



The Cutting Edge

Master Gardener Vision “*to be the most trusted resource for horticultural education in Florida*”

2266 N. Temple Ave., Starke, 904.966.6299 Email: lcompton@ufl.edu

Subtle Fall Colors

I've enjoyed watching the winged sumac on my property put on its berries, and one of these days I am going to take the time to harvest those berries make and some jelly with them! And I can't wait until the sumac puts on it's beautiful red color for fall. I also enjoy watching the wild grape vines turning yellow; they look like fairy lights up in the trees and really stand out at night. Then there is the goldenrod along the road, the 'swamp roses' (sunflowers), and some fall foliage colors of red, yellow and brown when the chlorophyll in the leaves start breaking down. We do have fall color in Florida, it's just more subtle. For some ideas on color in the garden for fall and winter read pages 6 and 7. Our featured plant, Firebush, is also a fall bloomer. On pages 2, 3 and 4 are the gardening calendars for November and Jim has written an interesting article on. Scale insects in the garden. You can find it on page 5. And can you believe it? November is almost here and your invitation to our Annul Farm City Luncheon is on page 8. Call to reserve a spot—hope to see you there and Happy Fall Gardening!

Laurie

Firebush

This charming Florida native will delight everyone with beautiful orange-red flowers throughout most of the year. Firebush, (*Hamelia patens*), is a large, soft-stemmed shrub that can reach a height and width of 8 to 12 feet tall without support. A one foot tall specimen that is planted in the spring can be expected to reach 5 feet or more by the following winter. It can grow to 15 feet tall or more if given support on a trellis or other structure. Its evergreen leaves are covered with red tomentum (hairs) when young and are speckled with red or purple at maturity. The petiole and young stems also appear red. These attractive leaves are commonly arranged in whorls of 3. Bright orange-red flowers appear in forking cymes at the tips of the branches throughout the year. The slender flowers are tubular and reach a length of 1 to 1 ½ inches. Although tolerant of shade, flowering is much reduced. The bright red flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies, including the zebra longwing and gulf fritillary butterflies. Song birds also like to feed on the berries. As an added attraction, this plant will also give you fall color!



Laurie

In the Garden: What to Plant in October

Even though temperatures are still warm, begin planting for the cooler months ahead. For instant color plant marigolds, coleus, and garden mums. Bulbs or bulb-types to plant include amaryllis, Aztec lily, calla, iris, lachenalia (leopard lily), narcissus, snowflake, watsonia, and zephyr lily.

Many crops can be planted now that will grow and produce through the winter months. These include beet, Brussels sprout, carrot, onion, pole beans, cucumbers, summer squash, tomatoes, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, leek, lettuce, mustard, onions, parsley, radish and turnips.



Leopard Lily

In the Garden: What to Do in October

Scout for insect and disease problems. Aphids, mealy bugs, whiteflies and other insect populations can build up quickly. To keep plants in bloom and reduce disease problems, remove old flowers (called deadheading). Harvest season for grapes comes to a close as other fruits like persimmons and pecans begin their season. Satsumas ripen around late October, especially if we start getting cooler weather. Fertilize fruit trees and shrubs in September as a final application. Wait to fertilize persimmons because they may drop fruit if fertilized. Check grafted plants to make sure no growth emerges below the graft union. Graft unions are usually 6" above the soil level and a swollen area is usually noticeable.



Japanese persimmon

Wildlife Calendar October

- Blazing star, summer farewell and other wildflowers bloom in pine uplands
- Monarch butterfly migration nears its peak along Florida's Gulf coast.
- Look for migrating Peregrine falcons in natural areas, especially along the coast as they follow shorebird prey.
- Warbler migration peaks early this month.
- Sandhill cranes that nested in more northern latitudes begin to move down to join our resident birds.
- Ducks begin to arrive for the winter
- Grosbeaks, warblers, tanagers, orioles, and thrushes begin migrating south for the winter



Sandhill Crane

Did You Know? Within the last few decades, sandhill cranes have greatly expanded their nesting range and numbers in the upper Midwest, a population that migrates southeastward toward Florida for the winter. Most populations are now stable or increasing, but still vulnerable to loss of habitat. Degradation of habitat at major stopover points for migrants could have serious impact on species. Localized races in Mississippi and Cuba are endangered.

Source: <http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/sandhill-crane>

In the Garden: What to Plant in November

Fall gardening is in full swing now. Some vegetables to try: Brussels sprouts, carrots, cauliflower, lettuce and spinach. November is the time to plant strawberries. Varieties to try include ‘Camarosa’, ‘Sweet Charlie’ and ‘Festival’. Plant in double rows and raised beds. Strawberries are also well suited for containers. There are lots of annuals that can be planted now. Try carnations, foxglove, larkspur, pansies and petunias. Bulb type plants for November include amaryllis, daylily, shell ginger and society garlic. Society garlic is a great landscape plant that has color most of the year.



“Festival” Strawberries

In the Garden: What to Do in November

Harvest persimmons as they ripen. Astringent varieties should be left on the tree until fully ripe, but non-astringent varieties can be harvested when firm. Satsumas can be ready to eat even though the peels are not completely orange so taste them for sweetness. Got weeds? Now’s the time to spot treat for perennial weeds. Hand pulling is still the best option if a weed is setting seed. Scout ornamental plants for scale, grasshoppers, caterpillars, whiteflies, and leaf beetles. If treatment is needed, treat only the affected area and use a Florida- Friendly insecticide (soaps, oils, neem, BT) to protect beneficial insects. Grasshoppers are laying eggs so to avoid higher numbers next year, kill manually because insecticides are not effective.



Florida Wax Scale

Source: http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/pdfs/November_Central.pdf

Wildlife Calendar November

- Set up winter seed and suet feeders
- Cedar waxwings come south for the winter. Their flocks can be seen on cedars, hollies, cherry laurels, privet, and other fruit plants.
- Sandhill cranes return in full force from their breeding grounds up north. (Only a small number live here all year round).
- Many yellow-rumped warblers and palm warblers will be in neighborhoods, natural areas, and yards, and gray catbirds have already arrived, and will be skulking (and cat-calling!) in thickets.



Gray Catbird

Did You Know? Rather plain but with lots of personality, the Gray Catbird often hides in the shrubbery, making an odd variety of musical and harsh sounds, including the catlike mewing responsible for its name. At other times it moves about boldly in the open, jerking its long tail expressively. Most catbirds winter in the southern United States or the tropics, but a few linger far to the north if they have access to a reliable source of berries or a well-stocked bird feeder.

Source: <http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/gray->

In the Garden: What to Plant in December

There are many annuals for cool weather. Try carnation (China doll), delphinium, dianthus, foxglove (digitalis), larkspur, lobelia, ornamental cabbage, ornamental kale, pansy, petunia, Shasta daisy, snapdragon and violas. Because a lot of vegetables are also attractive, consider using plants like Swiss chard or leaf lettuce in place of annuals. This is the season for arugula, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, Chinese cabbage, collards, kale, kohlrabi, leek, mustard, onions and radish. If you like leaf lettuce, try growing it in a container so it can be brought in during the coldest nights.



Kohlrabi

In the Garden: What to Do in December

Remove leaves as they drop from deciduous plants if they had a leaf spot disease to reduce disease problems next year. Otherwise, use them to mulch plant beds, in vegetable gardens, or compost piles. Install new ornamentals in the landscape now to give them a chance to establish roots before the heat kicks in next spring. Keep watered if weather is dry. Remember to plant them about 10% above the existing soil grade. Avoid heavy pruning now because it will stimulate new growth that is susceptible to the cold. It is okay to prune dead wood, diseased wood, and suckers coming from the plant base anytime of the year. Prune summer/fall blooming plants like Rose of Sharon in late winter.



Rose of Sharon

Wildlife Calendar December

- Annual Christmas bird count begins mid-December.
- This is the best time for watching waterfowl on wetlands, lakes, and prairies.
- Listen for Great horned owls and barred owls courting.
- Look for Goldfinches at north Florida feeders.
- Yellow-rumped warblers will show-up at feeders if it is cold enough.
- In north Florida, bald eagles start hatching about Christmas day.



Great Horned Owl

- **Did You Know?** With its long, earlike tufts, intimidating yellow-eyed stare, and deep hooting voice, the Great Horned Owl is the quintessential owl of storybooks. This powerful predator can take down birds and mammals even larger than itself, but it also dines on daintier fare such as tiny scorpions, mice, and frogs. It's one of the most common owls in North America, equally at home in deserts, wetlands, forests, grasslands, backyards, cities, and almost any other semi-open habitat between the Arctic and the tropics.

Source: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Great_Horned_Owl/id

Whats Buggin You - Scale Insects On Ornamentals

Scale insects are a diverse group of piercing-sucking pests (Hemiptera) commonly found on ornamental plants in landscapes and nurseries. Scale insects are small insects that use hair-like mouthparts to extract plant sap from leaves or branches. They are often overlooked by the untrained eye but they are easy to spot once you know what to look for.

On stems they often appear to be part of the twig, or a bump on a branch or leaf. On close inspection you will see that there are usually many of the little “bumps” and that they can be scraped off of the leaf. At this point I like to get my magnifying glass out for closer observation so I can begin the process of identifying the pest.

Scale insects can secrete a waxy covering that protects them from the environment and most chemical control measures. There are several families of scale insects; however, they can be generally divided into two main categories: armored and soft. Distinguishing between the two is important because their biology and management differ.

Armored scales: insects feed on the contents of cells just under the surface of leaves and bark and excrete their waste in the form of a protective cover. This cover can be removed to reveal the soft-bodied insect feeding beneath. Once female armored scales begin to feed on a host plant they will remain immobile in that location for the remainder of their life.



Gloomy scale, with armored covering removed.
Credit: A.G. Dale



Credit: A.G. Dale

Soft scales: (like the false oleander scale on the left), has a waxy cover that is not separate from the insect's body & cannot be removed. Although both are sedentary, female soft scales are mobile in every life stage (unlike armored scales), until they begin to produce eggs. Soft scales feed on the vascular tissue of plants and excrete honeydew as waste. The honeydew may cause a black covering on leaves and stems that is mistaken for a plant disease. **Biology:** Armored scales are only mobile as crawlers. After selecting a feeding site, females settle on the plant where they lose their antennae and legs and begin to produce their waxy covering.

Here, they will feed on the content of plant cells for the remainder of their life. Eggs will hatch and the life cycle will be repeated. Many species transition from the bark to leaves throughout the season. In their final location, adult females will appear more dome-shaped or produce a cottony elongation on their body, which contains the eggs.

Control: Scout and identify the pest and the plant the scale is on. Most scale insect pests are attacked by a number wasps, lady beetles and lacewings. High-pressure water sprays can remove armored scales and scale covers from bark and reduce populations without the need for chemical control. Use of insecticides, horticultural oils, dormant oils and insecticidal soaps may be options for control. Read <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in197> and <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg005> (article credit) before taking action.

Jim DeValerio

More Fall Color

While it's true I miss the beautiful fall colors up north, I am looking forward to the unique colors of a North Florida winter. Here are just some of the plants we count on for winter color (while all the plants up north are under a blanket of snow!).



Pansies and violas are terrific cold-tolerant annuals that you plant in winter and enjoy through spring. Viola flowers are typically less than an inch across, while pansy flowers can be two to three inches wide. Pansies and violas come in a range of colors, including red, white, purple, yellow, and apricot. Some pansy flowers are a single bright color, some have a dark center. Some also produce a sweet scent at dawn and dusk. Pansies and violas are ideal for borders, containers, and window boxes. They're also edible! Plant in a well-drained, rich soil. Give them plenty of sun, water as needed.

Snapdragons range in size from six inches to three feet tall and come in a rainbow of colors, so select a variety that fits your landscape. Plant snapdragons as weather cools in the fall. In North Florida, protect them on the coldest nights. They do best in soil amended with organic matter and prefer full sun. Snapdragons make great borders and they're beautiful when planted in groups. They are a long-lasting cut flower, and can even thrive in containers. Accent your snapdragons with pansies and alyssum for a cottage garden feel.



Firespike, one of my favorite plants, adds a big pop of red to the garden, making some gardeners suggest that it's the equivalent of red salvia on steroids. Known botanically as *Odontonema strictum*, firespike grows 4 to 6 feet tall and produces clusters of 3-inch-long, tubular red flowers. The foot-long spikes of showy flowers appear during fall and winter in North Florida. They attract hummingbirds and several species of butterflies that feed on the nectar. Because of its height and large, glossy foliage, firespike makes a great anchor when massed at the back of a garden bed.

American beautyberry grows as a slightly sprawling, small shrub (3 to 8 feet tall; 4 to 8 feet wide) and can work well in borders or as a specimen plant. The branches form long arches that bend toward the ground. You can prune the branches to give the plant a more compact habit. Flowers appear along the branches from June through August and then mature into jewel-like berries by September. If not devoured first by birds, the berries will persist for several weeks after the plant drops its leaves. You can plant beautyberry at any time during the year, and it will be drought-tolerant once established. Beautyberry prefers rich soils, but will also grow in a poor and sandy soils.



Yaupon hollies should be planted in a spot where they'll receive full or partial sun. They are both drought and salt tolerant, meaning this plant can find a home in a variety of landscapes. Remember to purchase a female holly if you want a plant that produces berries. Shop for a holly during the winter and purchase one that already has berries on it. Some cultivars, like 'Nana' and 'Schellings', are all-male plants. Yaupon holly readily sprouts from the roots; these sprouts will need to be pruned to the ground two or three times a year to keep the base of your plant looking neat. While yaupon holly is relatively free of serious pests and diseases, scale, leaf miners, mites, and aphids can sometimes be a problem



Cassia are delightful in the fall landscape because they are covered with cheerful yellow flowers when few other plants are blooming. Cassia also provides interesting foliage during other times of the year. Another benefit is that they serve as larval host plants for three types of Florida butterflies: cloudless, sleepy orange, and orange-barred sulphur. Two forms of cassia are most popular in gardens: candlestick bush (*Senna alata*), and butterfly bush or Christmas senna (*Senna bicapsularis*).

Flowering dogwood is a popular tree native to the eastern U.S., including North Florida. This beautiful spreading tree grows up to 35 feet tall. The dogwood is an understory tree, so it does best in part or filtered sun, and grow best in well drained, slightly acidic soils. They're not drought tolerant, and should get plenty of water. The dogwood tree blooms for a few weeks in the spring, with four-petaled white flowers. Its leaves turn a spectacular red in the fall before dropping. The tree has bright crimson berries that birds just love.



With its attractive yellow or orange fall leaf color, Florida maple is ideal for use as an ornamental or shade tree. While smaller and less showy than the related northern sugar maple, it's better suited to Florida, due to its higher heat tolerance. The Florida maple can reach 60 feet in height, but is more often seen at heights of 20 to 30 feet. This maple provides beautiful fall colors in muted yellows and oranges, and older trees have very attractive ribbed gray bark. Plant your Florida maple in full or part sun. It'll do well in a variety of soils and is tolerant of short drought periods. Irrigation can help your tree pull through extended drought.

So, if you think we don't have fall and winter color, look again!

Laurie



The Bradford County Extension office, in partnership with Florida Farm Bureau, Kiwanis of Starke and the Starke Rotary Club, Bradford Soil & Water Conservation District, and several other sponsors are privileged to invite you to the 7th Annual Farm City Day Celebration. We start the day at 9 am with educational demonstrations for the 3rd graders of Bradford County followed by a luncheon at noon.

You Are Cordially Invited to The Luncheon

The Farm City Luncheon is on Tuesday, November 15th at 12 pm in Building # 1 of the Fairgrounds. There is no charge for the luncheon but you **MUST** RSVP by November 4th. To RSVP for the luncheon or to help with a donation (see below), please call 904-966-6299.

Are you interested in supporting farming and agricultural awareness in Bradford County? If so, please consider making a donation to support our annual Farm City Celebration. Donations will be used to transport third graders to the event, provide educational materials and to purchase food for the luncheon. No donation is too small. Call the Bradford County Extension Office at 904-966-6299 to find out how to contribute. All supporters will be recognized in our promotional material.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution



The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information, and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions, or affiliations. USDA, UF/IFAS Extension, FAMU and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating.