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April - June 2007

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

Jennifer L. Welshans, Horticulture Agent
Newsletter Editor Barbara Shuman, Master Gardener
Editorial Ass’t Donn Barclay Master Gardener
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<td>Monday, April 2</td>
<td><strong>Homeowner Irrigation How–To Workshop</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park Extension Services Registration Req.: 407-518-2578</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>ReLeaf – Osceola</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park Extension Services Registration Req.: 321-697-3015.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, Apr. 7</td>
<td><strong>Homeowner Irrigation How–To Workshop</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park Extension Services Registration Req.: 407-518-2578</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Osceola County Master Gardener Plant Sale</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park KVLS Building</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 12</td>
<td><strong>Homeowner Irrigation How–To Workshop</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park Extension Services Registration Req.: 407-518-2578</td>
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<td>6 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Florida Master Naturalists – Uplands Habitats</strong></td>
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<td>Fri.- Sat., April 13–14</td>
<td><strong>Earth Day Celebration</strong></td>
<td>Chisholm Park, Saint Cloud Come &amp; enjoy your day!</td>
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<td>9 a.m. – 3 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Florida-Friendly Landscaping:</strong></td>
<td>St. Cloud Senior Center 3101 17th St., St. Cloud Call 321-697-3015 to register</td>
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<td>Wednesday, April 18</td>
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<td>Apr. 18-May 23</td>
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<td><strong>Sunset Woods Walk – Lake Lizzie Marsh Loop</strong></td>
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<td>10 a.m. – 2 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Kirby Park Nature Walk</strong></td>
<td>St. Cloud Senior Center 3101 17th St., St. Cloud Call 321-697-3015 to register</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 24</td>
<td><strong>Sunrise Woods Walk – Lake Lizzie Marsh Loop</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park Extension Services Registration Req.: 321-697-3015.</td>
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<td>6-8 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Sunset Woods Walk – Lake Lizzie North Loop</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park Extension Services Registration Req.: 321-697-3015.</td>
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<td>Thursday, Apr. 26</td>
<td><strong>Sunset Woods Walk – Lake Lizzie North Loop</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park Extension Services Registration Req.: 321-697-3015.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Homeowner Irrigation How–To Workshop</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park Extension Services Registration Req.: 407-518-2578</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, Apr. 27</td>
<td><strong>Sunrise Woods Walk – Lake Lizzie Marsh Loop</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park Extension Services Registration Req.: 321-697-3015.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 a.m. - noon</td>
<td><strong>Sunrise Nature Walk – St. Cloud Lakeshore</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park Extension Services Registration Req.: 321-697-3015.</td>
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<td>Saturday, May 5</td>
<td><strong>Homeowner Irrigation How–To Workshop</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park Extension Services Registration Req.: 407-518-2578</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>ReLeaf – Osceola</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, May 5</td>
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<td>9 a.m.</td>
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<td>6 a.m. - 8 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>ReLeaf – Osceola</strong></td>
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<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Florida-Friendly Landscaping:</strong></td>
<td>St. Cloud Senior Center 3101 17th St., St. Cloud Call 321-697-3015 to register</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Florida Master Naturalists – Uplands Habitats</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, May 19</td>
<td><strong>Florida Master Naturalists – Uplands Habitats</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9 a.m.-noon</td>
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<td>St. Cloud Senior Center 3101 17th St., St. Cloud Call 321-697-3015 to register</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, June 1</td>
<td><strong>Sunset Woods Walk – Sunset Ranch</strong></td>
<td>Osceola Heritage Park Extension Services Registration Req.: 321-697-3015.</td>
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<td>6:30 p.m. - 10:15 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Sunset Nature Walk – Sunset Ranch</strong></td>
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All programs are FREE and open to the public unless otherwise noted
ABOUT THOSE SEEDS YOU PLANTED

Sandy Webb, Master Gardener

In last month’s issue, Master Gardener Nancy Pfister wrote about starting seed trays. This month, Sandy Webb continues the discussion with starting seeds in small (2 - 4”) pots—ed.

Different sized pots hold moisture at different rates, so it is best to match the seeds to the pot size. The deeper the pot, the wetter the soil will stay. Tiny seeds, say poppy, need tiny pots to start. Bigger seeds, say pumpkin, need bigger pots (four inch).

Let’s assume four inch to start. Seeds need ten pots to germinate: be detrimental to process as well backbreaking. If plant all the pots same, they all have very similar seeds need the criteria to eat! Read the package again: some don’t like covering, some like it cool, some like it dark, etc. Again, read the package often.

It is worth the expense to purchase potting soil to guarantee it is sterile. The soil will thus have proper aeration, water uptake, and room for the seeds to expand as long as you “covered lightly.” The smaller the pots, the better, because the soil will dry out faster—yes, that’s right!

Keep seeds and seedlings barely moist: it’s better to water a little bit every two or three days with warm water than to soak pots once a week—at least at first. But what is a “little bit”? It depends on the size of the pot, naturally, but it also depends on the relative humidity in your plant nursery. If you started with a two inch pot, then two tablespoons of warm water every two days is probably enough. If you started with a four inch pot, a quarter cup of warm water every two days is probably enough. You can check this for yourself with a wood toothpick (just like a cake). The seeds are right under the surface of the soil, where you put them. Stick the toothpick down into the pot, does it need water? (Where is the wet line?) Roots travel for water, but also need air. Warm water will absorb into the soil easier and won’t shock the plants. Daytime ambient temperature should be about 72 degrees F, or as close as possible.

DAMPING OFF. Another potential problem is pre- or post-emergent damping off, caused by soil borne fungi. In pre emergent damping off, the seeds don’t really get going, and do not even break the surface. In post emergent damping off, the seedlings may break ground surface, but then fail to thrive, or they may get several inches tall, and then just fall over. By the time you notice a problem, it is often too late, although sometimes seedlings in nearby pots may turn out well. Over watering can lead to excess humidity, accelerating the spread of damping off.

If this happens to you, check it out! What is going on in those pots? Did seeds sprout? Dig them up! Maybe they are just slow! There are several things you can do if you have a problem. Set the tray outside, away from the rest and leave it alone to see what happens. You can start all over again and bake the soil in the oven, or preferably outside on the grill to kill the fungi; or, keep reading. Damping off is preventable most of the time.

Rebecca Brown, Professor of Plant Sciences at the University of Rhode Island says that an aspirin water solution (no more than 500 mg. of regular aspirin per gallon of water) “can induce resistance to pathogens, environmental stresses and some insects [and use]…to water germinating seeds and new transplants every two weeks” (Taunton’s Fine Gardening, Feb. 2007, p. 24). Use regular watering amounts and schedule between aspirin treatments. Go to The Colorado Extension Office, <www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/hates> for more information on tested “home remedies.”

If your plant nursery area smells musty, check under your trays— you may have watered the table! Set up a fan to blow across the tray of pots or use a ceiling fan to keep the air moving. This may help prevent an outbreak, but fungi due to overwatering is the key to damping off. If you have over-watered, and who hasn’t, put the wet pots on newspaper and turn that fan on! Wick excess moisture out the bottom until the soil has dried out. Discard these papers again, as they may have fungi. Then water sparingly, and check often; try that aspirin remedy for yourself. For large pots, carefully push paper towel tubes two to four inches into the soil and leave for a few days to wick off moisture.

“fungi due to overwatering is the key to damping off”
Many seeds need bright light, but not direct sunlight to germinate. Windowsills are popular, but they can be hot, cold, drafty, and very unsuitable, especially if you have animals. A better place to get started is in an area that can be closed off. Open the shades and let the light fill the room.

If you have too many seeds in each pot, wait until they get about three inches tall, when they will be ready to put in a bigger pot. Put on latex gloves and repot to the next larger size, thinning the plants as you go, maybe two or three to a pot depending on how long they will be in there. Separate plants in the new pot for good air movement and root mass. If you need a bigger pot to avoid root damage, use a bigger pot, but space accordingly. Add an inch or so of soil to empty pot and lightly press into bottom. Using a small trowel or old spoon, deeply “spoon” out each root ball, trying not to disturb or damage the fine, hair-like roots that collect water and nutrients. It helps to lay the pot on its side to “spoon” in the root balls, since you are layering them with soil rather than mashing and squeezing them down. Pack moist soil gently around each root ball and water sparingly, leaving about an inch of empty space at the top of the pot if possible.

When the seedlings are up and looking good, with some true leaves rather than the dicots, you can start to water them a bit more, since they have bigger roots. However, if they are tall and spindly, pinch off the top set of leaves and put them into brighter light or maybe in the morning sun (inside) for an hour (and then two) a day. When they grow, Wilting stresses plants, but for a few hours they should be all right, just don’t over water. If the water runs right off the soil, use warmer water (that’s right). (Speed up your schedule when you start to get a wilting problem, and get ready to transplant, especially if you see roots out the bottom.)

Going to the next larger size pot (second transplanting), say six to eight inch pots for woodies, wait until your plants have filled out (six inches tall after pinching). You can leave one to three seedlings to a pot and they can stay in that pot indefinitely. Annuals can stay three to a pot. Now, if you REALLY want to, and they will stay in the pots awhile longer, you may fertilize with HALF strength slow release fertilizer…that is half whatever the label says. (IF the label calls for a cup per gallon, use a half cup per gallon, for the FIRST time.) Don’t over fertilize! Don’t try to hurry growth along artificially. A flush of new growth attracts insects outside, and you want hardy, well rooted, happy plants, which mean hardy, well rooted, happy gardeners!

ROSES – Part IV: Duchesse de Brabant
By Carolyn Lamond, Master Gardener

The fourth rose with a story in our series is Duchesse de Brabant (1857), a great favorite for the South. Look for her in the Demonstration Garden at the Extension Office or just follow the fragrance as you approach the building. You’ll be instantly transported back in time to your grandparents’ rose garden. The very fragrant blooms are full and cup shaped, the petals are light pink and resemble tissue grey coat just as Decamp painted him. In the portrait, a blue bowl of the same rose is on the table.”

Fortunately for us, today Duchesse de Brabant is readily available. You just may find one or two at the Master Gardener Plant Sale April 13-14.
Anti-Litter/Earth Day Celebration

Help “Keep Osceola Beautiful” by volunteering to remove litter from our community’s parks, lakes, roadways, and neighborhoods, Saturday, April 21, from 8 to 11:30 a.m. After the clean-up, all volunteers are invited to Chisholm Park for a FREE thank-you lunch and opportunity to have fun and learn more about our environment at the Earth Day Fair. Organizations that wish to set up an Earth Day display will be provided with free exhibit space.

Earth Day festivities will run from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

For more information, contact K. P. Clemons at 407-343-7173 or kcle@osceola.org. Registration deadline is April 13.
Society Garlic

(Tulbaghia violacea)

Marilyn O'Hara, Master Gardener

Society garlic is a tuberous perennial with lavender-pink or lilac flowers at the top of a long, thin, grayish-green stem, with grass-like leaves that are from twelve to eighteen inches tall and a half inch wide. It grows in clumps that become an excellent ground cover or border. It also does well in containers. The growth rate is slow to medium. Individual flowers start out being tubular but spread out at the tips into  inch long, inch wide star-shaped flowers. When bruised, the flowers and leaves smell strongly like garlic. When not in flower, the plant looks similar to garlic chives with the scent varying from onion-like to garlicky. The leaves stay green all year and flowers nearly all year. The garlic odor is said to be useful as a pest repellent and the plant's smell generally prevents deer from consuming it.

Very little maintenance is required to keep society garlic looking good. Occasionally, spent flowering stalks may need to be removed. Society garlic can be planted at eighteen to twenty-four inch spacing in full sun to partial shade. However, when plants are grown in shade, they may not flower much. It is moderately drought and salt tolerant and is tolerant to a wide range of soil conditions. It prefers a light, well-drained, sandy soil and may be propagated by dividing the clumps while the plant is dormant in the spring or late autumn. To divide the clumps, trim the tops, lift the plants, trim the roots and separate the pieces. Plants spread slowly and are not aggressive, but they can be

The Feast of Brewing Beer: A Magical Herbal Brew

Brewing has been part of human history for over six thousand years. It is thought that the Sumerians discovered the fermentation process by chance, perhaps when bread became wet. The earliest account of brewing pictures wheat or barley bread baked, crumbled into liquid, and fermented—a process involving natural yeasts—into a drink that is said to have made people feel exhilarated.

Beer (sometimes thought of as "liquid bread") has been an important foodstuff in many cultures, especially in places where the water was impure. People of all ages drank it throughout the day, and workers were often paid with jugs of beer. Some beers played an important part in worship, where they was considered to be the source of inspiration from the gods, and were ceremonially prepared and ritually drunk by priests, such as the Druids who celebrated the Celtic Feast of Brewing. Laws were frequently made to regulate the consumption of beer. For example, the Puritans were allowed to drink only two quarts of beer for breakfast.

Hops (the herb that adds just the right bitterness and aroma) was not an ingredient of beer until the seventeenth century. Instead, other herbs provided a more subtle, complex flavor: bog myrtle, yarrow, rosemary, juniper berries, ginger, caraway seed, anise seed, nutmeg, cinnamon, wormwood, sage, broom. And rather than barley or malt, some herbs—such as ginger, nettles, St. Johns wort, and dandelions—were the primary ingredient of some delicious beers. Ginger beer was a much-loved nineteenth-century drink, in both England and America.

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divided every two or three years. Although plants will grow in dry, sandy soil, they will not grow as well as those grown in better soil with adequate moisture. In the USDA zones seven to ten, society garlic tolerates moderate frosts and light freezes down to twenty degrees Fahrenheit. During the hurricane season of 2004, society garlic showed little or no damage in my Central Florida subdivision.

Its native habitat is Natal, Transvaal and the Eastern Cape region in South Africa. Supposedly the Zulus of Africa use the leaves and flowers like spinach and as a hot, peppery seasoning with meat and potatoes. Legend has it that eating society garlic is less offensive on the breath than regular garlic, so in may be more acceptable in polite company. I have found the garlicky leaves and flowers, raw or cooked, taste a little hot without a pungent garlic flavor. I have tried to use it as a garlic substitute in soups. Literature states that the flowers are an attractive decoration for deviled eggs, stuffed celery and other foods. Only the leaves should be used chopped as a garlic substitute in sauces, salads and soups.

Several different species of *Tulbaghia* exist and several cultivars of *T. violacea* can be found in nurseries. The common cultivars are "Silver Lace" (also known as 'Variegata') which has larger flowers and leaves with cream stripes. 'Tricolor' has blue-gray, white-margined leaves and lavender-pink flowers. *T. fragrans* is a species with wider, green leaves and larger flowers.

References:
- "Tulbaghia violacea, Society Garlic", University of Florida/Miami, Dade County Extension Programs.

If you got this issue of **Roots & Shoots**
from a Master Gardener event or a friend,
get on the mailing list for FREE!

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Or email this to: crut@osceola.org

**Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale**

**Annuals**
**Perennials**
**Old Garden Roses**
**Herbs**
**Succulents**

Master Gardeners available for advice on planting, maintenance

Friday and Saturday
April 13 - 14

**Summer BBQ Tip**

To discourage mosquitoes, springs of rosemary, basil or pennyroyal can be tossed on the flames. Or make a potpourri-type collection of rosemary, pennyroyal, eucalyptus or juniper in a pan of water on the grill.
Central Florida Gardening Calendar
April - June

Planting Guide

Annuals
- Seeds to plant in **April**: Celosia, Coleus, Calliopsis, Crossandra, dusty miller, Exacum, Gaillardia, Gazania, hollyhock, Impatiens, Lobelia, Marguerite daisy, marigold, Nicotiana, ornamental pepper, Pentas, periwinkle, Phlox, Portulaca, Rudbeckia, Salvia, Streptocarpus, sweet William, Thunbergia alata, Torenia, Verbena and Zinnia.
- In **May**, plant seeds of Celosia, Coleus, Calliopsis, Crossandra, Exacum, Gaillardia, Gazania, hollyhock, Impatiens, Kalanchoe, marigold, Nicotiana, ornamental pepper, Pentas, periwinkle, Portulaca, Salvia, Torenia, Verbena, Vinca and Zinnia.
- **June** is a hot month which limits planting of many flowers. For June seeding, choose hardy flowers: Celosia, Coleus, Exacum, hollyhock, Impatiens, Kalanchoe, marigold, Nicotiana, Ornamental pepper, Portulaca, Salvia, Torenia, Vinca and Zinnia.
- The afternoon rains tend to shatter blooms of geraniums and can promote leaf spot diseases on many flowers. Use a general purpose fungicide labeled for flowers when frequent afternoon rains begin.

Perennials and Bulbs
- Bulbs to plant in **April**: Achimenes, African iris, Amazon lily, Aztec lily, tuberous Begonia, blood lily, Caladium, Canna, Crinum, Gladiolus, gloriosa lily, kaffir lily, shell ginger, society garlic, spider lily, tiger flower, walking iris and Watsonia.
- For **May** planting: African iris, Amazon lily, Aztec lily, tuberous Begonia, Butterfly lily, Caladium, Crinum, Gladiolus, kaffir lily, society garlic, spider lily, walking iris and Watsonia.
- In **June**, plant: African iris, Aztec lily, tuberous Begonia, Butterfly lily, Crinum, Gladiolus, kaffir lily, society garlic, spider lily, walking iris.

Vegetables
- In **April**, plant beans, cantaloupe, collards, okra, sweet potatoes, southern peas, New Zealand Summer Spinach, and peanuts for summer harvest.
- The summer heat is tough on most vegetables but sweet potatoes, southern peas, peanuts, okra and Swiss Chard can be planted through **June** with success.

Fruits
- Plant banana and other tropical fruits such as guava, papaya and pineapple to take advantage of the frost free growing season.
- Containerized fruit plants can be planted throughout the year.
- A variety of deciduous fruits can be grown here including some types of apples, peaches, pears, figs, blueberries, and persimmons. Be sure to select varieties adapted to Central Florida, since most popular northern varieties do not do well.

Landscaping
- Sow seeds for Bahia grass, Bermuda grass and Centipede grass or plant St. Augustine grass using plugs, sprigs or sod. Plant now only if you can water.
- Landscape plants grown in containers can be planted throughout the year.
- Delay planting balled and burlap palms until the summer rains begin. Keep the bud tied until it forces new growth. This keeps the young leaves from drying out until the new roots get established.
Maintenance Guide

Fruits
- Continue to water as needed during the next few months which are normally dry. Even though regular afternoon showers begin in mid-June, check for adequate moisture in root zone.
- Fertilize newly planted trees after new growth begins, about a month after planting.
- First year citrus trees should be fertilized every 6 to 8 weeks.
- Fertilize and prune blackberry and blueberry plants after fruit is harvested.
- Keep weeds and grass away from citrus trunk.
- Rake fallen citrus leaves and apply copper or benomyl fungicide in June if greasy spot has been a problem on citrus.
- Rains trigger "June bloom" which yields low quality fruit.
- In April, May and June, plan to harvest blackberry, blueberry, watermelon, Surinam cherry, 'Valencia' oranges, 'Honey' tangerine, and grapefruit.
- In April, continue harvest of loquats, and strawberries. Peaches should be ripe.
- Begin harvest of apples, avocado, bunch grapes, and mango in June.

Vegetables
- Harvest from winter and spring plantings.
- Water during dry weather.
- Continue applying fertilizer as a side dressing 6" from the plants along the side of plant rows at a rate of 5 weight oz. of 6-8-8 per 20 foot row.
- Remove old crop debris to reduce insect and disease problems in the fall.
- Prepare the garden area for fall planting.
- If you have had problems with weeds, nematodes, or wilt diseases, then plan to solarize the garden for 6 to 8 weeks. Water, then cover the prepared garden area with clear plastic to trap solar heat and bake harmful organisms which live in the soil and cause plant problems. The garden area must be located in full sun to get the full effect of the heat.

Lawns
- Fertilize Bermuda grass in April and June using a water soluble nitrogen source.
- Sharpen and balance mower blades.
- Mow often and leave clippings on the lawn to recycle as natural fertilizer.
- Check sick looking areas in the lawn for chinch bugs, webworms, brown patch or grey leaf spot disease. Bring a shoe box size sample of the sod from the edge of the sick area to the Plant Clinic.
- If mole crickets have been a problem in Bahiagrass, use baits late in the afternoon during late June and early July to kill the young ones. Use residual granules early in May for long term mole cricket control.

Landscaping
- Remove old flowers to extend blooming.
- Fertilize flower beds at planting time and then monthly.
- Fertilize trees and shrubs which have not been fertilized yet this spring. Fertilize again late June and late September. Gerberas need to be fertilized every month from February to November.
- Fertilize roses each time the plants produce a flush of bloom (about every 6-8 weeks).
- Water shrubs if there is not much rain since this tends to be dry season until mid-June.
Cut back spring blooming shrubs, such as azalea, spirea, and camellia soon after they bloom. Don't prune azaleas after **June**.

Several light prunings with hand pruners over the summer will keep fast-growing shrubs such as Ligustrum, viburnum and Photinia looking neat. "Pinch" tips for compact growth. Poinsettias should be pruned several times from **May through August**.

Root 4" to 6" long softwood cuttings for potting in 6-8 weeks.

Check weekly for powdery mildew (crape myrtles, roses), black spot on roses, scale, aphids, lacebugs on azaleas, thrips on roses, spider mites on daylilies, chewing caterpillars on cannas and oleander and grasshoppers on lilies.

Scab fungus can cause tan bumps on stems of poinsettia and deform leaves.

Check for angular leaf spot on pittosporum and Ligustrum. On pittosporum, symptoms are light yellow to pale green and tan angular spots, developing first on upper leaf surfaces.

Psocids (tree cattle) cause harmless webs on tree trunks. Wash off with a squirt of water hose or whisk off with a broom.

Apply *Bacillus thuringiensis* (ex. Dipel, thuricide) to kill caterpillars and not affect most beneficial insects.

Spider mites, aphids, soft scales and other soft bodied insects can be killed using a spray of 2½ tablespoons each of liquid dish soap and vegetable oil per gallon of water. Repeat in 5 days for mite control, as needed for others.

Roses will need weekly spraying once the afternoon rains begin in order to prevent many diseases. Alternate approved fungicides weekly or as the chemicals are used up.

Apply magnesium sulfate (Epsom salts) to poinsettias, gardenias, fruits and palms showing yellowing deficiency symptoms on oldest leaves.

The potted begonias you had in the house during the winter can be planted in shady areas of the yard.

Replenish mulch around all plantings (except annuals and citrus) to a depth of 3 inches.

### Got a Gardening Question?

**Visit the Extension Office Plant Clinic**

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday - Friday

Large plant and gardening library and other resources

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*(Se habla español)*

**Master Gardeners on site 10 - 2 most days**

Specialized Univ. of Fl Extension Office publications at no charge

Class schedules, personalized yard consultations at no charge

**Osceola Heritage Park**

1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane

Kissimmee, FL

or call

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