



# YOUR NORTH FLORIDA YARD & GARDEN

Flagler County Extension Service & UF/IFAS Florida  
Master Gardeners

ISSUE XL

January-March, 2013

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*The Foundation for The Gator Nation*  
An Equal Opportunity Institution

## From the MG Desk...

*David Tibbetts, Newsletter Editor*



Another, and momentous, year gone by. In the garden, it seems like things don't change quite so much or so quickly, but change they do. Every year brings another opportunity to apply the lessons of the past and finally get it right. Unfortunately, as soon as I think I've got it right, something else comes along to prove me wrong. The only constant is change. Enjoy the holiday season, and best wishes for a great 2013!

**Q**• Virtually every newsletter, it is apparent that many homeowners are over-watering something, whether their lawn, their shrubs or their trees (palms, citrus, etc.). So, how should we be watering?

**A**• Recently, we've had better than average rainfall. In addition, as the weather cools, our gardens slow down and in some cases go dormant. The result is that water is no longer so important, and in fact, may cause your garden some harm. This is part of the reason that watering restrictions limit us to one watering per week at this time of year. Additionally, as we take more water from wells, salt water intrudes into the ground water, thus introducing another possible problem into our gardens. Please take a look at your irrigation and adjust it, if necessary, to help your garden and help save our ground water.

*(Continued on page 17)*



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[WWW.SOLUTIONSFORYOURLIFE.COM](http://WWW.SOLUTIONSFORYOURLIFE.COM)

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## **Upcoming Programs at the Flagler County Extension Service:**

**Joy of Bonsai– January 19-20, 2013 Sponsored by Kawa Bonsai Society**

Go to: <http://kawabonsai.com/> for program fee information and pre-registration.



# The Good...

Downloaded from <http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/horticulture/fruit/lemon.html> on 12/14/12

## Meyer Lemon (*Citrus x meyeri*)

**Introduction.** The Meyer lemon (*Citrus × meyeri*) is a citrus fruit, native to China, thought to be a cross between a true lemon and a mandarin orange or sweet orange. The Meyer lemon was introduced to the United States in 1908 as S.P.I. #23028, by the agricultural explorer Frank Meyer, an employee of the United States Department of Agriculture who collected a sample of the plant on a trip to China. It is commonly grown in China potted as an ornamental plant. It became popular as a food item in the United States after being rediscovered by chefs, such as Alice Waters at Chez Panisse, during the California Cuisine revolution (characterized by using fresh, locally grown items). The Meyer lemon is also known as the *Valley lemon* in southern Texas due to its popularity in the Rio Grande Valley region.

**Description.** Meyer lemon trees are around 6 to 10 feet (2–3 meters) tall at maturity, though can be pruned smaller. Its leaves are dark green and shiny, young leaves and shoots are dark purple. The flowers are white with a purple base and fragrant. The fruit is yellow and rounder than a true lemon with a slight orange tint when ripe. It has a sweeter, less acidic flavor than the more common lemon (Lisbon or Eureka are typical grocery store varieties) and a fragrant edible skin.

**Cultivation.** Meyer lemons are reasonably



Grapefruit and Meyer lemon



Meyer lemon tree laden with fruit

hardy, but grow well in a warm climate. They are also fairly vigorous. A tree grown from seed usually begins fruiting in four years. While trees can produce fruit throughout the year, most fruit will be produced in Spring and Autumn. Trees require adequate water, but less in the winter. For maximum yield, they should be fertilized during growing periods. Meyer lemons are popular as ornamental plants due to their compact size, hardiness and productivity. They are highly decorative and are suitable for container growing.

**Improved Meyer.** By the mid 1940s the Meyer lemon had become widely grown in California. However, at that time it was discovered that a majority of the Meyer lemon trees being cloned were symptomless carriers of the Citrus tristeza virus, a virus which has killed millions of citrus trees all over the world and has rendered other

# The Good...(cont.)

millions useless for production. After this finding, most of the Meyer lemon trees in the United States were destroyed to save other citrus trees. A virus-free selection was found in the 1950s by the California company *Four Winds Growers*, and was later certified and released by the University of California in 1975. To help distinguish it, this release is known by the name *Improved Meyer lemon*.

## Growing Tips:

January:

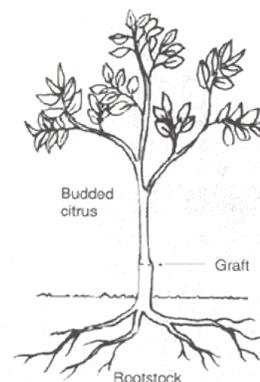
1. Water as needed – especially 24-48 hours before a freeze
2. Protect fruit grafted area if freeze will occur.

February:

1. Water as needed.
2. Prune any water sprouts, suckers, rubbing or crossing branches.
3. Remove weeds as needed.

March:

1. Remove graft freeze protection if threat of freeze is over.
2. Fertilize program begins for lemon using citrus fertilizer. Follow fertilizer label for frequency (slow release is used less often).
3. Check for citrus insects and diseases, apply fungicide just at new leaf flush or after bloom drop.



## Pest Management Issues:

Mites: Citrus rust, Citrus red (purple mites) and Texas citrus mites affect fruit rind. Treat with Horticultural oil spray every 10 days, 3-4 times.

Scale: Citrus snow, Purple scale, glover scale, red scale, yellow scale, Cottony cushion scale, and Mealybugs. These insects will be prevalent in spring and early summer. Whitefly and Aphids can be found year round. These soft-bodied insects can be managed with insecticidal soap spray every 10 days, 304 treatments. Inspect periodically for recurrence and treat as needed.

Caterpillars: Orangedog is a large brown-and-white caterpillar is the larva of a black-and-yellow, swallowtail butterfly. These butterfly caterpillars are left alone.

Chewing insects: Grasshoppers and katydids feed in the summer, causing notched and chewed foliage. Hand removal works best.

Diseases: Melanose, scab, greasy spot, Foot rot, HLB (Citrus greening), Canker are the most common problems. Fungicide treatment must occur on a regular basis.

Light pruning, pruning of dead limbs and frequent removal of leaf and limb debris should occur on a regular basis.



# The Bad...

From Solutions for Your Life, [http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/hot\\_topics/environment/invasive\\_plants.html](http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/hot_topics/environment/invasive_plants.html)

## Invasive Plants - What You Can Do

**Introduction.** Non-native plants, carried here by humans since Florida's discovery by Columbus, now threaten the state's remaining natural areas. Of the 4,012 plant species now growing on their own without cultivation in Florida, about thirty percent are non-native. Many of these plants were originally introduced as garden ornamentals or agricultural crops. Other non-native plants were accidentally introduced.

Regardless of how they arrived, these 1,200 or so non-native plants grew so well in Florida that they naturalized, that is, spread on their own into both managed and natural areas. While some of these plants are not a problem, many have become weeds, or undesirable plants, on agricultural lands, along roadways, and in forests, yards, and waterways.

When naturalized non-native plants spread extensively into natural areas, displacing native plants and disrupting natural processes such as fire or water flow, they are called invasive. Invasive non-native plants can be thought of as weeds in natural areas.

Familiar examples of invasive non-native plants in Florida include Brazilian pepper and melaleuca in South Florida, and cogongrass and Chinese tallow in north Florida. But there are many more, often cultivated by landowners unaware that they could be contributing to the spread of these destructive plants.

Non-native plants have been introduced as landscape ornamentals, aquarium plantings, agricultural crops, and by accident. They now exist in our landscapes, and some are still sold commercially. Invasive non-native plants growing in proximity to natural areas are a source of invasion.

Seeds and spores can be spread by birds, animals, wind, and yard trimmings.

**Learn to Recognize Florida's Non-native Invasive Plants.** Not everyone will want to learn to identify the entire list of invasive plants in Florida--at least not right away. A good start is to identify plants on your own property or plants sold in local nurseries, and determine if any are considered invasive. Most non-native invasive plants are included in various plant identification field guides, horticultural books, and botanical keys. The Flagler County Extension Office can assist with plant identification. A handbook, SP 257 *Identification and Biology of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas*, is available for sale from the [IFAS Extension Bookstore](#).



Air potato engulfing cabbage palm



Brazilian pepper-tree

**Prevention.** When landscaping, do not use plants that have potential to be invasive in natural areas near where you live. Local land managers, park biologists, and county governments can provide information on invasive plants that are the greatest problem locally. Currently there is no information source that describes all invasive species for each particular part of Florida. Most invasive species are weed problems in some areas, but not in others. Until more information is developed, the best strategy for land managers is to become familiar with the most invasive species in their areas, and be watchful for their appearance.

**Remove Non-native Invasive Plants from Your Property.** The removal of non-native invasive plants from private property can eliminate a major source of invasion into natural areas.

# The Bad...(cont.)

Many invasive plants, such as skunk vine, are also weeds in private landscapes. Others, such as carrotwood, may serve a function in the private landscape (as shade, for example). Removal of these plants may seem a sacrifice for the property owner, but this loss can be a short-term problem. The plant removal will be of long-term, far-reaching benefit to Florida's natural areas.

Stumps of trees that are cut down should always be treated with a herbicide to prevent regrowth. After removal, invasive non-native plants can be replaced with native plants or with non-native plants that are not invasive. Information on how to control specific non-native invasive plants and suggestions for non-invasive plants with which to replace them can be obtained from your [county Extension office](#).

Non-native invasive plants that are not removed



Chinese tallow



Tropical soda apple

from private property should be contained as carefully as possible, especially if the land is close to sensitive natural areas. Carefully dispose of trimmed material from invasive plants, especially material with attached seeds or spores, or plant parts capable of vegetative reproduction, such as stems of oyster plant (*Rhoeo spathacea*). Volunteer to remove invasive plants from local natural areas under the guidance of the natural area manager. Groups such as "Pepper Busters" have been formed for this purpose.

For other publications and resources, see [Invasive Species](#).

**Problem Invasive Plants.** Are you unknowingly harboring invasive plants in your yard? Here are some common problem invasive plants in Florida.

**Air Potato:** [Natural Area Weeds: Air Potato \(\*Dioscorea bulbifera\*\)](#)

**Brazilian Pepper:** [Brazilian Pepper-tree Control](#); [Brazilian Pepper-tree, \*Schinus terebinthifolius\*](#); [Brazilian-pepper tree--Okeechobee Extension Office](#)

**Chinese Tallow:** [Natural Area Weeds: Chinese Tallow \(\*Sapium sebiferum\*\)](#)

**Melaleuca:** [Natural Area Weeds: A Property Owner's Guide to Melaleuca Control](#)

**Mimosa:** [Catclaw Mimosa \(Giant Sensitive Plant\), \*Mimosa Pigra\*](#)

**Old World Climbing Fern:** [Natural Area Weeds: Old World Climbing Fern](#)

**Tropical Soda Apple:** [Tropical Soda Apple: A New Noxious Weed in Florida](#)

**Additional Information:** [Invasive Weeds](#); [IPM Florida: Integrated Pest Management](#)



# and the Bugglies

by: David Tibbetts, UF/IFAS Master Gardener

## Ladybirds, Ladybird beetles, Lady Beetles, Ladybugs of Florida, Coleoptera: Coccinellidae

**Introduction.** Ladybird is a name that has been used in England for more than 600 years for the European beetle *Coccinella septempunctata*. As knowledge about insects increased, the name became extended to all its relatives, members of the beetle family Coccinellidae. Of course, these insects are not birds, but then butterflies are not flies, nor are dragonflies, stoneflies, mayflies, or fireflies, which all are true common names in folklore, not invented names. The lady for whom ladybirds were named was “the Virgin Mary,” and common names in other European languages have the same association (the German name Marienkafer translates to “Marybeetle” or ladybeetle).

In the USA, the name ladybird was Americanized to ladybug, although these insects are beetles (Coleoptera), not bugs (Hemiptera). Now, the word ladybird applies to a whole family of beetles, Coccinellidae or ladybirds, not just *Coccinella septempunctata*. Many writers generalize them all as “the ladybird” and thus cause many in the public to believe that there is only one species. There are many species of ladybirds, just as there are of birds. The vast majority of ladybird species are considered beneficial to humans because they eat phytophagous insects (“pests of plants,” or “plant pests”), but not all eat pests of plants, and a very few are themselves pests. For the remainder of this article, I will use the name ‘ladybeetle’ to refer to these insects.

**Description.** Worldwide, nearly 6,000 species of ladybeetles are known, of which 99 are currently reported to occur in Florida. Some of these are considered to be **native**, and others to be **adventive**, having arrived from somewhere else and established feral populations. Among the adventive species, some were introduced deliberately, and others are called **immigrants**, having arrived by a means other than deliberate introduction. Ladybeetle adults are oval, range in length from about 1mm to over 10mm depending upon species, and have wings. Females on average are larger than males. Adults of some species are brightly colored. Adults are able to reflex-bleed from their leg joints; the blood is repellent, having a repulsive smell as well as sometimes containing alkaloid toxins. The blood is yellow and its repellent and toxic properties are believed to be a defense mechanism against predators. The immature stages (eggs, larvae,



Seven-spotted ladybeetle



Ladybeetle eggs



Ladybeetle adult and pupa

"Bugs are not going to inherit the earth. They own it now. So we might as well make peace with the landlord." ~ Thomas Eisner

## and the Bugglies (cont.)

and pupae) also contain the toxins that their adults have. Eggs are elongated ovoids, and occasionally protected by secretions of the adult female. Cannibalism of eggs, larvae and pupae is common, especially when prey is scarce. Larvae are mobile, and sometimes protected by waxy secretions. Pupae are unprotected by a cocoon (as in some other beetles), and the larvae may wander some distance from feeding sites (where they may be at risk from cannibalism) before pupating.

**Life Cycle and Behavior.** Ladybeetle larvae undergo four instars before pupating, metamorphosing, and giving rise to adults. So far as is known, all the Florida species have this typical life cycle. Typically, ladybeetles have several generations each year, and reproduction is slowed or halted by cooler winter weather, when adults may hibernate. In Florida, adults and larvae of 75 species feed on scale insects, and only 13 feed primarily on aphids. There are typical differences in behavior between these two groups. Those that feed on aphids develop faster, age faster, move faster, typically are larger, and lay their eggs in clusters. Those that feed on scale insects develop more slowly, live longer, move more slowly, typically are smaller, and lay their eggs singly.

**Food.** Ladybeetle beetles feed on a variety of pests, and two (of 99) species feed on plants. The two plant-eating species like either beans or squash. The vast majority of ladybeetles dine on various varieties of garden pests. For this reason, ladybeetles are considered to be hugely beneficial. Without going into detail about which ladybeetle eats which pest, the types of pests that may be ladybeetle fodder include mites, whiteflies, scale insects (including cottony cushion and armored scale), mealybugs, and aphids. In fact, ladybeetle employment in the control of citrus cottony cushion scale in California and Florida is credited with saving the citrus industry in both states. Unfortunately, the various stages of the ladybeetle may look similar to pests in the garden. It behooves the gardener to correctly identify suspected pests before taking action that might be detrimental to beneficial insects like ladybeetles.

**Summary.** Ladybeetles are a family of insects often considered beneficial to humans, because most of them eat other insects that feed on our plants. In Florida, there are about a hundred known species of ladybeetles. The adults and larvae of most of them feed on soft-bodied insects like scales, aphids, whiteflies, and mites. Ladybeetle adults are distinctive, round, flying insects that come in many colors. But the larvae look very different, and are often mistaken for pests. Killing ladybeetles and other beneficial insects can result in increased problems with the pests they feed on, so be sure to properly identify insects before deciding what to do about them. Use pesticides only as a last resort, and let nature help you control your pest problems!

Reference: UF IFA document EENY-170



Newly hatched ladybeetle lar-



Adult twice-stabbed ladybeetle



Adult multicolored Asian ladybeetle

"Bugs are not going to inherit the earth. They own it now. So we might as well make peace with the landlord." ~ Thomas Eisner



# Fresh from Florida

By: Sharon Treen, County Extension Director, Family Consumer Sciences Agent

## Florida Fresh: Cabbage

Cabbage grows mostly in the north and central parts of Florida. It is available from December to May, with peak harvests occurring in March. Cabbage is in the “Brassicaceae” family – so it is related to broccoli, greens and radishes, as well as Brussels sprouts.

**History and Facts:** The Ancient Greeks and Romans believed cabbage could cure almost any illness.

Cabbage, broccoli and Brussels sprouts are cruciferous vegetables. They have chemical compounds that may help prevent certain types of cancer.



Adding vinegar or a piece of bread to cabbage while it's cooking may reduce the odor.

One cup of chopped, raw cabbage gives us about one-third (30%) of the vitamin C we need each day!

Did you know?:

Florida is 3rd in the nation in cabbage production  
Flagler is top producer of cabbage in the state  
Cabbage grows from September to May-long growing season

Cabbage crops take 100 days to reach maturity  
About 3,000 acres are planted in Flagler County  
Commercial production yields 700 boxes per acre with a box holding 50 pounds.

### References:

<http://freshfromflorida.wordpress.com/>, University of Florida publication FCS8676 Florida Fresh: Cabbage Jennifer Hillan, MSH, RD, LD/N, Mark Warren, Agriculture Agent, Flagler County Extension Service

### Florida Cabbage

**Availability:** November through June

**Selection:** Make sure stem is not dry. Handle it gently because cabbage bruises easily. Avoid cabbage with holes and smell the core for sweetness. Green and red cabbage should have firm leaves with even color.

**Storage:** Cabbage should be refrigerated in a plastic bag; it will keep for up to two weeks or two to three days when it has been cut. Any discolored or wilted external leaves, as well as tough stalks, should be removed before cooking.

**Use and preparation:** A whole cabbage is best dealt with by removing the tough outer leaves, then cut in half lengthwise. Cut out the hard central core and slice thin for salads, slaws and stir-fry. When using whole leaves, carefully remove the leaves you intend to use from the head. Cook the leaves in lightly salted boiling water until almost tender, then cool them off in an ice water bath to stop the cooking.

### **Flavors well with**

Bacon, butter, caraway seeds, cheese, chicken, cider vinegar, corned beef, cream, duck, mayonnaise, nutmeg, pancetta, potatoes, sour cream, rosemary, dill

### **Other uses**

Cabbage plants can be used to repel slugs that may be eating your flowers. Plant a few cabbage plants in your garden; slugs go crazy for cabbage and will eat that instead.

## Baked Cabbage Egg Rolls Yield 4 Servings

### Ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups Florida cabbage, shredded
- 2 medium Florida carrots, peeled and shredded
- 2 cups Florida mushrooms, diced
- 1 bunch green onions, sliced
- 1 tablespoon fresh grated ginger or 1 teaspoon dried
- 12 egg roll wrappers
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch (divided)
- 1/2 cup water (divided)
- 1 cup water chestnuts, chopped (optional)
- 2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- Your favorite dipping sauce

**Preparation:** Spray a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. Mix 1 tablespoon of

the cornstarch into 1/4 cup water and set aside. Lightly spray large sauté pan with cooking spray and warm over low heat. Add cabbage, carrots, mushrooms, water chestnuts and ginger to the sauté pan. Cook for five to seven minutes or just until vegetables start to get slightly tender. Stir in cornstarch mixture and soy sauce. Cook until the sauce thickens. Let vegetable mixture completely cool and add green onions. Dissolve the remaining tablespoon of cornstarch in 1/4 cup water. Brush onto egg roll wrappers and fill with vegetables and wrap according to the directions on the egg roll package. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 15 minutes or until brown. Serve hot with dipping sauce.



## Steamed Cabbage Wraps Yield 2 servings

### Ingredients

- 4 leaves cabbage
- 1/2 pound deli turkey, sliced thin
- 1/4 onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 tomato, thinly sliced
- 1/4 pound jalapeno cheese, sliced

### Preparation

Cut the rib out of the cabbage leaf. Place between two damp paper towels and steam in the microwave for 30 seconds. On each leaf, place a slice of turkey, a slice of onion, a slice of tomato and a slice of cheese. Roll up. Place filled leaves in a dish and microwave for 20 seconds. Serve.





# The Urban Forest

By: Louise Leister, W.E.P. Coordinator

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## Bald Cypress

I have always enjoyed talking about this beautiful native tree. It reminds me of the giant redwoods of the Northwest since it is always struggling for survival in its native environment. This giant has been fighting for its survival for water, land and losing to development and urban sprawl. Historically most of the really old cypress were logged out in the early years of this country. Up until the 1970s, huge 500 year old trees with 10 foot wide trunks were cut and used for lumber. Sadly, only a few of the really large old cypress remain alive today. Some can be found in a few protected areas of Florida including State Parks and the Everglades. This beautiful tree remains a part of the southern topography with its dripping Spanish moss and is a worthwhile addition to any landscape. Bald and Pond Cypress grows from New York City's Central Park to the water saturated swamps of Florida's Everglades and



Bald Cypress seed cone



Cypress "knees"

back up the Mississippi River Basin. Many today are being threatened and reduced in number due to harvesting for mulch for the urban landscape.

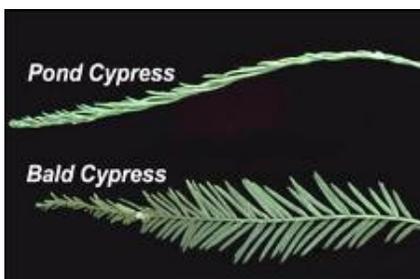
When young, bald cypress have beautiful red bark and soft light green foliage (which always gives spring a bright renewal). It sleeps through the winter, bare of foliage and then a fresh soft covering of fern like leaves break from its sleeping branches. As the tree ages, the bark that was once red as a juvenile tree, mellows to a light gray which again gives a beautiful contrast to the bright green leaves of spring. Summer foliage stays green and soft looking and will remain until the autumn when it will turn rusty red and falls. This leaves the silhouette of twisting branches of the typical flat-top style of the mature cypress stands,

often dripping with Spanish moss that frequently hangs from the older and larger trees giving us a picture of the southern landscape which we recognize so well.

Young trees have a typical conifer shape of a Christmas tree, standing as if waiting for ornaments to be hung from its branches. As the tree grows, the roots begin to take hold of the soil and the tree inches toward the sky while the base of the tree widens and starts to attain a fluted shape. As the tree trunk widens and flattens and the rough textured bark begins to peel with age, the tree's distinctive character develops. Also, as the tree ages a unique trait begins to develop; its famous **knees**. The knees start to develop out away from the trunk and they pop up like mini tree trunks often looking like wizards in the woods. Some say these knees allow the tree to breath while submerged under water during flooding, but we don't have scientific data to support this. Still, they are strange and beautiful at the same time and make us take notice of this beautiful tree. The fruit of the cypress is a hard, pear shaped cone that browns and becomes woody as it matures. Not many animals can open the tough fruit, so most of them fall to the ground beneath the tree and never sprout.

What many people don't know is that there are actually two different species of tree! There are **Bald Cypress - *Taxodium distichum*** and there are **Pond Cypress - *Taxodium ascendens***. These two trees look similar but have slightly different leaf shapes and bark. Superficially, the pond cypress have a slightly different appearance: the bark is more deeply ridged, the needles spiral around the stems, and they grow in much closer proximity to each other. The Bald cypress foliage tends to be more open, flatter and a bit longer. Scientist are not in total agreement whether pond cypress and bald cypress are two distinct species, but DNA testing suggests they are. The two types are also known to hybridize.

Bald cypress are very strong and durable trees for hurricane prone areas. They hold up to very high winds and they remain upright in saturated soils which reduces blow over. Insects, termites and rots pose no problems, therefore they require no spraying. They are a Florida native so they grow in a wide range of soils and temperatures and will tolerate rain and flooding along with dry periods.



These trees are deciduous, but the foliage is so small they require no raking after they shed their leaves. They can stand in water for months thus making them ideal for poorly drained soils or areas that flood. They are available at local nurseries and big box department stores so they will be easy to find. So I ask everyone to go and find a cypress, whether it be bald or pond, and buy one and plant one and give this native a chance to grace your landscape. Enjoy the wildlife they attract and the beautiful soft green foliage!

# Garden Calendar

*Taken from Guide to Successful Gardening in Florida's Zone 9A*

## January

### General

If it does not rain, irrigate landscape/lawn areas that need watering every ten to fourteen days. Put down approximately one quarter to one half inch of water each time.

### Lawn

Apply a weed control, if weeds are present. Refer to the lawn section of the Guide to Successful Gardening in Flagler County or contact the local extension office for specific recommendations and reference on weed control.

The grass is usually looking a little brown now from the lack of nutrients and the freezing weather. Do not be in a big hurry to fertilize. Lawn grasses are dormant and the fertilizer will help the weeds more than the grass. It is better to wait for the warmer weather in March to begin fertilizing, usually after you start mowing.

### Food Garden

Cold hardy vegetables to plant now include beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, Chinese cabbage, mustard, onions, English peas, potatoes, radishes, and turnips.



Paperwhites

### Fruit

This is a good time to spray deciduous fruit trees with horticultural oil to smother scale and other insects that might be over-wintering on the bark and twigs.

### Landscape

Cover sensitive plants during nights when the temperature is expected to drop below 35°. Be sure to take off coverings in the morning to ensure plants are exposed to sunlight.

Do not prune off dead branches that are frost damaged. This dead matter acts as insulation during later freezes. Wait until early March or when new growth emerges to determine where to prune back.

This is a good time to transplant deciduous and evergreen plants in the landscape (not palms). Keep transplants out of the ground for as short a time as possible. Keep the roots moist, not soaking wet. Do not fertilize plants now—wait until March. Do not prune except to remove diseased or dead material.

Annuals to plant now include calendula, pansies, petunias, snapdragons, delphiniums, larkspur, dianthus, viola, and foxgloves.

Check your trees for mistletoe, a parasitic plant that will harm them. If you see mistletoe, cut off the entire affected branch.

Narcissus (Paperwhites) and Jonquils should be blooming now. Enjoy the winter colors!

## February

### General

If it doesn't rain, water dry areas every 10 - 14 days. Put down approximately one half inch of water each time. Calibrate water sprinkler distribution system with cans or other suitable containers to ensure that one half inch is distributed evenly over the whole lawn.

### Lawn

If weeds are present and you have not applied a weed control within the previous 12 months, you may do so at the beginning of this month. This is also a good time to apply crabgrass preventative. Make sure you reapply in 10 -12 weeks. Refer to the lawn section of the Guide to Successful Gardening in Zone 9A or the local extension office for specific information regarding proper weed control methods.

### Food Garden

Prepare spring garden area by turning over soil and adding organic matter. Have a pH test done before planting.

Plant warm season vegetables indoors in flats so they are ready to plant outdoors in late March.

Vegetables that can be planted this month: beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, Chinese cabbage, collards, lettuce, mustard, green onions, and potatoes.

### Fruit

Prune grape plants and leafless vines this month.

Fertilize deciduous fruit trees and bushes including citrus, peaches, nectarines, plums, figs, blackberries, grapes, persimmons, blueberries, and pears. Use slow-release fertilizer on all of these except blueberries. For blueberries, use azalea/camellia fertilizer; apply at half the rate and repeat next month. Blueberries respond best to frequent, light fertilization.

Start checking lemon/lime trees for ripeness.

### Landscape

Spring flower seeds can be started in flats to ready for a late March planting outdoors.

Do not prune winter damaged plants yet. Wait until March when the chance of frost is essentially over.

Prune back roses this month. Roses can be cut back to the main canes. Refer to the section in Survival Guide... or your local extension office for more information on care and maintenance. Be sure to pull back mulch from the bases of each plant to prevent disease.

Crape Myrtle can be pruned this month. *Do not* "top" them. Prune off old seed heads and remove any crossing branches.

You can still transplant shrubs through the middle of the month.

Annuals to plant this month include baby's breath, calendulas, carnations, dianthus, dusty miller, Marguerite daisies, pansies, petunias, snapdragons, and statice.



Camelia

## March

### General

If no rain, water areas that need it approximately every 7 - 10 days, putting down one quarter to one half inch of water each time. Do you have a rain monitor on your irrigation system? Check system for broken, misdirected, blocked, and plugged heads. Our driest months, April and May, are ahead.

### Lawn

Apply fertilizer (15-0-15) with approximately 40% of the nitrogen in slow release form.

### Food Garden

Most gardens will produce better if the soil is amended with compost (organic matter). Have your soil pH tested at the Flagler County Extension Service to determine acid/alkaline level before you plant.

Warm season vegetables can be planted: snap beans, pole beans, cantaloupe, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, squash, tomatoes, and watermelons.

### Fruit

Most West Indian and Guatemalan avocado varieties should be checked for ripeness through June.

Valencia oranges should be checked for ripeness starting this month.

### Landscape

Annuals and perennials to be planted: ageratum, alyssum, amaranthus, balsam, begonia, browallia, celosia, cosmos, coreopsis, dusty miller, gaillardia, gazania, geranium, impatiens, Marguerite daisies, marigold, pentas, Persian violet, phlox, rudbeckia, salvia, sweet William, thunbergia, torenia, verbena, vinca, and zinnia.

Fertilize palm trees with slow release palm fertilizer with 4% magnesium.

Fertilize hibiscus, azaleas, and poinsettias with complete fertilizer for acid-loving plants.

Many plants can be pruned back this month. After danger of frost is over, generally mid- to end of March, prune off any dead areas, old seedheads and spent flowers. As a general rule of thumb, trees and shrubs should not be trimmed more than one-third the total size of the plant to maintain desired size and shape.

Poinsettias can be pruned once colored bracts begin to wilt. Cut back to approximately 12 - 18 inches above the soil.

Azaleas can be pruned after blooming.



Azalea



# Discover Natural Florida

## Lehigh Trail

by David Tibbetts, UF/IFAS Florida Master Gardener

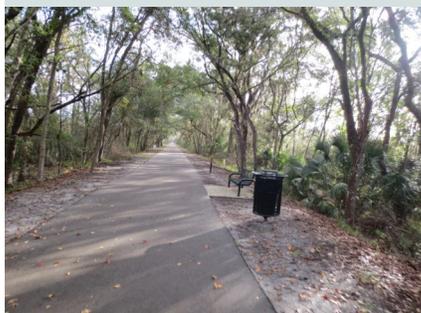
**Trail Location.** The Lehigh Trail is located in Flagler County on approximately eight miles of abandoned railroad corridor, comprising 194.95 acres. The Trail parallels the Lehigh Canal for much of its length and extends from US 1 at Royal Palms Parkway, through the town center of Palm Coast, through Graham Swamp, and ends at Colbert Lane immediately west of the old Lehigh Portland Cement Company.



Entrance to Lehigh Trail  
from Rymfire



Entrance from Belle Terre  
heading west



Trailhead at Old Kings Road

**Activities.** This trail provides hikers, cyclists, dog-walkers, bird-watchers, and in-line skaters a taste of wild Florida and in some sections there is some landscaping, giving it some of the best scenery in the county. Trees surround the trail virtually its entire length. The trail crosses three roads, Belle Terre Parkway near its intersection with Royal Palms Parkway, Town Center Boulevard at its intersection with Royal Palms Parkway, and Old Kings Road and Town Center Blvd. The trail has many benches and several trash bins, as well as dog-walking amenities.

**Construction.** Lehigh Trail is a linear park that stretches 6.31 miles from Colbert Lane in the east westward to US 1. It is a “rails to trails” project. At its intersection with US 1, both sides of Belle Terre, and at the Old Kings trailhead, there are ‘informal’ parking areas that provide easy access to the respective sections of the trail. In addition, construction has recently been started to create a parking area and restroom near the Colbert Lane trailhead. For those who live near Rymfire Drive, there is an entrance to that section of the trail from Royal Palms Parkway.



Entrance from US 1, note bench and  
dog-walking amenities



Section of trail from Belle Terre  
heading east



Boardwalk near Colbert Lane

# Kidz

by David Tibbetts and Honor O'Reilly, Flagler County Master Gardener Volunteers

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## Girl Scout Troop 669 at the DJJ Community Garden

Girl Scouts from local Troop 669 have been assisting the Master Gardeners (Honor O'Reilly and David Tibbetts) and Marsha Zeller to maintain the DJJ Community Garden in Bunnell. The girls needed a project to help them achieve various award levels, and the garden provided a variety of tasks to help them do this. They started working in August, weeding and cleaning up the raised beds and the areas surrounding the ten 10'X10' raised beds and around the twenty hydroponic uprights, as well as other areas of the garden including the two greenhouses and the citrus and blueberry orchard.



Girl Scout Troop 669

After three visits and around five and a half hours of cleanup, the garden was ready for planting. On September 24th, the girls then assisted in planting seedlings in the raised beds over a period of about three hours. They planted peppers, eggplant, strawberries, broccoli, various herbs, and collard greens.

In October, weeding continued, and the hydroponic uprights were prepped and planted by the Master Gardeners and Marsha.

Finally, in early November, it was time to harvest! On Saturday, November 10th, the girls harvested 54 pounds of lettuce and mustard greens in about two and half hours. In addition to the harvest, the girls also planted mustard green seeds to cover one of the raised beds. The produce was delivered to the Grace Food Pantry on Education Way in Bunnell.

The girls returned to the garden again on December 15th, to harvest more produce. This time they harvested peppers, eggplant, potatoes, collard greens, Swiss chard, mustard greens, lettuce, and grapefruit for a total harvest of almost 127 pounds of produce. This, too, was delivered to the food pantry. During this visit to the garden, some of the mustard green seedlings from the seeds the girls planted in November were transplanted into empty containers in the hydroponic uprights by Master Gardener Angela Hill.

The Girl Scouts will return in January for another harvest. They're looking forward to harvesting more grapefruit, mustards and collards, as well as some broccoli and perhaps some tangerines. The Master Gardeners are very thankful for the effort the girls have put in, and look forward to working with them in the future.

(Continued from page 1)

**Q.** What is the white stuff all over my sago palm, and what can I do about it?

**A.** If you have a sago palm with fronds covered with goeey white stuff, you are a victim of Asian cycad scale. This is, unfortunately, a too common sight here in Flagler neighborhoods. For severe infestations, pruning of affected fronds should be considered making sure to disinfect shears afterward. Horticultural oil has proven useful, as well as solutions of Malathion-in-oil - these treatments should be repeated bi-weekly for a total of five or six applications.

**Q.** As usual at this time of year, many questions come in regarding (1) fertilizing lawn grass and (2) pruning plants.

**A.** (1) Now is not the time to fertilize the grass - it's dormant or at least in a very slow growth period. Likewise, don't water excessively now, it cannot be used by the grass and may end up damaging it. March is the ideal time to put down lawn fertilizer since the lawn is just waking up from its winter dormancy. Use a 16-4-8, 15-0-15, 10-4-10 or similar formula fertilizer, **not** a "weed-n-feed" product. After applying, water in lightly if no rain is expected within a few hours. Just don't apply right before a heavy downpour is expected!

(2) Pruning evergreen or subtropical plants should not be done until after the last frost or freeze has passed. Freeze-damaged plants are protected by damaged branches, leaves, etc. As with the fertilizing, March is probably the first month in which pruning may be considered, but only after the last freeze has occurred and new buds start developing.

Pruning deciduous plants can be done during the dormant period. Prune only if necessary for proper plant structure and health. In other words, have a reason why it needs pruning, not "just because" it's time to do it.



## Machetes

You may think of swarthy characters like Indiana Jones when you think of machetes, but these oversized knives also make great garden tools.

If you have an overgrown corner of your landscape, a machete can help you easily remove vines and semi-woody perennials from this area.

A machete can be helpful when you're cutting back bananas after a freeze or lifting and dividing perennials.

You can also use a machete to chop yard waste into smaller pieces, which makes it easier for the waste to decompose in your compost bin.

Of course, it's always critical to use your machete safely, since its sharp blade can cause serious harm to any body parts that get in the way.

As long as you keep safety in mind, you'll love having a versatile garden tool like a machete!

### UF Resources For Gardeners

- Solutions For Your Life  
<http://solutionsforyourlife.com>
- UF/IFAS Publications (EDIS)  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>
- Florida Yards & Neighborhoods  
<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>
- UF Environmental Horticulture Dept.  
<http://hort.ufl.edu/>
- Florida Master Gardener Program  
<http://mastergardener.ifas.ufl.edu>
- Florida-friendly Landscaping  
<http://www.floridayards.org/>

For more information, contact your county Extension office or visit [GardeninginaMinute.com](http://GardeninginaMinute.com).

*Gardening in a Minute is a production of the University of Florida's Environmental Horticulture Department, IFAS Extension, and WUFT-FM.*