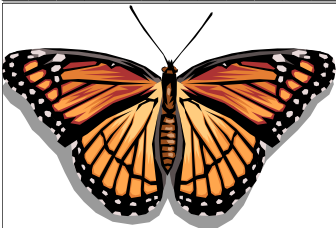




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## Upcoming Programs For Spring

**Tuesday, March 15 from 10AM to noon — Herbs, Butterflies and Fertilizers-** Duval County Extension Office, 1010 North McDuff Ave. Call 387-8850 to register. An assortment of herbs will be available for purchase. Topics include: Herbs to grow, create a butterfly garden, & select the right fertilizer.

**Thursday, April 14 from 10AM to 1PM — Butterflies & Wildlife-** Duval County Extension Office, 1010 North McDuff Ave. Create a yard you will love and enjoy. There is a \$5.00 fee, call 387-8850 to register.

**Friday, April 29 from 10AM to 1PM -Journal of a Spring Garden** Duval County Extension Office, 1010 N. McDuff Ave. Topics include Spring vege-

tables, plant propagation, & care. Call 387-8850 to register. \$5 fee.

**Friday, May 6 from 10AM to 1PM- Spring Gardening**

Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretta Rd. Learn how to compost, recycle, native plants for N.E. FL, identify and control invasives. There is a \$5 charge to attend plus a \$5 optional make-your-own worm bin. Pre-register @ 387-8850 by May 3rd.

**Thursday, June 2 from 10AM to 1PM— Landscape Design.** Come to a do-it yourself workshop on Landscape and Irrigation Design using the Florida Friendly ideas. Pre-register by calling 387-8850. Cost is \$5.00.

**Orchid Extravaganza—Saturday, April 9** from 9AM to 3PM @ the Duval County Extension Office on 1010 N. McDuff Ave. Join us to learn about Orchid Culture, Potting and Mounding, Water Quality & Fertilizer Needs, Essential Orchid Books, Pests and Control Options, Windowsill and Patio Culture, Garage Culture Under Lights, & Native Orchids of NE FL. Registration fee is \$15 which includes lunch. Payment due by April 7 or pay \$18 at the door. Bring orchids for repotting and buy a new one to take home. Call 387-8850 for more info.



### Master Gardener Spring Plant Clinics

Look for Master Gardeners at the following plant clinic sites at these retail garden centers. Bring in plant problems, soil samples, and pick up the latest info from the University of Florida. Clinics run from 9AM to noon.

#### Saturday March 19

- Lowe's @ 4040 Oldfield Crossing Dr
- Hall's Nursery @ 5645 Blanding Blvd.
- Hall's Nursery @ 11524 San Jose Blvd.
- Plant Ranch @ 14108 Beach Blvd.
- Second Hand Rose @ 14108 Beach Blvd.
- Let It Grow Nursery @ 5253 Hood Road



#### Saturday, April 2

- Proctor Ace @ 525 N. 3rd St., Jax Beach
- Turner Ace Hardware @ 13164 Atlantic Blvd
- Turner Ace @ 784 Marsh Landing Pkwy
- Turner Ace Hardware @ 5827 Arlington Road
- Hagan Ace Hardware @ 12501 San Jose Blvd
- Proctor Ace @ 5723 University Blvd.

## Problem—Thrips by Terry DelValle, Horticulturist

Thrips often go unseen but the damage is noticeable and populations peak in the spring. They're very small, ranging from 1/16 to 1/8 inch in length. They have a piercing sucking mouthpart and depending on the type, feed on leaves, young flower or leaf buds, or young fruit. Leaves develop a speckled, silvery appearance. Other signs of infestations are that flowers do not open fully or are distorted/discolored. They are sometimes a nuisance because they appear to pinch if on human skin, creating a skin irritation.

To check for thrips, place a piece of white paper be-

neath the infected plant part and tap lightly.

Use a 10X lens to look for the small insects. Examples of products to control thrips

include insecticidal soaps or permethrins. Spray to the point of runoff and treat the leaf undersides. For more information on thrips, go to <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG327>.



## Question of the Month: How to Control Weeds in Lawns? By DelValle

**How do I control this weed in my St. Augustinegrass?** To homeowners a beautiful lawn is one without a single weed and only one type of grass. Most homeowners are not tolerant of an occasional intruder. To accomplish this, be in tune with your lawn because if the grass is not strong, weeds can take over sections of the yard.

Usually, there is a reason that weeds establish themselves in lawns. Overfertilizing and overwatering are two common practices. Lawn areas killed by chinch bugs or cold damage can be quickly invaded by unwanted weeds. In truth, it's not easy to maintain a lawn in Florida. We have the perfect environment for insects, diseases, and many weeds.

A perfect lawn has a price tag. Herbicides may be required to get a handle on weed control and now is the time to treat. Before treating, first identify the weed. It should be categorized into one of three types: a grass, broadleaf, or sedge. A broadleaf weed is one that has net-like veins and usually showy flowers. Examples include dollarweed, chickweed, clovers, Florida pusley (photo on right), betony, and many others.



Grasses have hollow, rounded stems with joints. Veins run parallel to one another. Sedges look like grasses but stems are triangular-shaped and solid. Examples include kyllinga, yellow and purple nutsedge. Sedges like grass that stays wet because of poor drainage or compensation



The other question to ask: Is this weed persistent throughout the year or is it an annual (present during warm or cool season but not both—comes back from seed). Many annuals are treated with a pre-emergent herbicide. Most pre-emergent products for warm season weeds, like Atrazine, were applied in mid February. If you have not done this, it is not too late to treat.

For St. Augustinegrass, homeowners can consider the following options based on the weed type. Keep in mind Pest Control Operators have a wider range of materials to combat these problems. Before purchasing, read all the fine print to make

sure your grass is on the label and follow directions carefully. If you have Floratam, a variety of St. Augustinegrass, check the label. Sometimes, the label states that some of the herbicides for broadleaf weeds may damage this specific variety.

This list is not complete but is just intended to provide options for homeowner weed control on St. Augustinegrass.

**BROADLEAF:** Atrazine or look for combinations of 2,4-D, MCPP, and Dicamba. Examples of combo products include Ortho Weed B-Gon Weed Killer Ready to Use and Spectracide Weed Stop, Bayer Advanced Lawn Southern Weed Killer for Lawns (Ready to Use). Use low rates on St. Augustinegrass and a repeat application may be necessary 10 to 14 days after initial treatment for adequate control (see label).

**GRASSES:** Atrazine, Pendimethalin, Hi-Yield Benefin Granular & Agralawn Crabgrass Control.

**SEDGES:** Basagran (yellow and annual nutsedge, some kyllinga), Image (purple nutsedge, kyllinga, and others).

For more information on weeds and control options, go to <http://turf.ufl.edu/> Click on residential for options.

# Things to Plant in March and April by Terry DeValle

Warm weather is just around the corner. However, we may still have a freeze as late as early April, so be prepared to protect tender plants.

In March, annuals to plant include ageratum, alyssum, amaranthus, asters, baby's breath, balsam, begonia (nonstop, tuberous, wax), browalia, calendula, celosia, calliopsis, cosmos, dusty miller, exacum, gaillardia, gazania, geranium, hollyhock, impatiens, lobelia, marguerite daisy, marigold, nicotiana, ornamental pepper, pentas, phlox, rudbeckia, saliva, strawflower, sweet William, thunbergia, torenia, verbena, vinca (periwinkle), and zinnia. In April, add to the list coleus, portulaca, and sweet William, and remove from the list ageratum, alyssum, amaranthus, baby's breath, bal-

sam, begonia, browalia, calendula, cosmos, and strawflower.

Bulbs to plant in March include achimenes, allium, alstroemeria, Amazon lily, Aztec lily, begonia, blood lily, calladium, canna, crinum, dahlia, gladiolus, gloriosa lily, gloxinia, kaffir lily, tiger lily, tritonia, tuberosa, voodoo lily, watsonia, and zephyr lily. From the list for April add blood lily, buttercup (ranunculus), lily, marica (walking iris), moraea (African lily), and spider lily and remove crinum.

Prune back perennial plants once new growth emerges. If there was freeze damage, make the pruning cuts just above the new growth. Prune now also to control size. Many perennials get large and benefit from frequent prun-



firecracker plant

ing. Some great perennials to try include coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), Stoke's aster (*Stokesia*), firebush (*Hamelia patens*), firespike (*Odontonema strictum*), firecracker plant (*Russelia*), plumbago, salvias, and gingers.

When preparing flower beds, add 2 to 3" of organic matter (peat moss, mushroom compost, compost). Broadcast fertilizer over the surface before applying mulch. Use 18-6-12 or similar analysis at the rate of .7 pounds per 100 square feet or use a slow release product like osmocote.



Chinese ground orchid, Bletilla

# Good Time to Control Invasive Plants by Terry DeValle

Now is a good time to locate certain invasive plants and attempt to control them before new growth emerges.

The air potato (*Dioscorea bulbifera*) is a very aggressive vine. It is bare of leaves now but has potato-looking tubers hanging from the vines. To attempt to get rid of these, the above and below ground tubers must be removed. They should be sent to a landfill where they will be incinerated. Do not put



*Dioscorea bulbifera*  
Air potato  
Photo by Ann Murray  
Copyright 1999 University of Florida

these in with standard yard trash or it will become someone else's problem. As the vines begin to grow this spring and summer, apply Brush-B-Gon or Brush Killer onto the foliage. Repeated applications will be necessary for eradication.

Another invasive tree that should be controlled as new growth begins to emerge is the Chinese tallow tree

(*Sapium sebiferum*). Cut the tree down as close to the ground as possible and treat the stump with undiluted Brush-B-Gon or Brush Killer. Treat the stump just inside the bark area. Repeated applications may be necessary as the tree will come back from roots.



*Dioscorea bulbifera*

Air potato  
Photo by Yi Ramey  
Copyright 1999 University of Florida

## Urban Gardening Update

by Sara Cimbalik, Urban Gardening Program Assistant

The spring gardening season is nearing and it's time to get the vegetable garden planted. The demonstration site has some new additions to show off to homeowners. We have installed a drip irrigation system that covers about 1000 square feet. If you're thinking of installing a system of your own, come check ours out and we can give you some helpful hints.

We have also built a two-wire trellising system for grape vines. We are in transition time in the garden so we're pulling out some of the fall crops and preparing the soil for the abundance of spring veggies that will go in!

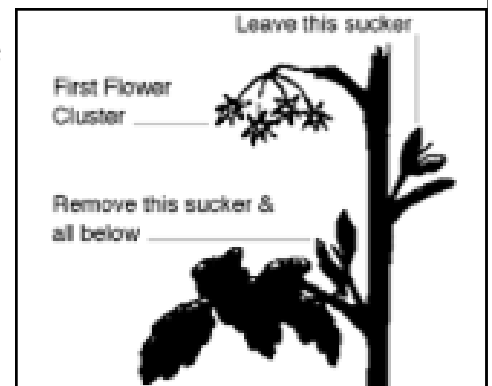
Our community gardens are full at the present time. We are in search of some new community garden sites, especially in intensive neighborhoods. If you've got a spot that may work for a community site, please contact our program at 387-8850. We had a fabulous turnout for the Totally Tomatoes workshop with over 65 people in attendance! We'll keep you posted on upcoming programs and in the mean time get those spring gardens ready to flourish a beautiful crop!



## Tomato Talk by Sara Cimbalik

Tomatoes (*Lycopersicon esculentum*) are a favorite of almost all vegetables growers. The fresh garden taste is unbeatable! Even if you don't have a lot of room to grow in your yard, always consider container growing. Tomatoes come in two different types, determinate and indeterminate. Determinate varieties are a bushy type of a plant. The blossoms and the fruit develop about the same time, which makes the harvest time fairly short. If you choose to grow tomatoes in a container plant a determinate variety rather than an indeterminate type. Indeterminate varieties have the nature of growing very tall. They can grow 5 to 8 feet in height. These varieties require plant support by staking or caging them. They will produce a shoot or "sucker" at each leaf axil that should be removed when it is 2-4 inches in length.

This allows the plant to put its energy into fruit production rather than vegetative growth. Indeterminate varieties will grow until a frost kills them therefore, harvest will last a long time.



There are hundreds of varieties out there, but here are some that are recommended for our area:

- Large Fruit Indeterminate Varieties: Floradel, Tropic, Manalucie, Better Boy, Bonnie Best
- Small Fruit Indeterminate Varieties: Red Cherry, Sweet Chelsea, Sweet 100, Sweet Million
- Large Fruit Determinate Varieties: Walter, Suncoast, Floramerica, Florida dade, Duke, Sunny, Solar Set, Celebrity
- Small Fruit Determinate Varieties: Floragold, Florida Basket, Florida Lanai, Patio, Cherry Grande, San Marzano

## Herb of the Month by Sara Cimbalik



Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) is an annual plant with a somewhat spicy taste. It has a very pleasant smell that comes in a wide range of leaf color and shape. Fragrance in the plant ranges from lemon to cinnamon to licorice. Sweet basil has a nice green oval shaped leaf while the Purple Ruffle variety has a deep red-purple color with a ruffled glossy leaf. Basil will grow up to 3 feet tall. Blooms are tiny and white or purplish on a long spike. Basil can be propagated from seed or by cuttings. Basil likes enriched soil and mulch. Try not to let the plant go to seed by keeping it trimmed. Basil has been used for vinegars, salads, meat flavoring, pastas, and is the main ingredient in pesto. If you haven't made your pesto from fresh basil grow a plant of your own and give it a try this year, it's great!

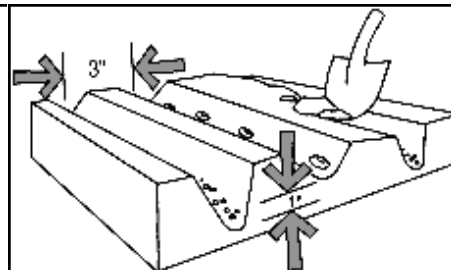
### Basil Vinegar

Fill a glass jar almost full with lightly packed basil. Cover the herbs with room temperature red or white wine vinegar and seal. Age for 6 weeks in a cool, dark cupboard shaking the jar every few days. For quicker results, microwave the vinegar for 1 minute per cup (not boiling) and pour over herbs. Seal and set aside to steep and it will be ready to use in 48 hours.

Variations: Use half green basil and half opal or red basil with white wine vinegar for outstanding color. Add 2 cloves garlic & a hot pepper threaded on a skewer for additional flavor.

## To Do List For the Spring Garden by Sara Cimbalik

- Take soil samples and have them tested for pH.
- Prepare soil by broadcasting 2-4 pounds/100 sq. feet of 8-8-8 fertilizer and incorporate into the ground 2-3 weeks before planting the garden.
- Plan your garden on paper. Choose crops your family likes and make sure to group them by plant family. This helps control pest and disease cycles.
- Vegetables to plant in March and April are beans, cucumbers, peppers, squash, tomatoes, eggplant, cantaloupes, and okra.
- Plant into the ground on a cloudy overcast day to prevent the plants from being "shocked"
- Once planted band in 2-3 inches from the side of each plant 4oz/10ft row of 8-8-8 fertilizer.
- Water the plants in once planted. When the plants are small they will need 1" of water per week. Once established they will need 2" per week.
- Mulch the plants with grass clippings, leaves, pine straw, or black plastic. This will keep weeds down, conserve moisture, prevent erosion, and protect roots from damage due to cultivation.
- Side dress the plants with fertilizer every 7-14 days depending on the plants needs.
- Scout for pests twice a week. Hand picking works well for home gardens.
- Keep weeds to a minimum. They rob plants of space, water, and nutrients.
- Have a bountiful harvest!



**Figure 2.** Fertilizer applied by the banding method is placed in furrows 3 inches from the sides of the row and slightly below the depth of the seed.

# It's Time to Fertilize Landscape Plants

March is the time to give our lawns a kick to fill in areas damaged by cold weather. The best way to know what fertilizer to use and at what rate is to send a soil sample to the Soils Lab at the University of Florida. The cost is \$7.00 per sample. Forms may be obtained from the county extension office.

For those of you without specific information, the best advice is to find a fertilizer for lawns that has the 1st and 3rd numbers almost equal and the middle number should be below 2 or zero, like 15-0-15. If you can't find this, go with the traditional 12-4-8 or 16-4-8. Look for one that has slow release nitrogen and minor elements, especially iron.

Woody plants can be fertilized at the same rate as recommended for lawns, but you might need a different analysis fertilizer. An azalea, palm or citrus type fertilizer will work for most woody ornamental plants. Fruit trees, especially citrus and pecans, should be fertilized to avoid nutrient deficiencies.

Determine the amount of fertilizer needed by determining the square feet of bed area to be treated: multiply the length by the width of the lawn or bed area. The University of Florida has developed an easy conversion chart to help homeowners avoid math. Check the table below to deter-

mine the amount fertilizer to apply for a given area. If using a fertilizer with 30 to 50% water insoluble nitrogen, the amount below can be doubled. To determine the % of water insoluble nitrogen, divide the amount of water insoluble nitrogen listed on the label by the 1st number of the fertilizer analysis and multiply by 100. Lawns need a minimum of 2 applications per year, in March and again in September. Depending on the lawn type, more applications may be necessary to maintain plant vigor. For a moderate maintenance St. Augustinelawn, apply a slow release nitrogen in April and ferrous sulfate, iron sulfate (acid soil) or iron chelate (alkaline soil) in July.

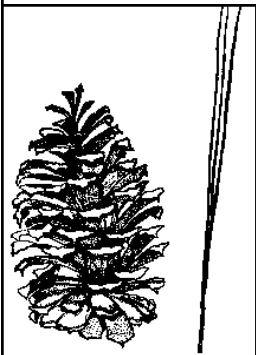
Lawn (square feet)	6%N*	10%N*	12%N*	15%N*	16%N*	23%N*	27%N*
1000	8.4 lbs. 17.4 cups	5 lbs. 9.5 cups	4.2 lbs. 8.7 cups	3.3 lbs. 7.25 cups	3.1 lbs. 6.5 cups	2.2 lbs. 5.5 cups	1.9 lbs. 4.75 cups
2000	16.8 lbs. 34.8 cups	10 lbs. 19 cups	8.4 lbs. 17.4 cups	6.6 lbs. 14.5 cups	6.2 lbs. 13 cups	4.4 lbs. 11.0 cups	3.8 lbs. 9.5 cups
3000	25.2 lbs. 52.2 cups	15 lbs. 28.5 cups	12.6 lbs. 26.1 cups	9.8 lbs. 21.8 cups	9.4 lbs. 19.5 cups	6.6 lbs. 16.6 cups	5.8 lbs. 14.5 cups
4000	33.6 lbs. 69.6 cups	20 lbs. 38 cups	16.8 lbs. 34.8 cups	13.2 lbs. 29 cups	12.6 lbs. 26 cups	8.8 lbs. 22.0 cups	7.8 lbs. 19.5 cups
5000	42 lbs. 87.2 cups	25 lbs. 47.5 cups	21 lbs. 43.6 cups	16.4 lbs. 36.4 cups	15.8 lbs. 32.5 cups	11.0 lbs. 27.6 cups	9.8 lbs. 24.5 cups

\*The percentage corresponds to the first of the three numbers found on the bag. For example, use the 15% calculations when using a 15-2-15 product. These figures assume that you are applying the recommended rate of 1/2 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. For more information on lawn fertilization, refer to the Residential Landscape section of <http://turf.ufl.edu> or consult your local County Extension Service office for lawn fertilization fact sheets.

This table was taken from ENH962, Figuring Out Fertilizer for the Home Lawn.

## Longleaf Pine *Pinus palustris* by Larry Figart, Urban Forester

This article is written as a tribute to the lightning struck longleaf pine I just had removed from my landscape.



The long leaf pine is a long lived native pine of the southern coastal plain. As a matter of fact it was the dominant tree in an area covering 140,000 square miles from southern Virginia around to eastern Texas. They were the dominant species because of adaptations that made the young seedlings tolerant of frequent fire. As the seedling germinates it will stay in a short

"grass" stage. The grass stage of long leaf pine looks like a bunch of long needles arranged in a clump. In this stage the long needles will protect the tender growing bud from the frequent lightning caused fires. While in

the grass stage, the tree stores energy, and develops a strong root system. When the conditions are right, the seedling jumps out of the grass stage and can grows tall enough to withstand a low intensity fire. The suppression of natural fires, logging and the replacement of longleaf in the forests by faster growing species such as slash and loblolly pine has caused this keystone of the wiregrass community to decline in number.

As a yard tree the long leaf pine is a champion. Planted with plenty of room and in full sun the tree will provide filtered shade to the bed underneath. This can allow enough sunlight through to grow a number of shelter loving plants as well as St. Augustinegrass. The flowering Dogwood is at its best when planted in the filtered shade of a long leaf pine. The long leaf pine is resistant to most pine diseases like fusiform rust and pitch canker. The long leaf pine prefers low maintenance landscapes that have minimal irrigation and fertilization.

## Tree Tips - Ambrosia Beetle by Larry Figart

Ambrosia Beetles are the scapegoats of the insect world. Many times they are wrongfully accused of killing trees in the landscape. It is easy to notice the dead or dying tree in your yard and look down and see the piles of powdery sawdust collecting at the bottom of the tree. The beetles have to be the cause of the tree's demise right. WRONG! The something else has killed or weakened the tree and the beetles are just attracted to the corpse. They are like the vultures of the tree world. They are boring into the tree in order to create galleries and to lay eggs. They need dead wood to accomplish this. They would not be able to establish themselves in a healthy tree.

The sawdust that is created in an Ambrosia Beetle infestation is a result of the beetle sweeping out its gallery and pushing it out of the tree. Ambrosia Beetles get their name from the fungi that they bring into the galleries and cultivate for their young. The female carries the ambrosia fungus in a sac like structure. When she tends to her gallery she will also cultivate the fungus in the gallery. The beetle larvae live exclusively on the ambrosia fungus growing on the walls of the gallery. When the larvae are old enough they will exit the tree.

The **Asian Ambrosia Beetle** was introduced into the United States around 1974. Unlike its native relatives, the

Asian Ambrosia Beetle can kill healthy trees. The good news (if there is any) is that this beetle primarily attacks closely spaced, small diameter trees in a nursery or orchard setting. The sawdust coming out of the gallery holes in Asian Ambrosia Beetle infested trees will stick together so that the tree will look like it has "toothpicks" sticking out of it. (See photo on the right). Rain, wind and movement will knock off the "toothpicks". When you buy a tree from a nursery, you should check the trunk thoroughly for Asian Ambrosia Beetle holes. Most nursery trees attacked by this beetle do not survive and have to be destroyed.



## Landscape Tips by Terry DelValle

This is a busy time in the landscape. Here is a checklist of some things to do.

- Rake leaves and move them to the compost pile or use as a natural leaf mulch.
- Pull weeds in plant beds before they go to seed so they don't become a major problem over summer.
- Prune azaleas and other spring bloomers directly after bloom, if needed.
- Lightly rake out dead grass from lawn areas if there



was cold damage. Lightly fertilize to stimulate new growth.

- Water plants as needed. As the weather warms up and rainfall becomes less frequent, add 3/4" of water to wet the root zone. Water early in the morning when there is dew on the grass. There is no watering between 10AM and 4PM unless needed to establish new plants or to water in pesticides.
- Plant poinsettias in the landscape for color in a sunny, protected area away from exterior lights.

Extension information and services are available to all individuals regardless of race, color, sex or national origin. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no endorsement by the Cooperative Extension Service is implied. This public document was promulgated at an annual cost of \$295.20 or .82 cents per copy to inform garden center personnel and homeowners of research results in ornamental horticulture. For persons with hearing or speech impairments, when contacting our office, please use the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

Once you have read this newsletter, turn "A New Leaf" and pass this information on to a friend.

Terry B. DelValle  
Extension Agent-Environmental Horticulture

This newsletter is jointly sponsored by the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, IFAS, Larry Arrington, Dean; City of Jacksonville, John Peyton, Mayor; and the Duval County Cooperative Extension Service, Rick Godke, Director.