

Gardening Tips

By Wendy L. Wilber

September 2009

Vegetable Gardens for the Fall Season

It is now time to get your fall garden in. A fall garden can be just as rewarding as gardening in spring time. The temperatures are cooler, and the insects are less abundant.

Quite a few vegetables can be planted now for the fall garden. Plant warm weather crops like bush and pole beans, cucumbers and squash right away. Cool weather crops like beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, endive/escarole, kale, kohlrabi, leek, lettuce, mustard, onions, radish and turnips can be planted beginning now. Wait until it gets cooler (October) to plant Chinese cabbage, spinach and strawberries. Also, wait until cooler weather to plant a cover crop such as winter rye or crimson clover on your resting garden. Proper soil preparation is important in getting a garden started. Till the soil with a spade, shovel or a tiller. Break up all clumps and level the soil after turning. This



Daylilies can be divided now to expand your bed or to share.

will help to maintain good soil texture, prevent excessive drying and improve seed germination. In wet areas, raise the elevation of the garden to promote drainage. Check the [vegetable gardening guide](#) for more info.

It is not too late to have your soil tested, especially if you experienced problems last time you planted in the same location. The solution to your problem might be as simple as adjusting the pH. The

ideal pH is slightly acidic 5.8-6.5 for vegetable gardens.

Fruits & Nuts

Potted fruit trees can be planted now. The Extension office has publications available on the [latest varieties of fruit recommended](#) for North Florida.

Large, sweet muscadine grapes are being harvested now. If you do not grow your own grapes, go to a local vineyard and pick some.



For more information, contact the Alachua County Extension Office at 2800 NE 39th Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32609 (352) 955-2402 or TDD/TYY (352) 955-2406

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CURRENT EVENTS

Florida Friendly Landscaping

September 15, 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Tower Road Branch Library, 3020 SW 75th Street,
Gainesville (352-2840)

Learn landscaping techniques to save water, and spend less on fertilizers and sprays. Class will be presented by Wendy Wilber, Environmental Horticulture Agent. Please pre-register by calling 352-337-6209. If you have any questions call the Extension Office at 352-955-2402.

Hummingbirds

September 18, 7:00 - 8:00 pm
Hilton Conference Center, 1714 SW 34th Street,
Gainesville

Learn about the hummingbirds that visit your landscape. Nationally known hummingbird expert and tagger Fred Bassett will lecture on the fascinating life of hummingbirds and what you can do to protect these amazing creatures. Seating is limited, a free ticket for admission can be obtained at the Extension Office prior to the event. Office hours: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm. If you have any questions call the Extension Office at 352-955-2402. Class is free of charge.

Florida Friendly Landscaping

September 23, 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Alachua County Extension Office, 2800 NE 39th Ave

Learn landscaping techniques to save water, and spend less on fertilizers and sprays. Class will be presented by Wendy Wilber, Environmental Horticulture Agent. Please pre-register by calling 352-337-6209. If you have any questions call the Extension Office at 352-955-2402. Class is free of charge. For more information see the 2009 Fall Gardening Programs brochure.

FYN Tour of Landscapes

September 26, 11:00 am - 3:00 pm

Attend a brief class about creating a Florida Friendly landscape and then take a self driving tour of four landscaped gardens that demonstrate environmentally friendly techniques. Tours originate from the Alachua County Extension Office. Class will be presented by Wendy Wilber, Environmental Horticulture Agent. Please pre-register by calling 352-337-6209. If you have any questions call the Extension Office at 352-955-2402. Class is free of charge.

A list of area grape growers can be obtained from the Extension Office.

September is the last month to fertilize with a citrus special fertilizer. Young citrus need plenty of nutrition. For more information on fertilizing your citrus trees, request the fact sheet on [citrus culture in the home landscape](#) from the Extension Office.

Flowers

Bedding plants for September include calendula, globe amaranth and garden mums. Later in October, when the weather cools down, you can plant candy tuft, petunia,



Attend a free class on hummingbirds with expert Fred Bassett on September 18th.

pansy, snapdragon, Shasta daisy, dianthus, ornamental kale, nasturtium and sweet pea. When replanting the annual beds, it is a

good idea to enrich the soil with well-composted material.

Now is the time to divide and replant daylilies. This type of thinning will encourage blooming in future seasons. Dig caladiums after the foliage fades and store the tubers in a dry, shady, cool place such as a garage. Support chrysanthemums and marigolds that have become top heavy. Remove spent flowers and flower spikes on perennials to encourage blooming up to the first cold snap. Deadheading

now can make for more blooms for the rest of the season.





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Tree and Shrubs

This is the last time of the year to fertilize most of the trees and shrubs, if needed. Use a fertilizer with a 3:1:2 ratio. If you use a 12-4-8, apply $\frac{3}{4}$ pound per 100 square feet. You may also use 10-0-10 at a rate of 1 pound per 100 square feet. Apply within the plant's root zone or 1.5 times the drip line diameter. Try to avoid fertilizing late into the fall. You could cause a flush of new growth that would be damaged by freezing temperatures.

Lawns

Fertilize St. Augustine and Bahia grass lawns with a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer like 15-0-15 (6.6 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. of lawn) or. If you have experienced cold damage in past winters, you can apply potassium one month before winter to increase cold hardiness. Apply 1.6 lbs. of muriate of potash or 2 lbs. of potassium sulfate per 100 sq. ft.

This time of year insects can be a problem. Watch for chinch bugs in St. Augustine grass. Chinch bugs suck juices out of the grass resulting in yellow to brownish patches in the lawn. The chinch bugs usually strike the hottest, driest spots of your turf, like between the sidewalk and the street or in the corner of the sidewalk and the driveway. If you find evidence that chinch bugs have invaded your lawn, spot treat the problem areas with Triazicide or a product containing bifenthrin. Call the extension office and request the document [Southern Chinchbug management in St. Augustine grass](#).

Other pests include sod webworms and army worms. The caterpillars are the larvae of moths, and they chew blades of grass. The grass appears ragged and yellow to brown in color. Damaged areas generally occur first along hedges and flower beds. Injury begins in spots 2-3 feet across. Use a product

like Sevin to control the sod webworms.

With all of the rain we are seeing plenty of fungal problems in the lawns.

Gray leafspot is a fungus disease that is very common in St. Augustine grass during hot, humid weather. It causes elongated, gray spots on leaves and leaf sheaths. Severely infected leaves become withered and brown. The disease is favored by high nitrogen fertilization. It can be most serious on newly planted lawns. Gray leafspot should be sprayed with Thiophanate methyl available as Scotts Lawn fungus control.

If you are thinking of "letting go of your lawn" consider planting a drought tolerant ground cover. Some of great [ground covers](#) for Alachua County are beach sunflower, sunshine mimosa, asiatic jasmine, society garlic, and day lilies for full sun. In more shady conditions try ground covers such as Algerian Ivy, ajuga, ferns, lerioppe, and asiatic jasmine.

Herbs

This is the last month to plant warm-season herbs. Many of the spring herbs that you had in your spring garden can have a second season this fall. These include basil, chamomile, Vietnamese coriander, scented geranium, lemon balm, lemon verbena, mints, Mexican oregano, marjoram, Cuban oregano sage, summer savory, French tarragon, and Mexican tarragon.

Some herb plants also attract butterflies and their larvae. Herb plants for the butterfly garden are dill, parsley, oregano, catmint, marjoram and many different



sages. Be willing to share your dill and parsley with the caterpillars. It gives new meaning to the phrase “plant a row for the hungry”. Herbs that have been growing through the season need to be cut, fertilized and watered to make sure they continue to produce tender new growth and minimize flowering.

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please e-mail Wendy at wilbewl@ufl.edu.

About This Newsletter

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For persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations, please contact Wendy Wilber at the Alachua County Extension Office, at least five working days prior to the program so that proper consideration may be given to the request.