

# Garden Scoop

## Shrubs

K.S.Kennen MGV

Shrubs can be an important part of your landscape. They are small to medium-sized woody perennials and are different than trees since they have multiple stems and are shorter. Some are deciduous and others are evergreen. A few uses for shrubs in the landscape are as hedges, foundation plantings, and screening plants.

A hedge is created when shrubs are planted in a row for the purpose of creating an edge, border, boundary, or surround. The mature size of the shrub is an important consideration since it will not only help you determine how many plants to purchase but how close they will be planted. Japanese boxwood or *Buxus microphylla* is often used for this purpose. Its small leaves and thick, bushy growth makes it the perfect plant to edge a drive or walkway. It can even be used in front of taller shrubs to create levels in your landscape. The boxwood has also been used for years as the borders that form knot gardens. The knot garden got its name because plants such as boxwoods were planted in patterns that often included a knot design,

The boxwood is a very versatile shrub and can not only be used as a border plant but also a foundation plant. A foundation planting serves to hide the foundation of a home and create a natural transition from the garden to the house. The key thing to remember is to plant the shrub one-half the distance of the plant's mature spread from the house. So, if the shrub has a spread of eight feet, plant it four feet from the house to avoid constant trimming and lopsided growth. There are many shrubs that can be used as foundation plants. A native that could work is Indian Hawthorne, *Rhaphiolepis indica*, a slow grower that would need very little trimming.

Indian Hawthorne would not work well as a screen since it is a very slow grower. Instead arborvitae, *Platycladus orientalis*, shrubs make a big and bold statement when used as a screen with their thick, dense foliage. Most homeowners have air condensers outside they want to screen. Be sure whatever you plant is far enough from the unit to allow proper air flow.

For a list of some florida shrubs refer to <https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/trees-and-shrubs/shrubs/>



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#### Lake County MGV Mission Statement

The mission of UF/IFAS Lake County Master Gardener Volunteers is to assist extension agents by providing horticultural education programs and current research-based information to the public through plant clinics, community outreach and Discovery Gardens.

For more information contact: UF/IFAS Extension, Lake County Office [lakemg.ifas@ufl.edu](mailto:lakemg.ifas@ufl.edu) ▪ (352) 343-4101 ▪ FAX (352) 343-2767

# Simpson Stopper – *Myrcuabtges frangrans*

K.S. Kennen MGV

Simpson stopper is a native, evergreen, woody shrub that can be grown as a small tree or shrub depending on how it is pruned and cultivated. The color changes of the leaves from pale chartreuse to dark wine throughout the year, adds interest to your landscape. The bark adds interest also when it falls off to reveal shades of reddish-brown. The height of the plant ranges from five to twenty feet but the dwarf 'Compacta' will only grow to five feet. Simpson stopper can grow in full sun or deep shade and is drought tolerant once it is established. The white blooms look like small, starbursts. Red berries come after flowering and are favorites of the mockingbird. The tree/bush also attracts other wildlife like butterflies, bees, and birds.



Photo: UF/IFAS



Photo: UF/IFAS

Fortunately, Simpson stopper has very few insect or disease concerns. There could be a rare occurrence of guava disease. This fungal disease will appear on new growth and cause dieback. Treat with fungicide meant for ornamentals. Since the plant is a threatened native, it should be purchased from a reputable dealer to be sure it is grown at the nursery and not removed from the wild. When planted be sure to supplement watering during dry seasons for the first four years. After that, the shrub should be well established and not need further supplemental watering. When planting as a hedge, place plants three to five feet apart. If planted near a house, keep about four feet from the house to allow room for growth. If planted near a drive or walkway, place about four feet from the pavement.

The Simpson's stopper can not only be used as a hedge for bordering or offering privacy, but also as a single yard accent specimen or serve as an anchor for a mixed bed or native plant garden. Also, placing it by a bird bath will give the birds a place to perch and groom.

The Simpson stopper name, also called twinberry, is a combination of acknowledgment of the American botanist, Charles Torrey Simpson who wrote several books about plants in South Florida. "Stopper" alludes to the plants' historical use as a treatment of diarrhea.

Sources:

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fp418>

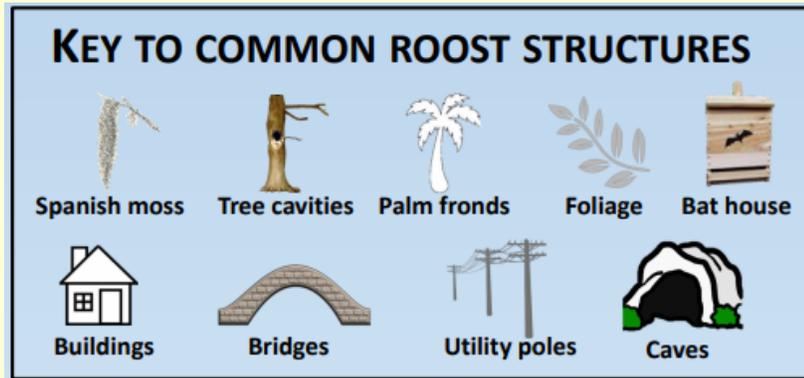
<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/trees-and-shrubs/shrubs/simpsons-stopper.htm>

# Bats In the Belfry?

Reggie Daugherty MGCV

A reminder from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC): Check your home and other structures for entry points BEFORE April 15<sup>th</sup> as that is when bat maternity season begins and extends until August 15<sup>th</sup>. It is illegal to block bats from their roosts while they are raising their young. Guidelines on how to exclude bats from structures can be found at [MyFWC.com/Bats](http://MyFWC.com/Bats) and would be helpful since bats can enter through very tiny spaces, even slits. You might even find it helpful to watch [How to Get Bats Out of a Building](#), a video on how to exclude bats. Just remember, it is illegal to harm or kill bats in Florida.

Florida is home to 13 resident bat species including a threatened species, such as the Florida bonneted bat. Florida native bats are an important part of our ecosystems and help keep insect populations under control.



There are several ways Floridians can help. First, try to preserve natural roost sites including trees with cavities, peeling bark, and dead fronds on palm trees. Second, put up a bat house. Finally, report any unusual bat behavior and sick or dead bats to [com/BatMortality](http://com/BatMortality). Remember to never touch a bat. If one is on the ground, it is probably ill and definitely should not be handled.



Key to Common Roost Structures and pictures are from FWC.

# Plant Clinic Clatter



Dear Master Gardener,

I am worried that my azalea bush is going to die because it has this unusual gray, green growth on it. The bushes grow in bed on the side of my house and have been there for over 20 years. Can I save them or should I replace them?



Homeowner Photo

Dear Homeowner,

What is growing on your azalea is lichen which does not cause harm to plants but it does need sunlight to grow. Try pruning your plant to encourage new growth that will create a bushier shrub and shade out the lichen. Be sure to prune after your plant has flowered because if you prune too early or late you may remove flower buds. It is best to do several light prunings over several years to help reduce shock to the plant.

As the shrub grows, it should naturally shade out the lichen. Whatever you do, do not try to remove the lichen since it can cause wounds to your plant. Also try to enrich soil around the shrub with compost to encourage growth. For more information you can refer to Publication ENY-2051 *The Life of Lichens* <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in1296>.

Dear Master Gardener,

I have a pretty, yellow, blooming, tabebuia tree in my yard just starting to have a few flowers appearing early since most will be on the tree next month. What I need to know is do I need to prune my tree and when?

Hello homeowner,

No worries you do not need to trim or prune your tree since the yellow (*Tabebuia chrysotricha*) tabebuia does not need pruning unlike the pink or purple bloom trees. *Tabebuia heterophylla* (pink) and *Tabebuia impotiginosa* (purple) both need pruning to be sure a single trunk is established. The tree makes an ideal patio or specimen tree and is sometimes commonly called the golden trumpet tree. The branches are prone to breakage so if some do break, you will need to do some pruning to repair and be sure the branch will grow in properly.

For more information refer to <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/st614>

## Plant Clinic

Remember that if you have questions or concerns about plants you can visit the plant clinic from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with your questions. Please remember that COVID cautions are in place and a controlled number of visitors with masks, are allowed into the office.

You can also call at 352-343-4101 or email [lake@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:lake@ifas.ufl.edu) with your questions.

# Azaleas and Bougainvilleas

By Jean Davidson

We are fortunate to be able to grow so many blooming shrubs in Florida. Two of my favorites are azaleas and bougainvilleas.

Let's talk about azaleas! Azaleas enhance the home landscape as a foundation, mass planting, and as a background or foreground plant. Azaleas are adapted to Florida and require 4-8 weeks of temperatures below 50°C so they will bloom. They generally begin to bloom between February and early April when warm temperatures follow this chilling period. Azaleas belong to the genus *Rhododendron*.

Dappled or partial shade provides conditions for healthy growth and optimum flowering. Pruning can be done in late spring or early fall to encourage more blooms and a fuller shrub. Fertilizing frequently and lightly are often necessary in Florida sandy soil. Acid-forming fertilizers like 12-4-8 or 15-5-15 should be applied during each season--spring, summer, fall, and winter.

One of the most popular spring blooming azaleas in southern landscapes is the Southern Indica azaleas, which include Formosa, George L. Taber, Mrs. G.G. Gerbing and Southern Charm. Pictured below is the Formosa.



Now those gorgeous Bougainvillea!

Even though they are considered a tropical vining shrub, they do quite well here in Central Florida. The flowers are actually modified leaves called bracts, that are long-lasting and bright. The colourful bracts outshine the plants true but tiny flower; they look like a poinsettia. They appear periodically throughout the year, but are especially plentiful in the winter when splashes of color are a welcome sight. They come in fuchsia, red, white, yellow, and orange blooms!

They require full sun and actually perform better when soil is left a little dry. Protect them from frost and freeze. Be careful when pruning, they have thorns!

Go easy on the pruning. You could be cutting off new blooms!

## Planting Tips for Shrubs

1. Consider where you are planting the shrub. Consider the sun, soil, and size of the mature shrub.
2. The planting hole needs to be one and one half times wider than the root ball and one inch shallower.
3. Fill around the root ball in the hole and not on top of it.
4. Leave one inch of the root ball above ground level.
5. Water a three gallon shrub with one gallon of water every eight days; in south Florida every four days.
6. Continue the water schedule for 20 to 28 weeks when the shrub should be established and can depend on normal rainfall.

# Treemendous: Palm Fertilization

By Jamie Daugherty, RHA

Fertilization is often referred to as 'feeding' your plants. This is not exactly what is happening. Plants make food through photosynthesis. Fertilization provides mineral nutrition; similar to you taking a multivitamin. This does not mean that fertilization is not important. It is vitally important for many plants, including palms. Palms require a special mix of nutrients for optimal growth and without it, they may exhibit some concerning symptoms and even die.

The best palm fertilizer is an 8-2-12 +4 MG fertilizer is best. This contains 8% nitrogen (N), 2% phosphorous (P), 12% potassium (K) and 4% magnesium. Palms are prone to magnesium deficiencies in Central Florida and required that extra boost. In addition, you want to ensure that there is 1-2% iron (Fe) and Manganese (Mn) as well as trace amounts of copper (Cu), Zinc (Fn) and Boron (B). It is best to have slow-release fertilizers that release at the same rate as above. Do not use turf or landscape fertilizers containing water soluble potassium on palms. You can use the 8-2-12 +4 fertilizer on your turf and landscape plants as well. Remember to leave lower palm leaves on the plant until they are fully brown. The palm is reabsorbing nutrients to use in new growth.

How can you know what nutrient your palm is deficient in? The below photos will help you determine what is wrong. You can also contact our Plant Clinic if you need help or are concerned that your palm may have a disease.



**Iron Deficiency**  
Photo: J. Daugherty



**Manganese Deficiency**  
Photo: T.K. Borschat UF/IFAS



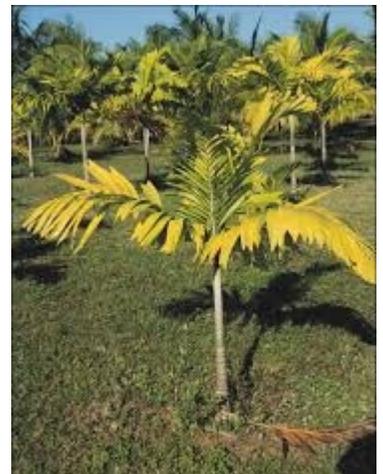
**Magnesium Deficiency**  
Photo: T.K. Borschat UF/IFAS



**Manganese Deficiency**  
Photo: T.K. Borschat UF/IFAS



**Boron Deficiency**  
Photo: T.K. Borschat UF/IFAS



**Nitrogen Deficiency**  
Photo: T.K. Borschat UF/IFAS

## PLANT SALE

### SPRING PLANT SALE – MARCH 27<sup>th</sup>

Master Gardener Volunteers will be having a limited access plant sale on March 27th at 1951 Woodlea Avenue, Tavares. The sale will begin at 9am and end at 2pm. We will be following safety guidelines for protection of volunteers and customers by allowing only 50 individuals in each hour to purchase plants. Those interested in purchasing plants will need a reservation for the hour they wish to attend. Reservations will be made by signing up online at <http://lakediscoverygardensprograms.eventbrite.com/>.

Additional information is available on the Eventbrite page.

All funds from the sale are used to maintain gardens and provide educational programs and materials to the public.



## Events

Due to COVID 19 activities and educational offerings are virtual. Please refer to our website for future offerings. The site for is at <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu.lake/> or <https://lakegardeningprograms.eventbrite.com> Extension programs are open to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, or national origin.

### March 2 & 10 2021

Closing Your Home Program will provide you the knowledge and important steps to take in the weeks leading up to leaving your Florida Home for the season. We will discuss preparations of your home both inside and out, addressing security and keeping it a healthy home that you can return to.

Please use the link below to register for the day and time that works best for you.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ufifas-extension-closing-your-seasonal-home-program-tickets-138276216887>

The agent, Jamie Daugherty, is collecting clean and dry 1 gallon milk/water jugs to be turning into planters for an event for at risk youth. People can drop them off at the office M-F form 8am-5pm until March 5th, 2021.

March 20th is a Master Gardener Garden Work Day. Master Gardeners can sign up on Better Impacts system to help with some larger garden projects from 8am-1pm.

## Discovery Gardens

Please plan a visit to over twenty different gardens located at 1951 Woodlea Road in Tavares. The hours are Monday through Friday and the third Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Just like your yard Discovery Garden changes with the seasons and will reveal something new with each visit. Pictured below is the Mediterranean garden which is exemplified by a water element, potted plants, raised beds, and shaded seating areas.

