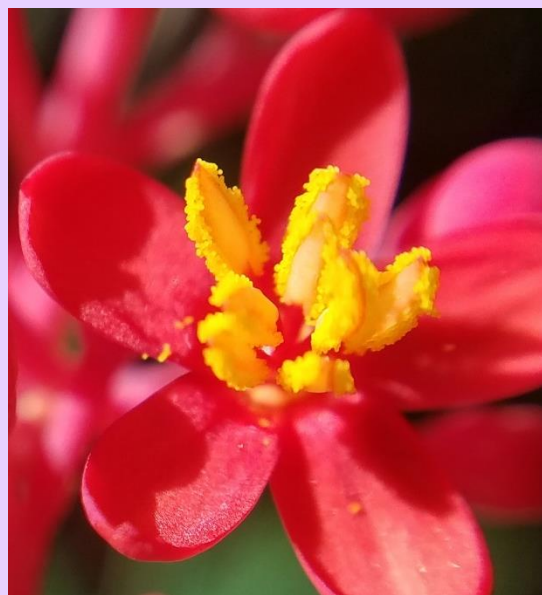


The Master Gardening Bench



The Manatee County Master Gardener Newsletter
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All articles are researched utilizing UF/IFAS Extension and/or other educational sources unless otherwise noted.



Take **EYE-POPPING** Close-up Photos on Your Smartphone

By Nancy Hammer, Master Gardener 2014

Recently a fellow Master Gardener shared a close-up photo taken with her Smartphone. I was amazed at the magnification, and asked how she got such a shot. She told me she has a macro lens for her Smartphone. I hopped online, and with a little research, ordered one for myself. I'm writing to spread the word: it so rewarding, tiptoeing around the garden, composing incredibly close-up photos of flora and fauna.

Generally, a macro lens comes as part of a kit which may include a wide-angle, fisheye, and/or telephoto lens, and sometimes a small tripod. I personally find using the macro lens the most rewarding. Typically, macro lenses provide between 10x and 20x magnification. Kit prices start at about \$15 (mine cost \$25), and there are numerous companies selling them online and in stores.

Using the macro lens takes some practice and patience to focus properly, especially when approaching camera shy insects or plants when there is a breeze. But the beautiful aspect of using your Smartphone camera is that less-than-stellar photos can simply be deleted. Some photographers temporarily remove their Smartphone cases before attaching the lenses, others do not. When researching kits, take note of which lenses will fit your Smartphone brand.

If you have a Smartphone, like taking pictures and enjoy nature, try macro lens photography!





The brown shrub is probably too far gone to save. I would remove it and replace it in the spring and use preventive measures with the rest. I've included a publication about *Botryosphaeria*. The chemical names in the publication are the active ingredients which will be on the labels of the products.

http://www.kpscc.com/landscaping_188_35101777_28.pdf,

<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/care/florida-friendly-landscapes/the-nine-principles.html>.

Q: Dear Master Gardener,

My husband and I just moved to Bradenton. We have a very aggressive disease or infestation which has attacked our shrubs along the side of our home. This started just about 10 days ago, and has grown rapidly. Do you have any idea how we should get rid of it before it kills off more plants? It is spreading rapidly. Please see the pictures below.

--Dana

A: Dear Dana,

Thank you for contacting the Manatee County Master Gardeners.

It appears that your pittosporum (*Pittosporum* spp.) hedge may be the victim of *Botryosphaeria* dieback or "Bot Rot," as this fungal condition is called. This is a common fungus affecting many woody plants. The most damage and death to shrubs occurs when the plants are stressed.

Nutritional deficiencies and drought are two such stressors. The disease is most severe in hot, humid conditions. Currently there is no recommended chemical cure for *Botryosphaeria*, but you can employ prophylactic techniques. Good sanitation measures are a must as the fungus can be spread on pruning tools. Eliminate conditions that promote the disease by following the 9 steps of Florida Friendly Landscaping™ (see link).



Master Gardener Karen Holleran answers your email questions and looks at photos for identification of problems at ManateeMG@gmail.com. Or visit our Plant Diagnostic Clinic Monday through Friday (closed Wednesdays) from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. at 1303 17th St. W., Palmetto, FL. Or call us with questions at 941-722-4524 and ask for a Master Gardener.

What's This?

Strange Roots on Palms

By Mary Lange, Master Gardener 2017



In the plant world, roots have two primary functions. Firstly, they provide stability, anchoring the plant against the forces of nature. Secondly, they allow for the absorption of water and nutrients. Root systems fall into two main categories. A taproot system, found in most dicots (a plant with two seed leaves), consists of one primary root that reaches deep into the earth. From the tap root, secondary and tertiary roots spread laterally for maximum stability. A few obvious examples of plants with tap root systems include dandelions, carrots, sunflowers, and (my favorite!) tomatoes.

A fibrous root system, found in most monocots, consists of roots growing directly from the stem or leaves of the plant. The roots tend to be shallow, spreading out horizontally near the surface to quickly absorb as much moisture and nutrients as possible. Plants such as grains, grasses, bromeliads, and palm trees have fibrous root systems. This root system is described by botanists as “adventitious.”

Adventitious is defined by Merriam-Webster as “coming from another source and not inherent or innate.” Applied to roots, it means “arising or occurring sporadically or in other than the usual location.” All fibrous root systems are considered adventitious in that the stem or leaves of a plant are generally not considered to be the usual location for root growth.

However, some plants with fibrous root systems take the word adventitious to a whole new level, often spawning above ground or aerial roots.

Consider the palm tree. All palms are monocots and have shallow roots (generally no more than three feet below the surface) spreading outward from the stem (trunk) rather than a tap root. Palm roots are therefore considered adventitious. In older palms, the root zone at the base of the tree becomes more evident as it begins to grow both up and out, splitting and flaring the tree’s bark in the process. Usually, the root zone is between 6 to 12 inches, although in old Phoenix date palms it can extend even higher.

While the root zone may look odd, it is all part of the normal aging process. So, the next time you see these adventitious roots, embrace them. They are just one of the many mechanisms that plants have developed to further their impressive gene pool.

Links:

Botany Handbook for Florida:


<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/MG/MG01200.pdf>

Palm Morphology and Anatomy:

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/EP/EP47300.pdf>

Normal “Abnormalities” in Palms:

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/EP/EP34400.pdf>



COOL WEATHER GARDENING

By Joy Derksen, Master Gardener 2007

Gardening chores? Of course! This is Florida where we garden all year round. Cooler weather frees us from some insect pests and makes gardening less sweaty. There is still time to get your garden up and running for cold weather.

Buy transplants or seeds from local vendors to be sure of getting varieties that do well in our area. Choose a sunny location for beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, collards, celery, peas, eggplant, lettuces, peppers, radish, spinach, tomatoes and turnips. Herbs that do well in the winter include parsley, fennel, dill, and basil.

This is also the time to plant flowers that are cold tolerant and colorful. Pansies, nasturtium, snapdragons, alysium and petunias are some northern summer favorites that can only be grown now in Manatee County.

Geraniums do especially well this time of year, as do impatiens, torenia and phlox. Don't forget mums for their burst of front porch color. You can try and replant your mums after blooming. Cut them back and wait and see if they thrive through our summer heat and hurricanes.

Lawn care becomes easier now. Most lawns need mowing only once every two weeks. Once very cold weather sets in, lawns do not need fertilizer. If your lawn is being invaded by cool season weeds, you have time to apply a broadleaf weed selective weed killer before temperatures become too cool for good results. Remember to spot treat only where there are weeds. St. Augustine lawns, in particular, are stressed by the application of Atrazine.

Stop pruning tropicals and semitropicals. The tender new growth that results can be killed by cold weather. Broken or dead branches, however, can be pruned at

any time. Deciduous trees should be pruned now while they are dormant.

Citrus plants are starting to produce. The fruit is sweeter when allowed to stay on the tree until night temperatures dip below 55 degrees. If you are not impressed with the quality of your fruit, remember to fertilize more regularly next year with a special citrus fertilizer. Call the Extension Master Gardeners for a schedule or go online for this publication: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/HS120>.

You should be prepared for cold weather before it arrives. When you know a frost is heading for the area, water your plants thoroughly. Often cold weather comes with strong winds that can cause the most damage by drying out the plants. Get ready to take container plants inside or under the protection of a porch roof or garage. Physically protect other tender plants in the landscape by covering with newspaper or cloth. Keep some bricks on hand to anchor the covering in strong winds. Use stakes or make a frame around trees or shrubs that aids in keeping the protection on during windy nights.

Do not attempt to irrigate during the freeze. This is a very tricky way to save crops that requires constant water flow, constant supervision, and constant temperature monitoring (not suitable for homeowners).

For gardening with annuals in Florida visit:

For cold protection visit:
<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg025>
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg319>

For vegetable seasons visit:
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>.

Fun Facts of Scientific Plant Names

By John Dawson, Master Gardener 2007 and Amy Stripe Master Gardener 2008

When identifying – or more importantly, purchasing plants - familiarity with scientific binomial names is critical. Whereas plants may have many different common names, they will have only one binomial name, usually in Latin or Greek, but not always. The binomial name is comprised of **genus** (a group of common characteristics) and **species** (a group capable of exchanging genes). The binomial scientific name uses the first name as describing the common group (a noun) with the second name providing descriptive information (as in an adjective).

Example: *Quercus alba*. *Quercus* is the scientific name for the oak genus (all oaks) and *alba* means white; therefore, *Quercus alba* is the binomial name for the white oak.

The yaupon holly is one common name for *Ilex vomitoria*. The common name “yaupon” comes from a Native American word meaning “tree” and “holly” derived from a middle English word *holi*, describing the leaves and red berries. *Ilex* is the scientific word for the holly genus.

Vomitoria as a descriptor is falsely associated with purging. William Aiton was a Scottish botanist credited with first describing this holly to the Royal Botanical Society which maintains the official recordings of all plant names. He had heard stories of how Native Americans boiled the leaves and bark of this tree to create a nasty black tea they called *asi*, which caused ritual purging, thought to bring on spiritual guidance.

Aiton chose the species descriptor *vomitoria* which at the time (and still to this day) was believed to be a room where ancient Romans would go to purge themselves after a heavy meal to continue partying. (This has since proven to be a myth; in reality, the Romans used *vomitoria* to describe any entrance/exit way where people would stampede forth.)

And further to the Native American term “asi,” the great Florida Seminole Chief Osceola, (born Billy Powell) - a son of a Scottish trader and mixed Creek Indian mother - derived his name from the Creek Indian word *Asi-yahola* which translates to “one who shouts after drinking the black tea.” *Asi-yahola* was later anglicized to “Osceola.”

Many plant names have interesting stories. Start by familiarizing yourself with are a few scientific descriptors:

Genus examples

- **Acer** = maples
- **Allium** = onions
- **Brassica** = mustards & leaf vegetables,
- **Capsicum** = peppers
- **Curcumis** = melons
- **Eugenia** = small fruit shrubs
- **Ficus** = figs
- **Jasminum** = jasmines
- **Lilium** = lilies
- **Mentha** = mints
- **Musa** = bananas
- **Ocimum** = basil
- **Passiflora** = passion flowers
- **Persea** = avocado/bay trees
- **Pinus** = pines
- **Prunus** = stone fruits
- **Rosa** = roses
- **Rubus** = thorned berries
- **Salix** = willows
- **Salvia** = sages
- **Solanum** = tomatoes, potatoes, eggplants
- **Tagetes** = marigolds
- **Ulmus** = elms
- **Vaccinium** = berries

Species examples:

Color = *alba*/white, *azur*/blue, *luteus*/yellow, *nigra*/black, *purpureus*/purple, *rubra*/red, *virens*/green

Form = *contorta*/twisted, *globose*/rounded, *maculata*/spotted, *magnus*/large, *nana*/dwarf, *pendula*/weeping, *prostatae*/creeping, *reclinata*/leaning or reclining.

Origin - *chinensis*/China, *japonica*/Japan, *occidentalis*/West North America, *orientalis*/East Asia, *virginiana*/all territory south of the Potomac River.

If you are challenged by identifying a specific plant or curious to learn about a plant’s scientific name, contact the Master Gardeners at ManateeMG@gmail.com or visit <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/sr013> to learn about the University of Florida’s plant identification service.

SORTING OUT MILKWEEDS

By Norma Kisida, Master Gardener 2012

An important factor in the decline of the famously beautiful monarch butterfly is their loss of habitat, largely including milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.). Milkweeds are the only plants that monarch and other milkweed caterpillars - such as the look-alike queen butterfly - feed and survive upon. For years, home gardeners have been encouraged to plant milkweeds.

Yet, here in Central and South Florida we have a dilemma. The most available and easy to grow milkweed here is non-native tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*), also known as scarlet or Mexican milkweed. Now some butterfly experts such as Dr. Jaret Daniels of the University of Florida believe the spread of this non-native milkweed is detrimental to monarchs for several reasons. Because it persists until the first freeze, it may encourage monarchs - which would normally migrate - to remain, subjecting them to freezes and disease.

Ophryocystis elektroscirrha (OE) is a parasite that builds up over time on the tropical milkweed, spread by adult butterfly wings as they nectar or lay eggs, causing an increase in the disease. To top this off, the University of Florida has now classified *A. curassavica* as an invasive plant in South Florida.

This theory is, however, not without controversy. Jeffrey Glassberg, an American biologist, author, and founder of the American Butterfly Association has a different opinion. He writes that "removal of tropical milkweed from Florida would probably wipe out the non-migratory Monarchs present, along with Queens and Soldiers," as well as discourage people from getting involved in the conservation of our milkweed butterflies.

Florida has 21 species of native milkweeds but they are very regionally specific and can be difficult to acquire and establish. Typically, only three species are available and these are usually only found at native nurseries.



Monarch Butterfly Kenneth Dwain Harrelson/Wikipedia



Queen Butterfly *Danaus gilippus*



Swamp milkweed



Butterfly weed



Aquatic milkweed

Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) is a native perennial wildflower, 3-6 ft. tall, with attractive lavender or pink flowers. It requires damp or wet soils, full to part sun and dies back in the winter.

Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) is probably the most commonly native available. It is a short-lived perennial 2-4 ft. tall and is winter dormant. It has orange or yellow flowers in the late spring until fall. The leaves are too tough for the young caterpillars so they will most likely be found on the buds or flowers. It requires very dry soil in full sun to part shade. It can be started from seed but the seed should be from plants native to our region (local ecotype).

Aquatic or white swamp milkweed (*Asclepias perennis*) is also a short-lived native perennial and is winter dormant. It grows 1-2 ft. tall with white showy flowers. It requires part sun to shade and wet soils. It can be propagated by seed.

So, what is the well-meaning gardener to do? If you use tropical milkweed, University of Florida recommendations are to cut it down almost to the ground in the fall. The new growth in the spring will be free of the parasite.

Try to establish native milkweeds in the spring as well as a variety of native nectar and pollinator plants and avoid the use of pesticides in your butterfly garden.

To find a native nursery near you visit the Florida Association of Native Nurseries website:

<https://www.plantrealflorida.org/professionals/3> and type in your county.

Milkweed, Food for Butterflies

<http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/highlandsco/2018/09/11/milkweed-food-for-butterflies/>

“Tropical Milkweed and the Injurious Effects of Well-Meaning People”

<http://nababutterfly.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Tropical-Milkweed.pdf>

December

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Date	Time	Event
1 st Saturday	10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	Ask a Master Gardener – Island Library – 5701 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach. Visit the Extension Master Gardener information table and get answers to your gardening questions.
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.
2 nd Saturday	10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	Ask a Master Gardener – South Manatee Library – 6081 26 th Street West, Bradenton. Visit the Extension Master Gardener information table and get answers to your gardening questions.
Saturday December 1	10:00 -11:30 a.m.	THE FLORIDA-FRIENDLY INTRO TO NUISANCE WILDLIFE - We share our state with many critters and “nuisance” is often in the eye of the beholder. Learn more about the good, the bad, the ugly, and the beautiful creatures who can sometimes get under our skin (or under our houses)! \$5 administrative fee. Register on-line at https://ffl_intro_nuisance_wildlife.eventbrite.com or call the Extension Master Gardeners (941) 722-4524.
Tuesday December 4	10:00 a.m.-Noon	LANDSCAPE TIPS FOR WATER COSERVATION - Topics will focus on Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ tips such as right plant vs right place, watering efficiently. and the benefits of mulch. This class satisfies the landscape educational class requirement for the Manatee County Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program. Register online or call Erik ext. 1828.
Thursday December 6	Noon-2:00p.m.	IRRIGATION WITH WATER CONSERVATION IN MIND - Topics will focus on how to adjust your in-ground sprinkler system to conserve water, how you can repair parts, and the benefits of installing smart irrigation devices. This class satisfies the irrigation educational class requirement for the Manatee County Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program. Register online or call Erik ext. 1828.
Saturday December 8	9:00-11:00 a.m.	Extension Master Gardener Plant ID Tour - Riverview Pointe Preserve – DeSoto National Memorial – Stroll through Riverview Pointe Preserve to learn more about Florida’s native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Suitable for all ages. The hike begins in the parking area of the DeSoto National Memorial Park and enters into the Riverview Preserve at 8250 DeSoto Memorial Highway, Bradenton. To register call the Extension Master Gardeners at (941) 722-4524.
Saturday December 8	9:00-11:00 a.m.	Extension Master Gardener Plant ID Tour – Emerson Point Preserve - Stroll through Emerson Point Preserve to learn more about Florida’s native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Suitable for all ages. Call the Extension Master Gardeners to register (941) 722-4524.
Saturday December 8	9:30-11:00 a.m.	I Can Grow it Myself – For Kids Only (recommended ages 6-10) - Kids love gardening! In this class they will learn how to grow and care for vegetable plants. They will have fun learning about the parts of the plants we can eat and where Florida farmers grow them before they arrive in the stores. They will enjoy getting their hands dirty as they work together to plant the salad table in our children's garden as well as potting and taking home their own plant. Class is limited to 15! Register online at https://pretty-flowers.eventbrite.com or call the Extension Master Gardeners (941) 722-4524.
Saturday December 15	9:00-11:00 a.m	Extension Master Gardener Plant ID Tour – Rye Preserve - Take a hike through upland habitats along Rye Branch and learn about Florida native plants, natural history, and early settlement of the area. Drinking water, sturdy shoes, and hiking sticks are recommended. Visitor Center open 9am-noon and 1-4pm. Call the Extension Master Gardeners to register (941) 722-4524.
Saturday December 16	9:00-11:00 a.m.	Extension Master Gardener Plant ID Tour – Robinson Preserve - Stroll through the Robinson Preserve’s salt marshes to learn more about Florida’s native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Suitable for all ages. Trail consists of shell paths with little shade. Good walking shoes, drinking water, hat, and sunscreen are recommended. Call the Extension Master Gardeners to register (941) 722-4524.
Saturday December 8	9:30-11:00 a.m.	ORCHID “MAKE AND TAKE” - A “make and take” workshop where you will mount a <i>Phalaenopsis</i> orchid on a piece of wood. Learn about these beautiful epiphytes and how they can enhance your home and landscape. Registration and advance material fee of \$20 due by December 3 (cash or check only, payable to Friends of Extension). Register on-line at https://orchid_december_8.eventbrite.com or call the Extension Master Gardeners (941) 722-4524.