



**September 2023**

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## Blue Flowers

Ellie Mascara, SRCMGV



Blue Sky Vine

Photo by Ellie Mascara, SRCMGV

The color blue is often associated with sadness and dejection. We refer to some music that evokes melancholy as "The Blues". We also use the term "feeling blue" if we are depressed. However, when I see a blue flower called Blue Sky Vine climbing up my pagoda, I can't help but feel happy. Whenever someone visits my garden they always remark about its powder blue coloring that contrasts so well with its yellow center.

This plant thrives in full sun and moderate amounts of water. It needs the support of a fence or other structure to reach its full potential. If you can meet these criteria, you will be rewarded throughout the spring and summer months with an awesome display of Blue Sky Vine flowers.



## Raising Butterflies

Ellie Mascara, SRCMGV

I pushed the screened door open with one hand as I held the monarch butterfly in the other. Its tiny legs were moving furtively as if it was trying to get away, and yet, when I opened my hand to release it, it did not fly away. It remained in my hand as if it was hesitant about the freedom that was being offered to it. I felt like a mother who was about to cut her apron strings. Finally, the monarch fluttered its wings and gradually ascended to the top of the old live oak tree. This was the end of a process that had begun several months ago.

Raising butterflies is not difficult, but it does take some forethought and planning. In November, after the monarchs have made their annual trek over the Gulf of Mexico and have settled into their winter habitat in the Mexican forests, I take all twenty-five of my potted milkweed plants and place them in my greenhouse for the winter. While I do have a few potted incarnates, the majority of these plants are common tropical milkweed. I cut each plant back to about eight inches and reduce my watering during this dormant period. I usually have a few plants that do not overwinter well. So, I take some of my cuttings and root them in water. I also propagate some milkweed from seeds. In this way, I'm assured of having enough milkweed when the season begins again.

In the spring, I give them their first fertilizer feeding and begin watering them on a regular basis. Within a few weeks, their bare stems are pushing out new growth every day. In April, most of them are ready to be placed outside again. Before long, they will reach maturity and be ready for the monarchs' northward migration.

Of course monarchs need more than milkweed to survive. They also need a source of energy, and they get that from the nectar that is found in both annuals and perennials blooms. For that reason, I spend some time nurturing my perennials and planting some annuals. One annual that I always plant is Red Penta. Monarchs love this flower.

As soon as I see monarchs flying around my yard, I begin to check my plants every day. The female will lay her eggs on the underside of the milkweed leaf. As soon as I see eggs or in some cases, tiny caterpillars, I place the plant in my screened porch where they will be safe from birds, wasps and adverse weather conditions.

When the eggs hatch, the caterpillars that emerge begin to eat ravenously. Each day, I find myself swapping-out defoliated plants with fresh ones. When the caterpillars are about two inches long, I place the potted plant in a cage. They continue to eat for the next few days, and then suddenly, they stop eating and climb to the top of the cage, where they will spin their chrysalis. It is during this time that the miracle of metamorphosis takes place. Over a period of about ten days, the caterpillar will develop into a beautiful monarch butterfly. It will emerge from its chrysalis, ready to seek a mate and begin its lifecycle over again.

Now it's time for me to sterilize the cages and get ready for another visit from these beautiful pollinators.



Figure 1. Monarchs may migrate to Florida from the northeastern U.S. and Canada, then stay here and breed year-round.  
Credit: Patricia Howell, Broward County Parks and Recreation

[WEC266/UW311: Native Habitats for Monarch Butterflies in South Florida \(ufl.edu\)](https://www.ufl.edu/~wec266/uw311/)

## September Garden Reminders

Lois Scott, SRCMGV

### Flowers:

- Cut back and remove old flower stalks from annuals and re-fertilize to obtain one more bloom before cool weather.
- Prepare beds for planting cool season annuals next month.
- Divide perennials: Shasta daisy, canna, amaryllis, daylily, coneflower and ornamental grasses.
- Cut strong stems of roses to encourage new growth for final flush of the year.
- Find a local source or order wildflower seeds for November planting. Be certain to choose seed that is specifically for the south.

### Trees and Shrubs:

- Last month to fertilize woody ornamental shrubs
- No pruning unless it's absolutely necessary. This is the worst time of the year to do major pruning of shrubs.
- Plant woody ornamentals including trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers during fall and early winter.
- Select crepe myrtles while in bloom.
- Remove and destroy twigs infested with back twig borer.
- Rake and collect pine needles to use as mulch. Apply 2-3 inches thick.
- Mature palms should receive palm fertilizer. Apply one pound per 100sq.ft. of canopy or landscape area.

### Vegetables:

- Prepare the soil now, allow about 3 weeks between incorporating amendments and planting.
- Last planting of bean, cucumbers and summer squash.
- Clean out the spring/summer vegetable garden.

### Lawns:

- Check the lawn weekly for pests
- Last month to fertilize bahiagrass, bermudagrass, St. Augustinegrass and zoysiagrass





## Sod Solutions

When you know that your lawn needs an application of fertilizer, herbicide, insecticide or fungicide, the question becomes how much to buy and put down. For these products, success stems from applying the right amount, not too much or too little.

The label on those products always tells the consumer how many square feet of lawn can be treated, but how do you figure that out? You could always do it the old-fashioned way with measuring tape and a calculator, estimating the angles and the areas of those curvy, irregular flower beds.

This method takes a bit of time and you will still wonder about the accuracy of your final numbers. Here's an easier, and more accurate way to do it! You and our clientèle will appreciate this online tool.

[The Sod Solutions Area Calculator | Sod University | Sod Solutions](#)

**Sod Solutions, Inc. <<http://areacalculator.sodsolutions.com/>>**

This online tool is easy to use and very accurate. Enter your address and GPS locates the aerial view of your property. Create an overlay by plotting points and the square footage is automatically calculated. The instructions under 'How to Use the Calculator' are very clear and make this tool so easy and convenient to use.

[How Do I Know How Much Sod I Need for My Yard? | Sod Solutions](#)

**Sod Solutions**  
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**SQUARE FOOTAGE CALCULATOR**

Your Address

HOW TO USE	CLEAR MAP
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## Hydration in Hot Working Environments

Jeanine Beatty and Gail P. A. Kauwell  
University of Florida IFAS Extension

Summertime isn't the only time you should be concerned about drinking enough water to stay hydrated. Workers in construction, landscaping, laundry, factory, farm, or restaurant settings, among others, often are faced with hot working environments year-round. These conditions can increase the risk for developing heat-related illnesses, so staying well hydrated is very important. The information in this publication can help identify if you are at risk for heat-related illnesses and ways you can take action. Did you know that water makes up more than half of your body weight? Every cell in your body needs water to function correctly. That's why it is important to stay hydrated. Your body loses water on a daily basis when you urinate, breathe, and sweat. These losses must be replaced in order to stay hydrated.

### Why Do We Sweat?

Your body has different ways of making sure it doesn't overheat. One of the most obvious ways is by sweating. Sweat evaporates on your skin and helps to cool it down. Working in a hot environment can cause you to lose up to 2 liters of water per hour through sweat. That's almost 4 pounds of water weight! It's extremely important to stay hydrated as you work by replacing the water you have lost. If you lose too much water, you can't sweat as much and your body overheats. This can lead to dangerous heat-related illnesses.

### Heat-Related Illnesses:

If your body is unable to cool off by sweating, you can develop a heat-related illness. Heat-related illnesses are very serious and can even lead to death. Heat-related illnesses include dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. The quicker you can recognize and treat these conditions, the better. Descriptions of each of these heat-related conditions and tips for treating them are presented below.

**Dehydration** occurs when you lose too much water from your body because of sweating too much. It is corrected easily by drinking water and electrolyte solutions. Being well hydrated helps your body work better and prevents heat exhaustion. Signs of dehydration are thirst and dry mouth.

**What to do:** Drink water or a sports drink. At least 1 pint (2 cups) for every hour you work in a hot environment is recommended.

**Heat exhaustion** occurs when dehydration has not been corrected, and your body becomes overheated. Signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion include heavy sweating, dizziness, nausea or vomiting, headache, or pale skin.

**What to do:** Move to a cooler place or seek shade. Drink small amounts of cool water or a sports drink. Remove or loosen outer or heavy clothing. Seek medical attention if conditions do not improve.

**Heat stroke** is the most severe type of heat-related illness. It occurs when you become too hot too quickly, and your body completely fails to cool down. Warning signs of heat stroke include red, hot, or dry skin (no sweating); rapid, weak pulse; shallow breathing; confusion; unconsciousness; and a very high temperature (above 103°F). When the Heat Index is as high as it has been the past month, it is even more important to **Stay Hydrated!!!**

## Where can I find more information?

The UF/IFAS Extension Solutions for Your Life website and Gardening Solutions website offer online material, including pre-recorded webinars and videos, that can be accessed at your convenience.

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn-and-garden/>

<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/>

In addition, we have our Master Gardener webinar page and our Gardening in the Panhandle web archives full of educational content.

<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/volunteers/education/webinars.html>

<http://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/hort/>

For a listing of local offices visit

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/find-your-local-office/>

Follow us on Facebook for updates

<https://www.facebook.com/SRCExtension/> Santa Rosa County Extension FB page:

<https://www.facebook.com/GardeningInThePanhandle/>

The Santa Rosa County residential horticulture agent, Josh Criss can be reached at 850-623-3868. [joshua.criss@ufl.edu](mailto:joshua.criss@ufl.edu)



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