## July – September 2006

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Contact us at: (321) 697-3000  
(321)697-3010 fax

Jennifer Welshans, Horticulture Agent  
Newsletter Editor  
Barbara Shuman, Master Gardener

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# Extension Calendar of Events

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<tr>
<th>DATE &amp; TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 20th</td>
<td>One Fish, Two Fish Workshop: Aquarium 101</td>
<td>Osceola County Library - Poinciana Branch</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-3pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call (321) 697-3015 for more information</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 12th</td>
<td>Florida Vegetable Gardening</td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park, Extension Services Bldg</td>
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<tr>
<td>10am - Noon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call (321) 697-3010 to register</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 18th</td>
<td>What Every Floridian Should Know About Africanized Bees and Fire Ants</td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park, Extension Services Bldg</td>
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<tr>
<td>2pm – 4pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call (321) 697-3010 to register</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 22nd</td>
<td>Florida Vegetable Gardening</td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park, Extension Services Bldg</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:30-8:30pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call (321) 697-3010 to register</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 23rd</td>
<td>What Every Floridian Should Know About Africanized Bees and Fire Ants</td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park, Extension Services Bldg</td>
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<tr>
<td>10am - Noon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call (321) 697-3010 to register</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 19th –</td>
<td>Master Gardener Program Volunteer Training Program</td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park, Extension Services Bldg</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 19th</td>
<td>Held on Tuesdays</td>
<td>Call (321) 697-3010 for more information</td>
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<tr>
<td>9am – 5pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 28th</td>
<td>Ask An Expert: Gingers</td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park, Extension Services Bldg</td>
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<tr>
<td>10am – 2pm</td>
<td>Master Gardener Barbara will answer your questions.</td>
<td>Call (321) 697-3000 or email your questions ahead of time to <a href="mailto:epabon5@ufl.edu">epabon5@ufl.edu</a>.</td>
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<td>September 28th –</td>
<td>Great Gardener Program 8-week program</td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park, Extension Services Bldg</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 16th</td>
<td>Held on Thursday evenings</td>
<td>Call (321) 697-3010 for more information</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00-9:00pm</td>
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*Additional class will be added. Check [http://osceola.ifas.ufl.edu](http://osceola.ifas.ufl.edu) for updates.*

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## Join the Florida Master Naturalist Program

The Florida Master Naturalist Program provides structured learning about Florida ecosystems and plant and animal interactions. It includes lectures, discussions, hands on activities and field trips to help participants learn about our natural world. Environmental professionals, teachers, outdoor enthusiasts, nature center guides, eco-tour operators, retirees and anyone interested in learning more about Florida is invited to attend. There will be two separate programs offered in Osceola County this fall and winter. Each program is 40 hours of instruction and activity time. The Wetlands Module will include field trips to the Disney Wilderness Preserve, Lake Tohopekaliga, Shingle Creek, and Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area. The Uplands Module will include field trips to Lake Lizzie Preserve, Sunset Ranch, and other natural areas. The Coastal Module will be offered in neighboring counties. Participants receive a variety of resources including a course manual with speaker notes, posters and materials on Florida native plants and animals. Eleanor Foerste, Natural Resources faculty with UF/IFAS Osceola County Extension will be the lead instructor with assistance from Capt. Ray Robida and Ken Brooker, certified Florida Master Naturalist Instructors. If you would like more information on these fun and educational programs, contact Cindy Rutherford at 321-697-3000 or email her at crut@osceola.org.
TRAIN TO BE A MASTER GARDENER

Have you ever had a problem in your garden or landscape that you couldn't solve, such as a sick plant or unidentified insect? Do you like gardening and want to learn more about it? Are you looking to participate in a University of Florida training program? Would you like to share your knowledge with others and meet new people with similar interests?

If you said yes to these questions, then the Osceola County Master Gardener Program may be for you.

The rapid urban growth in many areas of the United States coupled with increased interest in the environment and home gardening have prompted ever increasing numbers of homeowner questions to county Extension Service agents. Many of these questions are seasonal in nature and are relatively easily answered - assuming that one has horticultural training.

In 1972, an innovative Extension Service agent in the state of Washington reasoned that well-trained volunteers could respond to many of the everyday homeowner questions, freeing him and his colleagues for more technical and difficult problems. Volunteers, such as extension homemakers and 4-H leaders had always been a part of the Extension Service but never in the area of homeowner horticulture. The extension agent selected, trained and certified volunteers as Master Gardeners. They soon succeeded in meeting his desired objectives - in fact they exceeded his expectations. And so, the Master Gardener Program began.

Since that time, the program has grown and is now active in more than 45 states. Florida's program began in 1979. The program has been a tremendous success and is now active in 56 of Florida's 67 counties. The Florida Master Gardener Program is sponsored by the University of Florida/IFAS, of which the Osceola County Extension Service is a part.

Eleanor Foerste, the current natural resources agent, established the Osceola County program in 1981. Since then, over 300 Osceola County Master Gardeners have been certified providing more than 80,000 hours of service to more than 70,000 residents. A few of the Master Gardeners from the original class are still active, providing the county with 25 years of volunteer work.

Master Gardener volunteers have been involved in a variety of activities helping youth and adults learn about horticulture. They also put a lot of work into creating our two demonstration gardens, landscape and vegetable gardens in the Osceola Heritage Park complex. These gardens show county residents actual gardening techniques that can be used at home. In addition, Master Gardeners can be found at the Osceola County Extension Office to help answer plant-care questions from residents every weekday.

Gardening in Central Florida is like nowhere else. It can be a very frustrating task for a veteran gardener who has learned gardening elsewhere. Understanding our growing seasons and knowing what plants grow here can be difficult. The Osceola program is designed to help with these tribulations and train individuals interested in using the proper horticultural practices for Florida.

Extension agents and specialists from UF/IFAS provide the training for Master Gardener volunteers. Master Gardeners receive more than 60 hours of training over a three-month period.

Classes are offered on a variety of gardening topics, including citrus, pest management and lawn care.
Through field trips, demonstrations and activities, class participants learn about soils, insects, plant diseases, weeds, efficient irrigation, attracting wildlife, natural ecosystems and native plants.

After the training program, completing a comprehensive exam and a number of "in-training" hours, the volunteers are certified as Master Gardeners for one year. They agree to provide at least 50 hours of service each year to the county by helping local citizens reduce their impact on the environment while having attractive and functional landscapes.

Osceola County Master Gardeners serve as volunteers for the University of Florida/IFAS Osceola County Extension Service. Many volunteers have renewed their contracts and continue to be active beyond their original commitment.

Classes for the new crop of Master Gardeners will begin Sept. 20 and continue once a week (every Tuesday) until mid-December. If the horticulture training sounds interesting, but you cannot commit to the volunteer work, we are also offering a similar program called the "Osceola County Great Gardeners." For a Master Gardener or Great Gardener application, please contact our office. Class sizes are limited, so don't delay.

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**Osceola County Master Gardener Plant Clinic**

If you have a gardening question or concern, assistance is as near as your telephone. Master Gardeners are available to answer your questions between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday at (321) 697-3000. You may also stop by the Extension Services Building in Osceola Heritage Park located at Highway 192 and Bill Beck Blvd.

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**The 2006 Plants of the Year**

These plants have been selected by the Florida Nursery Grower and Landscape Association (FNGLA), as the best plants for 2006. First, is the cast iron plant, Aspidistra, Milky Way which can grow in dimly lit areas, even is suitable for a houseplant. It is a foliage plant with only inconspicuous flowers. Next is the yellow African Bulbine, Bulvine frutescens, which is a flowering perennial. It prefers full sun and has many star-shaped yellow or orange flowers. The dwarf powderpuff, Calliandra emarginata, can be used as a hedge and is very drought tolerant once established. The African blue basil, Ocimum kilimandscharicum X Ocimum basilicum pupurascens, is an annual herb used as a fragrant ornamental. It prefers moist soil and has purple blooms. The wild Indian date palm, Phoenix sylvestris, a tall slender palm, is fast grower and is drought and frost tolerant. The amethyst falls wisteria, Wisteria frutescens 'amethyst falls' is a flowering perennial vine which is not as aggressive as other wisterias. All of these are grown in zones 9b through 10.
What Are Nematodes Anyway?

www.edis.ifas.ufl.edu/NG005

William T Crow, Robert A Dunn

“Nematodes are unsegmented roundworms, different from earthworms and other familiar worms that are segmented (annelids) or in some cases flattened and slimy (flatworms). Nematodes living in soil are very small and most can only be seen using a microscope. There are many kinds of nematodes found in the soil of any garden. Most are beneficial, feeding on bacteria, fungi, or other microscopic organisms and some may be used as biological control organisms to help manage important insect pests. Unfortunately, there are also a group of nematodes that feed on plants, these are called plant-parasitic nematodes.

Effectiveness differs among varieties of marigolds; one report stated yellow or gold "Petite French" types to be most effective against the greatest number of root-knot nematode species.”

See also http://agroecology.ifas.ufl.edu/marigoldsbackground.htm “Marigolds as cover crops by Dover, McSorley, Wang

See also http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH019, Organic Vegetable Gardening, James M Stephens

“Crotolaria spectabilis and marigolds, when planted as cover crops, tend to reduce some kinds of nematodes. The use of marigolds to repel nematodes from interplanted vegetables is not effective control.

A good garden mulch tends to reduce damage caused by nematodes.”

The citations given above show research done by University of Florida scientists. The following article relates the experiences here at the Osceola County Extension Center edibles garden.

Marigolds and Nematodes in the Vegetable Garden

Frank Palka, Master Gardener

Last winter after the fair, we harvested most of the vegetables we'd planted in late October and early November. Even though the winter was milder than was best for cool season vegetables, we had a good harvest. When we pulled up the Swiss chard, we found extensive root knot nematode damage. This was not unexpected since we had found some damage on the roots of okra last fall. It was not the same bed. We knew they'd be here eventually and now we knew they're probably in every bed. Now it's time to give them the boot.

Since the soil fumigant Vapam was outlawed in the late eighties or so, there has been no chemical control available to the home gardener. Solarizing won't rid the area of them either. So what do you do?

In what we called the old garden, before the new Ag center was built, we had the same problem. We had always used marigolds planted in the cells of the blocks to repel insects. It was believed they didn't like them. Bugs that could fly just laughed but crawling, soil- born insects seemed to stay out of the cells.
While looking through catalogs for marigolds, I found a variety called Nema-Gone. The catalog claimed this particular variety, a single petaled French marigold, four feet tall, was an organic pest control for nematodes. I sent for the seeds to check out their claim.

Instead of solarizing all the beds as we usually did in the hot summer months, I did some mass planting of the seeds in two of the most heavily infested beds. After a few months, the flowers were pulled up. I had learned that the oil in the roots of marigolds contains the ingredient that kills nematodes and sends insects on the run. One bed was tilled with chopped roots, the other was not. Several types of cool season vegetables were planted in both beds. At harvest, none showed any sign of root knot damage. That was our last season at that location, so we never found out if they returned. If they did, they were clobbered by another control – the Bulldozer.

Looking through catalogs recently, I found another variety called Golden Guardian, a single petal marigold, two feet tall. This catalog claims that in a study done in Holland, this was the most effective marigold for nematode control, killing 99% over a three-month period. I’m going to buy the seeds and use them to plant a good portion of the beds during the summer. It takes a long time for this type of marigold to go to seed, so I’ll let one bed stay for seed collection purposes. After fall harvest, we should see some kind of result. After the winter harvest, we should have positive results. We’ll make them known.

By the way, one catalog stated that some gardeners plant marigolds to ward off rabbits. Several years ago, while standing in front of a mass planting of marigolds at Epcot, I watched a rabbit devour two whole plants. Myth busted?

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*Aesculus glabra*

**Buckeye Tree**

*Kay Flowers, Master Gardener*

Florida is filled with Buckeyes, but not with the buckeye tree. It is native to Ohio and when the pioneers crossed the Alleghenies settling our country it is said that the buckeye tree is the only tree in the forests that they did not know. It is a soft wood tree growing tall and wide with brown nuts that have a tan spot, making the nut resemble the eye of a deer. The wood of the tree has been used to carve baby cradles, troughs for watering, platters and other pioneer household needs. The nut of the tree, though inedible, is attractive, and folk wisdom has it that carrying one in a pocket brings good luck and wards off rheumatism. However in general, the trees and their nuts are of little practical use in today's society. The wood does not burn well, the bark has an unpleasant odor and the bitter meat of the nut is mildly toxic.

The first recorded use of the term is in 1788, when statesman Col. Ebenezer Sproat was called "Hetuck, Hetuck" by the Indians because of his large girth and swash buckling mannerisms. Hetuck means buckeye in their language. But the presidential election of William Henry Harrison solidified the name Buckeye with the State of Ohio. At the Whig convention in Cincinnati, frontiersmen carried buckeye canes, decorated strings of buckeye beads made out of the nut and adopted the buckeye tree and the buckeye nut as campaign symbols. It is believed that the beads were a precursor to today’s campaign buttons. This campaign indelibly linked the Buckeye with the State of Ohio.

The Ohio buckeye is one of 13 recognized members of the genus *Aesculus*, seven native to North America, one to Europe (the horse chestnut) and five to Asia. It has a five-fingered leaf and a brown nut with a tan deer-like eye on it. The Ohio State University uses the leaf on its flag and the Buckeye as it name recognition and mascot. It is one of the only teams in the United States to be named for a tree rather than an animal, but the name Buckeye is so ingrained in the lore and history of Ohio that it is instant name recognition when some one tells you they are a "Buckeye".
CITRUS RATS

Dale Downing, Master Gardener

We learn at a young age to love rodents such as Mickey Mouse, Stuart Little and Mighty Mouse. Then, as many of us get older, these animals become inexpensive, low maintenance pets. At what point do they become our urban nightmare? Maybe when we open our kitchen cupboard and a blinky-eyed rodent stares us down over its Double Stuffed Oreo? Or what about when we can’t fall asleep because our “upstairs neighbors” living in the attic won’t keep their scurrying and gnawing down to an appropriate inside noise level?

Unlike our native, or New World, rat and mice species, Old World rats and mice cause billions of dollars of economic damage annually. They are also carriers or vectors of many diseases that can afflict people such as the plague. We can thank early world travelers for bringing them from Europe and Asia to North America in the 1500’s.

Florida’s most abundant rodent pest is the citrus rat also known as the roof rat, black rat, or Rattus rattus. They enjoy living near dense human populations because we provide them with plenty of food, water and often a home. Citrus rats are up to 18" in length including the tail, and weigh ½ to ¾ of a pound. They differ from the Norway or sewer rat in some obvious ways. The citrus rat is more agile, its tail is longer than its head and body length combined, and they have very large ears and eyes. Citrus rats vary from dark brownish-black to lemon color. They are arboreal meaning they prefer to live above the ground using trees, power lines, and fences as runways. Because they regularly use the same runways when traveling, there are often rub marks, or dirt and oil smudges, along edges that they contact. They also prefer to nest off the ground using attics, trees and wall spaces as nurseries. Citrus rats are omnivores (eat animal and plant matter) and like other rodents they must constantly grind their teeth to keep them short and sharp.

Are you wondering if it is a rat living in your attic and visiting your yard? Here are some common signs to watch for:

- Gnawed and damaged wood, walls, or electrical wires
- Dark, greasy rubmarks along walls or edges from contact
- Urine stains in and around building
- Droppings approximately ½” long with pointed ends
- Activity from dusk until dawn (rats are generally nocturnal compared to squirrels which are diurnal or active during daylight hours)
- Squeaking and scratching noises throughout the night
- Food moved and/or eaten on the counter top
- Holes in pet food bags
- Citrus fruit hollowed out through quarter to half-dollar shaped hole in rind

The primary goal is to keep rats out of your house initially. Eliminating your house and yard of citrus rats once established may sound easy, but they are very secretive, agile and smart. Seal off any holes ½” or larger with hardware cloth 19g (or stronger)
that has a mesh of 1/4". Next, scout the area for any sanitation problems such as ripe fruit left on trees, fallen fruit and loose fitting garbage can lids. These are rat attractors. At night, remove any rat feeders disguised as bird feeders, dog or cat feeders, or food left out on the screened porch (including pet birds and their debris). Politely encourage neighbors to do the same.

If still having a rat problem, there are a variety of traps that can be used such as live and snap traps. Traps are the best solution for most rat infestations; therefore, poisons should not be needed. Unlike poisons, traps will allow access and removal of the carcass. This will prevent any decomposition odors in your home as well as any chance of secondary poisonings that can occur due to pets or birds of prey eating a poisoned rat.

**If you choose to use snap traps outside, set them at night and bring them in at dawn so non-targeted wildlife will not be harmed.** Also place a protective board over the trap to discourage birds and other wildlife from getting caught. When using traps, verify that the rat is dead before disposing of it. If it is not dead, kill it in a humane manner before disposal.

If poison baits are used outdoors, they must be placed in a tamper-resistant bait station. It is illegal in Florida to place poison rodenticide baits where they are accessible to children, pets or wildlife.

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**ROSES HAVE STORIES TO SHARE, Part I**

*Carolyn Lamond, Master Gardener*

Roses have a long and colorful history. They have been symbols of love, beauty, war, and peace. The rose is, according to fossil evidence, 35 million years old. In nature the genus Rosa has some 150 species spread throughout the Northern Hemisphere from Alaska to Mexico and including northern Africa. Garden cultivation of roses began some 5,000 years ago, probably in China. During the Roman period roses were grown extensively in the Middle East. They were used as confetti at celebrations, for medicinal purposes and as a source of perfume.

Roman nobility established large public rose gardens in the south of Rome. After the fall of the Roman Empire the popularity of roses seemed to rise and fall depending on gardening trends of the time. During the 15th Century the rose was used as a symbol for the factions fighting to control England. The white rose symbolized York and the red rose symbolized Lancaster. As a result the conflict became known as the “War of the Roses”.

Roses were in such high demand during the 17th century that royalty considered roses or rose water as legal tender and they were often used as barter. Napoleon’s wife, Josephine, established an extensive collection of roses at Chateau de Malmaison, her estate seven miles west of Paris in the 1800s.

This garden became the setting for Pierre Joseph Redoute’s work as a botanical illustrator. In 1824 he completed his watercolor collection “Les Rose” which is considered one of the finest records of botanical illustration.

Although in Florida we cannot grow all the roses mentioned in rose history, it is important to become familiar with the ones that are suited to our Central Florida climate.

*Source: Druitt and Shoup, Landscaping with Antique Roses*
GROWING HERBS

Joann Runnels, Master Gardener

Nothing in my garden brings me as much pleasure and joy as the delicate beauty of thyme flowers or the pungent licorice smell of damp fennel. Herbs bring me back to history all the way back to ancient times when herbs were our only medicines, cosmetics and flavor enhancements for food and wine. Their fragrant leaves were scattered on the floors and paths of our ancestors’ homes to cover unpleasant smells that lingered in the air. Every herb we grow today has an age-old history, a romantic story told about its name and use. I love reading and sharing these old tales. For instance, do you know that in 1696, medical books claimed that lemon balm taken every morning would renew youth, strengthen the brain and relieve a languish nature. Apollo’s temple at Delphi had its roof made entirely of bay leaves to protect against witchcraft. I am not that concerned about witchcraft, but it is quite rewarding to have a bay topiary sitting on my porch. Going in my yard to snip fresh herbs for dinner or to take an armful to a friend is one of life’s pleasures.

If you haven’t grown herbs before or if you only gave herbs a half-hearted attempt that failed, perhaps I can persuade you to try again. A corner in your garden or even a small space for inter-planting with other perennials and annuals is all the space you will need. Planning what, where and when to plant should be given the same consideration that you would give to any other plant.

How much sun would the plant need, is it a culinary herb, or herb revered for its fragrance, or all? I like to have the culinary herbs I use near the door or path. Not only is this location handy to the kitchen, but I can enjoy the fragrance as I brush by the door on my way in and out. After choosing a location, check the soil and water conditions.

Rosemary will grow successfully in a drier soil than will mint but most herbs will benefit from a well-drained or composted area. Summer months are not the best time to start new plants, but containers are always a safe bet. Bay laurel, ginger, Mexican tarragon, mint, rosemary and thyme many be planted in the Florida landscape any season. Summer is the time to plan, enrich or solarize the soil and start seeds for fall planting. I have found fall to be the best season to set out new plants. Fall planting allows the plant to develop a good root system before the stress of summer. Water plants every day the first week of planting and the second week water every other day. Fertilize with liquid fertilizer at the first sight of new growth. Go ahead and pamper your new herbs. I think you will find that after they are established, all you need to do is enjoy them.

The Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission reports that this state has 44 species of snakes which are found in all types of habitats. Despite people's fears, snakes really cause few problems and many are actually beneficial in reducing the number of rodents and other pests. Only six of these found in Florida are venomous of which only four are widespread. The poisonous ones are the Diamondback rattlesnake, the cottonmouth, the canebrake rattlesnake, the pygmy rattlesnake, the copperhead and the coral snake. The University of Florida, Osceola Extension plant clinic has a publication published by the Commission, which not only describes these but shows them in color.

The other three dozen or so are the nonvenomous varieties. Again the Plant Clinic has a
publication, which describes these and shows illustrations. It is stated that, contrary to public perception, snakes are not slimy and wormlike. Instead, being like the lizards, turtles and crocodilians, they are covered with hard, dry scales as well as being bony. They are carnivorous, (that is they eat other animals). They have no legs but coordinate movements of ribs, muscles and broad belly scales, which enable them to move. There are many differences among the snakes. Some give live birth, others lay eggs. The young appear in late summer. Some of the young differ greatly in coloration from the adult of the same species.

Some of these nonvenomous snakes are the racer, commonly known as the blacksnake, and the larger coach whip. The racer is more commonly seen because it hunts in the daytime. Both of these will bite in self-defense. Then there are rat snakes, which vary greatly in color and pattern even in the same species. Color variety includes shades of orange and red. Another snake with great variation in color pattern is the kingsnake, which may have cross bands of lighter color or be speckled or blotched. The hognose snakes are stout bodied and colored in brown, tan or yellow, some even black. It is a very defensive, aggressive snake, which results in the death of many. There are also garter snakes which fit the characteristic that striped snakes are nonvenomous. They may be black, brown or greenish with strips of green, blue, yellow or tan and usually thin. Ribbon snakes are also thin and are excellent climbers. Water snakes are often mistaken for water moccasins because of their habitat. Both are dark and may be over four feet long. Unlike the water moccasin, the water snakes will try to flee rather than staying put. There are also smaller snakes such as the ringnecks.

In conclusion, the Game and Fish Commission publication advises that snakes are part of the environment and are only to be killed if, in the case of a poisonous variety, they pose a threat to people or pets. Proper identification is the key to safety.

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**Advice to New Gardeners**

Plant bulbs carefully
Put the stem side up and
the root down.
Because the people in China
do not want to be surprised
when the plant grows in their path.

**Additional Gardening Tips**

.override As you head out to the garden, it’s a good idea to keep your health as well as that of wildlife in mind. Rather than using harmful pesticides, try attracting beneficial insects.

Override Small-flowered plants such as basil, dill, and fennel provide nectar and habitat for ladybugs, lacewings, and other insects that help control garden pests. Some of these also serve as a food source for butterfly larvae so do not automatically kill worms that may be on them. They may be ‘butterflies in the making’.

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**ASK AN EXPERT**

*By Eva Pabon, Horticulture Program Assistant*

As many of you know, we have a great group of Master Gardener experts. Their expertise are in many areas including organic gardening, horticulture therapy, and many more. Because they will like to share their knowledge with you during the following months we have developed a new program called "Ask the Expert". These experts will be in the Plant Clinic to help you with your specifics questions.

I am pleased to announce the first one on September 28, 2006. Her name is Barbara and she has plenty of knowledge to share about gingers. She will have some ginger flowers to show, information and many answers about how to take care of those beautiful plants.

Do not miss our next Roots & Shoots because we will have more days and experts during the fall. Mark your calendar and write all your questions, share this information with your family and friends, we want to make sure to keep these Master Gardener Experts very busy. Even better, you do not have to come, you can call or e-mail your question to the expert. Remember! Mark your calendar for our first expert on September 28, 2006 from 10 to 2pm. You may also send your inquiries to epabon5@ufl.edu or call us at 321-697-3000 ahead of time and Barbara will get back to you.
Central Florida
Gardening Calendar
July – September

ANNUALS

Few annuals can tolerate the summer heat and frequent rain showers. In July plant: Celosia, Coleus, Crossandra, Exacum, Hollyhock, Impatiens, Kalanchoe, Marigold, Nicotiana, Ornamental Pepper, Periwinkle, Portulaca, and Salvia.

Refresh your garden with summer color in August by planting Coleus, Kalanchoe, Marigolds, and Salvia.

If you desire cold hardy plants for winter, August is the time to sow seeds of the following in a germinating container: Ornamental Cabbage, Alyssum, Calendula, Pansy, Statice, Carnation, Petunia, Snapdragon, and Shasta Daisy. When sowing seeds in a germinating container, the growing medium should never be allowed to dry. The soil mix should be moist but not excessively wet. Certain seeds require light in order to germinate. Transplant seedlings to small pots as soon as the first true leaves appear.

In September, plant Alternanthera, Blue Daze, Exacum (Persian Violet), Foxglove, Kalanchoe, and Wax Begonia. All are heat tolerant and will be colorful until first frost, which may be late November.

PERENNIALS AND BULBS

Bulbs for July and August planting include: African Iris, Aztec Lily, Butterfly Lily, Crinum, Gladiolus, Iris, Kaffir Lily, Society Garlic, Spider Lily, and Walking Iris.

Pentas, Verbena and Blue Daze will bloom until frost and usually sprout from the roots in the spring.

Additional bulbs for September planting include Elephant Ear, Amaryllis, Calla, Watsonia, Lilium, Shell Ginger, Zephyr Lily, and Pineapple Lily. Gladiolus will bloom three months after planting.

FRUIT

Fruits grown in containers can be planted year around. In late September, set out strawberry plants in the landscape, garden or containers for winter and spring crops.

Harvest any oranges from last year’s crop, which may still be on the tree. Holding fruit on the tree this long will result in dry and tasteless fruit. Bearss lemon, Persian lime and Key limes are harvested during the summer. All are very cold sensitive so take special precautions.

Summer fruit harvest includes avocado, figs, guava, mango, pears, persimmon, and pomegranate. Bunch
grapes usually ripen in July, while muscadine grapes are ready for harvest in August and September.

If citrus shows symptoms of greasy spot disease (black oily spots on yellowing leaves), spray with a fungicide and rake fallen leaves. Keep grass and weeds away from citrus tree trunk. Check for flaking of the bark, near the soil line and yellow leaf veins indicating “foot rot” disease of citrus.

In July, fertilize first year blackberries, peaches, pecans, chestnuts and persimmons. Blueberries need only a small amount of fertilizer. Over fertilizing will kill the plants, so limit application to February and July.

In August, fertilize established banana, avocado and guava. Apply the third and final fertilizer for the year on established peaches, pecans, persimmons, chestnuts, and blackberries.

September is the last month of the year to fertilize. Fertilize citrus, pineapples, guavas, loquats, and mango.

VEGETABLES

July heat limits planting. Okra and southern peas are tolerant of summer conditions.

August is the beginning of our fall planting season. Plant pole beans, broccoli, celery, collards, okra, sweet corn, eggplant, onions, southern peas, peppers, pumpkin, summer squash, Swiss chard and watermelons.

In September, plant southern hybrid bulbing onions (Texas Grano, Granex, Excel) to have bulbs for spring harvest. Bulbing onions planted after December yield only green onion tops instead of bulbs. Also in September, cool and warm season plantings overlap. Plant cold sensitive crops which mature before frost: beans, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, summer squash, and tomatoes. Cold hardy vegetables include broccoli, cabbage, celery, endive, escarole, lettuce, mustard, bulbing and bunching onions, peas, radishes, rutabaga, Swiss chard, strawberries, and turnips.

If roots show swelling from nematode damage, treat soil before fall planting. A chemical free way is to solarize using free solar energy to heat sunny gardens and bake soil pests. Cover moist, prepared soil with clear plastic for at least six weeks.

Test soil pH every two to three years and adjust if necessary. It is good to make adjustments when preparing the soil for the upcoming season.

Insects and disease can be major problems in the fall garden. Summer rain and warm temperatures are ideal for disease and insects. Remove old or dead plants. Throw them away so they are not a breeding ground for pests and disease.

Peanuts planted in the spring should be ready for harvest in September.

LANDSCAPE

Prune azaleas before July 4, or you will have few flowers next spring. Do last pruning of other shrubs in September so new growth matures before first frost. Remove old flower blooms to extend flowering.
Poinsettias set buds in mid-September so continue pruning poinsettias until Labor Day for best growth and flowering.

Fertilize annuals and perennials during soil preparation and then monthly. Do not fertilize new plants at planting time, wait at least a month. In September, apply fall application of fertilizer to landscape plantings. Occasionally poinsettias need another application of fertilizer in July if heavy rains follow the June application.

Check weekly for lacebugs, aphids (new growth), caterpillars, scale (variegated Ligustrum, camellias, pittosporum, holly, podocarpus, and magnolia), spider mites and whitefly. Check for powdery mildew (crape myrtle, roses, and Gerbera) and maintain frequent rose fungicide spray program during summer rains.

September is the time to root-prune plants to be moved in January or February.

Balled and burlap or bare root field dug palms can be planted during our rainy season. Be sure to purchase from a reputable individual with experience moving palms. Cold hardy landscape plants grown in containers can be planted any time of year. Hold off on planting tropicaIs, which will need to be protected from frost, and freezing temperatures.

**LAWNS**

Sow seeds or lay sod for Bahia grass, Bermuda grass and Centipede grass. Plant St. Augustine grass plugs, sprigs, or sod.

Keep mower blades sharp. Leave grass clippings on the lawn to recycle nutrients naturally.

Wait until September to apply the fall application of complete fertilizer to Bermuda, Bahia and St. Augustine grasses. Obtain green-up without applying nitrogen fertilizer by using liquid iron. If fertilizer is deemed necessary earlier in the summer, apply fertilizer containing only natural organic or slow release nitrogen to prevent insect problems.

For the most effective control of mole crickets, apply baits or sprays as soon as the pest is seen. Due to the maturity of the mole crickets later in the summer, control is more difficult.

Watch for brown thinning patches in the lawn, which could indicate chinch bugs in St. Augustine grass, or caterpillars or diseases. Diseases can be severe due to frequent afternoon showers.

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