



# The Cutting Edge

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

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## Rain, Rain, Go Away.....

Seems like we have been singing this old rhyme for awhile. We certainly have had a “gracious plenty” of rain, as my Grandmother would have said, and it looks like more could be on the way. For more info on what affects our weather, see Jim De Valerio's article on El Nino on pages 6 and 7. Hints on what to do and what to plant in the garden are on pages 2, 3 and 4, and if you need a little help getting rid of pests in the garden, read about Lady Bird Beetles on page 5. Our Featured Plant this issue is the Swamp Sunflower; you will find it growing wild along many roadsides in Bradford County this time of year and Pam Whittle informed me that they are also known as ‘Redneck Roses’. You will also find an invitation on page 8 to attend our Farm City Celebration luncheon on Tuesday, November 17th, 2015. We host all the 3rd graders in Bradford County in the morning, leading them through a total of 10 different Agriculture related demonstrations, and then we have a luncheon for adults at 12:00 pm. Come join us and help celebrate the American Farmer!

By: Laurie

## Featured Plant: Swamp Sunflower

Swamp sunflower (*Helianthus angustifolius*) is a fall-blooming perennial that can carry a touch of summer into the fall garden. Starting in late summer or early fall, the two to three-inch flowers appear, sporting bright yellow petals and brown or burgundy centers. Often found growing wild along the roadsides, they are also perfect for the backs of borders in your garden beds. The plants grow four to six feet tall, and a hard prune in June keeps them more compact and well-branched. Like all sunflowers, this one performs best when grown in full sun. It's salt and flood tolerant, making it a good choice for coastal areas and rain gardens. This Florida-Friendly plant is relatively low maintenance but can be prone to infestations of powdery mildew and spittle bugs. You can divide swamp sunflower each year to create new plants, making it easy to pass along to friends.



Source: <http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/sunflowers.html>

## In the Garden: What to Plant in October

Temperatures are usually still warm in October, but start planting for the cooler months ahead. Pansy, petunia, phlox, Shasta daisy, snapdragon and violas do well in beds. For something different, try planting some ornamental cabbage or kale in your garden beds. A wide range of herbs can be planted from seeds or plants this month. Some to try are parsley, dill, fennel, oregano, and sage. Time to plant vegetables now that will produce through the winter months. This includes beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, greens, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, onions, radish and Chinese cabbage.



Ornamental Cabbage

## In the Garden: What to Do in October

Start ten weeks of short-day treatment for Christmas cactus in mid-October to enjoy blooms at Christmas. 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. Remove old flowers to keep plants in bloom and reduce disease problems. Satsumas ripen around late October, especially if we start getting cool weather.



Christmas Cactus

[http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn\\_and\\_garden/calendar/pdfs/October\\_North.pdf](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.
- Corn snakeroot, blazing star, summer farewell and other wildflowers bloom.

[http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife\\_info/happenings/october.php](http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/october.php)

**Did You Know?** Corn snakeroot typically flowers summer through late fall. A variety of pollinators are attracted to its flowers. Corn snake-root occurs naturally in sunny marshes and swamps, along pond edges and in ditches. Its natural range is in the panhandle and in North and Central Florida. The common name snakeroot (also known as rattlesnake master, both of which are used to describe the *Eryngium* genus) may have come from its use in Native American culture as a remedy for snakebite.



Corn Snakeroot

Source: <http://floridawildflowerfoundation.blogspot.com/>

## 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.



Society Garlic

## In the Garden: What to Do in November

If you have overgrown perennials that are not blooming, now is the time to divide and replant them. 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 lead the pack in harvest season for citrus. Often these fruit are ready to eat even though the peels are not completely orange so taste them for sweetness. Mow lawns higher going into winter. This will help develop a strong root system that is more cold tolerant. Do not add nitrogen fertilizers to lawns. If you missed the fall application, consider applying a fertilizer that contains potassium like a 0-0-16.



Satsuma

Source: [http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn\\_and\\_garden/calendar/pdfs/November\\_Central.pdf](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.
- 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](http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/november.php)

- **Did You Know?** Woodpeckers, bluebirds, cardinals, chickadees, jays, nuthatches, titmice, and wrens are all regular visitors to this type of feeder, which is usually a simple wire cage sized to hold a suet cake. The birds that visit the feeder cling to the wires and peck at the suet inside. Look for bottom suet feeders that are specially made for clinging birds like woodpeckers and nuthatches that can hang upside down and feed.

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



Suet Feeder

## In the Garden: What to Plant in December

Along with the Brussels sprouts, cauliflower and English peas you planted last month, add cabbage, carrots, kohlrabi and spinach in December. If you enjoy leaf lettuce, try growing it in a container that can be brought in before a hard freeze. Some annuals to plant include delphinium, larkspur, Shasta daisy and snapdragons. Bulbs to plant in December include anemone, African lily (agapanthus), callas and crinum.



'Veronica'  
hybrid cauliflower

## In the Garden: What to Do in December

Got weeds? Cool season weeds are popping up in plant beds and lawns. Hand pull or spot treat with a post emergence herbicide labeled for lawns or plant beds. Monitor lawns for large patch fungus, take all root rot and Pythium. Treat with recommended fungicide if present. Avoid heavy pruning now because it will stimulate new growth that is susceptible to the cold. It is fine to prune dead or diseased wood and suckers coming from the plant base any time of year.



Large patch in  
St. Augustine

[http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn\\_and\\_garden/calendar/pdfs/December\\_Central.pdf](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?** The first year of life is the hardest to survive for Great Horned owls and depends heavily on food abundance. Once they reach adulthood survival rates are very good. They have no natural predators as adults, so natural causes of death include starvation and hunting injuries. Great Horned Owls are carnivores, and don't eat seeds, bread, or anything other than meat. Basically they eat whatever is handy, and have one of the most diverse diets of North American owls. Great Horned Owls, like other owls, are clueless about building nests. They use other available structures to nest in, including nests of hawks, crows and squirrels; ledges or crevices on cliffs or in quarries; sometimes on the ground in the entrance to a den; bridges, power lines, barns and old buildings, large flower pots on balconies, and a variety of artificial nests put up by humans from old tires to laundry baskets. Can they turn their heads all the way around? Yes and no—it depends on the starting point. If an owl starts with its head in the forward position, it can easily rotate to look directly behind itself. If startled while in this position the owl can crank its head further until it's almost over the other shoulder—in the ballpark of 270 degrees. But they normally don't do more than look over their back under normal circumstances.



Great Horned Owl

## Whats Buggin You Lady Bird Beetle

Ladybird is a name that has been used in England for more than 600 years for the European beetle *Coccinella septempunctata*.

As knowledge about insects increased, the name became extended to all its relatives, members of the beetle family Coccinellidae. Of course these insects are not birds, but butterflies are not flies, nor are dragonflies, stoneflies, mayflies, and fireflies, which all are true common names in folklore, not invented names. The lady for whom they were named was "the Virgin Mary", and common names in other European languages have the same association (the German name Marienkafer translates to "Marybeetle" or ladybeetle).



Adult lady bird beetle

Prose and poetry mention ladybird, perhaps the most familiar in English

being the children's rhyme: Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home, your house is on fire, your children all gone...



Lady bird eggs

In the USA, the name ladybird was popularly Americanized to ladybug, although these insects are beetles (Coleoptera), not bugs (Hemiptera).

Today the word ladybird applies to a whole family of beetles, Coccinellidae or ladybirds, not just *Coccinella septempunctata*. There are many species of ladybirds, just as there are of birds, and the word "variety" (frequently used by newspaper writers) is not an appropriate substitute for the word "species." Many ladybird species are considered beneficial to humans because they eat "plant pests" but not all eat pests of plants, and a few are

themselves pests.

Worldwide, nearly 6,000 species of ladybirds are known, of which 105 are currently reported to occur in Florida. Some of these 105 are considered to be native, and others to be adventive ("having arrived from somewhere else and established feral populations"). Among the adventive species, some were introduced deliberately, and others are immigrants (having arrived by any means except deliberate introduction). Typically, ladybirds have several generations each year, and reproduction is slowed or halted by cooler winter weather, when adults may hibernate. Some of the plant pests lady bird beetles feed on include whiteflies, soft and armored scales, mealybugs and aphids.



Lady bird beetle larvae

So when you see these eggs, larvae and adult Lady Bird Beetles, you know they are working hard to rid your garden of pests!

Source: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in327>

## **Rain Forecasted: Plan Landscape & Gardening Accordingly**

El Niño is back in the tropical Pacific Ocean: How will it impact agriculture in the Southeast and what is El Niño you may ask? Fortunately the University of Florida employs an expert in climate study, Dr. Clyde Fraisse who works at the College of Agricultural and Biological Engineering in Gainesville. Dr. Fraisse is very active on developing and maintaining the AgroClimate system and also helps with the management of the Florida Automated Weather Network (FAWN) system. The FAWN network is used for many applications including weather forecasting, plant disease forecasting and irrigation management to name a few. He also coordinates with climatologists worldwide in efforts to better understand global weather patterns.

I am writing this article to alert readers to the most recent report, published by Dr. Fraisse. The report forecasts rainy weather that will extend into the upcoming fall and winter months.

Realizing most of us are ready for a little sunshine but resigned to the fact that, if rain is to continue it is best we plan accordingly so we are prepared to best manage our gardens, landscapes and farming efforts.

### **What is El Niño?**

El Niño is a condition that is characterized by extended ocean warm temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean. A mature and strong El Niño is now present in that region and most of the climate outlook models suggest that the 2015-16 El Niño is likely to strengthen further before the end of the year. The warm water temperatures change weather patterns throughout the United States. This article will focus on weather predictions that will affect the Southeastern United States.

The El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is the most important coupled ocean atmosphere phenomenon that causes global climate variability. It manifests itself as (1) changes in the sea-surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean and (2) the sea level pressure difference between eastern Pacific high pressure and western Pacific low pressure (the “Southern Oscillation”). During El Niño events ocean surface temperatures warm in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean and easterlies are less strong. El Niño events normally bring cooler and wetter winter and springs to the Southeast USA. More information about ENSO impacts can be found at: <http://agroclimate.org/fact-sheets-climate.php>

During the winter El Niño causes the Pacific jet stream current to dip into the Southeast. This provides cold fronts with more moisture and energy. El Niño typically leads to 40 to 50% more rainfall than normal for the Florida peninsula, and about 30% more than normal for South Georgia. El Niño's impacts on the weather in the Southeast US are usually most prominent in the winter, but given the strength of this year's event, we could begin to see its effects this fall. Many climate models are predicting a wet fall with above-normal temperatures for the Southeast.

The seasonal precipitation and temperature forecasts for October, November & December 2015 produced by the International Research Institute for Climate and Society at Columbia University were released in August. They indicate increased probabilities for above average rainfall and temperature for the Southeast USA.

## Impacts on Agriculture in the Southeast USA

The most urgent potential impact to keep in mind is a reduced window of time for planting or harvesting row crops in the Fall of 2015! Specific information for typical commodities grown in our region is provided below. Winter vegetables such as tomato and green peppers generally yield less during El Niño years than during Neutral or La Niña years.

Most soil-borne pathogens and fruit quality problems increase in El Niño years. Fruit quality problems like gray wall and bacterial and fungal diseases that are typically associated with wet climates can be more prevalent during El Niño winters.

Nutrient management can also be affected by wetter cropping seasons as the frequency of leaching rainfall events increases, causing nutrients, mainly Nitrogen, to be washed out of the root zone, especially in fields irrigated by seepage irrigation. Recent studies demonstrated that during El Niño years, at least one leaching rainfall event of 1.0 inch or more in 1 day occurred in most locations where winter vegetables are grown in Florida and two of these events occurred in 9 out of 10 years.

El Niño may also impact other commodities. In general, El Niño years are good for winter pasture such as rye due to wetter conditions. However, growth may be slower due to increased cloudiness and consequent decrease in solar radiation. In the case of forestry, El Niño plantings (wetter conditions) are generally well established. However, under such conditions, planting in very low lands might be avoided to minimize losses as excessive rains might drown seedlings. Wetter conditions may also have a negative impact on harvest operations.

In the case of temperate fruits (peach, nectarine, blueberry, strawberry), El Niño conditions generally result in increased chill accumulation in the early part of the winter (Nov-Jan) and can reduce the need for oil or other dormancy-compensating sprays in peaches and blueberries. Growers can keep track of chill accumulation by checking the AgroClimate chill hours calculator tool on AgroClimate:

(<http://agroclimate.org/tools/Chill-Hours-Calculator/> ).

Cooler rainy conditions may slow development rates in some perennial fruit crops such as strawberry. Lower levels of solar radiation resulting from cloudy conditions may also affect growth in some cultivars. Additionally, conditions may favor the development of fungal diseases such as Anthracnose and Botrytis fruit rots. Angular leaf spot (*Xanthomonas fragariae*) is another disease that is favored by cool wet winters (EDIS publication: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PG056> ). Strawberry growers in Florida can monitor AgroClimate 5 the risk for Anthracnose and Botrytis fruit rot diseases using the Strawberry Advisory System (SAS) available on AgroClimate: <http://agroclimate.org/tools/strawberry/> . More information about SAS is available in the following EDIS Publication: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ae450>

To help strawberry growers in Florida be more prepared for a season with potentially higher disease pressure we have recently released SAS smartphone apps: 1. Apple iOS: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/sas-strawberry-advisory-system/id898025106?mt=8> 2. Google Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.agroclimate.strawberry>

By: Jim DeValerio



The Bradford County Extension office, in partnership with Florida Farm Bureau, Kiwanis of Starke and the Starke Rotary Club, Bradford Soil & Water Conservation District, Gold Key and several other sponsors are privileged to invite you to the 6<sup>th</sup> 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 17<sup>th</sup> at 12 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.

**2015 Farm City Celebration Lunch Program**

- 11:30 Book signing with Cowboy Bill Roberts**
- 12:00 Welcome, Jim DeValerio, Bradford County Agricultural Extension Agent**
- 12:05 Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance**
- 12:20 Bradford County Youth in Agriculture Speeches**
- 12:30 Florida Cowboy Tales, Key Note Speaker  
Bill Roberts, Cowboy, Author, Artist**
- 1:00 Book signing with Cowboy Bill Roberts**



Cowboy Bill Roberts started catching wild cows when he was 13 years old. Hear him share some of his stories about his romantic, cowboy life in the Florida scrub. An accomplished artist, some of his renowned paintings of Florida's frontier landscapes will be on display.

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

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