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Gardening Questions?
Do you have a gardening question that you need help with? Duval County Master Gardeners are just a phone call away.

Tel: 387-8850

Want to stay on the mailing list? Complete the enclosed survey so you will stay on our mailing list. The information gathered helps us improve this newsletter.

Upcoming Classes
- **Saturday, September 9** from 10 to 11 AM @ Tree Hill Nature Center, 7152 Lone Star Rd, All About Butterflies. Speaker, Master Gardener Becky Wern. Bring the kids and find out how to cure NDD (Nature Deficit Disorder). To register, call 724-4646. Check out the schedule for Comcast Family Saturdays at http://www.treehill.org/schedule_comcast_saturdays.htm

- **Saturday, Oct. 7th**, 10 AM to 3PM, Octoberfest 2006 @ 1010 N. McDuff Avenue. Spend the day learning about exotic invasive plants and how to control them, daffodils in Florida, 10 moneysaving FYN tips and the best native plants for Florida. Purchase books from well-known authors Gil Nelson on native plants and noted daffodil expert Linda Van Beck. Purchase native plants and daffodil bulbs for your landscape while at the program. To reserve a spot, register by Oct. 4 and send a check for $10 made payable to DCOHAC along with your phone number to Gardenfest, 1010 N. McDuff Ave. Jacksonville, Fl 32254

- **Saturday, October 14** from 10 to 11 AM @ Tree Hill Nature Center, 7152 Lone Star Rd., Birds of the Area. Speaker, Master Gardener Alan Rau. To register, call 724-4646.
Things to do in September/October— by Terry DelValle,

♦ Is a small blue metallic insect munching away on your Mexican heather or other cupheas? If you find these plants disappearing before your very eyes, look for a small beetle insect. The immatures look like caterpillars so you might think you have more than one problem. To control, spray with an insecticide that contains Sevin or permethrin. If you use Sevin, make sure to treat in late afternoon after the bees have retired for the evening.

♦ Many spring bloomer have set their flower buds for next year so don’t prune them now. This includes Japanese magnolias, Ashe magnolias, fringe trees, redbuds, azaleas, wisteria, spireas, camellias, and poinsettias.

♦ Poinsettias need their last fertilization late in September. Apply 1 Tbsp. of a general fertilizer (8-8-8) per foot of plant height. Keep them away from light in the evening so they will develop flowers.

♦ Place Christmas cactus in a dark area each night from 5PM to 8AM each day starting in mid October. Continue this short day treatment for 6 weeks and then return to its normal spot to enjoy. Flowers should appear in about 10 weeks from start of treatment.

♦ Fertilize lawns and plant beds by late September. Use a fertilizer that has at least 50% of the nitrogen in a water insoluble form. Slow release/water insoluble potassium is also desirable because it too will quickly leach with heavy rains. Apply at the rate of one pound nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of area. Established trees (over 3 years in landscape) do not need additional fertilizers if surrounding areas receive applications.

♦ Spot treat with herbicides to control weeds. Do not treat the entire lawn with an herbicide unless the weed(s) are throughout the area. Many herbicides weaken lawns and make it more difficult for them to compete with the weeds. Some control may be possible by using a two or three way mix containing 2,4-D, MCPP, and/or Dicamba such as Spectracide Weed Stop, Bayer Advanced Lawn Southern Weed Killer, or Ortho Weed B-Gone for lawns. Read the label and make sure it is safe to use on your specific variety of lawn. ‘Floratam’, a commonly used variety of St. Augustinegrass is often excluded from the label. Some weeds are almost impossible to control with traditional lawn herbicides and will require more drastic measures. A broad-spectrum herbicide such as glyphosate may be another option to control tough weeds like crabgrass, Bermuda, Virginia buttonweed, Florida buttony, alligator weed, torpedo grass and doveweed in St. Augustinegrass. Use an edger or shovel to cut the runners of the St. Augustinegrass around the area to be treated. Glyphosate is a systemic herbicide so by cutting the runners, it prevents the material from being transferred outside of the treated area.

♦ Lawns have suffered this summer because of the extended drought. Many lawns have large brown patches that may be the result of multiple problems. Chinch bugs have been active all summer and sod webworms are also munching away. As temperatures drop and if rains become more frequent, watch out for brown patch fungus.

♦ This should be our rainy season. As temperatures drop and rains increase, you may be able to shut down the irrigation system completely. Enjoy the break and save the water! Water only when needed.

♦ Fall is approaching and trees will soon begin to shed their leaves. Don’t place them by the roadside destined for the recycling center. Leaves, especially pine needles and oak leaves, make an excellent mulch for plant beds. Place these in plant beds to cut down on weeds and conserve water. Add a 2 to 3 inch layer throughout the bed and pull mulch away from plant stems.
What to Plant in September/October by Terry DelValle

Plant strawberries in late October through November. Varieties include Florida 90, Tioga, Sequoia, Florida Belle, Dover, Tufts, Sweet Charlie and Chandler. Plant in rows 36” apart and 12” apart within the row. Elevate rows 6” above existing soil to insure good drainage. Use pine straw to reduce weed problems and slugs.

For instant color plant coleus, marigolds and garden chrysanthemums or wait until October to plant cool season flowers like dianthus, pansy, petunia, phlox, shasta daisy, snapdragon, viola, status, Thunbergia, flowering kale and cabbage.

Bulbs or bulb-types to plant include amaryllis, Aztec lily, calla, elephant ears, grape hyacinth, iris, lachenalia (leopard lily), narcissus, snowflake, watsonia, and zephyr lily. In October add to the list African lily (Agapanthus), gladiolus, kaffir lily, lily, marica (walking iris), moraea, society garlic, spider lily, anemone, hyacinth, pineapple lily and Star-of-Bethlehem.

For northern type bulbs (tulips and hyacinths), buy in October and store them in the refrigerator for about 60 days. Plant bulbs immediately upon removal. Keep them away from ripening fruit during storage.

There are many vegetables that can be planted now. In September plant bush beans, pole beans, cucumbers, summer squash, tomatoes, beets*, broccoli*, Brussels sprouts*, cabbage*, carrots*, cauliflower*, collards*, endive, kale*, kohlrabi*, leek*, lettuce*, mustard*, onions*, parsley*, radish*, and turnips*. Add to the list for October those with an * listed above plus Chinese cabbage and spinach.

Hamelia patens, firebush, is an excellent Florida native that will provide color to the landscape almost year-round. It provides orange-red blooms from spring through fall that change into fleshy black berries. Once cool weather arrives, leaves turn a beautiful red. Standard types mature at 6’ to 12’ tall with a 5’ to 8’ spread. They are fast growers and make a nice specimen plant or can be used in a mass plantings. A dwarf variety (Hamelia patens ‘Compacta’) is also available that tops out at about three feet tall and can be used as a border plant. Another plus—they attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

Plant in full sun to partial shade for the best flower production. They have some drought and salt tolerance and can tolerate a variety of soil types. Occasional pruning may be required to keep the larger plants within bounds. They are listed as hardy in zones 9 through 11 and can be damaged by cold weather but typically will come back from the root system. Check occasionally for insect problems like scale, mites and aphids and treat if natural predators are not present to keep numbers in check.
Urban Gardening Update
By Mary Puckett, Urban Gardening Program Assistant

We’re taking advantage of the high temperatures. Most of our beds are covered with plastic to help control weeds, insects and nematodes. Peppers, eggplant and grapes are still going strong.

Changes have been made by selecting varieties for the fall garden and the plan is committed to paper, showing the location of each crop. This helps keep track of the different varieties, which ones you like best and crop rotation. Crop rotation means that the same members of the same family are not planted repeatedly in the same soil. This practice primarily prevents diseases from carrying over from season to season. Nematode damage is less likely as well.

Now is the time for You to be planning for your Fall Garden as well. First step is selecting a site.

Pick a location that receives 6 to 8 hours of sunshine convenient to your home and near a water source. Stay away from tree and shrub roots. They compete with vegetable plants for nutrients and moisture, and may be injured when cultivating the garden. Avoid areas that are low and wet, as most vegetables do not tolerate standing water or waterlogged soil for any length of time. Fertile soil is best, but unfavorable soil can be improved by adding organic material (manure, compost, leaves, grass and commercial fertilizer).

Avoid planting over septic-lines as seepage could contaminate root and tuber crops. Septic mounds should also be avoided eventhough they grow nice green plants.

Herb of the Month  Chives

Chives are perennials, related to the onion and grow to about 8 inches tall. Onion chives prefer cold weather and shade during our “hot” summer afternoons. Garlic chives thrive during our summer months. They grow larger then the common chives with leaves up to 18 inches tall and clusters of white flowers. If you visit Urban Garden at this time, you would see them used as an excellent border and full of blooms.

Chives are easy to grow. Seeds germinate very slowly so transplants or divisions are best. Like most herbs, the more you use chives the more they will grow. Cut and wash the leaves, leaving 2-inch stems when harvesting.

Garlic chives can be used just as you use regular chives. They can be snipped into Parmesan cheese and used as a topping for pizza or garlic bread. Gently sauté them in butter and add shrimp for a nice pasta topping.

Herbed Cheese Toasts

Ingredients:

3/4 pound feta cheese, crumbled
1 tbsp. chopped tarragon
1/4 cup finely chopped garlic chives
Freshly ground pepper
1/4 cup olive oil

A fresh baguette or other crusty bread

Crumble the cheese in a bowl. Add the tarragon, garlic chives and pepper. Toss the mixture with the oil and allow it to rest for 1 to 3 hours at room temperature. When ready to serve, preheat the broiler and toast slices of the bread lightly. Spread each piece with a tablespoon or more of the cheese mixture. Place the bread on a baking sheet and broil for about 1 minute, or until the cheese just begins to bubble. Watch carefully as they broil. Serve warm. (Recipe provided by Brenda Hyde, a freelance writer)
With Fall approaching, it’s time to decide what cool-season vegetables you plan to grow. Those vegetables not only tolerate low temperatures but require it for good growth and development are referred to as cool-season. Some of these cool-season vegetables are Beets, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Cabbage, Collards, and Spinach. To find what varieties are recommended for our area, please refer to the University of Florida’s publication Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide found at [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021) or call Duval County Extension Office at 387-8850 and ask for one of our Master Gardeners.

Variety selection can make the difference between success or failure. A quote from Jim Stephens, author of the Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide, “Any gardening endeavor is only as good as all the intelligent planning, work, energy, and enthusiasm that go into it”.

Once you decide on varieties, is it better to use transplants or direct seed? Certain vegetables do very well as transplants while others require direct seeding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Easily survive Transplanting</th>
<th>Transplant well, but require care</th>
<th>Difficult to transplant (better to use seed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beet</td>
<td>Carrot</td>
<td>Mustard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>Celery</td>
<td>Peas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brussel Sprouts</td>
<td>Kale</td>
<td>Turnips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>Kohirabi</td>
<td>Chard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>Leek</td>
<td>Onion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chard</td>
<td></td>
<td>Collards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endive</td>
<td>Lettuce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, there are several of the cool-season vegetables that transplant easily.

What Would be the Advantage of Using Transplants?

Avoid Adverse Weather—Remember last August and September? We had one hurricane after another and all the rain that accompanied them. You choose when to expose the plant to the elements.

Choose the Best Plants—You select and plant only the best plants.

Obtain Small Number of Plants—Only a few plants are usually needed and can be purchased from a nursery, saving you the cost of expensive seed or the need to store left over seed.

Harvest Earlier—Vegetables started from transplants are usually ready to harvest earlier than those started from seeds. Most vegetables are ready to set in the garden when they are 4 to 6 weeks old. Avoid disturbing roots when transplanting.

Transplant when conditions are best—soon after a rain, when cloudy, or in the late afternoon. They will need some protection for 2-4 days after transplanting with something like a palmetto fan or board.

When setting the plant into the soil, do not compress the soil around the roots. Gently pour water into the hole to settle the soil around the roots. Once water has dried a bit, cover the wet spot with dry soil to reduce evaporation.

Advantage in direct seeding? You have a wider selection of varieties to choose from and the fact that not all vegetables do well when transplanted. Most vegetables may be seeded directly into the garden. Some exceptions are sweet potatoes, strawberries, and Irish potatoes which are started from plant parts.

Refer to the Vegetable Guide for the recommended spacing for plants. You may find it necessary to thin the seedlings. It is important that each plant has sufficient space to make the best development.

Once the garden is planted, controlling weeds will increase the yield of your vegetable crop. Hand pulling is the method of choice. Mulching can help prevent weed growth and conserve soil moisture.

Common mulches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hay</th>
<th>Pine Straw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaves</td>
<td>Pine Bark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Black plastic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vegetable crops grow best when they receive about 1/2 to 1 inch water each week from rain or irrigation.

Florida’s winter climate permits us to grow many vegetables. Take advantage of not only nutritious fresh vegetables, but the fresh air, sunshine and exercise.

Enjoy
Attract Birds to Your Landscape by Terry DelValle

It's easy to attract birds to the landscape if the basic needs are provided: food, cover, water, and space.

Food: Food can be provided by selecting the right plants, especially natives. Plants are the best source of energy because they provide nuts, fruit, seeds, and insects that serve as food for birds. An area that will attract an assortment of different birds will have layers of plant materials that include trees, tall shrubs, small shrubs, and ground covers. For example, cardinals, a year-round resident in north Florida, eat seeds in the fall and winter and switch to insects in spring and summer. Black gum tree (Nyssa sylvatica), sweetgum tree (Liquidambar styraciflua), American Beautyberry (Callicarpa americana), are all good food sources for cardinals. When they switch to an insect diet in the spring and summer, don't be so quick to eliminate their food source or they will move elsewhere.

Florida's state bird, the mockingbird, feeds on insects, grubs, fruits and seed. The southern red cedar (Juniperus silicicola), hackberry (Celtis laevigata), cabbage/sabel palm (Sabal palmetto) and American beautyberry (Callicarpa americana) all provide food for mockingbirds.

Bird feeders are a great way to enjoy a close up look at our feathered friends. If you have a feeder, select their favorite seed – the small black-oil sunflower seed. Other favored seeds are the thistle or niger seed (American Goldfinches), and white proso millet (Mourning Doves, sparrows). To keep squirrels from stealing the seed, mix in cayenne pepper. In cooler weather when insects are less plentiful, use suet or animal fat can provide needed protein. A recipe for suet cake is to melt 1-cup ground suet in saucepan, add 1-cup smooth peanut butter and stir until melted and blended. In a separate bowl, mix 2 to 3 cups yellow corn meal and ½ cup white or whole-wheat flour. When the suet cools and thickens, add the dry ingredients and mix thoroughly. Stuff the mix into the openings of a pine cone or place in small tins, like a muffin tin, to harden to later use in a suet feeder. Place the suet feeder or prepared pinecone in a shady location and suspend or attach to a tree limb.

The feeder doesn't have to be expensive. Just make sure it has drainage so the seed doesn't spoil by sitting in water. Place it in an area that is visible and accessible to the birds. Fruit, like oranges and raisins are also good foods to attract mockingbirds and orioles. For more info on feeders, go to http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW192.

Cover: Birds need cover for protection from their predators and for shelter during bad weather. Plants and/or birdhouses can provide cover. Most birds prefer to use natural nesting areas but many will use birdhouses (nest boxes). Birdhouses can be built or purchased from local stores. When selecting a birdhouse, birds do not need perches, but like a rough below the entrance hole. Treated pine or cedar and galvanized nails are the best products for longevity. Birdhouses should be cleaned annually so make sure there's an access panel to make this job easier. Provide ventilation near the top and never paint birdhouses dark colors because of the heat. Birds have specific requirements for houses which include size of the entrance hole, height of the hole above the floor, amount of floor space, and depth of cavity. To check on specific requirements, look at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW058. Dead tree snags are great sources of food and shelter for cavity nesting birds like woodpeckers, bluebirds and screech owls.

Water: Water is critical for the survival of birds. When selecting a birdbath, choose one with gently sloping sides and a rough texture. Select one that has running water because the sound attracts birds from surrounding areas. Place it in a shady spot, about 15’ from shrubbery 3’ off the ground. Clean the birdbath weekly to control bacteria and mosquito larvae.

Space: Space needs vary greatly and depend a lot on the bird's food requirements. For example, cardinals
First, a little history lesson. The American Elm, Ulmus Americana, was at one time the dominant street tree in the United States. In 1928, Asian elm beetles escaped into the U.S. from a shipment of logs bound for Chicago to be used to make furniture. The beetles carried with them a fungus that causes Dutch Elm disease. The disease rapidly spread throughout the N.E. United States wiping out entire neighborhoods of American Elm in the process.

What does all this have to do with Chinese Elms? As our native elms are dying off, a resistant replacement is being sought. Chinese elms have been around for a long time but they are now getting a lot of new attention. Chinese elms are native to China, Korea, and Japan. They were introduced in the U.S. in the mid 1800's and are resistant to Dutch Elm Disease.

Chinese elms are also called lacebark elms after their flaky attractive bark. Chinese elm should not be confused with Siberian elm, Ulmus pumila. Siberian elms were also thought to be a replacement for American elms but have proved to be very undesirable because they are short lived, brittle, and somewhat invasive.

Chinese elms are deciduous for the most part. Their branch structure is very typical of elms. It is upright scaffold limbs arching over into a rounded canopy. Chinese elm will not get to the size of the American elm. According to Dr. Ed Gilman from the University of Florida, “It can reach 80 feet in height but it is more often seen at 40 to 50 feet”.

The most distinguishing feature of Chinese elm is its bark. The bark is naturally flaky revealing inner bark that can be a range of grey, green, orange and brown. This adds winter interest to the landscape even when the foliage is not present.

The tree has small inconspicuous light green flowers that bloom in the late summer to early fall. The fruit is a small flat samara that drops from the tree in the fall, but causes little litter problems.

The tree has been described as an excellent, tough durable tree. However, recent research by Dr. Mary (Continued on Page 8)

If you ever see a giant palm weevil, you are not likely to forget it. It is one of the largest and most beautiful insects you will ever see. The adult weevils are variable in color. They are usually a mottled red and black but can be completely black, or completely red. They can reach sizes of 1 1/2 inches long. The palmetto weevil historically is a minor pest but with the increase in palms in the landscape, palmetto weevils have become more common.

The palmetto weevils use smell to locate susceptible palms. The adult male will be flying around and will pick up the odor of a stressed, or freshly wounded (pruned) palm. As he begins to feed he will release a pheromone (scent) to all the other weevils in the area to come join him. The mixture of wounded plant odor and pheromone is a very effective attractant to other weevils. As the party starts to gather, they will feed, mate and lay eggs in the bases of the leaves or wounds in the palm. The eggs hatch in about three days. The larvae gorge themselves on the soft tissue around the growth bud of the tree. A host of palm weevil larvae can quickly destroy the bud of the tree and once the bud dies, the tree will die as well. The younger leaves start to decline and then die. The decay that is associated with the larval feeding sometimes causes the top to fall over. Once the larvae are mature, they form cocoons in the leaf bases and pupate. The adult emerges around 84 days after the egg was laid.

The key to treating palmetto weevil is prevention. If you notice damage it is usually too late to spray. The larvae have already done irreparable damage to the bud. Preventative use of insecticides on transplanted trees is an option but it becomes expensive if the planting is large. Pruning is the most common source of palm wounding. Pruning should be done when the adults are the least active from fall through early spring. Canary Island Date Palms seem to be the most susceptible so timing of pruning is critical on these trees.
Duryea of the University of Florida suggests that this tree may not be very wind tolerant. This tree withstands urban conditions and will do fine in residential yards as well as larger parking lot islands.

The Chinese elm is naturally variable in form so several cultivars have been selected for form, size and cold hardiness. Some of the more common cultivars are as follows:

'Drake' - Upright branches, small dark leaves, that hold long into the fall.

'Allee' - Upright branching, drought tolerant, and modest fall color.

'Bosque' - One central leader with strong ascending branches with a pyramidal shape, excellent heat tolerance.

'Milliken' - A fine selection for exfoliating bark. Parent tree is 50 feet tall and has withstood high winds.

There are many more selections of this tree available. Many nurserymen and landscape architects believe that the use of this tree will increase as more selections become available. The downside to this is that it may become as overused as the American Elm was 60 years ago. A healthy urban forest needs to include a mix of many species and cultivars. The good news is that we still have some room for this tree.

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

Terry B. Del Valle
Extension Agent-Environmental Horticulture

This newsletter is jointly sponsored by the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, IFAS, Larry Arrington, Dean; City of Jacksonville, John Peyton, Mayor; and the Duval County Cooperative Extension Service, Rick Godke, Director.