



The Cutting Edge

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

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An Invitation for You!

Fall gardens, cooler weather...and Farm City Days! These are just some of the things I look forward to this time of year. The garden is underway, the weather has been decidedly less humid (I won't go so far as to say 'cool'), so that just leaves Farm City! This will be our 3rd year of holding demonstrations for the 3rd graders in the county, and the 5th year for the luncheon. Partnering with many businesses and organizations in the county, including Farm Bureau, the Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District, Master Gardeners, 4 H, FFA, the Kiwanis Club of Starke, and Normans Produce, among others, we provide the 3rd graders with agriculture related demonstrations and then host the luncheon for adults to celebrate the relationship between the growers and the consumers. Please find your invitation and more information on page 8. There is no charge for the luncheon, but please be aware that we only provide food for those who RSVP. Also in this issue: Strawberries— now is the time to plant! There are guides for what to plant and what to do in the garden and what to look for in woods on pages 2, 3 and 4. Wendy has a great article on those dang squash bugs on page 5. And be sure to read The Five Fall Vegetables for Your Garden on pages 6 and 7. Happy fall and happy gardening!

By: Laurie Compton

Featured Plant: Strawberries

Here in Bradford County we love our strawberries and now is the time to plant them! 'Camarosa' and 'Camino Real' are just two of the varieties recommended for North Florida gardens, but if you don't order them ahead of time, you may have to take what the local nurseries offer. Strawberries need temperatures between 50 to 80°F and less than 14 hours of daylight to flower and produce fruit, and in Florida these conditions occur throughout the fall, winter, and spring. Strawberries planted in September to early November will flower and fruit through April or May. Fruit set won't be constant, but will have two or three cycles, and can be interrupted by freezes. Grow strawberries in a full-sun location with at least 8 hours of direct sunlight. Try planting them in planter boxes, pots, or other containers. Just make sure there is good drainage. Temperatures below 32°F will damage the fruit and flowers, but crowns and leaves will survive to temperatures in the low 20s if they have been acclimated to cool weather. If a freeze comes along, protect the plants by covering them with old sheets or a commercial row cover during the afternoon and all night. Anchor the coverings so that the wind does not blow them off the plants. Strawberries are ready to harvest when three-quarters of the berry's surface is red. Once the fruit is completely red, it rots quickly, so be sure to harvest regularly, usually every two to four days.



By: Laurie Compton

In the Garden: What to Plant in October

Even though temperatures are still warm, begin planting for the cooler months ahead. Digitalis (foxglove), petunia, babys breath and shasta daisy are good **bedding plants** for the fall garden.

If you are a northern transplant and miss daffodils, there are many daffodil **bulbs** that are suitable for Florida. Fragrant varieties include ‘Carlton’, ‘Fortune’, ‘Silver Chimes’, ‘Thallia’, and ‘Sweetness’. A wide range of **herbs** can be planted from seeds or plants this month. Some to try are dill, fennel, oregano, and sage. Plant **vegetable** crops now that will grow and produce through the winter months. This includes beet, Brussels sprout, carrot, and onion.



Sage

In the Garden: What to Do in October

The time to control winter lawn weeds is before they appear. Pre-emergent herbicides must be applied at the right time to be effective. Apply when nighttime temps are 55-60°F for 4-5 days. Avoid weed and feed products. Evergreen hollies and their bright berries add color to the winter landscape when other plants have died back for the winter. Water well when planting and mulch to minimize weeds. Gather pine needles that are dropping and use them for a natural mulch. Prepare beds and set strawberry plants this month. If there isn't room for a bed, try planting them in large containers. Either way, provide daily watering until plants are established. **Lawns** will start to lose color as the weather cools. For a green lawn all winter, overseed with annual ryegrass when daytime temps are in the low 70's.



‘Sweet Charlie’ strawberry

http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/pdfs/October_North.pdf

Wildlife Calendar October

- Redfish and trout move up creeks and rivers in north Florida.
- Plant trees and shrubs, like holly and dogwood, that produce berries to feed wildlife.
- Blazing star, summer farewell and other wildflowers bloom.
- http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/october.php



Dogwood

Did You Know? The word dogwood is not exactly an appealing name for such a lovely tree. Just how did the plant get its name? There are many stories. In Europe, the bark from a dogwood species was used to make a treatment for mange. Perhaps, the name came from dogwood -- dag being an old name for a meat skewer. From the colonist viewpoint, it may have come from the name dog tree - bearer of worthless little fruit referred to as dog berries. *Source: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/quickref/trees/flowering_dogwood.html*

In the Garden: What to Plant in November

Create a display of fall colors with cool season **bedding plants**. Some to try are pansy, viola, and chrysanthemum. **Bulbs** to plant this month include amaryllis, crinum, and daylily. Plant Lycoris (spider lily) in partial shade. Plants will produce foliage in winter and beautiful red flowers emerge in late summer. Continue planting **herbs** from seeds or plants. A wide variety of herbs like cooler, dryer weather, including cilantro, dill, fennel, parsley, sage, and thyme. Continue planting cool season **vegetable** crops such as beet, broccoli, cabbage, carrot, kale, and lettuce.



Chinese Cabbage

In the Garden: What to Do in November

If freezing temperatures are predicted, protect small **citrus** trees by watering well at least a day before the freeze. You may also use covers that extend to the ground for protection. Now that temperatures are lower, use dormant oil sprays to control **scale insects** on trees and shrubs. Plants need less **supplemental watering** in cooler weather. Turn off systems and water only if needed. Taiwan cherry is an ornamental **Flowering Tree** suitable for north Florida. Late winter will bring pink buds so consider planting one now. As you prune your plants during the cooler months, make a small brush pile



Taiwan Cherry

in the back of the yard for **birds**. Add some of the new cultivars of **camellias** for bright spots of color in winter. Disbudding, or removing some buds now, will insure larger blooms later.

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

Wildlife Calendar

- Set up winter seed and suet feeders.
- Cedar waxwings can be seen on cedars, hollies, cherry laurels, privet, and other fruit plants.
- Look for downy, hairy, red-bellied, and redheaded woodpeckers on suet feeders.
- Bald eagles begin their nesting season. Look for spectacular aerial courtship displays.
- Many yellow-rumped warblers and palm warblers will be in neighborhoods, natural areas, and yards.
- Gray catbirds have already arrived, and will be skulking (and cat-calling!) in thickets.
- Peak of deer rutting in central and north Florida.
- Cypress begin turning a rust color. http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/november.php

Did You Know? Beets are a highly nutritious vegetable and are easy to grow.

Start planting in October and continue in three week intervals through February. Good varieties to try in the home garden are 'Early Wonder', 'Detroit Dark Red', 'Cylindra,' 'Red Ace,' 'Little Ball,' 'Asgrow Wonder,' 'Green Top,' 'Pacemaker III,' and 'Red Ace.' Beets like well-drained, loose, and slightly acidic soil.



Beets

Source: <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/agriculture/crops/vegetables/beet.html>

In the Garden: What to Plant in December

Bedding Plants: To add color to the winter garden, plant masses of petunia, pansy, snapdragon, lobelia, alyssum, and viola. Amaryllis is a popular **bulb** for the holiday season. They can be forced to bloom now or planted outdoors for spring blooms. Plant **herbs** that thrive in cool weather. Some to try are parsley, thyme, sage, dill, fennel, garlic, comfrey, and cilantro. Reliable cool season **vegetables** to plant this month include English pea, radish, cabbage, beet, and broccoli.



Amaryllis

In the Garden: What to Do in December

One of the most popular indoor holiday plants is **poinsettia**. With proper care, this colorful plant will give weeks of color. **Cold protection:** Don't prune cold-damaged plants yet. Be patient and wait until warm weather returns to cut back plants. Make sure that seeds and transplants are properly spaced to have good development of tubers and **vegetables**. Inspect **houseplants** regularly for pests on indoor plants. Keep in mind that plant specific temperature, light, and humidity are key to ensuring that indoor plants thrive. If outdoor plants did not perform as desired this year or new plantings are being planned, a **soil test** may be a good idea. Fallen leaves provide the carbon ingredient needed for successful **composting** and also make a good **mulch**. While cooler weather generally means fewer **pests**, some populations, like stinkbugs and leaf-footed bugs, actually increase at this time of year. Continue monitoring and treat as needed.



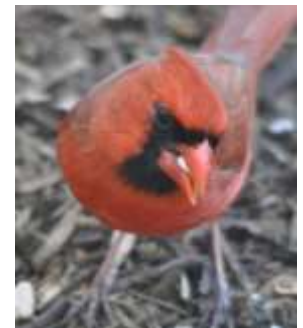
Free Mulch!

http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/pdfs/December_Central.pdf

Wildlife Calendar 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.

Did You Know? For migrating birds, taking a journey that can be a round-trip distance of several thousand miles is dangerous and arduous. The physical stress of the trip, lack of adequate food along the way, bad weather, and increased exposure to predators all add to the hazards. Birds normally depend on habitats that include native plants which provide seeds, nuts and berries. But every year there are fewer of these habitats left due to development and the encroachment of non-native, invasive plants. So every year there are fewer natural sources of food for our wild birds. During cold weather, birds need to fuel up on extra calories to stay warm. They burn off an incredible amount of energy keeping their body temperature up when outdoor temperatures drop. Birds expend a high proportion of energy searching for food, so providing supplemental food and water for them will actually help keep their calorie-intake high which will improve their chances of surviving winters cold weather.



Cardinal

Source: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/studying/migration/>

What's Buggin' You: The Squash Bug

By Wendy Helmeý Hartman

The squash bug is a common pest of cucurbits in Florida. These plants include several varieties (e.g., squash, pumpkin) that are planted or harvested during the Fall in this area.



Squash bug eggs

In Florida, several generations of squash bugs are produced each year. During the winter, adults remain dormant either in debris in the field or in nearby shelter. Six to eight weeks are required for the complete life cycle of the squash bug. Adult females will lay clusters of approximately 20 bronze-colored eggs on leaves (typically on the underside). The eggs develop for about one week and then hatch. The juvenile squash bug progresses through five stages, shedding its exoskeleton at the end of each stage. Upon hatching, the juvenile squash bug is light green, but it becomes gray and then progressively darker gray as it matures. The juvenile squash bugs are often found in groups on their host plants. After the five juvenile stages, the squash bugs molt one final time and become the winged adults. At this point, they are a dark grayish brown. Sometimes the adults have gold and brown spots along the edge of the abdomen. Adults can live for 75 to 130 days if they have sufficient sources of food.

Squash bugs will feed on many different varieties of cucurbits including squash, pumpkin, cucumber, and watermelon. They damage their host plants due to their highly toxic saliva. They will feed on both the fruits and the leaves of their host plants. When these insects feed upon the leaves of the plant, the leaves wilt and turn black. An increased number of squash bugs causes greater damage to the plant. Squash bugs are a known vector of cucurbit yellow vine disease, a bacterium that can kill plants.



Squash bug damage



Nymph and adult squash bug

Insecticides are relatively ineffective against squash bug adults. Instead, the juvenile squash bugs should be targeted to control this pest. Squash bug damage is typically a greater problem in small fields and home gardens than in large crop fields. If insecticides are used to control the juvenile squash bugs, care must be taken with the application to ensure that honeybees are not affected adversely. Since larger plants are preferred, early-planted crops can serve as trap crops for these insects. Additionally, boards, large cabbage leaves, or other shelters can be used to attract squash bugs and then they can be found and crushed more easily. The removal of debris from fields is also important in the control of squash bugs as they will feed and shelter readily in crop debris.

Sources: http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/veg/leaf/squash_bug.htm .

Five Fall Vegetables for the Home Garden

While folks up north are preparing to put their gardens to bed for the long winter, here in Florida we are planning our fall gardens! Whether you are new to vegetable gardening, or are an old hand at it, we thought you would be interested in a few of our fall favorites. Start preparing your garden today and you'll be enjoying these fresh vegetables in no time!

Lettuce

Lettuce is a hardy cool-season crop that grows well during cool weather. And if you are new to vegetable gardening, lettuce is one of the easiest to grow. Several varieties of it are grown in practically every garden. Lettuce does best on a fertile soil, well supplied with fertilizer and moisture.

The four principle types of lettuce are crisphead, butterhead, leaf, and romaine. While all four types do best in the cooler months, to produce firm heads, crisphead varieties should be tried only during the coolest season. The leaf varieties grow exceptionally well here in Florida. They are colorful and decorative both in the garden and in salads. Sow seeds very shallow as they need light for germination. Intercrop lettuce with long-season vegetables. Recommended varieties include:

Crisphead: Great Lakes; **Butterhead:** Ermosa, Bibb, Tom Thumb, Buttercrunch; **Loose Leaf:** Simpson types, Salad Bowl, Red Sails, New Red Fire; **Oak Leaf:** Salad Bowl, Royal Oak; **Romaine:** Parris Island Cos, Outredgeous



Mustard

One of the best cooking greens for fall through spring production is the garden mustard. 'Florida Broadleaf' is a favorite variety due to its extraordinary large leaves that may span 24 inches in width. 'Curled Leaf' produces smaller, deeply notched, light green leaves. Unlike turnips, mustard does not produce edible roots.

Because broadleaf types require more space, you may want to consider planting in a wide-row system. Wash freshly harvested leaves well to remove all grit, and then cool them immediately in the refrigerator. They're best when cooked within a day or two of harvest. Chop your greens and boil them in a pot. Save the nutritious cooking liquid (also known as "pot liquor") for dipping your cornbread. Recommended varieties include:

Southern Giant Curled, FloridaBroad Leaf, Tender green, Giant Red, Green Wave, and Mizuna.



Onions



Onions may be grown from seeds, sets, or plants and timing the planting is very important for bulb formation. Bulbing varieties that grow best in Florida are the short-day varieties, so they must be started in the fall (August to November) for bulbing to be induced by the short days of winter. For extra-large onion bulbs, try moving the soil away from the bulb as it grows. Spring onions, or green onions, may be started in fall, winter, and spring. Plant them close, and thin as needed. Multiplier onions are hardy perennial bunching onions which do not form enlarged bulbs. The shallot is a special form of this type. Multipliers need to be divided and reset every year. Recommended varieties include: **Bulbing:** Granex (yellow); **Bunching** (Green): Evergreen Bunching, White Lisbon Bunching; **Leeks:** American Flag; **Multipliers:** Shallots

Strawberries

Okay, so strawberries aren't actually vegetables, but they are a tasty addition to the fall garden. In Florida, strawberries are grown as annuals rather than as perennials. Obtain good, clean, disease-free plants from nurseries or plant suppliers early in the fall. Both bare-root transplants and potted plants are available. Set plants on twelve inches centers in beds mulched with black plastic, straw, or spoiled hay. Plants set in the fall begin to blossom in the cold, short days of winter; berry production follows in the late winter and continues to around May. Runners grow from each mother plant in the summer and can be removed for resetting and further runner production. A fresh start with new plants is best for each subsequent year. Adaptable varieties are a must for satisfactory production under Florida conditions. Gardeners generally plant the same varieties that are grown by the commercial industry due to the seasonal availability of plants. Recommended varieties include: Chandler, Oso Grande, Sweet Charlie, Selva, Camarosa, and Festival



Turnips

Turnips are a quick-growing, cool weather crop grown both for the tops and for the roots. Space plants 4–6 inches apart for good bulb production. Thinned plants can be eaten as greens. Roots should not be allowed to become overmature, as they become pithy, and stringy. Some varieties such as 'Shogoin' don't form tuberous roots. For both roots and tops, 'Purple Top White Globe' is the leading variety. A "Swede turnip" is more commonly known as a rutabaga. Broadcast seed in wide-row system or single file. Recommended varieties **Roots:** Purple Top White Globe; **Roots and Greens:** Purple Top, **Greens:** Seven Top, Shogoin

Excerpts from: <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/vegetables/five-fall->



For four years, the Bradford County Extension office has held an annual Farm City Day Celebration, to thank our farmers who provide a bountiful and healthy supply of fresh food and also to thank the people and businesses that buy the food and support the farmers. We start the day at 9 am with educational demonstrations for the 3rd graders of Bradford County, followed by the luncheon at noon.

You Are Cordially Invited

To our Farm City Luncheon on Tuesday, November 18th at 12:00 pm in Building # 1 of the Fairgrounds. There is no charge for the luncheon but you **MUST** RSVP by November 10th. To RSVP for the luncheon or to help with a donation (see below), please call 904-966-6299

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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.

The event features educational demonstrations for Bradford third graders followed by a luncheon celebrating farmers and consumers of agricultural commodities.

Donations will be used for transportation costs 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.

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