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4th Garden Fest

Join the District IV, Florida Federation of Garden Clubs and Duval County Extension Office for the 4th annual Garden Fest on Saturday, October 22 from 9AM to 3PM. This "Showcase of Plant Societies" will feature talks on herbs, roses, African violets, camellias, flower pressing, landscaping with accessories and more. Bring your own lunch and drinks will be provided. The cost is \$5.00 in advance or \$8.00 at the door. To register, call our office for a registration form or contact Roz Spegglevin @ (904) 272-6599.

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Upcoming Classes: Call 387-8850 to register for any of these classes.

- ◆ **September 15** from 6:30 to 8:30PM @ West Regional Library on 1425 S. Chaffee Rd. Learn about native plants for NE FL and how to save money in your landscape.
- ◆ **September 20** from 1 to 3PM @ the Mandarin Library on 3330 Kori Rd. Learn tips on how to troubleshoot problems in your landscape. Bring a problem in for identification.
- ◆ **October 6** from 1 to 3PM @ Regency Square Library on 9900 Regency Square Blvd. Learn tips on how to troubleshoot problems in your landscape. Bring a problem in for identification.
- ◆ **October 15** from 10 to 12:30PM @ 1010 N. McDuff Avenue. Learn how to grow vegetables in Florida. Wear gardening shoes so you can tour a vegetable garden. Also watch a hands-on demonstration on how to turn you vegetables into a flower garnish to use at your next feast.



Happy Halloween

Gardening Tips for September/October by Terry DeValle

- ◆ Winter and spring flowering trees and shrubs have set their flower buds for next year so don't prune them now. This includes Japanese magnolias, Ashe magnolias, fringe trees, redbuds, azaleas, wisteria, spireas, camellias, and poinsettias.
- ◆ Poinsettias need their last fertilization late in September. Apply 1 Tbsp. of a general fertilizer (8-8-8) per foot of plant height. Keep them away from light in the evening so they will develop flowers.
- ◆ Place Christmas cactus in a dark area each night from 5PM to 8AM each day starting in mid October. Continue this short day treatment for 6 weeks and then return to its normal spot to enjoy. Flowers should appear in about 10 weeks from start of treatment.
- ◆ Fertilize lawns and plant beds by late September. Use a fertilizer that has at least 50% of the nitrogen in a water insoluble form. Slow release/water insoluble potassium is also desirable because it too will quickly leach with heavy rains. Apply at the rate of one pound nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of area. Established trees (over 3 years in landscape) do not need additional fertilizers if surrounding areas receive applications.
- ◆ Spot treat with herbicides to control weeds. Do not



treat the entire lawn with an herbicide unless the weed(s) are throughout the area. Many herbicides weaken lawns and make it more difficult for them to compete with the weeds. Some control may be possible by using a two or three way mix containing 2,4-D, MCPP, and/or Dicamba such as Spectracide Weed Stop, Bayer Advanced Lawn Southern Weed Killer, or Ortho Weed B-Gone for lawns. Read the label and make sure it is safe to use on your specific variety of lawn. 'Floratom', a commonly used variety of St. Augustinegrass is often excluded from the label. Some weeds are almost impossible to control with traditional lawn herbicides and will require more drastic measures. A broad-spectrum herbicide such as glyphosate may be another option to control tough weeds like crabgrass, bermudagrass, Virginia buttonweed, Florida betony, alligator weed, and doveweed in St. Augustinegrass. Use an edger or shovel to cut the runners of the St. Augustinegrass around the area to be treated. Glyphosate is a systemic herbicide so by cutting the runners, it prevents the material from being transferred outside of the treated area.

◆ Inspect lawns weekly for discolored areas. Chinch bugs are still active and we are moving into the time that sod webworms become active. If the rains continue and night temperatures dip into the 70's, brown patch fungus could also become prevalent.

Citrus Canker Update by Terry DeValle

By now, most gardeners are aware that citrus canker was found in neighboring Clay County. To date, it has not been identified outside of that area. If you think your tree has citrus canker, do not transport the leaves to the extension office or a retail nursery (anywhere) for identification. Look at the symptoms on your tree. Spots on leaves are visible on both sides, surrounded by a yellow halo, slightly raised and rough in texture. Leaf spots are somewhat uniform in size and over time, the center of the spot may drop out. Fruit develop spots that are corky or scab-like in appearance and are often surrounded by a water-soaked margin and a yellow halo. If you suspect citrus canker, call the Citrus Canker

Helpline at (800) 282-5153 and report the problem. If you take the leaves to an area nursery for identification and it turns out to be citrus canker, their citrus trees will be exposed to the disease and the nursery will be quarantined. For more information, go to <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP116>.



Things to Plant in September & October by Terry DeValle

Plant strawberries in late October through November. Varieties include Florida 90, Tioga, Sequoia, Florida Belle, Dover, Tufts, Sweet Charlie and Chandler. Plant in rows 36" apart and 12" apart within the row. Elevate rows 6" above existing soil to insure good drainage. Use pine straw to reduce weed problems and slugs.

For instant color plant coleus, marigolds and garden chrysanthemums or wait until October to plant cool season flowers like dianthus, pansy, petunia, shasta daisy, snapdragon, viola, million bells, status, Thunbergia, flowering kale and cabbage.

Bulbs to plant include amaryllis, Aztec lily, calla, elephant ears, grape hyacinth, iris, lachenalia (leopard lily), narcissus, snowflake, watsonia, and zephyr lily. In October add to the list African lily (Agapanthus), gladiolus, kaffir lily, lily, marica (walking iris), moraea, society garlic, spider lily, anemone, hyacinth, pineapple lily and Star-of-Bethlehem.

Buy spring flowering bulbs in October (narcissus, tulips, etc.) and store them in the refrigerator for about 60 days. Plant bulbs immediately upon removal. Keep them

away from ripening fruit during storage.

Now is a good time to plant perennials to jazz up the landscape. They will have time to develop a good root system before the cold weather arrives. Salvias, like 'Indigo Spires' or 'Blue and Black', will provide color until the first frost. *Hamelia patens*, firebush, is another good addition sporting orange to red tubular flowers. The standard can get up to 8' but a compact variety will top out at 3'. Another hit for the late summer to fall is blue ginger, *Dichorisandra thrysiflora*. This is a great accent plant in shady areas. Although not a true ginger, it resembles the spiral ginger in its growth habit. Plants may reach up to 8' in height but are usually shorter here in NE Florida. Flowers resemble grape hyacinths.



Blue Ginger

See page 4 for vegetable list.

Ornamental Grasses by Terry DeValle

Fall is a great time to enjoy ornamental grasses. There are many varieties to choose from. Check local nurseries or go to the web for nurseries that specialize in ornamental grasses.

When installing grasses, plant in groups of 3 or more to maximize the effect. Before making a selection, do a little homework to find out the mature size. There may be 2 heights listed because once the flowers form, they usually tower over the foliage. Some grasses die back during the winter months and change to various straw or red colors in the process. These grasses often require pruning to remove old growth just before or as new growth emerges in the spring.

One that is very popular is muhly grass, (pictured on right) *Muhlenbergia capillaris*. This clumping bunch grass has leaves that are 2' to 3' long, blue-green to

gray-green, and are very thin and wispy. Leaves arch over to form a compact mound. Plants are 2' before bloom and 3' with flower plumes. It's just now coming into bloom which continues into November. Flowers are so delicate that

they form a pink-gray haze when viewed from a distance. Use as a groundcover for borders or in mass plantings.



It prefers full sun to partial shade and will adapt to most soils. It is salt and drought tolerant but will require watering to get the plants established.



Urban Gardening Update

by Sara Cimbalik, Urban Gardening Program Assistant

One of the best seasons for vegetable and herb gardening is just around the corner. As soon as the cooler temperatures get here the fall gardens will be flourishing with greens. September and October are the preferred months to plant vegetables. See the following recommended varieties:

CROP	RECOMMENDED VARIETY
Beets	Early Wonder, Detroit Dark Red, Cylindra, Red Ace, Little Ball
Broccoli	Early Green Sprouting, Waltham 29, Atlantic, Green Comet, Green Duke
Cabbage	Gourmet, Marion Market, King Cole, Market Prize, Red Acre, Chieftan Savoy, Rio Verde, Bravo
Carrots	Imperator, Thumbelina, Nantes, Gold Pak, Waltham Hicolor, Orlando Gold
Cauliflower	Snowball Strains, Snowdrift, Imperial 10-6, Snow Crown, White Rock
Chinese Cabbage	Michihili, Wong Bok, Bok Choy, Napa
Collards	Georgia, Vates, Blue Max, Hicrop Hybrid
Endive/Escarole	Florida Deep Heart, Full Heart, Ruffec
Kohlrabi	Early White Vienna, Grand Duke, Purple Vienna
Lettuce	Crisp: Minetto, Ithaca, Fulton, Floricrisp Butterhead: Bibb, White Boston, Tom Thumb Leaf: Prize Head, Red Sails, Salad Bowl Romaine: Parris Island Cos, Valmaine
Mustard	Southern Giant Curled, Florida Broad Leaf, Tendergreen
Onions	Bulbing: Excel, Texas Grano, Granex, White Granex, Tropicana Red Bunching: White Portugal, Evergreen, Beltsville Bunching, Perfecto Blanco Multipliers: Shallots
Parsley	Moss Curled, Perfection, Italian
Radish	Cherry Belle, Comet, Early Scarlet Globe, White Icicle, Sparkler, Red Prince
Spinach	Virginia Savoy, Melody, Bloomsdale Longstanding, Tye Olympia
Turnip	Purple Top White Globe

When planting the above crops make sure to plant on an overcast, cool day. If temperatures are too hot, it can cause shock to young plants being transplanted or bolting. Be sure to water in new plants. Vegetable gardens in general need approximately 1 inch of water per week when plants are small and 2 inches of water per week once the plants are established. Be sure to consider climatic factors such as, rainfall, before watering your garden. If you decide to plant your garden from seed try to plant seed that is treated with fungicide. This will help to protect seeds and seedlings from fungus diseases. Also to conserve moisture and suppress weeds mulch your garden. Use items like pine straw, manure, leaves, grass clippings or newspaper. If time allows, try to scout your garden for pests twice per week. Hand-pick pests or treat once you've correctly identified the pest. Enjoy the upcoming cool season of gardening. For more information on plant and row spacing please refer the Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide found at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH021>

Herb of the Month—Fennel

by Sara Cimbalik

Fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare*, is an herb native to Asia and the Mediterranean. It's an aromatic perennial plant that thrives during the cooler months in Florida. Once the seed is sown it can grow up to six feet in height. Fennel has erect hollow stems and mid-green feathery foliage. It will produce yellow flowers fol-



Fennel Seed Structure

lowed by ridged yellow-green umbrella-like seed structures. There are two kinds of fennel: Common fennel and Florence fennel, *foeniculum vulgare* var. *dulce*. Common fennel is grown mainly for the leaves, shoots and seeds which are used to flavor

foods. Florence fennel, known as, sweet fennel, fetticus

and finocchio forms a bulbous base at the end of the leaf which is rather thick and white in color. This particular part is harvested and consumed as a cooked vegetable. Except for the swollen above ground base of leaves on the Florence fennel, the two types are very similar in their licorice like flavor, as well as, growth habit.

Fennel in general, grows best in well-drained to sandy soil and prefers a sunny location. Florence Fennel needs a richer but well-drained soil along with plenty of water to create the "swollen" stems.



Bulbous Base of Florence Fennel



Companion Planting

by Sara Cimbalik

Have you ever heard, "Plant onions with the potatoes so that the potato eyes will water and you won't have to irrigate" or "Plant pole beans with sweet corn so that the corn stalk will support the climbing bean vine?" This is referred to as companion planting, the practice of planting one kind or variety of vegetable in close proximity to another kind or variety for a specific purpose. Intercropping, companionate planting, interplanting, combination planting, co-cropping and nurse-cropping are other commonly used terms meaning companion planting. There are many reasons for some plants liking certain plants and disliking others. Some of the reasons for growing vegetables in close range with other vegetables or varieties are improving growth and productivity, repelling insects and other pests, increasing nitrogen, improving plant nutrition, enhancing root penetration, improving plant environment, enhancing pollination, assist germination, maximize space, provide climbing support and increase aesthetic value.

Some reasons for companion planting have been brought upon by folklore however, some claims have scientific base. One that comes to mind is how marigolds deter nematodes. One study at the University of Georgia suggests that marigolds attract certain nematodes and kill them within the roots. According to a study at Cornell University, the marigolds that produce the toxin that kills the nematodes are French and African marigolds. These types of studies show residential gardeners that planting marigolds may reduce a nematode population.

Cover crops are also very beneficial in companion planting, especially if one chooses to grow organically. Cover crops such as, tropical alfalfa, hairy indigo, hairy vetch and ryegrass can provide nutrients to the soil once they are incorporated. Legumes used as cover crops have nitrogen-fixing bacteria within the nodules of the roots. These bacteria take nitrogen from the atmosphere and turn it into a usable plant form. However, don't be fooled, when the legume is living, the nitrogen only benefits the host plant. It is not until the legume breaks down and decomposes, that its nitrogen is available to another plant. All-in-all don't expect your bean that's growing up a corn stock to be providing the corn with nitrogen! While companion planting is not essential for a successful garden, the above are a couple of ideas to try.

Tree of the Month—Southern Magnolia

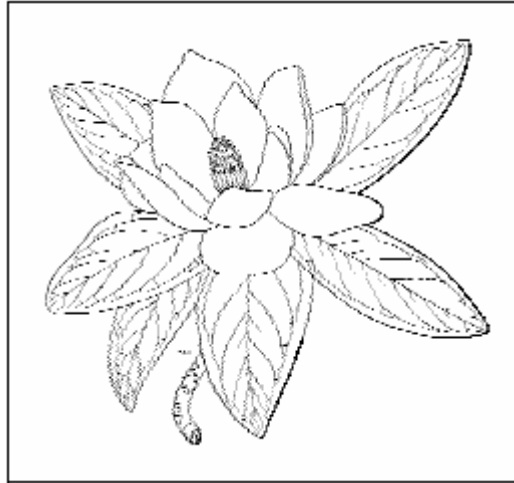
Magnolia grandifolia by Larry Figart, Urban Forester

Few trees have been associated as a symbol of the old south more than the Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*). It has been a part of the southern landscape for centuries. It has routinely been planted in yards, along streets, and parks, in great southern cities such as Charleston, Mobile, Savannah, and of course Jacksonville.

The Southern Magnolia naturally occurs in rich organic soils along the border of river floodplains and along the edges of hardwood swamps. It prefers rich, porous, well drained, acidic soils. However, it is very tolerant of different soil types. It can grow in full sun or partial shade. It may not look its best when planted in the full sun in droughty soils. It can withstand

saturated soils for a short period of time. The Southern Magnolia is somewhat pyramidal in growth and can reach heights of 60-100 feet at maturity.

The foliage and flowers of Southern Magnolia's set them apart from other trees. The evergreen leaves are large, leathery and dark green. Many people do not plant them because the leaves can be quite messy. One technique for dealing with the



leaves is to keep lower branches on the tree so that as the leaves fall they are held under the tree canopy by the lower branches. The flowers are white, fragrant, and large. Hence the scientific name *grandiflora* which means "big flower". The tree starts flowering in the early summer. The flowers then turn into cone-like structures with red seeds that ripen in late September though October. The cones then fall to the ground in November.

Southern Magnolia cultivars abound. Some of the more common ones and their attributes include:

'Alta'- grows columnar ,15-25 foot spread

'Little Gem'- smaller form, up to 20' tall in 20 years

'Brackens Brown Beauty'- Compact, full foliage, 30' at maturity.

'Claudia Wannamaker'- Fine form with dark green foliage, rusty undersides and flowers at an early age.

'Glen St. Mary'- Dark Green Leaves with felty undersides, flowers early.

When Lightning Strikes, By Larry Figart - Urban Forester



We have been taught since we were children that lightning strikes the tallest object. It is no wonder then, that lightning is one of the most common natural causes of tree damage.

Lightning can injure a tree in many ways. Most of the time the damage is obvious. The heat from the lightning vaporizes the water in the tree into steam instantaneously and the resulting pressure and heat blows the wood of the tree apart. Most of the time this happens toward the outside of the tree and we see it as a streak down the bark. Sometimes we cannot see the damage because it has affected

the root system or the interior of the tree.

Treatment for lightning comes in two phases. First, take care of any hazardous situations such as broken branches. Then comes the hard part. Wait six months to do any major corrective work. The extent of damage to the tree is not immediately evident. By that time most of the serious damage will be apparent and a decision can be made as to whether the tree can/should be salvaged. In the meantime, timely irrigation and light fertilization is helpful in helping the tree compartmentalize the damage.

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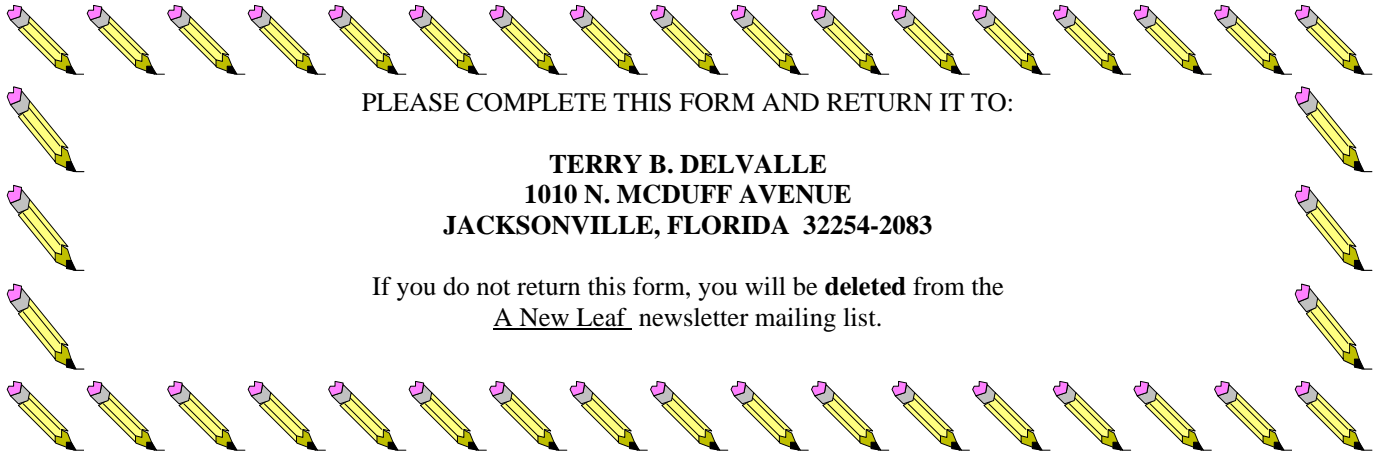
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Terry B. DelValle
Extension Agent-Environmental Horticulture

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