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Chinese Tallow Courtesy Flickr.com



Mimosa Tree Courtesy of Flickr.com



Hot Topics by Maxine Hunter

Invasive Species

Invasive species are introduced plants and animals that cause harm to the environment, the economy, and/or human health. These species cost Floridians over \$500 million per year and displace native species, skewing the delicate balance between animals, plants, and important ecological processes such as water flow and fire.

The economic impact of a single invasive species can cost millions of dollars and invasive species are difficult to control once they become established in an area. Consequently, backyard gardeners, farmers, and commercial nursery operators play an important role in early detection. The University of Florida/IFAS Extension also plays an active role in invasive species detection and management. Invasive species are part of our natural resources high priority initiative: "Enhancing and conserving Florida's natural resources and environmental quality". Invasive species are a challenge that require attention and observation from all of us. Along with working with your local UF/IFAS Extension office, you can report species that you see on the "Ivegot1" app which is available to both iPhone and android users. You can download this free app at the following link: <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ivegot1-identify-report-invasive/id381326170?mt=8>.

"IveGot1" is a real time integrated invasive species reporting tool and part of a comprehensive outreach campaign on invasive exotic plants and animals in Florida. The project includes the app, a website with direct access to invasive species reporting, and a hotline 1-888-IVEGOT1 for instant reporting of live animals. This app allows observations of invasive plant and animal species to be reported directly with an iPhone that uploads to a designated location and is e-mailed directly to local and state verifiers for review. The goal of the "IveGot1" app is to make identification and reporting of these problematic species easy and efficient as possible.

Invasive Plants: Sadly, the list of invasive plants is a long one. Common invasive plants that we see here in Central Florida include Air potato, Brazilian pepper, Camphor tree, Chinese Tallow (Popcorn tree), Mimosa tree, Old world climbing fern, Tropical soda apple and this is only the beginning. Three resource that can help you find out if a specific plant is invasive include 1) visit your local extension office and bring pictures of suspected plants or animals, 2) the UF/ IFAS Assessment <https://assessment.ifas.ufl.edu> and 3) Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council, www.fleppc.org.

Cuban Tree Frogs: The Cuban tree frog (*osteopilus septentrionalis*) is one of the most common invasive species seen by residents in Central Florida; it is native to Cuba, the Bahamas, and the Cayman Islands. This large frog often shows up unexpectedly in our showers and toilets and feeds on our native frogs and lizards. It was accidentally introduced into the Florida Keys in the 1920s and has become an increasing problem for our Florida ecosystem and for humans. These frogs can

Hot Topics by Maxine Hunter (cont.)



Cuban Tree Frog Courtesy Wikipedia

secrete noxious mucus that can cause burning in the eyes, allergy-like reactions and even asthmatic attacks. They have been known to cause increased salivation and seizures in pets.

The frogs have invaded houses causing plumbing problems such as clogged drains and toilets. They can also invade power boxes which can cause power outages.

Due to their dramatic impact on the Florida environment, the recommendation from the University of Florida is to capture and humanely euthanize the frogs. It is **very important** that you correctly identify the Cuban tree frog so that you do not euthanize a Florida native species. For tips and photos on correctly identifying the Cuban tree frog, go to the UF/IFAS Wildlife website at http://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/cuban_treefrog_inFL.shtm . If you do not wish to euthanize the frogs yourself, you can capture them and take them to your local extension office. Even though they are legally sold in Florida pet stores, it is illegal to release these frogs into the wild.



Cane Toad Courtesy Wikimedia Commons

Cane Toad: The Cane toad or Giant toad (*Bufo marinus*) is the largest of the frogs and toads found in Florida. This toad was originally released in the U.S. in sugar cane fields to help control “white grubs,” larvae of pest Scarabaeidae and became established in southern Florida as result of accidental release of about 100 specimens from the stock of a pet dealer at Miami airport in 1955, and by subsequent releases by pet dealers in the 1960s (Krakauer, 1968).

Giant Toads are a highly predacious exotic species that will eat all types of native frogs and toads. This species is skilled at locating all types of food, they have even been known to eat pet food. These non-native toads secrete a highly toxic milky substance from its large parotid glands at the back of its head if handled or threatened. This secretion can burn your eyes, irritate your skin, and can kill cats and dogs if they ingest the secretion. Their populations are spreading and they are now commonly seen in areas as far north as Citrus County.

Other invasive species currently of interest to us in Florida are whiteflies, brown marmorated stink bug, European pepper moth, day lily leaf miner, laurel wilt, and sudden oak death. For more information on invasive species and how to identify them, the damage they cause, similar species (if applicable), and management recommendations, please see: <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/natural-resources/sustainability-invasive-species/>



Marmorated Stink Bug Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

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Upcoming Events January thru March

Bellevue Public Library Satellite Plant Clinic

13145 SE Hwy 484, Bellevue
10 a.m.– 1 p.m.

January 4 & 18, 2019

February 1 & 15, 2019

March 1 & 5, 2019

Downtown Farmers Market Satellite Plant Clinic

3rd Ave and 3rd St, Ocala
10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

January 5, 2019

February 2, 2019

March 2, 2019

Dunnellon Public Library Satellite Plant Clinic

20351 Robinson Rd, Dunnellon
10 a.m.-1 p.m.

January 8, 2019

February 5, 2019

March 5, 2019

Dunnellon Public Library Events

2:00 p.m.– 3:00 p.m.

Houseplants

January 15, 2019

Butterfly Gardening

February 19, 2019

Annuals & Perennials

March 19, 2019

Master The Possibilities Events

On Top Of The World

8415 SW 80th Street, Ocala

10.00 a.m. -11:00 a.m.

Series: “Dust Bowl”

January 11, 2019

Series: Vegetable Gardening

February 8, 2019

Series: Bees

March 8, 2019

WANTED: Crape Murderer!

Amanda Marek

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Extension Agent I
UF/IFAS Extension Marion County

It's that time of the year again when even the best of us can succumb to a life of crime, committing one of the most common landscaping offenses - crape murder. Crape murder is a nickname given to a type of severe pruning called “topping” that is oftentimes done to crape myrtle trees. Evidence of the crime is obvious as skeletons of poor, unsuspecting crape myrtles with bare chopped off trunks begin to line city streets and neighborhood drives. This type of hard pruning is particularly stressful and potentially fatal to crape myrtles that are topped too early and begin to sprout new leaves and branches just in time for hard winter freezes.

Crape myrtles are usually very low maintenance trees that require little to no pruning. Many of the newer cultivars (varieties) are bred to bloom for longer periods of time which makes pruning to encourage better flowering unnecessary. The practice of topping crape myrtles is still practiced by many landscapers and homeowners today to either keep a crape myrtle down to a certain size that was planted in the wrong place at the start, or simply due to convenience or unawareness. It's much easier and quicker to simply top a crape myrtle down than it is to do proper selective pruning.

If pruning crape myrtles is needed to keep the tree from imposing on structures or walkways, the best time to prune is when the tree is completely leafless and dormant, typically late December – early February. Selectively pruning out small crisscrossing or rubbing branches, particularly in the center of the plant, can be beneficial by allowing more sunlight and airflow through the interior of the tree. Tipping is another type of selective pruning that can be quite time consuming but can result in a more attractively shaped, fuller tree.

Crape myrtles are overall very hardy low-maintenance trees that can be a splendor of color to enjoy in the landscape but can be made into high maintenance trouble when planted in the wrong place or improperly pruned.

To learn more about crape myrtles and proper pruning, contact your UF/IFAS Extension Service Marion County or visit <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep399>.



Photo courtesy of hort.ufl.edu



Proper Pruning. Courtesy: Flickr.com

Master Gardener Corner

Petunias

By Kathy Edenhofer

Did you know - In Florida, petunias are a popular winter annual. Their long flowering period, the wide array of colors and forms available, and the ease with which they grow make them a favorite among gardeners.

Petunias (*Petunia* spp.) were originally native to South



Courtesy of Pixabay.com

America, but the petunias that we grow today (*Petunia* x hybrid) comprise a large family of hybrids derived from many species. Petunias are usually separated into two categories; grandiflora (large-flowered) and multiflora (many-flowered).

With so many varieties to choose from, the form of each petunia plant will vary greatly. Some petunias will only grow to be about 6 inches tall while others can get over a foot tall. The spread of your petunia plant will depend on the variety as well, with some varieties spreading only about 18 inches while others can spread out as much as 4 feet. (cont.)

Out of Sight But Not Out of Mind

Yilin Zhuang, Ph.D., UF/IFAS Extension Marion County

(yilinz@ufl.edu)

Many people choose to live in the country because they cherish the peace and quiet, the wide open spaces, and the beauty of nature. Today, however, I am going to talk about something that may not sound or smell that pleasant: onsite wastewater treatment systems. Understanding how these systems work and how to keep them operating efficiently is critical for your family's health. It is also important to your household's budget.

The most common onsite wastewater treatment system is conventional septic system (Figure 1). It consists of a septic tank and a soil absorption field, which is also called a drain field. When sewer leaves a home, it goes to the septic tank first, which is an enclosed watertight container where the solids are separated from liquid wastes. There, microorganisms begin to break down organic matters in the wastewater. Then the partially treated wastewater is moved to the drain field, which consists of perforated pipes, and soil, where it will evaporate, be used by plants, or drain deeper into the soil, and potentially into groundwater. Septic systems come in many types and sizes. The operation and maintenance depend on:

- The treatment methods used to remove contaminants in the wastewater;
- The amount of wastewater that the system handles;
- The strength of the wastewater, such as solids, nutrients, organic matters, and pathogens.

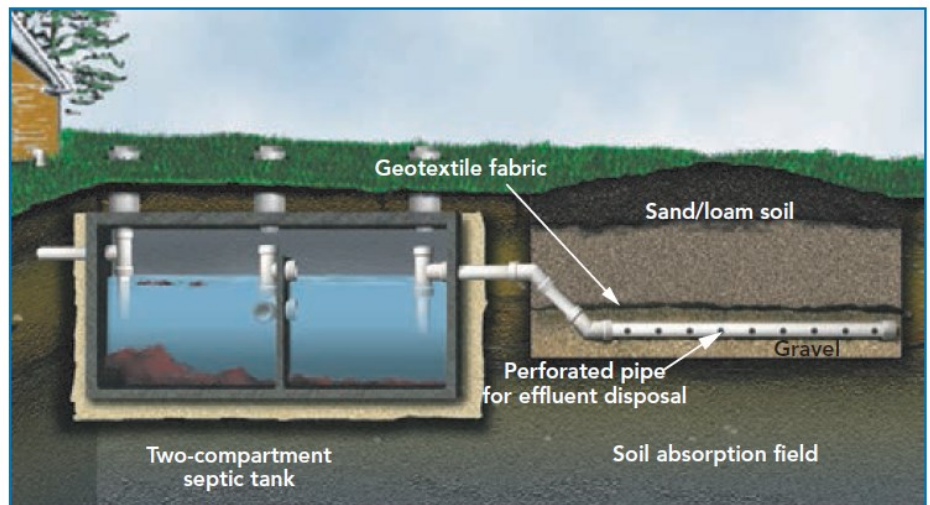


Figure 1. Conventional onsite wastewater treatment system (septic system).
Source: Texas A&M

Generally speaking, a typical three-bedroom home with a 1000-gallon septic tank needs to have solids removed every three to five years. Smaller tanks must be pumped more often. Do not put this job off until the tank and sewer fill up and the toilet overflows onto the bathroom floor. If this happens, a new drain field may also have to be installed.

Believe or not, your septic tank additives that “clean” the tank are not clean. They are either not significantly effectively or may cause the solids to be flushed from the septic tank into the drain field, causing clogging problems. Other compounds

Master Gardener Corner

(continued)

Petunia flowers are also incredibly variable in terms of size, shape, hue, and color pattern; some petunias even have sweet fragrances. While some varieties have small flowers, only about an inch in diameter, others have flowers as large as 6 inches across. Flowers can be ruffled, fringed, or double, in almost any color imaginable. Some flowers will be one solid color while others have contrasting veins or edges, and in some varieties the flower even has a star pattern.

The numerous variety of petunias makes them quite versatile in the landscape. They can be used for color masses, in containers, hanging baskets, or as a seasonal ground cover. See following link for growing information.

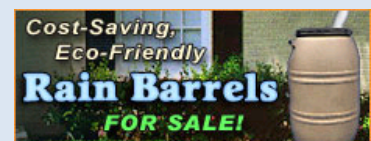
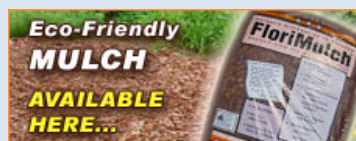
[http://
gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/
plants/ornamentals/
petunia.html](http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/petunia.html)

Out of Sight But Not Out of Mind (Continued)

may produce a septic tank effluent which will destroy soil structure and cause premature failure of the drain field.




In recent years, the use of products such as “flushable” wipes have been advertised as a better cleaning experience when compared to traditional toilet paper. These products are marketed in a variety of ways, such as “septic-safe”, “break down like toilet paper,” and “safe for sewer and septic.” The problem is that they appear to take longer to break down when compared to traditional toilet paper, and as a result have caused major blockages in sewer systems and have to be manually removed from lift stations. Wipes that clog pipes can also lead to blockages that can cause sewage overflow into the house. Keep in mind, everything that goes down your drains ends up in your septic system, whether you flush it down the toilet, grind it in the garbage disposal, or pour it down the sink, shower, or bath. What goes down the drains affects how well your septic system works. An easy rule of thumb: Do not flush anything besides 4Ps. We all know the first 2Ps. The other two are paper and puke. Your septic system contains a collection of living organisms that digest and treat household waste. Think at the sink. Never pour cooking oil or grease down the drains. Eliminating or limiting the use of garbage disposal will significantly reduce the amount of fats, grease, and solids that enter your septic tank and ultimately clogs its drain field.

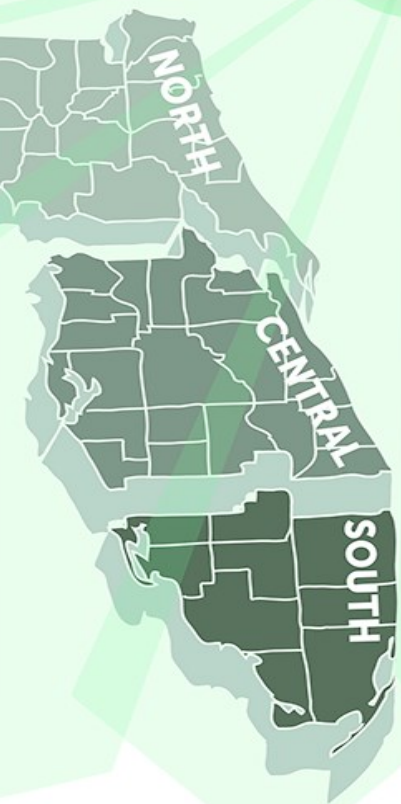
Septic system maintenance is not complicated, and it does not need to be expensive. If you follow these tips, inspect and pump frequently, properly dispose of water, use water efficiently, and maintain your drain field, you should have a nearly trouble free system. Your septic system is out of sight but do not keep it out of mind!



These items are available for purchase at the UF/IFAS Extension Marion County. The store is open Mon-Fri from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Please come to see these environmentally-friendly products, as well as many other agricultural-related items.

EDIBLES TO PLANT IN JANUARY

| | North | Central | South |
|---|--|--|--|
|  Easily Survives Transplanting | Arugula, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Chinese Cabbage, Collards, Endive/Escarole, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Swiss Chard | Arugula, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Chinese Cabbage, Collards, Eggplant, Endive/Escarole, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Pepper, Swiss Chard, Tomatoes | Arugula, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Chinese Cabbage, Collards, Eggplant, Endive/Escarole, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Pepper, Sweet Potatoes, Swiss Chard, Tomatoes |
|  Survives Careful Transplanting | Carrots, Celery, Mustard, Potatoes, Spinach | Carrots, Celery, Mustard, Potatoes, Spinach | Carrots, Celery, Mustard, Potatoes, Spinach |
|  Use Seeds | Onion (bunching, shallots), Peas (English), Radish, Turnip | Cantaloupes, Corn, Cucumbers, Onion (bunching, shallot), Peas (English), Radish, Squash (summer, winter), Turnip, Watermelon | Beans (bush, pole, lima), Cantaloupes, Corn, Cucumbers, Okra, Onion (bunching, shallot), Peas (English, southern), Radish, Squash (summer, winter), Turnip, Watermelon |



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Gardening SOLUTIONS

WHAT'S FLOWERING in Florida? FEBRUARY

**NORTH/
CENTRAL**

- Chickasaw Plum** 
Native, deciduous (*Prunus angustifolia*)
- Eastern Redbud** 
Native, deciduous (*Cercis Canadensis*)
- Eastern Dogwood** 
Native, deciduous (*Cornus florida*)
- Fringetree** 
Native, deciduous (*Chionanthus virginicus*)
- Japanese Magnolia** 
Not-native, deciduous (*Magnolia x soulangiana*)
- Taiwan Cherry** 
Not-native, deciduous (*Prunus campanulata*)

-  **Bougainvillea**
Non-native, evergreen (*Bougainvillea* spp.)
-  **Hong Kong Orchid Tree**
Non-native, evergreen (*Bauhinia blakeana*)

SOUTH

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Gardening SOLUTIONS

For more information, please visit
GardeningSolutions.ifas.ufl.edu

25 years as the area's largest all-in-one plant sale and garden expo!

Marion County  Master Gardeners' **Spring festival**

Always the 2nd weekend in March!

Southeastern Livestock Pavilion
2232 NE Jacksonville Road, Ocala

March 9
8 a.m.-4 p.m.

March 10
9 a.m.-4 p.m.



Kids Gardening Zone

Native and tropical

Garden décor

Trees and shrubs

Food truck rally

Experts on site

Flowers and herbs

Helpful tips and demos

Admission: \$2
Ages 12 and under: FREE

FREE parking near venue

ONLY service animals are permitted

Exact change? Express entry!

Interact with us:
#MCMGSF2019

Info: 352-671-8400

marioncountyfl.org/springfestival
facebook.com/MarionCountyMasterGardeners

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Scan with smartphone



Marion County
FLORIDA
EXTENSION SERVICE

25 years of bringing the experts to you!

Daylily

Saturday

10 a.m. Landscape, pesticide service

11:30 a.m. Caring for Roses

1 p.m. Citrus: crops vs. greening

2:30 p.m. Water conservation: sewer systems

Sunday

10 a.m. Vanda orchids

11:30 a.m. Florida's native plants

1 p.m. Ocala Wetland Recharge Park

2:30 p.m. Landscape designs

Marigold

Saturday

10:30 a.m. Organic gardening

noon Pruning crepe myrtles

1:30 p.m. Insecticide safety

3 p.m. Attracting birds

Sunday

10:30 a.m. Drip irrigation

noon Join Master Gardeners!

1:30 p.m. Grow herb gardens

3 p.m. Butterflies and gardens

See, Learn and Play in the Kids Gardening Zone!

Fun activities!



Build a bird feeder



Mask making



Scavenger hunt

Face painting



Plant your own seedling!

Tomato
Coreopsis



Watermelon

Prizes at every station!

Cool displays!

Bat cave



Live bee hive



Worm farm



Root view

