



April 2017

Tricks of the Trade

**Butterfly Gardening:
Don't Forget the Larval
Hosts**

**Timely Gardening Tips
for Marion County**

Upcoming Events

Published by UF/IFAS
Extension Marion County

**Timely Gardening Tips
for MARION COUNTY**

by Josephine Leyte-Vidal, UF/IFAS
Extension Marion County Master
Gardener

If you have gardened somewhere on this planet, you can garden in Florida. Gardening in Florida is not rocket science, but it is different. The plants, the soil, the heat, the water are all different but the basics are not. With a little education about Florida's extremes, you will be all set.

First, you must realize you now live on land, that many thousands of years ago was underwater. The soil is sandy in some areas and full of clay or limestone in others. And who knows where your yard-fill came from when

Tricks of the Trade

by Gloria Hebert, Master Gardener Intern

Our goal as Master Gardeners is to show you how UF/IFAS (Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences) can help you with your gardening questions, and how easily accessible the *correct* answers are to those questions.

How many of you have gone to the internet with a gardening question only to find six people say one thing, six other people say the opposite, and you're just as confused as before you looked up the information? We've all been there. I can remember how my grandmother did things "up north". If I do that here, I'll scorch my plants! And besides, with our Florida weather we have bugs and diseases the people up north can't even imagine.

I'll let you know up front, Master Gardeners do not have all the solutions in our heads. And some of us are only interns, which mean we still have a ways to go to become certified Master Gardeners. But what we do have is the knowledge to be able to find the answer easily. We do this by means of:

- **Plant Clinic**—This is where you call or bring in that elusive garden problem. We volunteer on the phones from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., Monday through Friday in the Plant Clinic at the Extension Office. There are also Satellite Plant Clinics once a month at the Belleview and Dunnellon Public Libraries, as well as at the Downtown Farmer's Market. You can also email us pictures of your plant or bug question if you don't have time to stop by, you can reach us at mastergardener@marioncountyfl.org



Plant Clinic

Photo by Terry Holt

- On each desk in the Plant Clinic is "**The Big Book of Answers**", which has been compiled from years of answering the same questions over and

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by Josephine Leyte-Vidal, UF/IFAS Extension Marion County Master Gardener

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your house was built.

First thing you should do is get a soil pH test. The Master Gardeners test soil pH on the second Thursday of each month. The cost is \$2 per sample. To submit a good sample, take a small scoop of soil from several places in your yard. Dig down about 4-6 inches to where the roots are. Mix these samples together and place about 1 cup of the soil in a small paper bag so it will be kept dry. Bring it in to the Plant Clinic before our testing date. The pH results will be emailed to you, along with information on the best pH ranges for different plants. Most plants grow best in the soil pH range of 5.5 to 6.5.



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over. Let's say you call in with "Something is eating my camellia!" We go right to our "Big Book of Answers" and look up 'Camellias'. There, we are told what bugs are attacking, what disease is consuming, what fertilizer to use, how much water it needs, even if the plant is supposed to be in the sun or shade.

If you have a real stumper of a question, we call out the big guns:

- **EDIS** (Electronic Data Information System), which is simply a huge library of UF/IFAS publications on the computer. You and I have access to research-based articles written by professors and graduate students from the University of Florida on problems relating to Florida plants.
- **IPM** (Integrated Pest Management) is another acronym for some very useful information: everything you ever wanted to know about managing pests and diseases. This department will tell you several ways of combating your problem—from the least toxic to the most toxic, the least toxic usually being *"if you can see 'em, you pick 'em off"*.
- **Extension Agents**—they know everythingwell, sort of. We are here to lighten their load by assisting with the easier questions. If things get tough and we are at a loss, they are here to chime in by further researching the issue or sharing their professional knowledge.

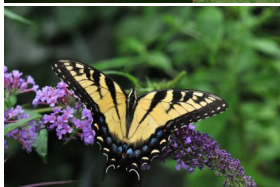
One last comment: we would like to invite you to explore our public Demonstration Gardens behind the Extension Office. We have several garden types on display: shade, butterfly, herb, vegetable, tropical fruits and more. We have the same problems as you do with your garden, and this area is where we work out the answers to those problems. As an added bonus, there are usually several Master Gardeners roaming around to help answer questions.



Butterfly Gardening: Don't Forget The Larval Hosts

by Jo Leyte-Vidal, Master Gardener

Butterfly gardens are beautiful in the yard. Most butterfly-attracting plants are perennials, such as: milkweed, firebush, plumbago, penta, dill, fennel, red salvia, and many more. Some plants are for nectar and some feed the caterpillars (larval host plants); it is necessary to have both types for a successful butterfly garden. We receive frequent calls in the Plant Clinic on what to do about the



Tiger Swallowtail fas.ufl.edu

butterflies will help you distinguish between butterfly larva and possible pests on your plants.

caterpillars found munching on a someone's beloved plant. Our usual advice is: "watch them". Caterpillars in their own right are fascinating in their endless diversity of colors and shapes, unique behaviors, and of course their close relationship with the plants that we all love and adore. Without the caterpillar stage, the beautiful butterflies we enjoy in Florida would soon be gone, never to reappear. So do not worry if the caterpillars strip the plant of its leaves; they will quickly grow back. Checking a publication on



Zebra Longwing ifas.ufl.edu

Larval Host Plants

Beggar's Tick
Blue Porterweed
Passionflower
Canna Lily
Cassia
Coontie
Dill
Dutchman's Pipe
Fennel
Live Oak
Maypop
Milkweed
Pawpaw
Plumbago
Stokes Aster
Waxed Myrtle
Winged Elm

Adult Nectar Sources

Azalea
Bougainvillea
Butterfly Bush
Coral Vine
Firebush
Golden Dewdrop
Hibiscus
Ixora
Lantana
Milkweed
Morning Glory
Penta
Plumbago
Salvia
Shrimp Plant
Society Garlic
Stokes Aster

UPCOMING LECTURES/EVENTS:

Educational seminars and events are presented by UF/IFAS Extension Agents and/or Master Gardeners. Unless otherwise indicated, to pre-register, please call 352-671-8400 or e-mail terry.holt@marioncountyfl.org.

April

Downtown Satellite Plant Clinic

April 1, 2017
10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
Downtown Farmers Market
3rd Ave and 3rd St, Ocala

Dunnellon Satellite Plant Clinic

April 4, 2017
10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
Dunnellon Public Library
2035 I Robinson Rd, Dunnellon

Bellevue Satellite Plant Clinic

April 7, 2017
10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
Bellevue Public Library
13145 SE Hwy 484, Bellevue

Master the Possibilities Series

What is Lichen?
April 14, 2017
10:00—11:30 a.m.
On Top of the World
8415 SW 80th St, Ocala

Freedom Library

Butterfly Gardening
April 14, 2017
12:00—1:00 p.m.
Freedom Public Library
5870 SW 95th St, Ocala

Dunnellon Library

Earth Day Activities
April 18, 2017
2:00—3:00 p.m.
Dunnellon Public Library
2035 I Robinson Rd, Dunnellon

UPCOMING LECTURES/EVENTS:

May

Dunnellon Satellite Plant Clinic

May 2, 2017
10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
Dunnellon Public Library
20351 Robinson Rd, Dunnellon

Belleview Satellite Plant Clinic

May 5, 2017
10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
Belleview Public Library
13145 SE Hwy 484, Belleview

Downtown Satellite Plant Clinic

May 6, 2017
10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
Downtown Farmers Market
3rd Ave and 3rd St, Ocala

Farmland Preservation Festival

May 6, 2017
9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.
Coon Hollo Farm
Off 441, North of McIntosh

Master The Possibilities Series:

Invasive Plants
May 12, 2017
10:00—11:30 a.m.
On Top Of The World
8415 SW 80th Street, Ocala

Dunnellon Library

Growing Orchids & Other Tropicals
May 16, 2017
2:00—3:00 p.m.
Dunnellon Public Library
20351 Robinson Rd, Dunnellon

April

Central Florida Edition

What to Plant

Annuals: New varieties of coleus do well in sun or shade and provide vivid colors and patterns for months. **See:** [Gardening with Annuals in Florida](#)

Bulbs: Planting early-, mid-, and late-blooming varieties of [daylily](#) will insure months of color from these low maintenance plants. **See:** [Bulbs for Florida](#)

Herbs: Add nasturtiums to your herb garden. The leaves and flowers add a peppery zest to salads. **See:** [Nasturtium, Garden - *Tropaeolum majus* L.](#)

Vegetables: Continue planting warm season crops such as bean, cantaloupe, and okra. Mulch well to prevent weeds, and provide water if the weather has been dry. **See:** [Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide](#)

What to Do

Pests: Monitor landscape plants weekly for aphids on tender new growth. **See:** [Insects Sheet 2 Landscape Integrated Pest Management](#)

Flowering Plants: Check for thrips if leaves and/or flowers of gardenias and roses are damaged. **See:** [Insects Sheet 1](#)

Divide perennials and bulbs: Divide clumps of bulbs, ornamental grasses, or herbaceous perennials to expand or rejuvenate garden beds or to pass-along to friends. **See:** [Propagation of Landscape Plants](#) [Perennial Gardening in Florida](#)

Lawn Problems: Many lawn problems, such as lack of water, mimic insect damage. Confirm the damage is being caused by insects before applying a pesticide. **See:** [Insect Pest Management on Turfgrass](#)

Shrubs: Choose from a wide variety of shrubs to add to the landscape now. **See:** [Florida-Friendly Landscaping Guide to Plant Selection and Landscape Design](#) [Planting Shrubs in the Florida Landscape](#)

Lawns: Apply fertilizer after new growth has started. Choose a fertilizer (not a "weed and feed") with little or no phosphorus unless a soil test indicates the need for it. A fertilizer with controlled-release nitrogen yields longer-lasting results.

See: [Your Florida Lawn](#) [Bahigrass for Florida Lawns](#)
[Bermudagrass for Florida Lawns](#) [Centipedegrass for Florida Lawns](#)
[St. Augustinegrass for Florida Lawns](#) [Zoysiagrass for Florida Lawns](#)

What to Do Every Month

- Adjust irrigation based on rainfall.
- Deadhead flowers to encourage new blooms.
- Monitor the garden for insects and disease.
- Plant trees, shrubs, and perennials and water until established.
- [Mow lawns](#) at recommended heights:
 - St. Augustine & Bahia: 3-4"
 - Centipede: 1.5-2.0"
 - Dwarf St. Augustine: 2.5"
 - [Zoysiagrass](#)

UF Resources For Gardeners

- UF/IFAS Publications (EDIS) <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>
- Florida-Friendly Landscaping <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/>
- Solutions For Your Life <http://solutionsforyourlife.com>
- *Gardening in a Minute* Radio Program <http://gardeninginaminute.com>
- Florida Master Gardener Program <http://gardeninginsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/>
- Living Green <http://livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Know The Facts About Bats

by Jo Leyte-Vidal, Master Gardener



Did you know that bats are protected wildlife? Florida Administrative Code rule 68A-4.001 General Prohibitions makes it illegal to kill or harm bats; bats roosting in man-made structures are protected under rule 68A-9.010.

Most of us have grown up with myths, superstitions and fears about bats. Sadly, many bats are listed as threatened or endangered species; habitat loss, pesticide use, and lack of human understanding of the species have been a significant contributors to their population

decline. The bat is a very unique mammal, and the only one that can fly. Bats are highly beneficial to their environment; they are pollinators, help with seed dispersal, and prey upon many insects that are considered agricultural and human pests.

There are 13 species of bats which inhabit Florida either permanently or seasonally. Eight of these species are found in Central Florida among which five of them live in social groups known as colonies. Due to habitat loss they are inhabiting man-made structures such as bridges, buildings, statues, stadiums, gazebos, and bat houses.

In order to get a better understanding of bats let's undo the fiction: Bats are not rodents, they do not normally fly when they are sick, they are not blind, they do not fly **only** at night, they do not want to get tangled in your hair, and there are no vampire bats in the continental United States although three species do exist in Latin America. 70% of bats are insect eaters, they can eat their weight in insects each night, bats make up 20% of mammal species, they leave this area when the temperature drops below 40 degrees and fly toward Orlando and then return, bats do not frequently contract rabies, they have night vision like cats, 30% of bats eat fruit and drop the seeds, and they can fly at 60 miles per hour and up to 10,000 feet high chasing insects. Pesticide can kill bats, the fruit bats also eats insects, they birth and nurse their young the same as humans, their lifespan is 25 – 40 years, and 350 species eat seeds and pollinate plants. Scientists estimate that bats save farmers in the U.S. over \$23 billion every year in crop loss and damage.

Installing a correctly made bat house in a good location will attract bats to your property without inviting them into your home. BAT BELFRYS INC. suggests the following guidelines for your Bat House: at least five hours of direct sun with front facing east or west and located within ¼ mile of fresh water and natural vegetation. Mount on a steel pole at least 12 feet above the ground Avoid mounting near bright night lights. Do not mount on trees or within 25 feet of tree branches due to danger of predators. Open bottom houses are best to keep birds, mice, squirrels and small animals out, and allows the Bat guano to drop to the ground. The guano may be used as fertilizer, although it should not be handled. Our bats are in desperate need of help if they are to continue being beneficial to you and me.

Please see <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw203>



RED BOTTLEBRUSH— APRIL SPOTLIGHT PLANT

It's common name perfectly describes this evergreen plant's bright red flower spikes. Hummingbirds love the flowers and the plant is very hardy. Offered as a shrub, bottlebrush can be trained as a tree to 15-foot or espaliered as a quick wall cover. It makes a nice screen or tall unclipped hedge. Pruning to develop several trunks and removing some lower branches can create a fine small specimen tree.

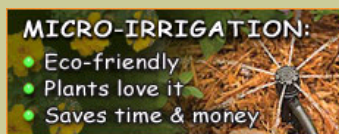
HEIGHT: 10 to 15 feet with equal spread. Moderate grower.

LIGHT: Needs full sun for best flowering.

MOISTURE: Very drought tolerant once established. Tolerates any soil except very poor, alkaline, or poorly drained.

PRUNING: Very little pruning required. Suckers from the trunk need to be removed periodically to maintain tree form.

Items below are available for purchase at the UF/IFAS Extension Marion County. We also have many other items available in our Shop Extension store. 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.



UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Foundation for the Gator Nation
An Equal Opportunity Institution

Edibles to plant in April

SURVIVES	Sweet Potatoes
TRANSPLANT	
USE SEEDS	Beans (bush, pole, lima), Peas (Southern)

Marion County Master Gardeners
Spring Plant Sale
Saturday, May 13, 2017
8:00 am—Noon

- Native Plants
- Herbs and Perennials
- Pollinator Plants
- Hummingbird Plants
- Butterfly Plants

- Fruit Trees
- Ornamental Trees
- Shade Trees
- Shrubs

- Rain Barrels
- Melaleuca Mulch
- Micro-irrigation supplies
- Garden publications
- Master Gardeners available for consultation
 - Mobile Plant Clinic on site
 - Soil Test Kits available

FREE ADMISSION
NO PETS PLEASE!

PAYMENT BY
CASH OR CHECK ONLY

UF/IFAS Extension Marion County