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Different Fungi in Your Landscape by Maxine Hunter

Fungi of all sorts are common in Florida's warm wet climate. We notice them most when they decide to cause problems such as black spot on roses, brown spots in our lawn, spots on leaves or grass blades, sooty mold on many of our citrus and ornamentals. Healthy lawns and plants are less susceptible to fungal infection.

Fungi are primitive plants that do not contain chlorophyll and cannot make sugars as green plants do. They take nourishment from the plants on which they live. Their structure is simple; most fungi are composed of a network of threads, which are sometimes bundled into cords. These threads and cords are called mycelium and make up the body of fungus. They are most easily seen as the fragile white threads that form under rotting leaves. Fungi have a major place in the natural order, they recycle dead plant matter into simpler compounds for reuse in the soil. They are responsible for large portion of plant decay that happens in nature, most of these processes are beneficial and harmless to us and our landscapes.



Ganoderma zonatum.

Source: hort.ifas.ufl.edu

When fungal problems arise, we often notice signs of disease similar to other landscape problems such as bacterial and viral pathogens, insect pests, and even physical factors such as overwatering. Fungal diseases can be spread in soil from transplants, by splashing water, or by airborne spores. Some symptoms of fungal diseases include pale patches on leaves, chlorosis (yellowing of leaves), specifically round spots or irregular yellow-green spots that darken with time, decayed spots or sections on leaves, or rust-colored spots. In the lawn, this can look like large brown patches or spots on blades of grass.

Many of our landscape plants, potted plants, citrus and palms in particular are subject to root rot fungal diseases which are usually fatal. These fungal pathogens often occur naturally in the soil. One example is Ganoderma Butt Rot of palms which is caused by the fungus *Ganoderma zonatum* (<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pp100>). This fungus degrades the lignin in the lower 4–5 feet of the trunk but does not cause a soft rot, so the trunk seems hard.

Prevention and Control

- Buy disease resistant cultivars and plant for diversity in your landscape.
- Water properly. Do not let the irrigation sprays hit your plants foliage, particularly roses. Don't over water. Water your lawn thoroughly with three

Plant Profile: Indian Pipe / Ghost Plant

Monotropa uniflora



Photo Source: Amanda Marek

Ever come across something odd in your yard? How about something that looks strangely like candy canes?

This is actually a very unique native plant called Indian pipe or ghost plant. It's oftentimes solid white or can have reddish pink tint such as this specimen. It blooms in the fall with a single bloom on each stem.

Unlike most plants, Indian pipe has no chlorophyll so it cannot make food from sunlight. Rather, it parasitizes fungi living on the forest floor. We will never cease to be amazed at the diversity of our state's flora and fauna!

For more information on this unique native plant, visit:

[https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/
plant-of-the-week/
monotropa_uniflora.shtml](https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/monotropa_uniflora.shtml)



Sooty Mold

Source: edis.ifas.ufl.edu

fourths of an inch of water twice per week during dry periods of the summer and no more than once per week during the winter. If you have had plenty of rain, turn off your sprinklers entirely. Water your lawns early in the morning, just before dawn. Watering in the late afternoon or evenings leaves the water to sit on the blades until it evaporates the

following morning. These wet conditions encourage fungal organisms to develop. When watering plants by hand, avoid wetting the leaves. Apply water on the ground where the roots can absorb it.

- Clean up all diseased leaves from the plant and the ground and dispose of them.
- When pruning, sterilize your pruning shears with rubbing alcohol or a 10% bleach solution between cuts and before going to another plant to minimize the spread of any diseases. Black sooty mold, a black coating on the leaves, is caused by piercing/sucking insects such as aphids, mealy bugs, scales and thrips. They secrete a sugary waste which promotes the growth of the black mold. Treat with horticultural oils, such as neem oil, or insecticidal soap 3-4 times at 7-10 day intervals.
- When planting, space your plants far enough apart to encourage good air flow and circulation. Fungal diseases thrive in hot, damp areas with poor air circulation. The better the air circulation, the faster the plants will dry after rain or watering. There are many commercial fungicides available to the public, many of them work best as preventatives rather than curatives. Follow the label instructions.

Common fungi that affect our lawns include Anthracnose, Brown Patch or Large Patch, Dollar Spot, Gray Leaf Spot, Helminthosporium Leaf Spot, Pythium Root Rot, Rhizoctonia Sheath blight, Rust and Take-All root rot. They can be treated with commercially available fungicides, but the best solution is a healthy lawn and good watering practices. For problem identification, bring a 6 inch x 6 inch piece of the lawn just outside the dead area, roots and all, to your County Extension Service or submit a sample to the Rapid Turfgrass Diagnostic Service <http://turf.ufl.edu/rapiddiag.shtml>



Large Patch on lawn

Source: edis.ifas.ufl.edu

Upcoming Events January Thru March

Bellevue Public Library Satellite Plant Clinic

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

January 3 and 17

February 7 and 21

March 6 and 20

Downtown Farmers Market

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

January 4

February 1

March 7

Dunnellon Public Library Satellite Plant Clinic

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

January 7

February 4

March 3

Master The Possibilities

On Top Of The World
8415 SW 80th Street, Ocala
10.00 a.m. -11:00 a.m.

Propagation: Jan 10

Fertilizers: Feb 14

Garden Pests: Mar 13

Healthy 55

One Health Center
1714 SW 17th St, Ocala
1—2:30 p.m.

Houseplants: Jan 23

Pruning In Winter

Amanda Marek, Florida-Friendly Landscaping Agent

With the cooling weather many of us are excited to get some landscaping work done. Winter is a great time to add fresh mulch, to do a thorough check of your irrigation system, and to start planning for all that you want to plant come spring. It's also a great time to prune many (not all) plants, but to do it properly here are a few tips.



Source: hort.uga.edu

Hardwood trees and woody, evergreen shrubs can be pruned just about any time of the year as long as they are not under severe stress such as drought. To prune large trees, it's best to hire a licensed and insured professional that has the necessary safety equipment. To find a licensed arborist in your area, visit Treesaregood.org. For trees you can safely reach, first remove any dead or diseased branches. Winter is a great time to clearly see parasitic mistletoe that has been hiding in amongst the branches. Since mistletoe sends out parasitic roots into the branches, be sure to cut at least six inches down from where the plant is anchored to remove the roots. In trees where the mistletoe cannot be safely reached, a licensed pest control operator can be hired to spot spray an



Avoid Crape Murder

Source: hort.ifas.ufl.edu

herbicide while the tree is dormant, usually December – early February. Mistletoe is very toxic to children and pets so be sure to pick up and dispose of any that falls out of the trees, or securely tie it up out of reach with ribbon for a lovely Christmas tradition. Once any dead or diseased branches are removed, prune out any minor branches that are crisscrossed, rubbing against another, or out of place being sure to avoid cutting flush to the trunk so the swollen collar is left to heal.

For woody shrubs, minimal pruning is typically recommended. Sudden severe pruning to shrubs and bushes should be avoided. If a shrub is blocking views or access, gradually prune it down to the desired height. Selecting the right plant for the right place so that its mature size does not become a problem in the future is the first principle of Florida-Friendly Landscaping and your UF/IFAS Marion County Extension FFL agent or Master Gardener volunteers will be happy to assist.

For deciduous trees that lose their leaves, such as crape myrtles, it's best to prune while the tree is dormant and has lost all of its leaves (usually in January or early February). Avoid pruning too early before the tree has gone into complete dormancy since doing so can stunt the tree and cause severe damage to any new growth during a hard freeze. Also avoid pruning too late in the spring

Wildlife Encounters

Living With Snakes



Southern Black Racer (adult)
Credit: Steve Johnson, University of Florida

Snakes provide numerous benefits to people and to the environment. They play an important role in nature by controlling animals that can become pests (e.g. rats, mice, slugs and insects).

Most snakes that you may encounter in your garden are non-venomous and are simply trying to live in an environment that is all too often hostile to snakes. Threats to snakes in residential areas include cats and dogs, lawnmowers, people who misunderstand and fear snakes, as well as automobiles.

Of the 50 species of snakes native to Florida, only six are venomous. Learn to identify snakes in your area so you know which are harmless and which are venomous.

If you spot a snake, the safest option is to do nothing and simply wait for it to move away. Most wild snakes are not aggressive and will flee when they see you unless they are cornered. If you find a snake in your garage, shut the door to your home but leave the external door open part way so the snake can exit at will. You

Continued on page 5

when the tree is trying to flush out. And lastly, do not commit crape murder! This is the nickname given to a common practice of topping crape myrtles which is usually unnecessary and quite damaging to the tree.

For any plants that are more tender and more cold sensitive, it is best to hold off any pruning until after the chance of hard freeze which is typically the end of March. Some plants such as our lovely azaleas and camellias bloom in the winter months and can be pruned after they're done blooming, but not past July 4th to avoid accidentally pruning out next year's buds. Keeping these plants unpruned through the winter also provides habitat for some beneficial insects in various life stages that find shelter from the cold amongst the curled leaves and leaf litter.

For more information about pruning, contact your UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service at 352-671-8400.

What Floridians Think About Water

Yilin Zhuang, Water/Energy Extension Agent

With bountiful freshwater sources, heavy rainfall, and oceans, Florida is unique in its seemingly endless water resources. However, water quality and quantity are a crucial issue in Florida, as the need to balance agricultural needs, business and development needs, the needs of the natural environment, and public use is becoming more challenging as the state's population continues to



Photo Source: southeastagnet

grow. University of Florida Center for Public Issues Education (PIE) conducted the fourth-annual public opinions survey on water issues.

Based on more than 500 responses, Florida residents acknowledged the importance of water. Water concern was only preceded by healthcare and closely followed by the economy and public education. More than half of Floridians identified water as an issue of extreme importance. While many residents prioritized water as important, fewer were willing to make sacrifices in their home and lifestyle to conserve water. Only 34% of the survey participants said they would volunteer for water cleanup events and even fewer would join a water conservation organization. The majority of residents usually keep the water on when doing the dishes, but more than 60% turn off the tap when it comes time to brush their teeth. About half of them have water-efficient toilets and showerheads, but only 15% use rain barrels to collect

can also gently spray the snake with a garden hose while standing far away. The snake will want to move to the nearest place to hide, so aim the spray to direct the snake away from you and towards some form of cover.

Here are a few common visitors to Central Florida gardens:



Southern Black Racer (juvenile)
Credit: Steve Johnson, University of Florida



Eastern Garter Snake
Credit: Kenneth Krysko, University of Florida



Yellow Rat Snake
Credit: Steve Johnson, University of Florida



Red Rat Snake aka Corn Snake
Credit: Terry Holt, UF/IFAS Extension

Excerpt from:
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw395>

water for irrigation. Residents can make the most improvements in their home landscapes, according to PIE Center survey results. Forty-three percent of Floridians do not use low-water consuming plants, compared to 31% who do and 23% who are unsure.

More than half of Floridians remained neutral when researchers asked if turfgrass lawns and landscape irrigation have a positive effect on the environment, which UF/IFAS senior vice president Jack Payne said signals an opportunity to educate and inform residents about how to conserve water when caring for their landscapes. "These results demonstrate that Floridians are thirsty for knowledge about how they can conserve this vital natural resource," he said. "This issue isn't going away any time soon, and our public wants to be informed and engaged in water conservation."

Residents can make the most improvements in their home landscapes, according to PIE Center survey results. Forty-three percent of Floridians do not use low-water consuming plants, compared to 31 percent who do and 23 percent who are unsure. Most will turn off their sprinklers when the weather is rainy or showers are forecasted. Fourteen percent of Floridians thought that turfgrass lawns needed too much water to maintain, though 56% neither agreed nor disagreed. Nearly two-thirds of residents said they appreciated when homes have well-maintained yards, and 54% believed that having a healthy turfgrass lawn is important for maintaining a property's economic value. According to the statewide survey, 72% of Floridians are responsible for maintaining a lawn. Of those residents, 52% have turfgrass and 46 percent owned irrigation systems. Roughly half of the high-water users reported monthly water bills between \$50 and \$100.




Marion County Lawn Watering Days and Times

- Lawn watering is limited to no more than twice per week.
- Lawn watering days and times are as follows unless your city or county has a different schedule or stricter hours in effect:
- Even addresses may water on Thursday and/or Sunday before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
- Odd addresses may water on Wednesday and/or Saturday before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
- Locations without a discernable address, such as rights-of-way and common areas inside a subdivision, may water on Tuesday and/or Friday before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.

Hand watering and micro-irrigation of plants (other than lawns) can be done on any day and any time.

Southwest Florida Water Management District 2018

EDIBLES TO PLANT IN JANUARY

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






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Gardening SOLUTIONS

EDIBLES TO PLANT IN MARCH

| | North | Central | South |
|--|--|---|---|
|  Survives Transplanting | Beets, Collards, Eggplant, Endive/Escarole, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Peppers, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes | Beets, Collards, Eggplant, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Peppers, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes | Peppers, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes |
|  Transplant With Care | Carrots, Celery, Mustard, Potatoes | Carrots, Mustard | Mustard |
|  Use Seeds | Beans (bush, pole, lima), Cantaloupe, Corn (sweet), Cucumbers, Okra, Onions (green, shallots), Peas (English, Southern), Pumpkin, Radish, Squash (summer, winter), Turnips, Watermelon | Beans (bush, pole, lima), Cantaloupes, Corn (sweet), Cucumbers, Okra, Onions (green, shallots), Peas (English, Southern), Pumpkin, Radish, Squash (summer, winter), Turnips, Watermelon | Beans (bush, pole, lima), Cantaloupes, Corn (sweet), Cucumbers, Onions (green, shallot), Peas (Southern), Radish, Squash (summer), Watermelon |



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Gardening SOLUTIONS