

A quarterly online magazine published for Master Gardeners in support of the educational mission of UF/IFAS Extension Service.

When Water Causes Problems

By Debi Ford, Master Gardener

Water is always a concern for gardeners, whether too much or too little. When water collects near the foundation of your home or other structures on your property, it can cause problems ranging from rotting wood to affecting foundation stability. Gutters are helpful. Even if you have gutters, however, short downspouts at ground level will not solve the problem. In fact, they may help water collect near the foundation if the ground does not slope away from the foundation. Here are some simple and inexpensive ways you can safely redirect the water runoff from your roof to your gutters.

Splash Blocks

Splash blocks, made out of plastic or concrete, are oblong shapes with raised sides. Placing them beneath a downspout helps diffuse the impact of the draining water while directing it away from the building.

Concrete ones are heavy and better at withstanding our heavy summer rains, but plastic ones should work for downspouts that are not subject to heavy output. They can pose a problem of being too short to be very effective.



Photo Credits: Creative Commons



Downspout Extensions

Got a short downspout or splash blocks are not long enough to get the job done? Fortunately, there are alternatives. Downspout extensions come in a variety of sizes, colors, and types. There are simple roll out types that will unfurl when water flows down the downspout. You can roll them back up after the rain or leave them unrolled. This type is inexpensive and easy to install around the bottom of the downspout.

Other extensions are made of rigid plastic and are installed around the bottom of the downspout. Some designs come with a pre-drilled hole you can use to install them in place of the original short end piece using the same screw on the downspout. These are available in a few different widths depending on the size of the downspout. You can also connect several to extend the distance from the foundation.

If you have a great deal of output from your downspouts, you may want to consider directing the water from the extensions to a rain garden. Rain gardens are depressions in the ground that are designed to accept the runoff and allow it to slowly and safely percolate into the ground. For more information on constructing a rain garden, there is the UF/IFAS site at <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/design/types-of-gardens/rain-gardens.html>



Left and right photo credits: Creative Commons. Center photo credit: Debi Ford

Rain Barrels

Rain Barrels are effective in keeping the roof runoff from reaching the ground in the first place. They give you the added benefit of storing water for use in watering non-edibles or rinsing off garden tools and pots. You can use one rain barrel, or connect several at the bottom so they fill equally. Find more information on rain barrels at <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/barrels.htm>.



Delightful Daylilies

By Debi Ford, Master Gardener

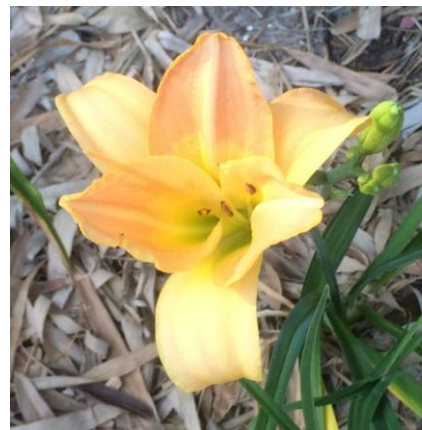
Whether as a focal plant or as a mass planting, daylilies offer a gardener not only beauty but also free plants!

Daylilies belong to the genus *Hemerocallis*: "Hemero" is Greek for "day" and "callis" for "beauty," i.e. beauty for a day, although there are varieties whose blooms last longer. While they are native to China, they do well in our zones 8 to 10. Because they have a deep root system, they are drought tolerant as well. Daylily foliage falls into three growth patterns:

- Dormant: After a frost, all leaves die back to ground level and emerge during the next growing season
- Semi-evergreen: Leaves may stay green, depending on growing area
- Evergreen: Leaves stay green all year long

Sizes vary, ranging from small to large stems (or scapes) of six to 37 inches or more. Blooms range in diameter from three to six or more inches.

The standard bloom shape resembles a trumpet. However, flower shapes can also be triangular or spidery. Petals can be strap-like or rounded, smooth-edged or ruffled, and solid or multicolored. Daylilies re-bloom, meaning there is more than one flowering cycle each year. Sometimes, they flower late in the day, remaining open during the night and part or all of the following day with an extended bloom time of 16 hours or more. They come in every color except blue. All have a light fragrance with some being more fragrant than others.



All photos: Debi Ford.

Daylilies grow in full sun to filtered shade. Avoid heavy shade, as this will produce thin, spindly growth. Soil pH should be between 6.2 – 6.8 with 6.5 being optimal. Daylilies like loose soil that's rich in organic matter. You can choose established plants in pots or select bare-root varieties. Choosing potted plants will establish your garden more quickly, but you may find a wider variety to choose from with bare-root varieties.

Plant your daylilies 18 to 24 inches apart. With this amount of space, you won't need to divide them for three to five years. If you're starting with potted plants, simply plant them at the same height they are in their containers.

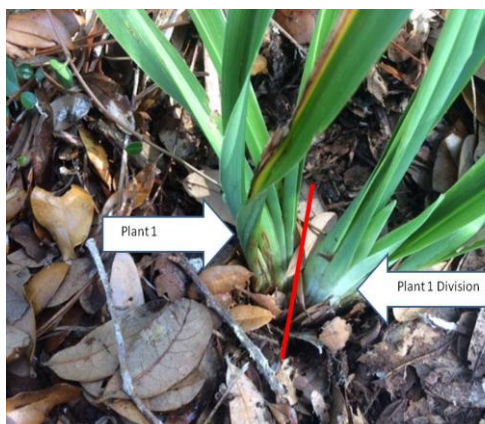
For bare-root plants, dig a hole larger than the root mass. Make a mound of soil in the center of the hole and set the center of the daylily on top of the mound, spreading roots out to the sides of the mound, making sure the crown is at ground level. Water well, mulch, and keep the soil moist until plants are well established.

During the summer heat, irrigate them frequently if regular rainfall does not occur. Fertilize daylilies in the fall, early spring, and mid-summer.

One common problem with daylilies is daylily rust, caused by the fungus *Puccinia hemerocallidis*. Symptoms of daylily rust include yellow to brown vertical streaks on the foliage and small yellow spots on the upper surface of the leaves. Good sanitation practices and selecting resistant varieties help prevent daylily rust.

Daylilies offer the gardener the bonus of free plants. They produce offshoots called fans. When you see a clump with more than the one plant you started with, use a garden fork to loosen the soil around the plant and lift the entire clump up from the hole. Rinse off the roots so you can see where the new plants are, and carefully separate the new fans from the parent plant. Replant the parent plant, and find new homes for the baby plants. Presto—free plants!

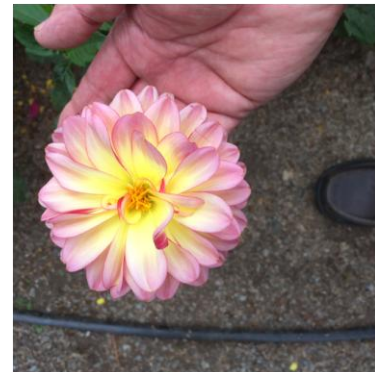
For more information on daylilies, visit <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep006>



Mendocino Botanical Garden

By Marian Cirello, Master Gardener

In September 2017, I visited the Mendocino Botanical Garden in Fort Bragg, CA. Because of my membership in the Florida Botanical Garden, I did not have to pay an entrance fee. There are two trails, one of which takes you along the coast with beautiful views of the ocean. The garden contains more than 300 varieties of rhododendrons and 150 types of dahlias. The many colors of the dahlias produced a beautiful vision. Below are some of my pictures.



2017 Statewide Master Gardener Conference

By Dianne L. Fecteau, Master Gardener

The 35th Florida Master Gardener Conference took place in October at the Renaissance World Golf Village Resort in St. Augustine. Workshops fell into one of four categories: horticulture, diagnostics, edibles, and Florida Friendly Landscaping™. General Sessions included topics on soil, GMOs, mushrooms, butterflies, pollinators, and happiness in your garden.

Butterflies & Pollinators: Master Gardeners Can Make a Difference was one of my favorite general sessions. Jaret Daniels, Associate Professor & Insect Conservationist at UF/IFAS, was the presenter. After describing several of the 189 species of butterflies one can find in Florida, Dr. Daniels spoke about bees and other insect pollinators. Florida is home to about 316 species of native bees of which 29 are endemic. 70% of these bees nest in the ground; 30% nest in hollow plant stems or holes in wood. Gardeners can provide insect houses that the latter can use.

While bees are important pollinators, he pointed out that non-bees accounted for 25 to 50% of the total number of flower visits. Non-bees are less effective pollinators than bees during each flower visit; however, non-bees visit each flower more frequently. As a result, they offer pollination results similar to those of bees. As Dr. Daniels said of non-bee insect's valuable service, "they provide potential insurance against bee population declines."



Photo Credits: Dianne L. Fecteau.

In addition to limited use of pesticides, he gave the following tips for enhancing our landscapes for pollinators:

- 1) Provide a mix of flower shapes and sizes. Some butterflies can hover; others need to land. A variety of shapes and sizes accommodates both types.
- 2) Provide a mix of flower colors. For example, while many butterflies are attracted to brightly colored flowers, the Zebra swallowtail prefers small white blooms.
- 3) Include both larval host plants and adult nectar sources. It's unusual that one flower provides both. However, swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) feeds the adult Monarch butterfly as well as offers a host for its caterpillars.
- 4) Provide flowers throughout the growing season. This assures pollinators a constant source of food.
- 5) Create horizontal and vertical diversity. For example, little pockets provide protection from storms and predators.
- 6) Group like plants together. Groupings enhance pollinator "efficiency". For example, a pollinator can more easily transfer pollen to the same species and not squander it on non-receptive flowers.
- 7) Include native plants. They often are the most attractive to our native pollinators.



Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*.
Photo Credit: Chris Evans, University of Illinois.



Monarch. Photo Credit: Patricia Howell,
Broward County Parks and Recreation



Send your Articles and Photos

The next Issue of *The Dirt* is April 2018. The Deadline for articles is March 31. Share your passion for gardening with your fellow Master Gardeners by writing an article for *The Dirt*. Include images where possible. However, if you include images they must fall under one of the following guidelines:

- your own
- UF/IFAS image
- open access image, as in wiki-commons, where all rights are open and the photographer is credited
- used with the express permission of the photographer

When you do send images, please do not embed them within the article. Include them separately. Please send all files as Word files. I cannot edit .pdf files.

Do you like to photograph plants or trees but don't like to write? Send me your photos with a description, even without an accompanying article, and I'll publish them with the description as well as a credit to you, the photographer.

Send your articles, images, and your photos to Dianne Fecteau at dianne@kendiacorp.com. My phone number is 727.366.1392.

All articles are subject to editing. In addition, Theresa Badurek, Urban Horticulture Extension Agent and Master Gardener Coordinator, reviews and approves all articles prior to publication.

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