Ahhh, summer...the hissing sound of sprinklers on the lawn, the watermelons, the beach, the heat, the BUGS! In this issue of the Cutting Edge we have some great articles that will help you cope with some summer challenges. Our Featured Plant this issue is the Walking Onion. It’s an easy-to-grow plant and all parts of it can be used in cooking. At the request of some of our readers, we have expanded our calendar sections in this issue. In Florida we can plant pretty much year round, even during the hot months, although I like to sit back in July and dream about my fall garden! We have a timely article on hornworms in our “Whats Buggin’ You” section, with pictures from the University of Florida of the larvae and the adult moths. In many ways Florida is a state of extremes and although we have had a good amount of rain so far this year, we all know dry times are coming. Check out the Make a Rainbarrel article on page 6 and the second installation of the nine Florida Friendly Landscaping principles on page 7. These articles can help you through the droughty times. On page 8 is a notice about a Food Preservation Workshop that will be held here at the Bradford County Extension Office.

So get out there and garden, or, if you’re like me, settle back on the porch with an iced tea and several seed catalogues and enjoy the summer! Laurie Compton

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**Featured Plant: Walking Onion**

*(Allium cepa var).* Proliferum is distinct because of its unique appearance when it blooms. It is also known as Egyptian onion, tree onion, top set and perennial onion. A variety commonly grown in Florida is listed in seed catalogs as Red Egyptian Topset. It originated in Canada, and became popular in kitchen gardens in the 1790’s. Walking onion produces a tall, thick stalk which can be eaten like chives or spring onions early in the season. When the plant is mature and ready to bloom, it sends up a flower stalk that produces clusters of small onions called bulbils. Bulbils can be harvested and used like pearl onions or shallots and are excellent for pickling. As the stem matures and weakens, the weight of the bulbils forces the main stem down and allows bulbils to make contact with soil. The bulbils then root and start new plants. Easily naturalized, you can separate the bulbils, or plant them as bunches about 8 inches apart. These plants are best grown as annuals. Best results will be obtained if started in the fall, but winter and spring plantings give fair results.

http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mv101
**The Cutting Edge**

**July In the Garden: What to Plant**

**Bedding Plants:** Annuals to plant now include celosia, coleus, torenia and ornamental peppers.

**Bulbs:** Butterfly lily, gladiolus, and society garlic can be planted during the middle of summer.

**Vegetables:** Plant watermelon, peppers, okra, southern peas, and eggplant. Provide water during dry spells.

**Palms:** Plant palms while the rainy season is in full swing. Support with braces for 6-8 months after planting. Nails should not be driven directly into a palm trunk.

Source: [http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/](http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/)

**July Wildlife Calendar**

July brings the dog-days of summer, our national Independence Day, and some great wildlife activity.

**Birds:**
- Shore bird migration starts in mid-July, peaking in August.
- Swallow tailed kites, purple martins and tree swallows begin gathering in preparation for migrating south for the winter.

**Reptiles:**
- Later this month, young alligators and crocodiles will begin to hatch.

**Mammals:**
- Baby raccoons, foxes, armadillos, possum and bobcats leave dens and begin following their parents.

**Plants:**
- Sea oats flower along the Atlantic.
- Scrub morning glory and butterfly weed begin to bloom.

Source: [http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/](http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/)

**July In the Garden: What to Do**

**Trees:** Prepare for hurricane season by checking trees for damaged or weakened branches and prune if needed.

**Lawn insects:** Lawn pests can be a problem this time of year. Before treating, find out if an insect is the culprit and treat only the affected area.

**Solarize the vegetable garden:** Use summer heat as a tool in preparing the vegetable garden for fall planting. It takes four to six weeks to kill weeds, disease and nematodes, so start now.

**Irrigation:** An inexpensive rain shut off device can save money by overriding an irrigation system when it rains. If one is already installed, check that it is operating properly.

**Pests on ornamental Plants:** Small white dots on the leaves of azaleas and other ornamental plants may indicate lacebugs at work. Spraying forcefully with water helps control this pest.

**Peach and nectarine trees:** Many of the new cultivars of peaches and nectarines grow well in North Florida. Newly planted trees should be fertilized now. Apply 1/2 pound of 8-8-8 fertilizer per tree.

Source: [http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/](http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/)
**August in the Garden: What to Plant**

**Bedding Plants:** Limit planting now to heat tolerant melampodium, salvias, torenia, and coleus.

**Bulbs:** Aztec Lily, Butterfly Lily, Walking Iris, and Spider Lily can be planted any time of the year.

**Herbs:** Herbs that can be planted from plants (not seeds) include bay laurel, ginger, Mexican tarragon, and rosemary.

**Vegetables:** This month is the **start of the fall planting season** with many varieties of cool and warm season crops to start now. Contact the Bradford County Extension Office for a copy of the Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide or go to [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021) for more information.

Source: [http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/](http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/)

**August in the Garden: What to Do**

**Lawn problems:** Lawn insects are very active during the warm months. Check frequently for damaged areas and keep insects in check with early treatment.

**Palms:** If older fronds are yellowing, apply magnesium sulfate (Epsom Salts) to correct the problem.

**Vegetables:** If not done in July, solarize the vegetable garden in preparation for fall planting.

**Poinsettias:** Pinch back Poinsettias and Mums before the end of the month to allow time for buds to form for winter bloom.

**Ornamental plants:** Rapid growth and leaching rains may result in nutrient deficiencies in some plants. Fertilize those plants that show signs of deficiencies.

**Bedding plants:** Remove spent blooms, cut back, and fertilize.

**Mow Lawns at Recommended Heights:**
- St. Augustine & Bahia: 3-4”
- Centipede: 1.5-2.0 “
- Dwarf St. Augustine: 2.5”

Source: [http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/](http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/)

**August Wildlife Calendar**

Here are some interesting things to look for in August:

**Birds:**
- First flocks of blue-winged and green-winged teal arrive to winter on Florida lakes and wetlands.
- Yellow warbler migration begins.

**Mammals:**
- Two year old black bear cubs will wean from their mothers.

**Reptiles:**
- Young sea turtles are hatching.

**Insects:**
- Thousands of great southern white butterflies can be seen migrating through coastal areas.

Source: [http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/](http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/)
The Cutting Edge

September In the Garden: What to Plant

**Bedding Plants:** If summer beds need refreshing, try ageratum, celosia, zinnias, and wax begonias.

**Bulbs:** Add color, texture, and pattern to the garden with the many varieties of Elephant’s Ears (Alocasia) available now.

**Herbs:** Plant herbs that tolerate the warm temperatures of early fall, such as Mexican tarragon, mints, rosemary, and basil.

**Vegetables:** Start the fall planting season now. Plant cool season vegetable crops such as beets, cabbage, lettuce, and onions.

Source: http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/

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September In the Garden: What to Do

**Lawn problems:** Continue to monitor the lawn for signs of insect damage. Fall armyworms, chinch bugs, mole crickets, and sod webworms are still active this month.

**Divide perennials and bulbs:** Divide and replant perennials and bulbs that have grown too large or need rejuvenation. Add organic matter to new planting areas and monitor water needs during establishment.

**Fertilize lawns:** Bahia, Bermudagrass, Zoysia, and St, Augustine lawns should be fertilized this month with a complete fertilizer. Choose one with slow or timed-release nitrogen for longer lasting results.

**Check irrigation system:** Before summer rains taper off, check that irrigation systems are providing good coverage and operating properly.

**Amaryllis:** Dig and reset Amaryllis plants now. Divide large bulbs and remove offsets. Replant in an area that has been amended with organic matter.

**Vegetable gardens:** If not done in August, prepare the fall vegetable garden. Using transplants from your local garden center will get the garden off to a fast start, but seeds provide a wider variety. Contact the Bradford County Extension Office for a copy of the Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide or go to http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021

Source: http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/

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September Wildlife Calendar

September brings the beginning of Fall, and the peak of the hurricane season, so we should be seeing some new species and activity as a result. Some things to look for in September:

**Birds:**
- Get feeders ready for returning birds.
- Bald eagles return to nest sites and begin courtship.

**Mammals:**
- Deer breeding begins in south Florida flatwoods.
- Manatees concentrate in rivers, bays and near power plants.

**Fish:**
- Atlantic sturgeon begin fall migration from the Suwannee and Apalachicola Rivers to the Gulf of Mexico.

**Invertebrates:**
- Blue crabs migrate from the shallow panhandle coast to deeper water for winter.

Source: http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/
This month’s insects are two closely related species: the tomato hornworm and the tobacco hornworm. The larvae (caterpillars) of these two species are commonly found on tomato plants in the garden. They are similar in appearance and can consume all foliage on a plant very rapidly. They will feed on leaves, blossoms, and green fruits. Due to the green color of the larvae, they are difficult to detect before they cause a great deal of damage to a plant.

Once the eggs hatch, the caterpillars require approximately 20 days to enter the pupal stage before becoming adults. The pupal stage can be found buried in the soil. As adults, these species are large grayish moths with orange-yellow spots along the abdomen. The adult moths are not destructive to gardens as they feed on the nectar of a variety of plants, rather than on the foliage.

Several different control methods can be used to effectively lower the number of tomato and tobacco hornworms in your garden. Chemical insecticides can be used, but these are most useful against the young caterpillars. A bacterial insecticide, *Bacillus thuringiensis*, can also be used on the foliage of affected plants. Caterpillars can also be hand-picked and destroyed. To control the pupae, normal soil tillage methods should be used. Some wasp species are also effective predators or parasitoids on these species.

Frequent inspection of tomato plants for young larvae and immediate removal of these organisms is the best method of control. Hopefully they won’t become a problem in your garden, but if they do, now you know what to do!
Florida receives an average of 53 inches of rainfall per year. Most of this water washes across lawns and pavement, carrying fertilizers and other chemicals into local waterways. An inch of rainfall over a 1000 sq.ft. area yields in excess of 600 gallons of water. A rain barrel is an inexpensive means of capturing and storing some of this water for later use. By installing a rain barrel you'll not only help reduce pollution, but you'll also have a supply of free non-chlorinated soft water for irrigating your landscape!

**Choose and clean your barrel**

Use a food-quality container. Do not use a barrel that held corrosive or toxic chemicals. Rinse the side of the barrel before decorating.

**Decorate your barrel**

**Install the hose bibs**

To install a 3/4" hose spigot, drill a 15/16" hole for the spigot threading just a few inches from the bottom of the barrel. This will provide a few inches of clearance for attaching a hose or filling a watering can and allow for debris to settle below the outlet to reduce clogging. We also installed a second spigot near the top to handle over-flow or for possible connection to a second barrel. Wrap the threads of the hose bib with teflon plumbers tape to guard against leaking.

**Choose your location**

Concrete cinder blocks provide a strong, stable and level platform for your rain barrel. The higher the barrel, the more gravity will increase your water pressure.

**Connect to your downspout**

Position the barrel at its set height and measure where you need to cut or disconnect your downspout. Often you can disassemble the downspout at the gutter by taking out screws or drilling out rivets. If you do have to cut it off, use a fine-toothed hacksaw blade or tin snips.

Place the downspout connection in the barrel. If your barrel comes with a lid, or if it has a sealed top, you will need to cut a hole in it. Seal around the downspout with silicone.

**Overflow**

You may want to connect an overflow pipe or link multiple barrels together. An overflow pipe will carry excess water that would normally overflow the barrel to another part of the yard or into another rain barrel; this is a great way to reduce water around the foundation of your house during rain.

**Edited by Jim DeValerio, Bradford County Extension**

**Created by Master Gardener Tracey Davis**
The second of the nine Florida Friendly Landscape principles, Water Efficiently, can help you reduce water bills, pest problems and maintenance needs. We all know water is a limited resource and should be used wisely, but we often overwater our landscapes unintentionally. Overwatering does more than deplete the water supply; it also makes plants more prone to disease and pests. By choosing and operating a watering system correctly, you can reduce water bills, decrease plant problems, and lower maintenance requirements. For example, the more you water your lawn, the faster it grows and the more it needs to be mowed. It’s also more likely to develop fungal problems that require treatment with pesticides. Overwatering can also cause water pollution by a process called leaching. Leaching happens when more fertilizer is applied to a landscape than the plants can absorb, or when heavy rains and overwatering cause nutrients to travel quickly through Florida’s sandy soils, past plant roots, and into the aquifer. Eventually these nutrients can reach nearby water bodies, disrupting natural systems.

Choosing the right plant for the right place is essential to Watering Efficiently. All plants must get the right amount of sun, water, and nutrients to thrive—even natives. Select plants suited to your area, place them in the landscape where site conditions match their needs, and group plants with similar water needs together.

Water thoughtfully: A drop here and a drop there can add up to a lot of water. Always follow water restrictions in your area. Water early in the morning and irrigate plants and grass only when they start to wilt, if permitted by water use restrictions.

Hand water when possible: Hand watering is usually allowed during water restrictions, because it uses less water than an automatic irrigation system. Use a watering can, pail, or hose with an automatic shutoff nozzle, hand water potted plants, shrubs, trees, vegetables, and flower beds, and check if your water management district limits hand watering.

Perform regular irrigation system maintenance: An irrigation system is only as efficient as it’s maintained to be. Check for and repair leaks. Unclog and replace broken heads. Point heads at plants, not driveways and sidewalks, and prune plants that interfere with irrigation systems.

Calibrate irrigation system: Even an efficient irrigation system can waste water if it’s left on for too long. The ideal amount of water to apply to a lawn is 1/2 - 3/4 inch. Call your Extension Office for information on how to calibrate your system.

Make a rain barrel: Rain barrels capture rainwater that flows off your roof, and they’re easy and inexpensive to make. Instead of watering your plants with water you’re paying for, you’re using free water!

Mulch plants: Mulch helps keep moisture in the soil around your plants. Choose from many different kinds of mulch and apply two to three inches around trees, shrubs, flowers, and vegetables.

Mow correctly: How you mow your lawn can have a big impact on how much water it needs. Raise your mowing deck to promote a healthy root system, which will make your grass more drought tolerant.

Be a weather watcher: Rain is irrigation, too. Use it to your advantage—it’s free!

Source: Excerpts from http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/
University of Florida/IFAS
Bradford County Extension Service

FOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Friday August 20th, 2010
9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
at the
Bradford County Extension Office
2266 N. Temple Ave. Starke, FL 32091

Program will emphasize canning foods, however, freezing and drying will be covered as well.
Cost of program is $25.00 per person to cover supplies.

Attendees will receive:
Copy of Simply Florida Cookbook
Newest Food Preservation Information
Door Prizes

Registration Information:
Deadline to register for this program is Tuesday, August 17th.

Please call the Bradford County Extension Office at 904-966-6299
for questions or to reserve your spot.