



A NEW LEAF

UF | IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Duval County Extension

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Welcome to 2016 by Terry DeValle

2016 brings a new year full of gardening opportunities. Now is a great time to make changes in your landscape while the weather is cool. New plants then have a chance to establish new roots before the heat kicks in. Add to your list of 2016 goals to visit an arboretum or botanical garden, or attend an educational workshop. Experiment: try a new plant or product in your garden.



2016 may also bring challenges based on current weather patterns. December was unusually warm and many cool season vegetables responded by flowering. But according to NOAA's Climate Prediction Center, the south is forecast to be cooler and wetter than average through the end of February. This year El Nino is said to be one of the strongest on record and is predicted to last throughout the winter. Hopefully, we will get a freeze or two to reduce the insect pests before the spring gardening season kicks in. Time will tell.

Upcoming January/February Classes

Canning Classes are \$20 per person, pre-registration & pre-payment required. Call Jeannie to register.

- Saturday, January 9, 9 am-noon, Calamondin Preserves
- Monday, January 11, 9 am –1 pm, Cans—Chili and Cheese Wafers
- Saturday, February 6, 9 am-noon, "Red Hot" Pepper Jelly for your Valentine
- Saturday, February 20, 9 am-noon, Carrot-Pineapple-Orange Marmalade

Tuesday, January 13, 10:00am-noon, "Show and Grow" Workshop @ Duval County Extension. We'll "Show" you how to accomplish your New Year's Yard Resolutions to be more Florida-Friendly. Next, a "make and take home" activity on "Growing" your own microgreens. Cost \$10, Pre-registration and pre-payment required by January 8th. Call Jeannie. Make checks payable to University of Florida.

Saturday, January 23, 9am-noon, Vegetable Seed Workshop. Make and take seed trays, learn how to start vegetables from seed. \$15, Pre-registration and pre-payment required. Make checks payable to University of Florida. Call Jeannie to register.

Wednesday, January 27, 9:30am-noon, Rain Barrel "Make & Take" Workshop. Learn about saving water with rain barrels and rain gardens and reducing storm-water runoff. Class size is limited. Registration & pre-payment required by January 22nd. Cost \$50 (\$5 class & \$45 each rain barrel). Check payable to University of Florida. Call Jeannie to register.

Saturday, February 27, 9:30am-2:30pm, A Day of Gardening, see details on back page.

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. Check for details in the next edition on planting tips.
- ◆ Deadhead (remove old flowers) pansies and snapdragons to keep them blooming. Cold sensitive bedding plants can be covered with leaves, pine straw, blankets, or row covers for protection during a freeze.
- ◆ Add cool season flowers like alyssum to produce food for pollinators during winter



months.

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 6 buds per spur. Remove most of the spurs located at the top of the trunk to prevent crowding and bushiness.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ 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. Use a 6-6-6 or 8-8-8 at the rate of 1 to 2 pounds of fertilizer per inch of trunk diameter measured 4' above ground level.

Lawns

- ◆ Large patch fungus (brown patch) is active in area lawns creating circular brown patches in St. Augustine and Zoysia lawns. This disease thrives with mild temperatures and moisture. For more info: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh044>.
- ◆ Take a break from mowing lawns after the weather cools down since lawns go dormant. This is a great time to 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 dormant, water may be needed if it's dry. The Irrigation Ordinance allows watering once per week if needed. During cool weather, water once every 10 to 14 days. Watering days for Saturdays are odd # addresses and Sundays are even # addresses.
- ◆ Pull cool season weeds like chickweed or Asiatic hawksbeard before they go 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 four or five consecutive days. This usually is when azaleas and dogwoods are blooming.

Trees + Shrubs

- ◆ Purchase camellias now so you can see the flower color and type. It's also a good time to purchase holly trees to make sure they are females if berries are desired.
- ◆ It's time to prune deciduous plants if needed. Trees like crape myrtles don't need to be pruned except to 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, dogwood, redbud, Japanese magnolia, and spirea.
- ◆ Prune roses and strip any remaining leaves from plants to reduce disease problems. Remove leaves that have dropped to the ground.
- ◆ Fertilize young ornamental plants in mid-February with a specialty or 16-0-16 type fertilizer.



Ilex rotunda
Lord's Holly

Vegetable Garden

- Prepare gardens for spring planting in February. Turn the soil two weeks before planting to give plants a chance to rot or for a no-till option cover with cardboard or newspaper to choke out weeds.
- Start seedlings for transplants. Although squash can be direct seeded, transplants offer quicker yields and may help avoid borer problems.

What to Plant in January/February By Terry DeValle



Lettuce bolting due to warm weather

We have had an unusually warm fall which has affected many of our plants, especially our cool season vegetables. Even though the weather has been mild, it's still a good idea to play it safe by growing cold hardy plants. Choices of things to plant are limited, so take some time to look through 2016 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.

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. Lettuce is one of the first cool season vegetables to go to flower if we get a few days of really warm weather. Once the plant begins this process (bolting), harvest the leaves as soon as possible because they will become more bitter over time. For more

information, go to <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>.

Annuals recommended for planting now are carnation (China doll), dianthus, flowering cabbage and kale, lobelia, pansy, petunia, ranunculus, stock, viola, and snapdragon. Violas 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. Both delphiniums and larkspur may require staking to support the flower stalk and both can be used as cut flowers. Keep in mind that all plant parts, including the seed, are poisonous. 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.

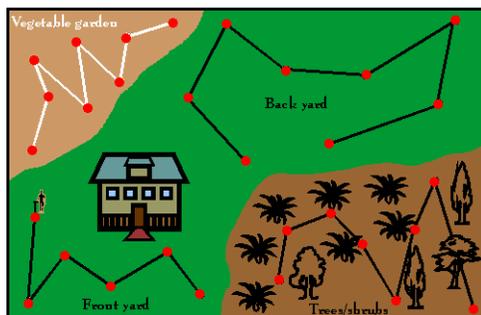


Soleil d'or

Great Time for Soil Testing By Terry DeValle

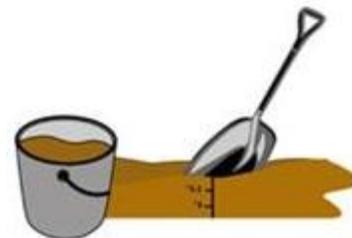
Now is a great time to collect soil samples and send them in for testing. Duval County Extension will test soil for pH only at no cost for Duval County residents, but with fertilizer season coming up, it would be better to submit samples to the UF/IFAS Soil Testing Lab.

For \$7 per sample, they will tell you the soil pH, lime requirement and fertility levels for phosphorous, potassium, calcium and magnesium. To download the form for this test go to: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/SS/SS18700.pdf>.



Divide the landscape into sections and test areas separately. Some plants have different lime and

fertilizer needs so distinguish between lawns, vegetables and acid loving plants like blueberries and azaleas.



To collect the sample, Use a hand trowel or shovel to take a small scoop of soil from 10 to 15 different spots within area. Take soil from the top 2 to 4" for lawn and top 6" for vegetables, fruit, and trees/shrubs. Place the 10 to 15 samples in a bucket and mix. Remove any plant debris or mulch from samples.

Dry samples by spreading soil out on newspaper and let it air dry. Then place about two cups of the dry soil in a paper or plastic bag for mailing. Label each bag and indicate on the forms which crops are grown in those locations. When it comes time to plant, you will be ahead of the game.

Cool-Season Gardening by Mary Puckett

Knowing what crops to grow and when to plant is the key to a successful garden. Vegetables can be grown in Florida year-round if attention is paid to the appropriate planting dates, because vegetables differ in their climatic requirements.

- Warm-season vegetables do not tolerate frost but need warm temperatures to set and properly mature. However when temperatures are too high, quality is reduced.
- Cool-season vegetables are hardy or frost tolerant and for best quality need to mature during cooler periods rather than in the heat.

In January continue to set out cool season vegetables such as broccoli, beets, cabbage, carrots, Chinese cabbage, collards, kale, mustard, radishes, sugar snap peas, swiss chard, and turnips. Herbs that prefer cooler weather include but are not limited to borage, cilantro, chives, dill, fennel, most mints, nasturtium, oregano, parsley, and thyme.

Consider Irish potatoes in your January and February plantings:

- They grow 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 potato production as the average season is 100 days. The planting period recommended for North Florida is January through February.
- I will caution you, if soil is cold and wet, hold off from planting your potato seedlings. If they sit in cold, wet soil they are susceptible to decay. Soil temperature should be above 45 degrees, ideally 50 degrees. Maximum tuber formation occurs at soil temperatures between 60 and 70 degrees. The tubers fail to form when the soil temperature is above 80 degrees which explains the importance of early planting. Yields vary, but most gardeners should expect between one and two pounds of potatoes per foot of row.
- Potatoes grow best in a loose, well-drained, slightly acidic soil with a pH between 5 and 6. If the area is prone to flooding, prepare a bed at least 10-12 inches above the soil level.
- Potatoes are not roots but specialized underground storage stems called “tubers.”
- Potatoes are grown from seed pieces, which are simply pieces of the tuber. Since potatoes are susceptible to several diseases, buy certified seed from a reputable seed seller. Cut seed pieces should be the size of an egg weighing around 2 ounces with one to two eyes. Cut seed pieces should “heal-over” before planting by placing the freshly cut seed pieces in a cool (60-65 degrees), well-ventilated, humid place for one or two days.



Eye on a seed potato
Credit C. Hutchinson



- Potato plants are heavy feeders. The first fertilizer application should be at planting with two additional applications in 3 to 4 week intervals. Moderate soil moisture levels should be maintained throughout the season, with care not to over water leaving the soil soggy.
- “Hilling” will be required at least twice during the growing season to prevent sunburn “greening”. When the plant sprouts emerge, roughly 10 to 14 days after planting, add 2 to 3 inches of soil on the potato row. Hill again when plants are 6 to 8 inches tall by pulling the soil up, covering the base of plants up to the bottom leaves.
- If potatoes will be stored after harvest, the plant should be allowed to die before harvest. Two to three weeks later, harvest the tubers carefully. Place them in a cool area with good air circulation for 10 to 14 days and then wash them. Allow tubers to dry thoroughly before storing.

Cool-Season Gardening continued by Mary Puckett

For those with an already established garden, the unusual warm or up and down temperatures, may be confusing our cool season vegetables while frustrating the gardener. For example, with the warm temperatures, lettuce tastes bitter and “bolts” (flowers and goes to seed), while peas become tough.

- **Broccoli** prefers temperatures between 65 and 75 degrees during the day and between 40 and 50 degrees at night. Harvest the central head when still tight and compact. When harvesting, cut head with 5 to 6 inches of stem. The heat reduces growth, decreases quality and causes loose heads.

Broccoli flowering and going to seed



- **Spinach** is a hardy, cool-season crop that should only be grown in the coolest months. High temperatures and long days cause plants to bolt, by forming flower stalks. It is recommended to harvest the entire plant when seed stalk formation begins, because the leaves tend to deteriorate quickly. This is a good reason to stick to those varieties that are more heat tolerant. The varieties recommended in the “Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide” (table 4) are Melody, Bloomsdale Longstanding, Tee, and Space. Spinach is also easy to grow in containers.



- **Carrots** prefer cooler temperatures, between 55 and 70 degrees. Consider growing carrots in containers filled with light-weight well-drained soil and deep enough for development. Containers allow flexibility by moving them to a cooler spot if temperatures heat up or covering them if temperatures drop. Carrots require regular moisture, but will rot if the soil is too soggy. Fertilize with a balanced fertilizer, light on the nitrogen. Excessive nitrogen and/or poor drainage can cause hairy roots.



I say all this to remind you there is one thing we cannot control and that is the weather. It can be fickle in North Florida. But, we can pick and choose varieties that are recommended for our area, because they are more tolerant of varying weather conditions.

If you want to know what to plant during our upcoming warm-season, please join me on Thursday, February 11th at the Duval County Extension Office from 9am to NOON. “Warm Season Vegetable Workshop” Cost is \$5.00. Please contact Jeannie Crosby between 11-4pm Monday through Friday at 255-7450 to register.

Resources:

EDIS publication *Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide* (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>)

and

<http://www.solutionsforyourlife.com>

Storage & Disposal of Unwanted Chemicals By Terry DeValle

This may not be on the top of your to-do list for 2016 but it is very important. Over time, gardeners accumulate an arsenal of chemicals and are unsure of what they have or how to use them.

The first thing to do when inspecting pesticide containers is to look for any signs of leaks. Then check to see if labels are damaged or missing which makes it impossible to determine application rates. This is a sure sign that the product has been around for some time and may no longer be effective. Pesticides don't have an indefinite shelf life, so if you can't remember the last time you used that product, you probably don't need it. Leaking containers and materials without labels should be set aside for proper disposal.



Don't put pesticides in food type container

Storage Tips: Once you've looked over the materials and determined what should be kept, store them correctly. Here are a few common sense tips to follow.

- Always store products in their original containers or make sure the containers are clearly labeled on the outside. Don't ever place pesticides in a food-type container that children could mistake for a food item.
- Store dry products (dusts, granules, baits) above liquids. Do not store dry materials on the floor but keep them elevated to prevent moisture problems.
- Keep containers tightly sealed. Many dry products will absorb moisture and lose effectiveness. For example, Amdro fire ant bait has a very short shelf life once opened.
- Limit the amount of pesticides and fertilizers that are stored by purchasing only what is needed. Before shopping for fertilizers, calculate the square feet of lawn or landscape area and buy the correct amount for that application or the year.
- Store any flammable products separately from other products. Always store nitrate-based fertilizers separately from solvents, fuels and pesticides. Nitrate fertilizers can accelerate fires
- Store insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides in separate areas to avoid contamination and misapplication.

- Keep kitty litter or vermiculite on hand for pesticide spills. These are excellent absorbent materials.
- Storage shelves should be composed of a nonporous material so they will not absorb spills.
- For longer shelf life, pesticides should not be exposed to extremes in hot and cold temperatures.



What is wrong with this picture?
Answer (A) at bottom of article

How to Dispose of Unwanted Chemicals: Don't pour unwanted pesticides down the drain or put in the trash. Nothing should go down storm-water drains except for water. It's illegal to put pesticides, fertilizers and clippings down the storm drain. If fertilizers and grass clippings end up on hard surfaces, blow them back on the lawn or landscape.

Most counties have a Household Hazardous Wastes collection site for your convenience. In Duval County, the facility is at 2675 Commonwealth Avenue (904-387-8847) and is open from Tuesday to Saturday from 8:00AM to 5:00PM. They accept paints, pesticides, used oils, CFL light bulbs/ fluorescent bulbs & tubes, rechargeable batteries, aerosol cans, pool cleaners, fireworks, thermometers, televisions, computer monitors and household cleaners from Duval County residents. For more info or to make special arrangements, call their office at (904)387-8847. They will not accept medical waste or containers of materials of unknown origin. The label can be missing and the product will be accepted as long as you know if it's a household cleaner or a pesticide. There are also special days for mobile collection events to make it more convenient for folks at the beach and other outlying areas: (<http://www.coj.net/departments/public-works/solid-waste/remote-collection-events.aspx>).

For more information on what to do with household hazardous wastes in your county, go to <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/hazardous/pages/localgovhwwweb.htm> and click on your county for their website.

Is it Citrus Greening? by Larry Figart

I am not sure what you call it, but perhaps instead of a hypochondriac we could call it a “phyto”-chondriac. What I am talking about is the notion that when something is wrong with our citrus tree, we automatically assume that it is Citrus Greening. While we have Citrus Greening in Northeast Florida, I have seen a lot more Greasy Spot and Melanose, than I have seen Citrus Greening. In the next few paragraphs I will attempt to sort them out and hopefully make it easier to identify on your tree.

Right now, **Citrus Greening** is the biggest threat to a healthy vibrant citrus industry in the state. At this time, we do not have any economical way to control it and it is estimated that as many as 50% of commercial citrus trees are infected with Citrus Greening. The first noticeable symptom is called **blotchy mottle**. Blotchy mottle is the best diagnostic symptom and the earliest leaf symptom. Blotchy mottle is a random pattern of yellowing (chlorosis) on leaves that is not the same on the right and left sides of the leaf. It can be confused with a nutrient deficiency, but the asymmetrical pattern is a good clue. In addition to blotchy mottle, infected leaves may be thicker and leathery and have raised corky veins. As the disease progresses, the entire tree will be affected, and symptoms will become more prominent. Fruit symptoms would include the fruit being lopsided, misshapen, smaller, and remain-

Blotchy Mottle



ing mostly green. Also, the fruit would taste salty and bitter. If you suspect citrus greening on your tree, there is a test you can perform using iodine that does not confirm greening but it

can help decide whether it needs to be sent in for testing. Go to: <http://www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/greening/PDF/HS37500.pdf>. In order to confirm a greening diagnosis you will need to send a leaf sample into the U.F. Plant Diagnostic Center where they will look for the bacteria's DNA.

Greasy Spot is a leaf and fruit disease that is very common. The first things that people usually notice is that the tree starts losing a lot of leaves in January and February. The leaves may or may not have spots on the undersides that start out yellow and then go

from brown to black. Usually, after the diseased leaf falls to the ground the spot starts to take on a dark, greasy appearance. While the disease shows up in the winter, the leaves are actually infected



Greasy Spot on a Leaf

by the fungus in the early summer. It is then that most of the spores produced on the fallen leaves get dispersed onto the new flush of tender green leaves. It is for that reason that fungicidal control is applied to the new growth flush in the early summer, not in the winter when the worst symptoms appear.

Melanose is a disease that is very similar to greasy spot in that it can affect fruit and leaves. When the disease appears on the fruit it is a blemish that does not affect the fruit quality, however it causes the fruit to look unappealing. The sign of melanose on the fruit is called mudcaking. The blemish is formed as the fungal spores are washed over the fruit with irrigation or rainfall. On the foliage, melanose symptoms start as tiny water-soaked specks that become depressed in the center and surrounded by a translucent, yellow area that is not depressed. Later, the leaf cuticle ruptures and a gummy substance, which turns brown and hardens, is exuded. The yellowish margin disappears and the hardened gummed areas will have a sandpaper-like texture. Control of melanose uses a two-pronged method of attack. If melanose was bad the year before, fungicide application should be started at petal fall continuing until it becomes resistant in late June or early July. Also, melanose over-winters in dead twigs. Any deadwood in the tree should be pruned out in order to reduce inoculum.



Melanose signs on fruit

For more information on citrus diseases go to: http://www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/plant_pathology/.

Duval County Extension
1010 N. McDuff Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32254
(904) 255-7450
Fax: (904)387-8902
Website: <http://duval.ifas.ufl.edu>

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A Day of Gardening



We are hosting "A Day of Gardening" on February 27th from 9:30am to 2:30pm to kick off the spring 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 \$20 and the deadline to register is February 22nd. This fee will cover a light lunch, snacks and handouts. Please call 255-7450 for a registration form or request one via email at delvalle@coj.net.

To register using a credit card go to: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-a-day-of-gardening-tickets-20144138661>

Doors will open @ 8:30am & not before.

Agenda

8:30 to 9:30am: Registration and Shopping
9:30-10:10am: Welcome & Poisonous Plants
10:10-10:45am: Garden-"cise"

Break

11:00-11:45am: Breakout Session 1 (select 1)

- Top 10 Turf Problems
- Muscadine Grapes
- Tools of Organic Gardening

11:45am-12:30pm - Lunch

12:30-1:15pm: Breakout Session 2 (select 1)

- Underutilized Fruit for NE FL
- Start Anew....Plant Propagation
- Hydroponic Gardening Made Simple

Break

1:30-2:25pm: Standouts and Shout-outs from the Gardens of the Big Bend

2:30pm: Adjourn

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

Terry B. DeValle

Extension Agent-Environmental Horticulture

For individuals requiring special accommodations, please contact our office (904-255-7450) within a minimum of 5 working days of the program. For persons with hearing or speech impairments, when contacting our office please use the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

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