

The Master Gardening Bench



The Manatee County Master Gardener Newsletter
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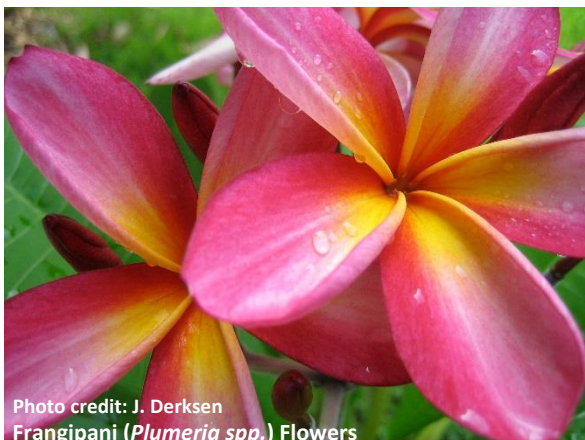


Photo credit: J. Derksen
Frangipani (*Plumeria* spp.) Flowers



Photo credit: J. Derksen
Angel Trumpet



Photo credit: J. Derksen
Royal Poinciana Flowering

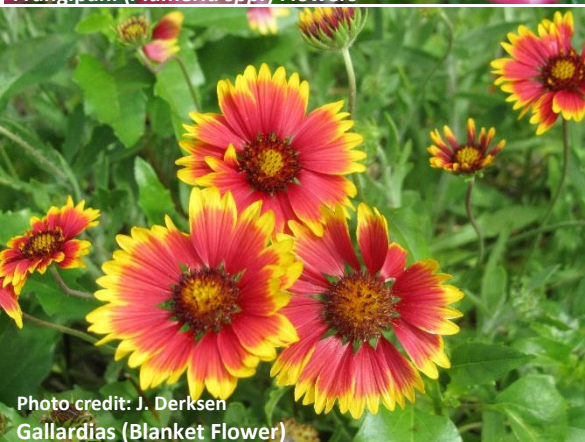


Photo credit: J. Derksen
Gallardias (Blanket Flower)



Photo credit: J. Derksen
Golden Shower Tree (*Cassia fistula*)



Photo credit: Floridata.com
Ixora

What's Blooming in August

By Joy Derksen, Master Gardener 2004

Florida's heat makes many plants curl up and die--of either being too hot, too dry, or too wet. If you've lived here for a few years, you probably have some summer favorites that keep blooming through it all. Florida natives and plants from lands with similar climates can and do bloom in the summer. Many annuals like our winter and spring better than the summers. So what can we add to our yards for summer color?

Flowers that are reliable are a mix of local and exotic. In sunny areas use blanket flower and coreopsis and cosmos and pentas and milkweeds. These will also attract butterflies. In shadier areas introduce angel wing begonias.

Bulbs and rhizomes that work in our hot wet climate are agapanthus (Lily of the Nile), Louisiana walking iris, canna lilies, and Crinum lilies of various varieties. Queen Emma Crinum and Crinum asiaticum bloom all summer but these need big spaces.

Shrubs and small trees in Florida are colorful and abundant. Native Firebush (*Hamelia patens*) and Ixora are good bloomers if treated with palm fertilizer in the winter and spring season and a dose of iron during the hot weather if their leaves turn pale green. Plumbago blooms nearly nonstop once it heats up--it comes in blue and white. If you have pets, the flowers will stick to their coats! Snowbush colors the landscape with its white, red, and green leaves. It does get a caterpillar called the snowbush span worm that can be treated with Bt (Dipel or Thuricide) if it is denuding the plant.

Angel trumpet is blooming now. This small tree in salmon or white or pink grows in some shade and in partial sun. Nighttime moths seem to love these. Frangipani is just starting to bloom in June and July. This import likes our weather and is easy to grow. You can take a cut off branch, dry it for two weeks, put it into the soil and you have a new plant. Frangipani comes in many colors, some of which are scented. Crepe myrtle is also an easy care summer bloomer. If you remove the first set of blooms, it will rebloom.

Trees that come into bloom at this time of year can grow quite big. Big yellow blooms are found on the Golden Shower (*Cassia fistula*) tree and the copper pod (*Peltophorum* sp). These are big trees and need about 30 feet of space, but in return you get shade and stunning landscape color on a grand scale. The Royal Poinciana which isn't native, although it shows up in many Florida Highwaymen pictures, is also just winding down its magnificent display of red blooms.

More information on blooming plants for the summer can be found at:
http://www.flbg.org/whatblooming/june_july_august.htm.



WHAT'S THAT?

Seen some curious plastic covering on open landscape beds recently? Like the guy shown (Bob McSorley, UF/IFAS researcher) below? Bob is demonstrating how to solarize a landscape bed - to eliminate soil-borne pests - in preparation for a fall vegetable crop. Click on the link below for a how-to.

<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/care/pests-and-diseases/pests/management/soil-solarization.html>



MAIL ORDER MANIA MEETS PEST PREDATORS

BY AMY L. STRIPE, MASTER GARDENER 2008

I am a self-admitted mail order queen: a Spiegel catalog heavy-hitter in the day; worked the free shipping game long before Amazon Prime was even a gleam in Jeff Bezos' eye. So imagine my delight when I discovered I could buy pest control by mail! Nothing like curling up with a laptop and a ladybug assortment.

Here's how it can work: Say you've been a bit naughty and sprayed a few crawly pests with a few chemical things without really identifying either, and the crawly things have not gone away. This is an opportunity for a predatory BENEFICIAL insect to PREY upon the crawly one. Only, you may have unwittingly killed the beneficial with the unidentified chemical. Believe me, it happens all the time.

So now you need to re-introduce the beneficial, only how? BY MAIL, of course! (And shelve the chemical things!)

The bling bug of the predatory mail-order world is the ladybug or ladybird beetle (Coccinellidae family). This critter will consume aphids, mealybugs, scale insects, and mites at an impressive rate. Some have attractive red spotted shells; they're easy on the eye!

These darling damsels are available in quantities from 300 individuals for treating a very small garden area all the way up to gallon-size for treating an acre. They arrive alive and thirsty, so your first order of business is to put them in your fridge to calm them down. Release them at dusk onto pest-ridden plants after watering the

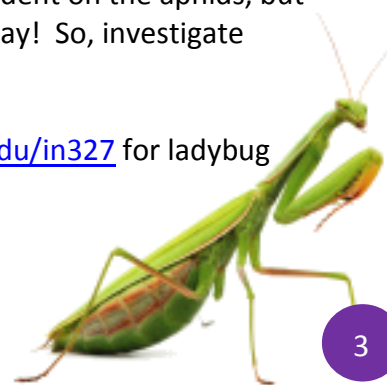
foliage; the bugs won't fly away at night and will need to rehydrate before they can go to work the following morning. Suppliers recommend releasing only a few bugs at a time, a week apart, for several applications.

Once they've feasted, they move on, looking for another bug buffet, nectar and pollen, which may not be in your yard. But consider the benefits you are bestowing on the entire neighborhood!

Other predatory insects available by mail include green lacewings (*Chrysoperia* spp.) which share the ladybug's taste for soft-bodied insects; praying mantids (*Hippodamia convergens*) which will snack on anything; beneficial nematodes, predatory mites, fly predators and so on. There are many suppliers of these good guys; go online and Google "beneficial bugs." Be sure to read all instructions for release and how to provide for the comfort and care of your new enforcers.

Shop around; my 1,500 ladybugs set me back, with postage, less than ten bucks. That's certainly cheaper than some chemical alternatives. And do a little homework. Our bling bug, the ladybug, is often captured in the wild and is thus genetically programmed to fly away at the end of winter, regardless of food availability. I learned that the hard way, releasing my mail order beauties in early spring. They made a dent on the aphids, but were long gone the next day! So, investigate where your bugs come.

Visit <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in327> for ladybug information.



Some Like It Hot

Herbs for Florida Summers

Nancy Hammer, Master Gardener 2014

Herbs are plants grown for their scents and flavors. If we use the leaves and soft stems, we call them herbs. If we use the seed or woody bark, they are spices. As an example, cilantro is an herb because we use the leaves, but coriander which is the seed is called a spice. Some plants are annuals and some perennials. Some are started from seed and others more easily from cuttings or divisions. Some thrive in our hot, humid, and rainy Florida summers.

Growing herbs in containers is often the way to go because you usually use small amounts at a given time, and most plants are small. Also some can be invasive if planted in the landscape. As an added benefit, many containers can be moved to shadier and more protected areas to provide relief from intense afternoon summer sun and heavy rainfall. Following are descriptions of several Florida summer-friendly herbs.



Photo credit: UF/IFAS Gardening Solutions

Basils (*Ocimum spp.*) are available in a wide variety of aromas and flavors. There are sweet basils such as “Genovese” and “Lettuce Leaf”, spicy Thai basil, “Mexican Spice” also called cinnamon basil, and lemon and lime basils. Basils can even be found in chocolate, licorice, camphor, and anise-scented varieties. Most basils are annuals, but a few behave as perennials.

When planting seed, wait until nighttime temperatures are above 55 degrees. Growing basil in containers is a good way to provide necessary drainage. Especially in summer, it prefers partial shade. Pick off the growing points to encourage branching, to keep the plant compact, and to maximize the harvest season.



Photo credit: Andrew Grygus

Culantro (*Eryngium foetidum L.*) is a biennial herb not commonly known in the U.S., but worth knowing. It is related to, and tastes similar to cilantro, but is better suited to Florida summers.

It is planted from seed, can be planted in the landscape or containers, and prefers partial shade.

It is mostly pest-free, and may attract beneficial insects to your garden. Try it in salsa, sauces and soups, and any other dish that calls for cilantro.



Photo credit: <http://heritagegarden.uic.edu/>

Mexican Tarragon (*Tagetes lucida*) is a good alternative to French Tarragon in Florida. It is a semi-woody herb which grows to 18-30 inches tall.

The leaves have a tarragon and licorice scent and taste. The yellow flowers are attractive in salads. It prefers full sun to part shade, and is propagated from cuttings, or from division.



Photo credit: <http://florawww.eeb.uconn.edu/>

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) is an attractive evergreen woody perennial or shrub which can grow as tall as 6 feet if planted in the landscape, but will remain smaller in a container. It prefers well drained soil kept on the drier side, and full sun. It is easy to propagate from cuttings

Here are some links for more information about growing herbs in Florida: Herbs in the Florida Garden, James. M. Stephens and Culinary Herbs: <http://brevard.ifas.ufl.edu/horticulture/PDF/culinaryherbs.pdf>

Warm Climate Production for Herbs, Rick Schoellhorn: http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/floriculture/pdfs/crop_production/Herbs%20GPN_ENHFL04-002.pdf



Q: This gardenia has leaves and blooms that have become smaller and smaller (now only half the size they used to be) than five years ago when first planted. Our soil was tested at your office: pH 5.2, salts 0.81. The plant is located on the east side of the home, gets morning sun but no afternoon sun; soil drains easily; watered every 4 days. As I cleared the soil under the tree of ground cover and mulch, I discovered that the trunk bark seems to be split vertically and horizontally (ring). See photos. Any suggestions to heal it to restore bloom and leaf size? - L.W.



A: This shrub is well established after 5 years and at that age probably doesn't need supplemental water as often as you're giving it. The soil remains moist, promoting root rot, and could very well be the reason the bark is splitting. (The horizontal ring you mention is where the plant was grafted onto rootstock, a common practice for gardenias.)

The roots of this shrub extend out into the lawn and if you have an irrigation system for your lawn, it's getting watered when you water your lawn. If there is a sprinkler head that waters this shrub, turn it off if possible or re-direct the water away from the shrub. Your soil pH is good for a gardenia.

The small, spare, and yellowing leaves can be symptoms of excessive water at the root zone. Try reducing supplemental water to this shrub and I think you will see an improvement.

Urban Horticulture Extension Agent Lisa Hickey adds, routine use of an acidic fertilizer can rule out that the chlorosis and reduced leaf size are a result of nutritional deficiencies. County Ordinance, "no fertilizer use until September 30."

Q: Our backyard palms are all producing their messy seeds and fruit. Is it ok to take off all this growth at the trunk of the tree? - C.F., Parrish

A: Although you shouldn't prune any green fronds from a palm, it is perfectly fine to cut off the flowers and messy seeds that follow. Be careful though, as many pollinators will be visiting the flowers and some of them sting.

Q: I came across the caterpillar shown in the photos voraciously eating his way through one of my tomatoes. Can you ID and recommend a way to get rid of him (and his cousins)? - P.R., Bradenton



A: This is an armyworm, either Southern or Yellow-striped, both of them voracious consumers of tomato and other vegetables. This is one of 5 instars they go through, so as large as it is, it's still immature. The best and least toxic way to be rid of them is to scout and pick them off, dropping them into soapy water where they drown. (Excellent as fish food if you have a pond!)

We usually recommend Bt, *Bacillus thuringiensis* for caterpillars, but it may not be effective as quickly as you would want. Sevin, the brand name for carbaryl, is often used for pests on vegetables. There may be other products available in the garden section of 'box stores' or your local hardware store.

If you choose a chemical insecticide, be sure to read and follow the label directions carefully. Check the label for armyworm as a targeted insect and be sure to read the safety and toxicity information provided by the manufacturer. More information can be found at: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/IN/IN26300.pdf>

"Ask a Master Gardener" questions were sent to ManateeMG@gmail.com and answered by Master Gardener Karen Holleran.

If you have a lawn-and-garden question, email us, phone us at 941-722-4524, or visit us at the Extension Service, 1303 17th St., W., Palmetto. Samples and photos are immensely useful.

Protection....We All Need It!

By Nancy O. Porter, Master Gardener 2014

As we enter into each new day, we all need some sort of protection. Especially here in Florida where the mosquito is sometimes referred to as our state bird.

Seriously speaking, since the rise in the latest disease, Zika Virus, we need to take precautions. When it comes to mosquitoes, we all know it takes water. So if you have any areas of standing water in or around your property, get rid of it!

The next step is to pay attention to our clothing when spending the better part of our lives out of doors. (*The CDC recommends wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants.*) There is good news! There are companies that provide specific mosquito repellent clothing, if you want to go that route. Check out the internet and you will find a plethora of products from which to

choose. The following is an excerpt from a University of Florida IFAS Extension article:

“Protecting yourself. To avoid getting bitten use a mosquito repellent, avoid infested areas, **wear light-colored, loose-fitting protective clothing, and stay inside during dawn and dusk.** Repellents work by confusing the mosquito. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends only three repellents: DEET (diethyl toluamide); Picaridin; and Oil of Lemon-Eucalyptus (do NOT use on children under 3 years). There is no scientific evidence that sound emitting devices, or that eating garlic, vitamins, onions, or any other food will repel mosquitoes.”

The Protection Times of Tested Mosquito Repellents and the Product Label information extracted from <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/files/IN/IN41900.pdf>.

Protection Times of Tested Mosquito Repellents

Products	Active Ingredient	Average Complete Protection Time
OFF! Deep Woods	23.8% DEET	5 hours
Sawyer Controlled Release	20% DEET	4 hours
OFF! Skintastic	6.65% DEET	2 hours
Repel Lemon Eucalyptus Insect Repellent	Oil of lemon eucalyptus; p-menthane 3,8-diol (PMD)	2 hours
Bite Blocker for Kids	2% Soybean Oil	1.5 hours
OFF! Skintastic for Kids	4.75% DEET	1.5 hours
Skin-So-Soft Bug Guard Plus	7.5% IR3535	23 minutes
Natrapel	10% Citronella	20 minutes

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Products	Active Ingredient	Average Complete Protection Time
Herbal Armor	12% Citronella; 2.5% peppermint oil; 2% cedar oil; 1% lemongrass oil; 0.05% geranium oil	19 minutes
Green Ban for People	10% Citronella; 2% peppermint oil	14 minutes
Buzz Away	5% Citronella	14 minutes
Skin-So-Soft Bug Guard	0.1% Citronella	10 minutes
Skin-So-Soft Bath Oil	Active Ingredient not known	10 minutes
Skin-So-Soft Moisturizing Suncare	0.05% Citronella	3 minutes
Gone Original Wristband	9.5% DEET	0
Repello Wristband	9.5% DEET	0
Gone Plus Repelling Wristband	25% Citronella	0

Footnotes

1. This document is ENY-671, one of a series of the Entomology and Nematology Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date July 2002. Revised July 2014. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. C. Roxanne Rutledge and Jonathan F. Day, professors at the Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory, Entomology and Nematology Department, UF/IFAS Extension, Vero Beach, FL 32962.

The use of trade names in this publication is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. UF/IFAS does not guarantee or warranty the products named, and references to them in this publication do not signify our approval to the exclusion of other products of suitable composition.

Product Labels

It is very important to read the label before using any mosquito repellent and remember the following:

- Both N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide and N,N-dimethylbenzamide are chemical names for DEET; the label may or may not have the word "DEET" on it.
- There are different recommendations for frequency of application for different repellents; do not over apply.
- Check the container for an EPA-approved label and registration number; never use a repellent that has not been approved for use by the EPA.
- Make sure that the repellent label lists the insect that you need to repel; some repellents are not formulated for certain insects.

Using common sense can really help you out in this case. If you go outside and feel or hear the drone of mosquitos, get back in the house and dress appropriately! If you have children or grandchildren, help them stay safe too!

July

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Date	Time	Event
3 rd Tuesday of each Month	10:00 a.m.	Monthly Guided Tours of the Master Gardener Educational Gardens - Join us for a guided tour lasting about one hour. The gardens illustrate a variety of garden styles and techniques, demonstrate Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles, educate residents about plants that perform well in Florida landscapes, and inspire garden visitors to follow recommended gardening practices at home. Register by calling the Master Gardener Plant Diagnostic Clinic (941) 722-4524.
2 nd & 4 th Saturday	10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	Ask a Master Gardener – Rocky Bluff Library – 6750 US Highway 301 N., Ellenton. Visit the Extension Master Gardener information table and get answers to your gardening questions.
Wednesday July 13	10:00-11:30 a.m.	Compost Happens – Home Composting - Learn to turn your kitchen scraps and yard waste into useful soil amendments, along with details on how to set up a home compost bin. \$40 fee for compost bin. Register online at http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu or call the Extension Master Gardeners (941) 722-4524.
New Date! Saturday July 16	9:00 a.m.-Noon	Grafting Fruit Trees – Part 2 - Local expert Wayne Clifton will follow up his first grafting workshop by introducing new grafting techniques. Materials fee of \$25 due the day of class (cash or check only, payable to Friends of Extension). Register online at http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu or call the Extension Master Gardeners (941) 722-4524.
Tuesday July 26	1:30-3:30 p.m.	Taking the Mystery Out of Micro-Irrigation - This class satisfies the irrigation educational requirement for the Manatee County Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program. Learn how to select, install, and operate your own water-saving micro-irrigation system. Register online at http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu or call Joann (941) 722-4524.
Photo Credit: www.garden.org Thursday July 28	1:30-3:30 p.m.	Ground Covers – Plants that Work - This class satisfies the landscape educational requirement for the Manatee County Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program. Learn how landscaping with low-growing ground cover plants has become a popular trend in landscape practices. Register online at http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu or call Joann (941) 722-4524.
Saturday July 30	9:00-10:30 a.m.	Worm Composting – Vermicomposting - Find out how to use worms to turn food scraps and other waste into compost. Workshop free, worm bins cost \$50 (optional). Register online at http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu or call the Extension Master Gardeners (941) 722-4524.

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