

October Gardening Guide

By: Patricia Porchey

Frequent rains continue even though this month usually signals the start of the dry season. The plentiful rains produced lush green growth on our landscape plants, however, stress from the dry spring is still evident on many of our plants. The appearance of ball moss on open-branched trees that would normally be full of foliage is one example. These wind-blown spores look for a landing spot to reproduce and branches that were slow to leaf out are ideal. But not to worry, ball moss (as well as Spanish moss) does not kill trees!

Summer rains have leached the nutrients out of the soil so fertilizer is now needed by all plants. Mature fruit trees, those five years and older, are ready for their third feeding of the year with 8-8-8 plus other nutrients such as magnesium, manganese, copper and boron. Young trees need to be fertilized more frequently. Lawns need a fertilizer complete with nitrogen, little or no phosphorus, potassium and a host of minor nutrients. The nitrogen and potassium should be in a 30-50% slow-release form with the percentage of potassium equal to or greater than the nitrogen. The recommended analysis for palms is 8-2-12 with 4 % Magnesium plus other micronutrients. Shrubs and young trees will benefit from a fall feeding as well. Vegetable gardens are in full production now and require monthly feedings if using a water-soluble, quick-release fertilizer; a slow-release granular applied now, will last several months. More fertilizer information may be obtained from our office or the University of Florida website.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>

Gardening activities:

- Prune shrubs, but avoid repeated drastic shearing as it shortens the life of a hedge and will lead to reduced density of foliage over time. If a plant is too large, consider replacing it with a plant whose mature size is at the desired height. This will result in less maintenance, optimum plant growth, and a longer life.
- Do not prune spring-blooming plants until after they bloom next year.
- Prune about one foot off roses and remove dead or weakened canes.
- Check your irrigation system and repair or replace broken heads. Check spray patterns and calibrate each zone. The goal is to apply $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of water once per week when it has not rained.
- Plant new shrubs and trees so roots will be established before the flush of new growth emerges in the spring.
- Herbicides to control weeds can now be applied to lawns when the daytime temperatures stay below 85 degrees.

Upcoming educational classes:

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

<http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu/EdSched.htm> or call the numbers listed below.

- “Snakes” at Shamrock Park, October 5 at 2:00 pm. Call 861-9900.

- “Stinging Insects” at Florida House, October 19 at 2:00 pm. Call 316-1200.
- “Africanized Bees” at Florida House, October 24 at 2:00 pm. Call 316-1200.
- “Palms in the Landscape” at Shamrock Park, November 2 at 2:00 pm. Call 861-9900.

Planting guide

Vegetables & Herbs: Basil, beans, beets, Borage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, celery, chervil, collards, coriander, cucumber, cumin, garlic, leek, lettuce, mustard, onions, parsley, peas, radish, rutabaga, spinach, strawberries, thyme, tomato, and turnips.

Annuals: Ageratum, Alyssum, Begonia, calendula, Celosia, Coleus, dusty miller, geranium, Impatiens, Lobelia, marigold, Melampodium, nasturtium, pansy, petunia, Salvia, snapdragon, and Zinnia.

Perennials: Agapanthus, beach buttercup, blue daze, calla lily, Chrysanthemum, cigar plant, Coreopsis, Crinum lily, Dianthus, elephant ears, Gaillardia, Gerbera daisy, gloriosa lily, iris, Liatris, Pentas, Salvia, Shasta daisy, society garlic, and Verbena.

Fruits in season: Atemoya, avocado, banana, carambola, citrus (calamondin, lemon, and lime), fig, guava, hog plum, kumquat, muscadine grape, papaya, pecan, persimmon, pomegranate, sea grape, sugar apple, and tamarind.

Blooming plants: Allamanda, bird-of-paradise, bottlebrush, Bougainvillea, Cassia, Cordia, dwarf Poinciana, false dragonhead, firecracker plant, firespike, goldenrain tree, Mexican heather, oleander, Philippine violet, red and yellow shrimp plants, rouge plant, Plumbago, rose, Salvia, thryallis, Turk’s cap, Thunbergia, and Tibouchina.

If you have questions concerning your landscape, please call or visit our office at Twin Lakes Park. The **Master Gardener Help Desk** is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 am-Noon and 1-4:00 pm (941-861-9807). We have satellite service at the **Downtown Farmer’s Market** every second Saturday of the month to answer your questions.

(Patricia Porchey is a Horticulture Courtesy Agent with University of Florida/IFAS, Sarasota County Extension)