

May Gardening Guide

By: Patricia Porchey

Is your yard thirsty? The period from November 2005 to March 2007 ranks as the 3rd driest period in recorded history. There is little relief expected in May.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Southwest Florida Water Management District and other agencies are working together to increase public awareness about our declining water levels. Because up to 50% of public water goes to watering the landscape, a modified Phase II Water Shortage Order is in effect. The permitted hours on the weekly watering day have been shortened by 4 hours from the normal year-round water conservation measure. The current restrictions are:

- Watering is prohibited between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.
- You may water only one time on your watering day.
- Addresses ending in **EVEN** numbers or the letters **A-M** may only water on **TUESDAYS**.
- Addresses ending in **ODD** numbers or the letters **N-Z** may only water on **THURSDAYS**.

The University of Florida's website, The Solutions for Your Life, has compiled useful lawn and landscape information on coping with the drought.

<http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/>

A good starting place for your home water conservation program is to let your plants tell you when they need water – they wilt when they need water. Water your lawn, shrubs and trees when using pop-up heads only once a week. If the area is shady or the trees are mature, you may water less often. Annuals, perennials and vegetables usually require more frequent watering so install micro-irrigation or hand water.

Landscape problems to monitor:

- As temperatures approach 90 degrees, monitor for chinch bugs in St. Augustine grass; however, spot treat the affected area only.
- Plant larraflower seeds if mole crickets are a problem. Free seeds are available at our office or the Florida House.
- Lacebugs are often found on azalea and avocado. Treat with oil and soap.
- If you spot caterpillars on plants, properly ID them before touching (some are stinging types) or killing (some turn into butterflies).
- Bring specimens to our office for correct ID (they may be beneficial insects).

Planting guide:

- **Vegetables & Herbs:** Anise, beans, black-eyed peas, borage, catnip, chervil, cilantro/coriander, comfrey, corn, cumin, dasheen, eggplant, marjoram, mint, okra, oregano, peas, summer savory, sweet potatoes, tarragon and watermelon.
- **Annuals:** Ageratum, Begonia, Celosia, Cleome, Coleus, Cosmos, Crossandra, dusty miller, four o'clock, Gazania, marigold, morning glory, Nicotiana, periwinkle, Portulaca, Salvia, sunflower, Torenia, Verbena and Zinnia.

- **Perennials:** Blue daze, Caladium, Coreopsis, Dahlberg daisy, daylily, Gaillardia, Gaura, Gerbera daisy, Kalanchoe, Mexican heather, Pentas, Rudbeckia, Salvias, shell ginger, shrimp plants, Tithonia and Verbena.
- **Fruits in Season:** Banana, blackberry, blueberry, Carambola, citrus, (calamondin, grapefruit, key lime, lemon, and lime.), guava, kumquat, loquat, macadamia, papaya, pineapple, Surinam cherry, and tamarind.
- **Blooming Plants:** Amaryllis, birds of paradise, bottlebrush, Bougainvillea, crape jasmine, daylily, devil's backbone, Gardenia, dwarf Indian hawthorn, Jacaranda Jerusalem thorn, Magnolia, Mexican flame vine, natal plum, pipevine, silk oak society garlic, Simpson's stopper, star jasmine, Texas sage, and Yucca.

Upcoming educational classes:

You may now register for classes on-line at our website:

<http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu/EdSched.htm> or call 861-5000.

- "Fighting Fire Ants" at Twin Lakes Park, May 9 at 10:00 a.m.
- "Beneficial Insects: Good Guys in the Garden" at Twin Lakes Park, May 16 at 2:00 p.m.
- "Pests in and Around the Florida Home" at Twin Lakes Park, May 23 at 2:00 p.m.
- "Master Gardener Program – What Is It?" at Twin Lakes Park, May 23 at 4:00 p.m.
- "Container Gardening" Twin Lakes Park, May 30 at 10:00 a.m.
- "Spiders: Myth vs. Reality" at Twin Lakes Park, May 30 at 2:00 p.m.
- "Chinch Bugs & White Grubs" at Lakes Park, June 6 at 2:00 p.m.

Satellite Services

In addition to our four south county library locations, we have two new locations at North Sarasota Library and the Farmers' Market. Master Gardeners are at the North Sarasota Library, Monday, 10:00 a.m.-noon and the Farmers' Market, 3rd Saturday of each month, 7:00 a.m.-noon.

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