

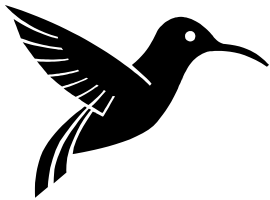


# A New Leaf

Volume 5, Issue 4

July/August 2004

## Upcoming Programs



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Register for any of these Florida Yards and Neighborhoods programs by calling 387-8850.

- **July 13th** from 10AM to noon @ the Duval County Extension Office on 1010 N. McDuff Avenue. Learn to troubleshoot problems in your landscape with answers to your most frequently asked questions. RSVP @ 387-8850.
- **August 10th** from 10AM to 2PM @ the Duval County Extension Office on 1010 N. McDuff Avenue. Learn Landscape Design at a hands-on workshop including tips on using Feng Shui concepts. RSVP @ 387-8850 by August 8 and fee is \$5.00 to attend.
- **September 14th** from 1PM to 3PM @ Regency Square Library at 9900 Regency Square Blvd. FYN Part I: Learn the nine steps to Create a Florida-Friendly Landscape. Also, learn tips about planting a fall vegetable garden. RSVP @ 387-8850.
- **September 21st** from 1PM to 3PM @ Regency Square Library on 9900 Regency Square Blvd. Part II: Learn How to maintain your landscape the Florida-friendly way. Hear how to expand your plant palate with ferns. RSVP @ 387-8850.

## Alligator Weed

Alligator Weed appears shortly after new sod has been laid. It is an aquatic weed which has adapted to the wet "muck" soil that is used in much of our Florida sod farms. The sod farms treat for weeds before sending out the sod, but it's hard to eradicate and neither the homeowner nor the lawn care companies have anything that will touch it in hot weather. It has flushed pink stems with leaves that are elliptical, opposite and non-succulent.



Alligator Weed

## Plants for July/August

Plant selections are somewhat limited until we get relief from the heat & humidity. Annuals for July include Calibrachoa (Million Bells), Celosia, coleus, crossandra, Exacum, Impatiens, kalanchoe, nicotiana, ornamental pepper, portulaca, salvia, and vinca (periwinkle). In August, consider replacing spent plants with coleus, salvia or garden mums. A great annual to plant right now is the mallows. They have large dinner-plate size flowers and come in white, pink, red and bi-colors.

leopard lily. Divide and transplant spring flowering bulbs in August/September.



Bulbs for July include Aztec lily, butterfly lily, gladiolus, gloriosa lily, kaffir lily, moraea (African lily), scarborough lily, sternbergia, spider lily, and walking iris. In August add to the list grape hyacinth, iris, and

Vegetables have suffered this spring with too much of water so diseases have been a problem. If plants are not producing and look unsightly, remove spent plants. If you have a problem with nematodes, try planting the Charleston Belle

pepper. Studies indicate this variety repels nematodes and it also protects other susceptible plants that double-cropped with them. The Charleston Bell peppers get their resistance from the N gene, found in a resistant pimento pepper and placed into Keystone cultivars. The gene controls resistance to three types of root-knot nematodes. Vegetables to plant in July include eggplant, okra, pepper, southern peas, and watermelons. In August, add to the list corn, cucum-

bers, and summer squash. Order seeds for fall gardens now.



## Help With Attracting the Good Guys

Want help in attracting beneficial insects? There are many plants that can assist with this task. Some plants have extrafloral nectaries (EFN). These are glands that produce nectar that are not part of the flower. These glands are found on leaves, leaf petioles, rachids, bracts, fruit, etc. They are found on more than 2000 plants species. The glands secrete about 95% sugar and the other 5% consists of an assortment of amino acids and other nutrients. Scientists think EFNs exist to either get rid of metabolic waste from the plant or to attract beneficial insects to assist with plant defense. Ants and ladybird beetles are frequent visitors to these sites.

Common plants and location of EFNs in our area include: the passion flower/petiole, bud and flower bracts (upper right photo); cassia spp. (petiole); Calli-carpa, beauty berry (near veins at leaf base); costus

or spiral ginger/outer surface of floral bracts; hairy vetch/stipules; elderberry/stipules (lower right photo); impatiens/petiole and leaves; Thunbergia, blue trumpet vine/sepals; Salix spp. willows/leaves; viburnum spp./lower leaf surfaces near petiole. For more information, refer to this website: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/IN/IN17500.pdf>.



## Tree of the Month: Pineapple Guava or Feijoa

By Larry Figart, Duval County Urban Forester

The pineapple guava or feijoa, (pronounced fay-JOE-uh) is a small shrub that can be pruned into a small tree form. As a shrub it can be used as a hedge, or screen, but when pruned to a tree form it makes a nice specimen tree. Its evergreen leaves are a dark green on the upper surface and a gray/green color below. The pineapple guava is native to southern Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. It can withstand temperatures as low as 15 degrees F. The tree can get up to 15 feet in height with a spread of 15 feet. It will grow in full sun or partial shade. It will grow best in a well drained soil and is fairly drought tolerant.

The unique feature of this tree is the flowering and fruit production. The flowers are showy, white tinged with purple, about one inch wide, with long red stamens. The flowers typically appear in the late spring, early summer. The flower petals can be used in salads as they are edible and mildly sweet. The fruits range from 3/4-3 1/2 inches long. Most trees are at least 3 years old

before they will fruit. The fruits typically ripen in 4-5 months after the flowers appear. The fruits are used in smoothies, ice creams and fruit salads. The fruits will fall off the tree when ripe. Some varieties are self pollinating but many people report better crops with more than one tree.



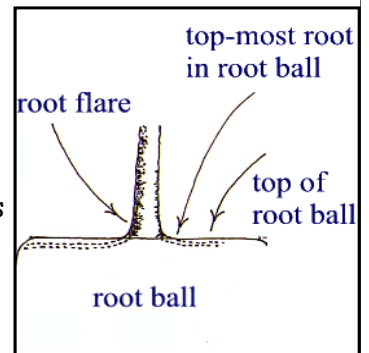
## Tree Tips by Larry Figart, Duval County Urban Forester

I can remember when the rule of thumb when planting a tree was that you should plant it so that the level of the soil in the pot should be level with the natural soil surface. Well, things have changed. A tree that is planted too deep has problems right from the start. A tree's root system needs oxygen in order to grow and respire. The deeper in the soil you go, soil oxygen levels are reduced. In many of our soils, the water table is high, saturating the soil and reducing oxygen levels further. When we plant trees deeper than they need to be, the root systems lack the oxygen levels that they need to thrive. Also, with trees planted too deep, the trunks are covered with soil, promoting decay situations. It has been found that even when using the old rule of thumb, many trees are still planted too deep. In some cases, the root system in the container or in the field grown root ball has had additional soil placed on top of the natural grade during routine nursery operations.

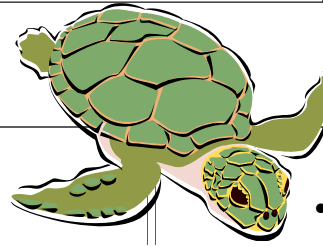
The latest recommendations from the University of Florida suggest that before planting the tree the pur-

chaser should remove the soil so that the point where the top-most root emerges from the trunk (the root flare) is within the top two inches of the root ball. It is even preferable that this root flare be visible. This way circling roots can be corrected prior to planting.

The tree should then be placed so that the root flare is slightly above the natural soil level. No soil should be placed on top of the root ball when backfilling the hole. The soil removed when digging the hole is the best soil to put back in the hole when backfilling. No amendments like fertilizer or manure should be added to the hole. The rest is easy. Water the tree often, apply mulch (not around the trunk), and stake it if necessary. By planting the tree at the correct depth in the soil, we are giving it the best chance for survival.



# Wildlife Events for July and August



## July Events -

- Shorebirds are nesting on area beaches.
- Alligators and crocodiles will begin to hatch.
- Tree frogs are laying eggs which hatch into tadpoles in about 5 days.
- Armadillos are breeding.
- Gray squirrels are being

born.

## August Events -

- Black bear cubs are weaning from their mothers.
- Short-tailed shrews are beginning a second round of breeding for the year.
- First flocks of blue-winged and green-winged teal arrive to winter on Florida lakes and

Gopher tortoise and sea turtle eggs are hatching.

wetlands.

- Purple martins and tree swallows begin to gather to migrate south for the winter.
- Gopher tortoise and young sea turtles are hatching.
- Indigo snake and other snake eggs are hatching.
- Yellow warbler migration begins.

# Formosan Termites Found in Duval County

The wait is over... The dreaded Formosan subterranean termites (FST) have been found in Duval County. The 1st record was in Charleston, SC in 1957 and later was found in a shipyard in Houston, Texas in 1965. In the 1980s, they were located in Broward County and later in Orlando, Pensacola, and Tampa. Native to southern China and Japan, they are easily spread by boats or infested wood (like railroad ties or potted plants) to new locations. They have been found in areas all around us so it was just a matter of time before they showed up.

Why the big concern? The colonies are much larger (up to 8 million individuals) than the native subterranean termite colonies so they consume more food. They can infest boats and high-rise condominiums. Like native subterranean termites, they typically nest below ground and build mud tubes. However, some FST will build nests above ground if they have an adequate water source such as water leaks, poor drainage from roofs and gutters, and condensation from AC units.

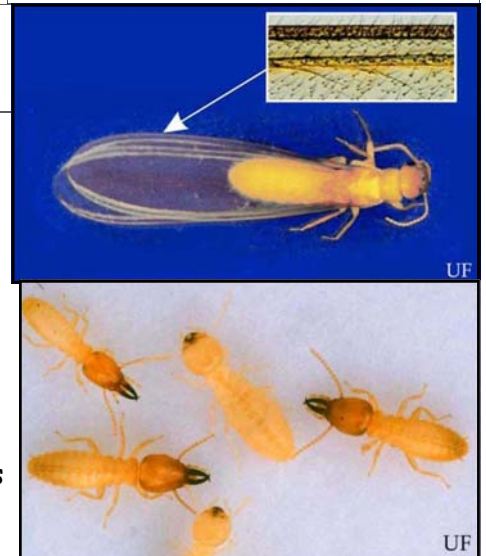
In Florida, FST swarms occur from April through July on calm, warm, and humid nights. Colonies may have over 8 million individuals, larger than native subterranean colonies. They feed mostly on wood but can chew through foam insulation boards, thin lead and copper sheeting, plaster, asphalt, and some plastics. Contrary to popular belief, they do not eat concrete. They typi-

cally nest in the soil but can nest above ground without a connecting mud tube.

It is difficult to distinguish FST from the soldiers or workers from other subterranean termites

although there are minor differences. On the other hand, the winged alates are easy to identify with magnification. The wings are clear with two thick veins on the top edge covered with small hairs. Other subterranean termites do not have these small hairs.

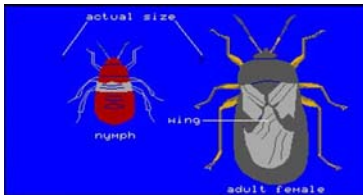
Control methods are the same as for native subterranean termites. If you suspect that you have FST, collect the termites, put them in a small container, and place them in the freezer or add rubbing alcohol. Do not put them in a plastic bag or tape them to a notecard as they will get crushed and are then difficult to identify. If you have a bond with a pest control company, contact them to determine what type of termite you have. You may also bring them into our office for identification. For more information on FTE go to <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG064>.



## Gardening Chores for July/August

If lawns are off-color, the fertilizer may have leached out from the soil due to all the rain. If you fertilize now, use either a slow release material or iron. If using a slow release fertilizer, apply 1/2 pound to 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. To apply iron, use ferrous sulfate @ the rate of 2 ounces mixed in 3 to 5 gallons of water per 1,000 square feet. Or apply a chelated iron. Iron will stain light colored surfaces like concrete.

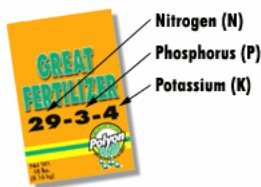
Watch for chinch bugs, sod webworm, and armyworm activity in lawns. Identify the pest before treating. According to IFAS Extension Entomologist, Eileen Buss



Juvenile and adult chinch bug

trials testing various insecticides for chinch bug control showed Sevin SL to be the best products available for homeowner purchase with no chinch bugs found 4 weeks after treatment. To control chinch bugs, use Sevin (carbaryl) sold as GardenTech Sevin when it's not rainy and when rain is frequent, switch to a pyrethroid. Another key to adequate control is to reduce thatch because it provides a 'hide-out' for bugs and shelters them from contact with the pesticides.

Fertilize fruit trees after harvesting fruit. A good general peach/pecan special or a citrus fertilizer is a good all around fertilizer for fruit trees. The exception would be for blueberries in which an azalea/camellia blend should be used. If you fertilize persimmons, apply a very light application because fertilizer can sometimes promote fruit drop.



Fertilize citrus 4 times a year with a Citrus Special to improve vigor and fruit quality. Applications should begin in March and end in late September to early October.

Prune blackberries back to ground level once fruit are harvested.

Blueberries also will be more productive if pruned. For the first 5 to 7 years, plants don't need to be pruned. After that, older branches will become unproductive

and should be cut back to the ground. Younger canes should be left intact. By annually removing older branches, new canes will form and keep plants more vigorous.



With the rains, expect more mosquitoes. To reduce the numbers, eliminate any standing water. Water in flower pots, bird baths, or any other containers should be emptied every several days to disrupt the life cycle. Bromeliads and other plants that hold water are potential breeding areas. Flush plants with water to remove larvae. Clean roof gutters to remove leaves that hold water.

Carpenter ants are swarming now. They are reddish-brown ants up to 1/2" in length. In summer months, swarms of winged carpenter ants leave the colony to mate and form new colonies. The key to successful control is to find the nest. Because they are most active at night, this is the best time to track them and follow their trails. If ants are coming from outdoors, a perimeter treatment of Sevin or Diazinon may eliminate the problem. Another option is to apply a granular bait, like Combat, to an 8" to 12" area around the foundation.

When treating indoors, use ant baits that contain hydrodramethylnon, fulfluramind, afermectin or boric acid.

To make your own bait, mix the following materials: 1 level teaspoon of boric acid in 2 1/2 fl. oz. of corn syrup or honey. Heat until boric acid completely dissolves. Cool. Dilute bait with an equal volume of water and with an eye-dropper place in areas where ants feed or place in small lids where ants have access. Keep baits available to ants for 2 weeks and keep this out of reach of children.



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***Crocosmia (Crow-kos-mee-uh) (Montbretia)***

Common Name: Crocosmia, Coppertip, Falling Stars

Geophyte Organ: Corm

Light Requirements: Full AM Sun

Height 24-36 Inches

Flowering Season: Summer

Flower Color: Orange, red, yellow

Planting Time: Spring

Planting Depth: 5 inches

Space between Corms: 4-6- inches

Hardiness: Semi-hardy—injured below 28 degrees F

Bulb Storage: Store corms in peat or vermiculite at 35-41 degrees F

Comments: Sword-shaped leaves, excellent cut flower, prefers well drained soil

Cultivars: Jenny Bloom (30 inches orange buds, open yellow) Lucifer (orange-red, 3 foot) Meteor (yellow tinged with orange), Red King (red with orange-yellow center), Emily Mckenzie (orange)



For those of you interested in perennials, here is a great website:

Http://  
[aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/  
ornamentals/  
cor-](http://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/cor-)



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When you finish with this newsletter, pass it on to a friend.

Terry B. DelValle  
Extension Agent—Environmental Horticulture

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