



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

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It's Spring!

It's been a long, hard winter, but it looks like it's finally easing its grip on Florida. The dogwoods and redbuds are blooming, the azaleas and lorapetalums have put on a beautiful show—it's spring! Read more about our native redbuds in 'Featured Plant' below. April is the time to get busy in the garden. For ideas on what to plant and what to do in the garden, see pages 2, 3 and 4. Wendy has some great information for you on page 5 about Leafcutting bees. To learn how to divide the perennials in your garden, check out the article on pages 6 and 8. If you are looking for a way to invite hummingbirds and butterflies into your yard and garden, be sure to come to the Extension office on Saturday, April 26th. That is the day of our Master Gardener fund raiser, the Spring Fling Plant Sale (see page 7). Along with selling butterfly and hummingbird plants we will also have educational booths on several different subjects including butterfly gardening, composting and soil testing. So 'Save the Date' and come see us on the 26th! And sadly, we have lost one of our Master Gardeners this year. Master Gardener Dave Peace and his wife, Christine, were killed in a motorcycle accident on March 12th. We have a short memorial on page 8. Spring is a time of renewal—plant some flowers or vegetables—it renews your spirit, your soul and the earth.

Laurie

Eastern Redbud

Eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) is usually one of the first trees to bloom in spring. Pink to reddish purple flowers are grown on old twigs, branches, and trunks. Flowering occurs in March to May before leaf growth. After bloom, the leaves begin growing and gradually turn dark green. When mature, the alternately arranged leaves are about four inches long, four inches wide and heart shaped with prominent venation. Eastern redbud produces clusters of flat green pods that change to brown when mature.

Each pod contains four to ten small hard black or brown seeds. Eastern redbud occurs as scattered trees or small populations. It is an understory species in open woods and is found on moist, loam or sandy soils in valleys or bottomlands. Usually this tree is more numerous on south facing slopes with more sunlight. Eastern redbud grows on a wide range of pH; however, it is not found on inundated sites, poorly aerated soils, or coarse sands. The tree is fire tolerant and root sprouts after fire.



Source: http://www.floridata.com/ref/c/cercis_c.cfm

What to Plant in April

If you are looking for an **Annual** that will do well in the sun or in the shade, and will provide vivid color and patterns for months, try planting some coleus. Caladiums are **Bulbs** that will do well in the shady parts of your garden, and also are attractive cut and put in a vase of water. Louisiana iris also makes a great cut flower, and thrives in most types of soil, but prefers moist soils with high organic matter content. You may also want to try bulbs like cannas and blood lily. If you like **Herbs**, plant some that love the heat, like basil, oregano, sage, Mexican tarragon and rosemary. Keep planting warm season **Vegetables** like okra and cucumbers. If you mulch them well it will help prevent weeds. Be sure to provide irrigation if rainfall is scarce. April is also a good time to plant many **Shrubs and Trees**. Try fringetree, red bud or Carolina Silverbell.



Okra Flower

What to Do in April

Now that tender new growth is coming out on landscape plants, monitor them weekly for signs of **Pests** like aphids, scale and mealybugs. One of the best things about gardening is being able to pass along cuttings and divisions, so **Divide Perennials and Bulbs** this month to share with friends and family. April is also a good time to divide ornamental grasses. Very often **Lawn Problems** like lack of water can look like insect damage. Confirm that insects are the culprit before applying a pesticide. Wait until mid April to apply **Lawn Fertilizer**. The best time to apply is after new growth has started. Choose a lawn fertilizer with little or no phosphorous, unless a soil test indicates a need for it. Fertilizers with slow release nitrogen will give longer lasting results.



Muhly grass

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

Wildlife Calendar April

- Bobwhite quail nest now through September.
- Hummingbirds feed on blooms of columbine, buckeye, and others.
- Black bears begin moving after winter's inactivity.
- Plant extra parsley for black swallowtail butterfly larvae to eat.
- Blooming wildflowers and pitcher plants blanket the wet savannahs of the Apalachicola National Forest.

Source: http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/april.php



Flat leaf parsley

Did You Know? Most people know that parsley is a versatile herb that is used in cooking, with the flat-leaf form having the strongest flavor. But here's something you may not know about parsley: it's also a host plant for caterpillars of the black swallowtail butterfly. So why not plant parsley in your garden this season? Even if you don't cook with it, the caterpillars will thank you!

Laurie

What to Plant in May

Annuals that can take the summer heat include angelonia, wax begonia, salvia and ornamental pepper. If you like months of color in your garden, try planting low maintenance early, mid and late blooming **Bulbs** of daylilies. Oregano, sage, basil and rosemary are heat loving **Herbs** to try. Some Southern **Vegetable** favorites that can be planted in May include southern peas, sweet potatoes and okra. Come into the Extension office and get a copy of the Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide for more ideas.



Daylillies

What to Do in May

Harmful **Insects** can become more active as the warm weather returns. Be a good scout! Check ornamental plants as least once a week for scale, thrips and mites. Some yellowing of older leaves on **Gardenias** is normal, but yellowing of new growth can indicate a nutrient deficiency. Watch for damage from chinch bugs in St Augustine **Lawns** and begin scouting for newly hatched mole crickets in Bahia lawns. If you didn't do it in April, apply a **Lawn Fertilizer** (not a weed and feed) without phosphorous unless a soil test indicates the need for it. Now is the time to watch for nutritional disorders, pests and disease on **Tomatoes**. May is an excellent time to **Propagate** landscape plants by air layering, grafting, division or cuttings. Hurricane season is right around the corner. Prepare for it by checking **Trees** for damaged or weak limbs and prune if needed.



Gardenia flower

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

Wildlife Calendar May

- Painted Buntings nest through summer in northeast Florida.
- Bald eagles begin migrating north.
- Alligators begin to court and make loud resounding 'bellows'.
- Loggerhead sea turtles begin nesting on summer nights.
- Soft-shell and alligator snapping turtles complete egg laying.
- Velvet-leaf milkweed blooms on sand hills and clay hills.

Source: http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/



Asclepias tomentosa

Did You Know?

Velvetleaf milkweed (*Asclepias tomentosa*) is a rather nondescript member of the milkweed family which occurs in a variety of well-drained upland sites throughout most of Florida and the Southeast. This is a native, deciduous species that dies back to the ground in the late fall after its seeds are released. As it emerges in the spring, it can go largely unnoticed as it sends its stalk upwards. Eventually, it reaches a height of about 3 feet in summer. The individual stalks are stiff, and opposite rounded leaves occur along the length of each. The leaves are somewhat fuzzy in texture; hence the common name.

Source: <http://hawthornhillwildflowers.blogspot.com/2010/08/velvetleaf-milkweed-asclepias-tomentosa.html>

What to Plant in June

Annuals that can take full sun during hot summer months include celosia, portulaca, vinca, and some coleus. Add bright color to the landscape with a variety of **Perennial** salvias including blue sage, 'Hot Lips' salvia, Mexican sage, and rose leaf sage. Summer's warm, rainy weather is the perfect time to plant **Palms**. Make sure to not cover the trunk with soil. Plant heat loving **Herbs**, including basil, Mexican tarragon, and rosemary. Pinch back regularly to prevent flowering and enhance branching. **Vegetables** to plant include okra, southern pea, lima bean, and sweet potato. It's too late to plant tomatoes.



Vinca

What to Do in June

Monitor the landscape weekly for harmful **Insects**. Knowing which insects commonly attack a plant can aid in identification and treatment. If you are unsure what insect you have, bring a sample to the Extension office for identification. **Irrigation:** June is normally the start of the rainy season, but if rainfall has been spotty, watch for drought stress and water as needed.



Azaleas

Palms and cycads: Watch for nutrient deficiencies or environmental problems with palms and correct using an appropriate treatment. Keep lawn fertilizers away from the rootzone of palms. **Pruning:** Many summer flowering shrubs, like hibiscus, oleander, and crapemyrtle, benefit from frequent light pruning during the warmer months to encourage further blooming. **Azaleas** can still be pruned in June without harming next spring's buds. **Rejuvenate lawn areas:** For areas where grass doesn't grow well, try replacing it with versatile ground covers. **Lawn problems:** Yellow and brown lawn patches can be caused by chinch bugs, disease, or lack of water. Take time to determine the cause so your remedy is effective.

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

Wildlife Calendar June

- Mockingbirds may attack pedestrians who wander too close to nesting sites.
- The Southern Flying Squirrel is starting its breeding season.
- It's the height of the Gopher Tortoise breeding season.
- Cicadas emerge from their underground growth period to begin making their classic summer sound.
- Snook begin moving into inlets and passes.
- Narrow leaf pawpaw blooms in sandhills.



Narrow leaf pawpaw

Did You Know? Narrow leaf pawpaw blooms from April to June. The blooms are yellow-white, sometimes tinged with purple, and fragrant. The leaves are simple, alternate, deciduous, and up to 8-10 inches long. When crushed, they smell like green peppers. Source: <http://www.butterflyfunfacts.com/pawpaw-plants.php>

What's Buggin' You

Leafcutting Bees

Leafcutting bees can be found worldwide and are native to North America. In Florida, we have approximately 63 different species of leafcutting bees. They are important pollinators for many flowering plants including wildflowers, fruits, and vegetables. Some leafcutting bees are used as commercial pollinators for crops such as onions, blueberries, and carrots.



A leafcutting bee, *Megachile* sp.

These insects are called “leafcutting bees” because they cut pieces (approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch circles) from leaves of nearly any broadleaf plant which they then use in their nesting cavities. Some species will also use petals and resin to construct their nests. Roses, azaleas, and bougainvillea are ornamentals that are often used by leafcutting bees. Their cigar-shaped nests consist of multiple cells which each contain a juvenile bee and pollen (for food). The nests are built in holes in wood, in plant stems, or in soil. Nests are also sometimes built in manmade objects such as holes in concrete walls. During the winter, adults may stay in these nests for protection and then chew their way out in the Spring when temperatures

warm. Leafcutting bees are solitary and build individual nests rather than living in colonies.

Leafcutting bees are similar in size to honey bees, but leafcutting bees have a stouter body and are darker in color. Unlike other bees, which carry pollen on their hind legs, female leafcutting bees carry pollen on hairs on the underside of their abdomen.

Although leafcutting bees can sting, they are not typically aggressive in defending their nests. Additionally, their sting is less painful than that of a honey bee. Leafcutting bees usually will sting only when handled.

Leafcutting bees have several natural enemies, such as ants, which attack their nests. Other insects that attack leafcutting bee nests include flies, wasps, and beetles.

The damage caused to ornamental plants by leafcutting bees results in them being labeled a pest by some gardeners. However, plants are not typically harmed by leafcutting bees, rather the damage is aesthetic in nature. Insecticides are rarely effective in controlling leafcutting bees, but physical barriers, such as cheesecloth, can be used to minimize damage when bees are active. Additionally, removing nesting sites can reduce the number of leafcutting bees in an area. Source: http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/misc/bees/leafcutting_bees.htm.



Typical leaf damage caused by leafcutting bees. The bees use the leaf pieces to construct nests.

By: Wendy Helmey-Hartman

Dividing Perennials

April is a great time to divide the perennial plants in your garden. Perennials are plants that live for more than two years, as compared to annuals, which typically last one season. The shrubs and trees in our landscapes are perennials, but they are referred to as woody perennials. The plants we'll talk about today are herbaceous perennials; that is, plants with little or no woody tissue. Herbaceous perennials in North Florida are often killed to the ground each winter, but will come back in the spring.

Division is the process of lifting an established perennial out of the ground, loosening or cutting the root system and making more plants from one. It is often the quickest and easiest method of multiplying some types of herbaceous perennials. One thing to keep in mind is that plants are pretty tough and they can handle being handled. So when it's time to divide your perennials, be brave. All you need to do is sink your shovel in the ground, loosen the soil deeply around the perimeter, about 4 to 6 inches away from the plant and lift the whole clump to be divided.



Spreading Roots

If the plant is large and heavy, you may need to cut it into several pieces in place with your shovel before lifting it. Then shake or hose off the loose soil and remove dead leaves and stems. This will help loosen tangled root balls and make it easier to see what you are doing.

Perennials have several different types of root systems.

Each of these needs to be treated a bit differently.

Spreading root systems have many slender, matted roots that originate from many locations with no distinct pattern and can usually be pulled apart by hand, or cut apart with shears or a knife. Keep at least one developing "eye" or bud with each division. If larger plants are wanted, keep several eyes.



Clumping Roots

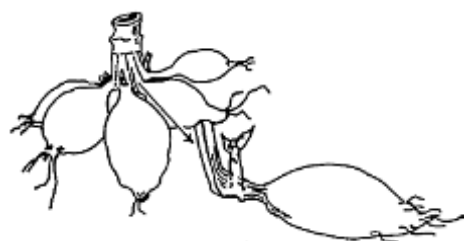
Clumping root systems originate from a central clump with multiple growing points. It is often necessary to cut through the thick fleshy crowns (the central growing area between the roots, leaves and stems of the plant) with a heavy, sharp knife. You can also pry apart these roots with back-to-back digging forks.

Rhizomes are stems that grow horizontally at or above the soil level. Cut and discard the rhizome sections that are one year or older. Inspect rhizomes for disease and insect damage. Damaged rhizomes should be trimmed and treated, or discarded if badly damaged.



Rhizome

Tuberous roots should be cut apart with a sharp knife. Every division must have a piece of the original stem and a growth bud attached. After division they can either be replanted or stored for spring planting.



Tuberous Root

Continued on Page 7

The best time to divide plants is after the blooming season or during milder times of the year. A good rule of thumb is: “If it blooms in the spring, divide in the fall. If it blooms in the fall, divide in the spring”. Early in the spring, there is less foliage for the plant to support and continued mild and moist spring conditions give the root system time to grow before the plant is stressed by heat or periods of drought. Fall offers similar conditions. Just make sure to divide about four weeks before the first hard frost so the root system has time to rebuild before winter.

However, perennials are pretty forgiving. If you have to move them at a less than optimal time, they may go into early dormancy, but should bounce back quickly the following spring. Don’t worry; it’s going to be fine.

While it may sound like plant abuse, the process is beneficial on many levels. Division helps control the plant’s size, peeps up the plant, and creates more plants. Think of division as nature’s bonus plant program. With these freebies, you can expand your garden or create masses for added impact. Expand friendships by gifting bonus plants.

Continued on Page 8

2014 Master Gardener Spring Fling Plant Sale Saturday, April 26

9 am to noon at the Bradford County Extension Office

Exceptional Bargains!

Hummingbird and Butterfly Plants!

Expert Advice from Master Gardeners!

Information Booths on:

Butterfly Gardening

Soil Testing

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Please join us for an educational and fun filled morning.

There is no charge to attend.

All proceeds benefit the Bradford County Master Gardener Program

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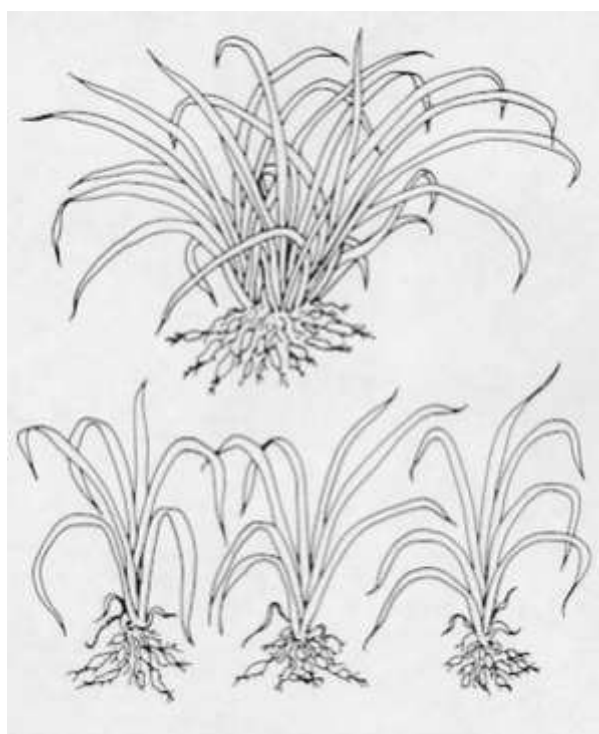
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There are a few plants that like to stay put. Perennials with a taproot don't divide well. A taproot is a vertical and deep growing root. False Indigo (*Baptisia australis*), and Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) are two that get grumpy about moving due to their long taproots. For those types, wait till you get some seedlings and then move the babies. Seedlings transplant better because the taproot has not had time to develop. Plants really want to survive, so if you lift a plant and find it has a long taproot, just replant it. Keep it watered until the plant has re-established and chances are the plant will be just fine.

While some plants are homebodies, others like to roam. If you notice after a few years that a perennial is not blooming well or you notice that the center of a clump is dying out, those plants need to travel. Dividing rejuvenates many plants. Daylilies, rudbeckia and iris are plants that like to roam. They bloom better after being divided. Most perennials can be divided every two to three years. Healthy plants do their best to stick around. Handle your plants. Move them around. They will reward you by growing beautifully.

Excerpts from : <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/landscape/flowers/hgic1150.html>



Mature plant (top), divided (Bottom)

By: Laurie

IN MEMORIAL



Left: Dave and Christine attending a volunteer appreciation banquet.

Sadly, Master Gardener Dave Peace and his wife Christine passed away on March 12th. Dave became a Master Gardener in 2010. He especially enjoyed hydroponic vegetable gardening and was instrumental in our BuzzBuster program. Dave built and planted a raised bed garden at the First Christian Church of Starke so the students could learn how to grow vegetables and butterfly plants. They both had a real joy of life and will be greatly missed by family and friends. Rest in Peace, Dave and Christine.

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