

**Duval County  
Extension**

**A NEW LEAF**



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January/February 2012

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**Happy New Year - By Terry DeValle**

Welcome to 2012 and a chilly start. Based on NOAA/National Weather Service, we are currently in a La Niña weather pattern based on colder than normal conditions in the tropical Pacific. For the southeastern United States, this means warmer weather by 2 to 4°F from November through March, plus drier than normal. So be prepared to deal with more drought issues in lawns and landscapes. This is a good time to replace water-needy plants with those that are more drought tolerant.



Here are a few goals that you might want to add to your New Years Resolutions.

- ◆ Support local farmers by shopping at farmers market or join a CSA (community supported agriculture). No Farms/No Food!
- ◆ Want to loose weight? Spend more time outside gardening.
- ◆ Reduce water use in the landscape by converting plant beds to drip or if plants are established, cut those zones off or cap the heads.
- ◆ When controlling pests, avoid using broad-spectrum insecticides to protect beneficial insects. Horticultural soaps and oils will control many of our traditional pest problems.

**Upcoming Classes**

- ◆ **Saturday, January 14, 9am to noon or 1 to 4pm. Canning with Splenda.** Make and take workshop at Canning Center: blackberry apple spread. \$20 per person must be paid in advance. Call Jeannie to register at 255-7450.
- ◆ **Saturday, January 21, 10am to NOON - Start Your Own Vegetables From Seed.** Learn the principals in germinating seeds and take home a planted seed tray. Cost: \$15.00 Duval County Extension Office. Pre-registration is required with Jeannie Crosby @ 255-7450.
- ◆ **Monday, January 23, from 9am to Noon or 1 to 4pm. Calamondin Preserves.** Make and take workshop at Canning Center: \$20 per person must be paid in advance. Call Jeannie to register at 255-7450.
- ◆ **Monday, February 6, 9am to Noon or 1 to 4pm. Hot Pepper Jelly.** Make and take workshop at Canning Center: \$20 per person must be paid in advance. Call Jeannie to register at 255-7450.
- ◆ **Saturday, February 11, 9:30am to 12:30pm - Eating and Growing Seasonable.** Food demo/sampling using seasonal produce and learn to grow warm season vegetables. Cost \$10. Duval County Extension Office. Pre-registration is required with Jeannie Crosby @ 255-7450.
- ◆ **Saturday, February 25, 9:00 am to 2:30pm. Day of Gardening.** See back page for details.



# Things to do in January/February

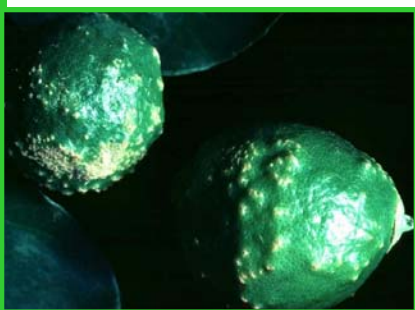
By Terry DeValle

## Flowers

- ◆ Hold on to poinsettias if you intend to plant them in the landscape after the cold weather is past. March is typically a safe planting month.
- ◆ Deadhead (remove old flowers) pansies and snapdragons to keep them blooming. If petunias start looking leggy, prune back hard and fertilize to force new growth.
- ◆ Cold sensitive bedding plants can be covered with leaves, pine straw, blankets, or row covers for protection. If using plastic, make sure to remove during warm sunny days and keep plastic from touching plants to avoid damage.

## Fruits and Nuts

- ◆ Prune grapes in January or February. For muscadines, prune all branches that are less than 3/16" in diameter, leaving 2 to 3 buds per spur. Remove most of the spurs located at the top of the trunk to prevent crowding and bushiness.
- ◆ Now is the time to prune deciduous fruit trees. There are different training methods depending on the type of tree. For more info on pruning and training go to <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg345>.
- ◆ Harvest citrus that are ripe before the freeze if temperatures are going to drop below 28°F for at least 4 hours. If fruit are not ripe, leave on the tree because citrus will not ripen once picked.
- ◆ If citrus scab has been a problem in the past,



February is the time to apply a copper fungicide as new leaves emerge and 2/3 of the blossoms have dropped.

- ◆ Prior to a severe freeze, protect graft unions of young citrus by banking

clean sand around the trunk just above the graft union.

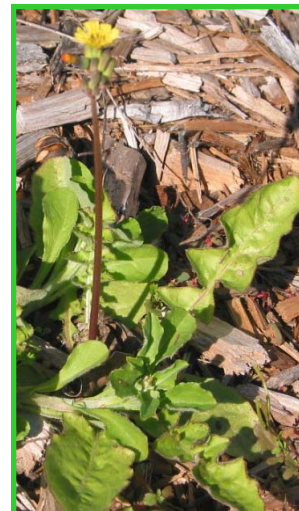
- ◆ Now is the time to purchase and plant bare root fruit trees like pears and plums.
- ◆ Fertilize fruit trees in mid-February. For most fruit, use a citrus blend or peach/pecan special.

## Lawns

- ◆ Take a break from mowing lawns and service your lawnmower. Clean the mower, sharpen the blades, drain and replace the oil, drain or use up

the gasoline and grease all fittings.

- ◆ Even though lawns may be brown, if there is little to no rain for several weeks, lawns may need supplemental water. The Irrigation Ordinance allows watering once per week if needed. Watering days for odd # addresses are Saturday and even addresses on Sunday.
- ◆ Pull cool season weeds like chickweed or Asiatic hawksbeard (photo on right) if they are going to seed. If warm season weeds were a problem last year, be prepared to treat before seeds germinate. Germination is based on soil temperatures, so treatment time can vary from mid-February to early March. Treat when day temperatures reach 65 to 70 F for 4 or 5 consecutive days. This usually is when azaleas and dogwoods are blooming.



## Trees & Shrubs

- ◆ It's time to prune deciduous plants, if needed. Remove rubbing branches, diseased or dead branches, and suckers from the base. Don't prune spring flowering shrubs or trees until after bloom. Examples include: azalea, redbud, Japanese magnolia, and spirea.
- ◆ Prune roses and strip any remaining leaves from plants to reduce disease problems.
- ◆ Fertilize young ornamental plants in mid-February with a specialty or 16-0-16 type fertilizer.

## Vegetable Garden

- Prepare gardens for spring planting in February. Turn the soil 2 weeks before planting to give plants a chance to rot.
- Start seedlings for transplants. Although squash can be direct seeded, transplants offer quicker yields and may help avoid borer problems.
- Protect sensitive vegetables with heavy mulch or row covers in the event of a hard freeze.

## What to Plant in January/February

By Terry DeValle



Winter weather has finally arrived so play it safe by growing cold hardy plants. Choices of things to plant are limited, so take some time to look through 2012 catalogues and prepare for spring planting. Order

seeds now while they are still available. Start transplants by early February for March planting to get a head start on the spring season.

Annuals recommended for planting now are carnation (China doll), dianthus, flowering cabbage and kale, lobelia, pansy, petunia, ranunculus, stock, viola, and snapdragon. Violas (shown above) are much easier to care for than pansies as they require no deadheading for continued flowering. For March flowers, plant delphinium, digitalis (foxglove), and larkspur in January or February. In February, add to the list baby's breath, calendula, marguerite daisy, and statice.

Bulbs that can be planted are Achimenes, African

lily (Agapanthus), amaryllis, Aztec lily, calla, crinum, daylily, Dutch iris, Gloriosa lily, gloxinia, Hurricane lily, Ixia, Kaffir lily, marica (walking iris), moraea (African lily), Spider lily, Tritonia, tuberose, tulip (prechilled only), Voodoo lily, watsonia, and Zephyr lily. In February it's too late to plant amaryllis, calla, daylily, Hurricane lily, and tulips, but add to the list Amazon lily, caladium, canna, and dahlia.

Vegetables to plant now include beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, Chinese cabbage, collards, kale, kohlrabi, leek, mustard, onions, parsley, English peas, potatoes, radish and turnips.

Endive and lettuce can be planted in February. For more information, go to <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>.



## Jadera Plant Bugs By Terry DeValle



Jadera bug nymph

Cool weather followed by warm spring-like days will create perfect conditions for the emergence masses of red insects. Of course this is only a problem if you or a neighbor has a Goldenrain tree. This insect is called a scentless plant bug or *Jadera haematoloma*.

They feed on the seed of the Goldenrain tree and the Chinaberry tree. That is a good thing because this will reduce nuisance seedlings that will germinate from these trees.

The nymphs are mostly red in color while the legs, thorax, antennae, and beak are brown. The adult is mostly black or brownish-black, but has reddish eyes, shoulders, and a small area on the abdomen. Adults are about 1/2" in length.

There are no recommendations for control so most people learn to ignore them. The main problem is they sometimes enter the home and can become a nuisance pest. Do not attempt to squash them on walls as they will stain walls and clothing. Use a vacuum cleaner to collect them and then empty the bag outside or try spraying with an insecticidal soap. If they are in a play area and children's clothing is a concern, try to collect them manually or rake to remove the seeds which is their food source.

Information and photos taken from <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in287>.



Adult Jadera bug feeding on Goldenrain tree seed



## Urban Gardening

### Growing Your Own Food by Mary Puckett

Grow fresh and tasty vegetables within feet of your backdoor. Check out page 3 for a listing of vegetables to plant now under "What to Plant in January/February". Knowing what to grow and when is a huge part of being successful.

"Seasonal Gardening" is understanding what conditions the vegetables you choose require. Good example, November and December, with the unusual warm temperatures and now recent cold, it can be confusing to our cool season vegetables.



With the warm temperatures, lettuce tastes bitter and goes to seed while peas become tough.

Broccoli prefers temperatures between 65 and 75°. If crops are exposed to 10 or more days of temperatures between 35 and 50° and then followed by warm conditions, don't be surprised if your broccoli plant bolts (flowers and goes to seed).

Broccoli plants are heavy feeders. Apply a general fertilizer at planting and sidedress every 3 to 4 weeks with ammonium nitrate at 1lb. per 100 square feet. Broccoli prefers uniform moisture to a depth of 6 inches, preferably in the morning which will ensure foliage is dry before night fall.

Harvest main head while flower cluster is still tightly closed. Cut the main stem 5 to 6 inches below the top of the head. Harvesting the main head encourages additional side-shoots.



Carrots prefer cooler temperatures, between 55 and 70°. Consider growing carrots in containers filled with lightweight well-drained soil and deep enough for development. Containers allow flexibility,

moving to a cooler spot if temperatures heat up or cover if temperatures drop. Carrots require regular moisture, but will rot if soil is too soggy. Fertilize with a balanced fertilizer, light on the nitrogen. Most varieties are ready for harvest in 65-75 days.

Potato is a cool-season vegetable that grows during the winter and spring months in North Florida as the day length increases and the temperature changes from cool to warm. Earliness is an important characteristic for Florida production as the average season is 100 days.

Maximum tuber formation occurs at soil temperatures between 60 and 70°. The tubers fail to form when the soil temperature is below 45° or above 80°.

Do not plant in cold wet ground.

Tubers are ready to cut into seed pieces when one or more of the eyes begin to sprout.

Potato plants are heavy feeders. First fertilizer application should be applied at planting time, with two additional applications in 3 to 4 week intervals. Moderate soil moisture levels should be maintained throughout season.

Care must be taken not to over water.

Roughly 10 days to 2 weeks after planting, hilling will be required.

Harvest potatoes after the plants flower and then leaves turn yellow. Clean the potatoes and allow to dry thoroughly before storing.

When gardening consider the conditions and not just the calendar.

Time vegetable plantings so that you have a steady harvest throughout the growing season and most of all...Enjoy!



## Urban Gardening Favorites By Mary Puckett

### ***Diva Cucumber***

58 days to maturity.



Produces distinctly tender, crisp, sweet and seedless fruits. Harvest small for best flavor. Plants are gynocious (all-female) and parthenocarpic (grow fruits without pollination). Foliage is nonbitter, therefore not as attractive to cucumber beetles as some varieties. AAS winner.

### **Sweet Gold**



F1 Hybrid. 60 days to maturity. Very tall, indeterminate that "vines" and needs staking. This plant produces good yields of deep yellow grape tomatoes which stay firm, crisp and are crack resistant. They are very sweet, trust me!

### **Revolution Pepper**



Large, blocky Bell Pepper with extra thick walls ripening from a glossy dark green to a brilliant red. Perfect for stuffing, roasting, freezing and in fresh salads.

First offered to the public in Feb/Mar 2011 by Tomato Growers Supply Co. Indeterminate. Provides a good yield. The fruit are oblate, smooth and a bit irregular in appearance. Weighs in at around 8 to 10 ounces and is a nice even purple. Excellent flavor

### **Dwarf Wild Fred**



### **Juliet Hybrid**



Looks like a miniature Italian plum tomato, but it's really a cherry tomato that is juicy, sweet and weighs about an ounce. Very dependable "All America Winner" produces grape-like clusters that are crack resistant. Matures in 60 days. Indeterminate.

### **Cherokee Purple: Heirloom**



Large dark purple tomato from Tennessee which, when sliced, reveals an intense, red color. Flavor is very good! Plants make large vines that yield tomatoes up to 5" across and 3 1/2" deep.

Matures in 85 days. Indeterminate, so it requires staking and spacing of at least 18" between planting.

## Park of the Month: The Timucuan Preserve By Brad Burbaugh

As I wrap-up my park of the month segment, I thought I would highlight one of the largest and most educational parks in Jacksonville. The Timucuan Preserve encompasses over 46,000-acres and was designated a National Park in 1988. The preserve is named for the Timucua, the native people who lived along the waterways in northeast Florida. The Timucuan Preserve includes Fort Caroline National Memorial, the Theodore Roosevelt Area, Kingsley Plantation, Cedar Point, and thousands of acres of woods, water, and salt marsh.

Fort Caroline memorializes the short-lived French presence in the sixteenth century of Florida. Here you will find stories of exploration, survival, religious disputes, territorial battles, and first contact between American Indians and Europeans. The fort on site is a replica and was built to one-third scale in 1964. The Timucuan Preserve Visitor Center is also located at Fort Caroline. Inside the visitor center are exhibits about the natural history and environment, European exploration and settlement, and the Timucua Indians. Kingsley Plantation allows visitors an opportunity to explore life on a nineteenth-century Florida plantation. During Florida's plantation period (1763-1865), Fort George Island was owned by many planters. The site includes the plantation house, a kitchen house, a barn, and the ruins of 25 of the original slave cabins. The plantation house was built be-

tween 1797 and 1798 and is cited as being the oldest surviving plantation house in the state. This site allows visitors to discover the stories of the life and times of the hundreds of men, women, and children of African descent and how they labored, raised families, worshipped, celebrated, and mourned.

As with most preserves and parks in Jacksonville admission is free and the park is open from sunrise to sunset. If you want to a glimpse of old Florida while learning about the rich history of our area, I would encourage you to visit the Timucuan Preserve. For more information, go to the park website at: <http://www.nps.gov/foca/index.htm>



Historic drawing of Timucuan chief and procession

## Cottony Cushion Scale By Terry DeValle



Cottony cushion scale is a soft scale that is a major pest of citrus and many ornamental plants. Of the ornamental plants, pittosporum is a favorite.

Immature scale feed on leaves and line up along the midrib and veins and on small twigs. Older nymphs move to larger twigs and as adults they settle in on large branches. One sign that they are present is the black sooty mold from the honeydew the scale produce. The sooty mold can be found on leaves and branches. The females have bright orange-red,

yellow, or brown bodies and are somewhat covered by a yellowish to white wax. The fluted egg sac shown in the picture on the left is an egg sac that contains around 1000 red eggs.

These scale cause fruit drop, leaf drop, and a decline in vigor so control measures are sometimes needed if beneficial insects are not present. Ladybird beetles and a parasitic fly, *Cryptochetum iceryae*, are both great at controlling this pest.

If a twig is heavily infested, prune it off to reduce pest numbers and hand remove the fluted egg sacs. Horticultural oils are very effective but it's best to target the crawler stage. Crawlers typically emerge with new leaves. Keep a close eye of the egg sacs to see when the little ones are on the move.

## A Tribute to Trees By Larry Figart, Urban Forester

January is the month to plant trees in Florida. While other states a little farther north are dealing with frozen soil, we are fortunate to have the perfect planting conditions. In fact Arbor Day in Florida is January 20th. Instead of my usual "Arbor Day" article this year, I thought I would write about why trees are important enough to get their own "day".

First the obvious. Trees provide us with thousands of products that we use every day. We all know about lumber and wood, but did you know that cellophane, and rayon were made from trees. Some other unusual things that have tree parts in them include football helmets, photographic film, shatterproof glass, and imitation bacon.

Trees help slow down runoff into the St. Johns river by acting as mini-reservoirs, controlling runoff at the source. Trees reduce runoff by; intercepting and holding rain on leaves, branches and bark; increasing infiltration and storage of rainwater through the tree's root system; and reducing soil erosion by slowing rainfall before it strikes the soil. In Jacksonville, it has been calculated our trees store 928 million cubic feet of water. The cost to engineer that much infrastructure equals \$1.86 billion.



Trees help us save energy by cooling our houses. A large shade tree cools an equivalent of 10 room sized air conditioners running 20 hours a day. By helping us save energy, trees also help us avoid subsequent pollutant emissions from power plants.

We all have been hearing a lot about climate change caused by the increase in Carbon Dioxide in the atmosphere. Well, trees can help by storing carbon. A typical 12 inch live oak stores 322 lbs of carbon. In Jacksonville, our trees store up 69,000 lbs of carbon per year.

Recent research by Dr. Kathleen Wolf of the US Forest Service has provided some interesting information on how trees influence us as consumers. Shoppers shop more often and longer in well-landscaped tree lined business districts, and are willing to pay more for parking, and up to 12% more for goods and

services. She also found that commercial office properties having quality landscapes rent for 7% higher rates.



One of the best benefits of trees for our sluggish real estate sector is that they add to property value. A yard with healthy trees growing on it has greater curb appeal. Also, a yard with a healthy landscape that includes trees can increase property value by 10-20 percent.

Well, you may say that all of this is well and good, but what about me? How does a tree benefit me? Trees provide the oxygen we breathe. One acre of trees produces enough oxygen for 18 people to breathe each day and eliminates as much carbon dioxide from the air as is produced from driving a car 26,000 miles. Also, tree-filled neighborhoods have lower levels of domestic violence, are safer and more sociable and reduce stress. In hospitals, trees decrease need for medication, and speed hospital recovery times.

Finally, trees create jobs. Landscape architecture is the fastest growing design profession. Employment is projected to grow by 16% over the next 10 years. In the tree care industry, there is a job opening for almost all trained workers. As green infrastructure alternatives are increasingly used to manage stormwater, improve air quality, and reduce the urban heat island effect, jobs in engineering, research, and modeling will be essential in the development, design and performance monitoring of green systems.

When you break it down and consider trees as part of the infrastructure of our community, and see the benefits they provide it is easy to see why they are so valuable to have. So, for this year's Arbor Day, let's take a moment to appreciate all the benefits that trees provide. For more information go to the Alliance for Community Trees at: <http://actrees.org>.



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## Day of Gardening - February 25



We are hosting "A Day of Gardening" on February 25 from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm to kick off the spring gardening season. Please join us for this delightful day of gardening

topics while you shop with local vendors to get ready for the growing season.

The cost is \$10 if you register by February 21 and is \$15 after that date. This fee will include a light lunch. Please contact Becky at 255-7450 for a registration flier.

### Day of Gardening Agenda

- 9:00 am - Registration
- 9:30 am - Attracting Beneficial Insects
- 10:05 am - Permaculture 101
- 11:00 am - Concurrent Sessions (pick one)
  - ◆ Organic Vegetable Gardening
  - ◆ Water Conservation - Save \$\$
  - ◆ Container Gardening
- 11:45am - Light lunch
- 12:30 pm - Concurrent Sessions (pick one)
  - ◆ Tomato Varieties & Growing Tips
  - ◆ Caring for Palms
  - ◆ Terrariums
- 1:30 pm - Exceptional Plants for NE Florida

Extension information and services are available to all individuals regardless of race, color, sex or national origin. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no endorsement by the Cooperative Extension Service is implied. For persons with hearing or speech impairments, when contacting our office, please use the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

Once you have read this newsletter, turn "A New Leaf" and pass this information on to a friend.

Terry B. DelValle  
Extension Agent-Environmental Horticulture

This newsletter is jointly sponsored by the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, IFAS, Millie Ferrer-Chancey, Interim Dean; City of Jacksonville, Alvin Brown, Mayor; and the Duval County Cooperative Extension Service, Mike Sweat, Director.