

November 2008 Gardening Guide

By: Patricia Porchey

The hum of our air conditioners seems especially prolonged this year as our cool autumn weather has been slow to arrive. Our citrus fruits are still green on the tree as a result of the continued warm nighttime temperatures. Navel oranges and grapefruit are usually ready to harvest this month. If we wait until the fruit is fully orange or yellow, the fruit may actually be overripe and the pulp, dry. Mother Nature usually helps us know the fruit is ripe by dropping some on the ground. To confirm it's ready to eat, pick one and cut it in half. Just the smell can trigger the appetite.

If you don't have a large yard, you can still enjoy homegrown fruit by growing it and other edibles in containers. The restricted root space will slow down the upper growth of trees, but still allow you to have fruit to harvest. All of the vegetables and herbs listed below can successfully be grown in containers. Using containers also helps you to avoid some of the problems with soil borne nematodes and disease. Location is still key to growing healthy plants so place your containers in a sunny well-ventilated area.

To learn more about growing vegetables and herbs, attend the open house on November 1 at Orange Blossom Community Garden located in the Orange Avenue Park at 17th and Orange Avenue. Parking is available on the north side of the park on Carver Street. Gardeners will be eager to share their knowledge and experiences with you throughout the day from 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Dr. Robert Kluson, Agricultural & Natural Resources Agent, will be talking about "Organic Vegetable Gardening" at 2:00 p.m.

Gardening activities

- Now that the temperatures are lower than 85 degrees, it's OK to apply an herbicide to turf weeds. Alternatives are to weed by hand or just keep them mowed so they don't go to seed.
- It's time for the final pruning for most ornamentals before the onset of colder weather. The exception is those spring-blooming plants such as azalea and gardenia which have already set their buds for next year.
- Monitor for pests causing serious damage to ornamentals. Notching on the margins of leaves is probably due to the influx of the Sri Lanka weevil. Distorted new growth on Hibiscus is due to a resurgence of the pink Hibiscus mealybug. Call our office for more information on addressing these serious pests.
- We are in the driest months of the year and this is the third year our total rainfall is 20 inches below normal. Replenish mulches 2-4 inches to aid in soil moisture retention and weed control.

Blooming & Planting Guide

- Vegetables & herbs: Basil, beets, Borage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrot, cauliflower, celery, chervil, collards, coriander, dill, fennel, garlic, leek, mustard, onions, parsley, peas, rutabaga, sage, spinach, strawberries, Swiss chard, thyme, tomato, and turnips.

- **Annuals:** Ageratum, Alyssum, Begonia, Calendula, Celosia, Coleus, cosmos, dusty miller, foxglove, geranium, Impatiens, Lobelia, marigold, Melampodium, nasturtium, pansy, Pentas, petunia, Salvia, snapdragon, and statice.
- **Perennials:** African iris, aster, blue daze, bush daisy, Chrysanthemum, cigar plant, Coreopsis, Dianthus, Gaillardia, Gerbera daisy, Liatris, Mexican petunia, Salvia, Scabiosa, Shasta daisy, society garlic, and Verbena.
- **Fruits in Season:** Atemoya, avocado, banana, carambola, citrus (calamondin, grapefruit, key lime, lemon, lime, orange, tangelo and tangerine), kumquat, papaya, pecan, persimmon, pomegranate, sea grape, and sugar apple.
- **Blooming plants:** Allamanda, bottlebrush, Bougainvillea, Cassia, Cordia, firecracker plant, firespike, goldenrod, Liatris, lion's ear, oleander, Philippine violet, red and yellow shrimp plants, Salvia, thryallis, Turk's cap, Thunbergia, and yellow elder.

Upcoming classes

You may now register for all classes on-line at

<http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu/EdSched.htm> or call 861-9900.

- "Insect Pests of Woody Plants," Twin Lakes Park, November 5 at 1:00 p.m.
- "Out Native Air Plants (Epiphytes)," Shamrock Park, November 6 at 2:00 p.m.
- "Color in the Winter Landscape," Twin Lakes Park, November 12 at 1:00 p.m.
- "Creating Your Florida Yard," Gulf Gate Library, November 14 at 2:00 p.m.
- "Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles," Fruitville Library at 2:00 p.m.
- "Do You Know What Spider That Is?" Shamrock Park, November 20 at 2:00 p.m.
- "Organic Foods: A Consumer's Guide," Twin Lakes Park, December 3 at 10:00 a.m.
- "Palms in the Landscape," Twin Lakes Park, December 3 at 1:00 p.m.
- "Florida Buggy Critters: The Bad, Good & Harmless," Twin Lakes Park, December 3 at 4:00 p.m.

For information

If you have questions concerning your landscape, please call (941-861-9807) or visit the **Master Gardener Help Desk** at our office at Twin Lakes Park on Clark Road east of I-75. The **Help Desk** is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.-Noon and 1:00-4:00 p.m. We have weekly satellite help desks at the four south county libraries and every third Saturday of the month at the **Downtown Farmer's Market**.

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