

The Backyard Gardener

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Coordinator's Corner

Summer is in full force and many flowers and gardens are nearing their end. As summer ends, we begin to gear up for the fall garden

It's busy here at the UF Extension office. I am offering many fall classes for Volusia County residents and Master Gardeners. In late July (29th), we will be offering Rain Barrels, Dry-side Gardening and Gardening for Wildlife. Also, our fall Basic Vegetable Gardening class will be held on August (12th). Green Industry - Best Management Practice

classes will be held on August 16th, and September 15th (Spanish class). For more information on registration of these or other classes, contact the UF Extension office at 386-822-5778.

We are now signing up Master Gardeners to serve on committees. Many Master Gardeners expressed interest in forming activity committees. Now is your chance to sign up. To volunteer, go to the VMS and click on 'Projects' on the left side bar. The list of 'Committees'-

Projects is displayed. Click on the **Project**, scroll down to the bottom and click on **Volunteer** to serve on the committee.

I hope your summer is filled with warm rain to get your landscapes green and keep your gardens fruitful!



Karen Stauderman
Master Gardener Coordinator
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Night Gardening

Does the idea of a night garden interest you? Do you suffer from little time in your daytime schedule to garden? If so, a night garden can solve both problems.

Of the many available night gardening plants, here are a few suggestions:

- *Brachycome* or white impatiens
- Lamb's ear (*Stachys*)
- Flowering tobacco (*Nicotiana*)
- Meadow rue (*Thalictrum*)
- Star jasmine (*Jasminum nitidum*)

Plants which bloom or release their fragrances only at night belong to a "noctiflora" group. Light flowers or foli-



Photo courtesy of
gardencrossings.com

age found on plants like bacopa, aromatic honeysuckle, lamb's ear, gardenias, nemesia, partridge feather (*Tanacetum densum*) and verbascum all suit evening gardens.

Moonlight in the right spot definitely lights up the garden. However, you can add your own lighting, including candles, torches, or simple landscaping lights.

When maintaining an evening garden, you might want to spend a little more time deadheading the spent flowers. This will encourage more flowers to bloom, which in turn means more night color in your garden. And more night color will beckon you to relax in a garden custom-made for the stars.

For more information go to www.hgtv.com/gardening/how-to-grow-a-night-garden/index.html



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2011 Florida Garden Select

Every year the Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association (FNLGA) feature some of the industry's best plant selections for our landscapes. This year is no different. These plants are known as the **Florida Garden Select** plants and they indeed are appealing, and successful for Florida's climate. This year's selections include:

Gold Medallion Tree (*Cassia leptophylla*)

This vibrant tree boasts of yellow flowers that bloom in early summer and sometimes again in the fall. The foliage is delicate, glossy green and forms large seed pods, which are poisonous. Originally from Brazil, this Latin beauty is drought tolerant once established in the landscape and can survive temperatures mid-to low twenties in range.



Photo courtesy of
Harry P. Leu Gardens

Caranday Palm (*Copernicia alba*)

This palm translates to 'water palm.' It has a one-of-a-kind silver-green fronds which contrast with its chocolate brown spiked stems. The fruit is black in color. This palm will thrive in both dry and seasonally wet soils. Native to South

America, the trunk is used to build bungalows... beach cabanas anyone? It currently is being tested in bio-diesel crop studies.



Photo courtesy of
Harry P. Leu Gardens

Wire Vine (*Muehlenbeckia axillaris*)

This ground cover can be a substitute for turf. It has glossy green leaves that spread in a mat of dense creeping wiry stems. In late spring, small white flowers bloom followed by small berries. Go ahead and walk on it, it will take a variety of soils from sand to clay. Fall and winter will bless you to bronze foliage. Great for erosion control on your sloped areas.

Yellow Butterfly Pea vine (*Callaeum macropterum*)

This climber is well suited for trellising, pergolas, fences or in screening. It is a Latin heat-loving evergreen native to Mexico. It is a yellow bloomer with long-lasting one inch blooms. The seed pods resemble a butterfly with light green coloring at immaturity progressing to brown as they mature. This vine is fairly drought tolerant requiring regular watering during the warm season to

enhance the vines appearance and appeal. This is a *must have* for the butterfly enthusiasts.

Japanese Plum Yew or Prostrate Yew (*Cephalotaxus harringtonia* "Prostrata")

This can be a ground cover, a low hedge or a foundation planting. When young, it is low and spreading; as it matures it becomes mound-shaped with arching branches. It is low maintenance with dark green foliage with needle-like texture resembling conifers. Keep this plant in deep to partial shade. It is suited to small spaces and does not like dry conditions.

Snow Princess (*Lobularia* "Snow Princess"™)

This perky annual is ideal for containers, hanging baskets or a blast of color in your landscape. This is the first heat tolerant of its genus and will bloom longer throughout the season with extreme vigor. This plant forms mounds of white subtle fragrant flowers that repeatedly bloom from January through July. Full sun to partial shade is best for this exciting bloomer.



Photo courtesy of
mytexasgarden.com

For more information on these Florida Garden Select Plants, go to www.floridagardenselect.org or check with your local nursery for availability.

Pumpkins and American History



Photo courtesy of
Onmilwaukee.com

Long before the discovery of corn, Native Americans used pumpkins to

help them through long winters. Over the centuries, they found many ways to enjoy the sweet inner meat

of the nutritious pumpkin. They baked, boiled, roasted, fried, parched, or dried it. They added pumpkin blossoms to soups, turned dried pumpkin pieces into rich flour, and munched on the seeds as a tasty snack.

Native Americans developed a way to grow pumpkins. The method is called "Three Sisters." They planted three crops: corn, beans, and pumpkins together in one place. The "Three Sisters" or plants worked together. The corn stock grew sturdy

and supported the bean plant that grew and twisted around the stock. The bean plant added nitrogen to the soil that helped the corn plant grow. The pumpkins provided a ground cover of shade that helped the soil stay moist. The "Three Sisters" method is just one example of the contributions Native Americans made to agriculture.

Taken from 'Pumpkin', *Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom Magazine*, 1701 Towanda Avenue, Bloomington, IL 61701

MarketMaker

MarketMaker is an interactive mapping system that locates businesses and markets of agricultural products providing an important link between producers and consumers.

MarketMaker is rich with demographic and business data that the user can query.

Consumers can find out what is in season, information about local foods, recipes, and fact sheets. More importantly, you can find a farmer, search agritourism sites, eating and drinking places, farmers market,

wholesalers, wineries, food retailers, processors, and buyers.

One can easily set the mileage to an area of interest. Try the new site and see what you have been missing!

Florida Marketmaker web site:
<http://fl.foodmarketmaker.com>

National Marketmaker web site:
<http://national.marketmaker.uiuc.edu>.

For more information, contact Karen Stauderman, UF Horticulture Extension Agent.

Buckhorning

Severe pruning or buckhorning is a technique used to take the tree limbs, of several inches or more in diameter, back to the healthy portions. This experimental technique is used to stimulate a flushing of growth.

Using this technique, trees are usually pruned back to 4 1/2 feet in height by 4 1/2 feet in width. This severe technique is used together with a shock micronutrient application to treat citrus greening.

Homemade Remedies for Insect and Disease Control

Many gardeners are frustrated with the lack of products available to them for treatments against pests and disease. There is a reason for this. In the past, products have been available; unfortunately, over time, consumers have violated the label use directions, causing them to misuse, over apply, and cause harm to themselves or their crops. I shudder to think this also happens in the medical community. Manufacturers have stopped marketing and labeling their products to homeowners to prevent this from further happening.

Today's gardeners have demanded products that are safer with less toxicity to prevent this from happening accidentally. Here in the United States, we have enacted the highest product safety standards in the world for crop protection in our agricultural field crops as well as home garden products in pest control. Unfortunately, these standards are not enacted or enforced outside the United States. This is why it is recommended that you buy local or nationally grown produce to ensure its safety.

How about home remedies? These can be useful and cost effective. However, there is no guarantee on the effectiveness of homemade products or an implied warranty of their use. Manufacturers, on the other hand, do have an implied warranty. However, it only extends to the label directions as written exactly.

From the Oregon State University publication *Using Home Remedies to Control Garden Pests* (2006.EC1586), here are a few safer home remedies to try.

Continued on Page 4

Wind Sculptures

Gardeners who become habituated to the flora of Central Florida gradually come to an appreciation of what is considered misshapen or gnarly, unpretentious or just plain ugly by those not attune to the plant varieties in our unique region. But those who notice things with a “fresh eye”, come to esteem the Myrtle Oaks - those “unthought of” oaks or “wind sculpted” oaks or “shrubby oaks” that exist quietly in our landscape.

These are not the massive limbed oaks that make a statement, but those small, twisted trunk oaks that are virtually invisible to many. They are the *Quercus myrtifolia* Willdenow and/or other varieties of oak similar in crooked or stunted growth habit, such as the Bluejack or scrub Laurels (there are many hybrids in the oak family). The Myrtles grow only 20 - 40 feet and usually in thickets. Their leaves are shiny, rounded, and leathery. The trunks are “wind-shaped”

as well as their crowns, which are often irregularly formed.

Myrtle Oaks grow in extremely dry coastal sand dunes and scrublands and inland in sandy uplands. They are red oaks, one of eleven members of the native Florida red oaks. These are mainly distinguished from the white oaks (of which eight are natives) by their leaves and bitter acorn fruit, which mature in the second year. However, the acorns provide a high fat/carbohydrate diet for both mammals and birds, including the threatened Florida Scrub Jay. Myrtle Oaks grow in thickets because they readily produce sprouts from rhizomous roots, which enabled them to recover well after the natural fires that used to regenerate the scrub sands with ash minerals. These stands of small trees provide nesting cover for wildlife as well. The Myrtles grow in sun to part shade and generally are

not bothered by pests. Their biggest problem is what urbanization has done to their environment. Once the scrubland plants die, they do not regenerate as they once did because their entire ecoclimate has been changed.

If you look, you may see older, twisted shrubby Myrtle Oaks and similar small oaks in an uncleared area, their branches often draped with soft grey Tillandsia. These are the oaks that could and should be used as a landscape tree, especially where space is limited. They have salt tolerance, and do not require irrigation once established, and their smaller size is not so worrisome with regard to storms. These are the oaks that should be thought of. These are Old Florida and a big part of what makes our landscape truly unique and beautiful.

Rebecca Turner ('06)

Homemade Remedies Continued...

For insect control:

Mix: one teaspoon (tsp) vegetable oil + one tsp dishwashing liquid. Mix well in cup of water. Shake well before and during application. Water the plant well the day before you spray. After a few hours, wash off the oil and soap with a garden hose. Do not spray during the heat of the day in full sun. Thorough coverage of the pest is necessary so spray both sides of the foliage thoroughly until it drips from the leaves. Spray every five to seven days as needed.

For fungal control:

Add to formula above along with one tsp of baking soda. Shake well before and during application.

If the weather is humid or the threat of disease is high, spray every five to seven days. Be sure to spray both sides of the leaves thoroughly. Always test any spray on a small area of the plant. This can be used against black spot & mildew on roses, and powdery mildew, early

blight on tomatoes, and Alternaria leaf spot on summer squash.

Another control for the fungus Powdery Mildew:

Spray a milk solution (one cup milk/nine cups water) twice weekly. (Research conducted in Brazil and published in J. Crop. Protection, 1999, 18:489-92)

For slug control:

Loosen soil and remove weeds, debris, and decaying organic matter which serve as a breeding ground or hiding places. Keep shaded area weed- and litter-free. If your garden is small, remove slugs by hand using a glove. Snails and slugs are attracted to yeast. You can trap slugs and snails by placing beer (any brand) in shallow pans or flat containers at the ground level. Place many containers throughout the garden in open areas. Beer is effective for only about three days before it loses its efficacy. Wash slug slime

off of your hands using white vinegar and warm water.

For control of Earwigs, sowbugs, and pillbugs:

Earwigs are attracted to fish oil, so you can trap them by filling shallow containers with fish oil and burying them in soil up to the edge. After rain, sowbugs and pillbugs emerge from compost spread around the garden. In spring, they migrate to houses. Removing debris is effective. Trap the pests by placing loosely rolled-up damp paper in the garden. They will hide in the paper; collect the rolls of paper each morning, throw them in the garbage, and replace with new rolls.

Caution: When using homemade remedies, always test each spray on a small portion of a plant to make sure there are no adverse affects before applying it to the entire plant. Be aware that different plants will react differently.