



# YOUR NORTH FLORIDA YARD & GARDEN

Flagler County Extension Service & UF/IFAS Florida  
Master Gardeners

ISSUE XXIX

April - June 2010

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

## From the MG Desk...

*Diane Cortés, Editor*  
*UF/IFAS Florida Master Gardener*



O hhh, could Spring really be here? I had almost forgotten how thrilling it is to see the trees leafing out and new shoots showing on my favorite plants. At least this past cold Winter was good for something!

I'm sure that you are busy working in your landscape, but I hope you will take the time to visit the Master Gardeners at our **Spring Fling on Saturday, April 24, 2010 from 9 am to 2 pm**. We are showing off our gardens, holding a plant sale and offering special presentations on gardening throughout the day. See the Upcoming Events section for more details!

Here are some of the latest burning questions that have come into the Master Gardener Help Desk:

**Q:** When is the best time to water my landscape?

**A:** The best time to water is early in the morning; from just before dawn until 10 a.m. This gives the water a chance to soak in before the heat of the day and allows the leaf surface to dry before nightfall, reducing the chance of fungal problems. **Remember:** Now

*(Continued on page 14)*



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[WWW.FLAGLERCOUNTY.ORG](http://WWW.FLAGLERCOUNTY.ORG)

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

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- ◆ **Wednesday - Sunday, April 14 - 18 - Flagler County Fair & Youth Show** at the Flagler County Fairgrounds in Bunnell. For more details and information go to <http://www.flaglercountyfair.com>
- ◆ **Saturday & Sunday, April 17th & 18th - Earth Day Celebration** at Washington Oaks Gardens State Park from 10 am to 4 pm both days. Event activities will include arts and crafts vendors, living history demonstrations, environmental and cultural booths, live entertainment, nature programs, live animals, games of chance, and a large children's environmental activity center. A variety of food and drink will also be sold by vendors and local organizations. Fees: \$10.00 per vehicle donation to the CSO. Contact the park for more information: (386) 446-6780.
- ◆ **Saturday, April 24 - Spring Fling** garden showcase, plant sale and free educational lectures at the Flagler County Extension Office. Hosted by Flagler County Master Gardeners from 9 am to 2 pm. For more information please call the Extension Office at (386) 437-7464.
- ◆ **Saturday, May 8 - City of Palm Coast Arbor Day** in Central Park at Town Center from 9 am to 1 pm. There will be FREE 3-Gallon Tree Giveaways (while quantities last) as well as vendors, entertainment, guest speakers, food, kids activities, and a native butterfly release at noon! For more info: (386) 986-3722.

**Watch your email for more information on upcoming programs at the Flagler County Extension Office!**



# The Good...

## European Fan Palm

*Julia Wilson, UF/IFAS Florida Master Gardener*

Looking to replace those palms that succumbed to the freezes of 2010? Then consider the European Fan Palm (*Chamaerops humilis*). T

This attractive little palm has become very popular in recent years due to its cold hardiness. And not only can it resist temperatures below 20 degrees Fahrenheit, but it is fairly fast growing and drought resistant. Also known as the Mediterranean Fan Palm, it is ideal for landscapes and containers. It has multiple trunks and fan shaped leaves that range from green to blue-green to gray green.

Besides its color variability, the European fan palm has many shapes. With the leaves trimmed up to show off the trunk, it makes a beautiful specimen plant. Unpruned, these palms assume an attractive shrubby form which works well as a screen or when grouped create a barrier. Plant several to accent that hard-to-garden bare corner of your yard. The palm forms clumps that can grow up to 15 feet in height. Some plants form suckers more freely than others to become very shrubby plants that may reach 15 feet in width. Other are almost dwarf growing just 5 feet tall by 4 feet wide. These days it is popular to remove all but a few of the suckers and to prune the fronds to form a cluster of clear trunked “mini” palms.

The triangular fan shaped leaves grow to about 20 to 24 inches long by 24 inches wide. They are deeply divided in multiple segments and are themselves split at the tip. They are supported on 3 to 4 feet stems.

Though native to the hot, dry hills and mountains of the Mediterranean Sea basin, this palm is hardy throughout Florida. It prefers full sun, but will do well in part shade with some direct sunlight. In heavy shade it will survive but will lose its compact shape. It is referred to as fast growing as well as slow growing. Provide adequate moisture and fertilizer for faster growth.

This palm is very adaptable to many kinds of well-drained soils. It is drought tolerant once established. Note the well-drained reference—it dislikes soggy soil. Considered somewhat salt tolerant, it may be grown near the ocean if protected by buildings or dunes. It is not as tolerant of salt in the soil.



European Fan Palm - K. Suggs

The planting time in our area is year round. Propagation is usually from seed. The clumps can be divided or the suckers removed, but these methods are difficult. The leaf stalks are spiny and the thorns sharp. Reasonably priced specimens are readily available from nurseries and discount stores.

Small bright yellow flowers bloom close to the trunk and are hidden behind the leaf stems with their sharp thorns. The flowers are followed in the fall by fruits which are dark yellow, orange or brown and about ½-inch in diameter.

So with beauty, ruggedness, versatility, cold hardiness and drought resistance, the *Chamaerops humilis* is a winner. Consider it when replacing the less cold hardy Pygmy Date Palm (*Phoenix roebelenii*). The silver or blue European Fan Palm is the *Chamaerops Humilis var. cerifera*. It has shorter stems and grows slower but is not as cold hardy.

Sources: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> and <http://www.floridata.com>



# The Bad...

## Stinkhorn Fungus

David Tibbetts, UF/IFAS Florida Master Gardener

The Stinkhorn Fungus: Is it a stinky plague? Is it a welcomed addition to the landscape? Is it the stinkiest, smelliest mushroom ever encountered? Is it all of these things and maybe more? In a word, yes.

First off, what is the thing known as a stinkhorn fungus? Simply put, it's a family of fungi. Shared characteristics of these fungi are:

a. They smell very strongly of rotted meat. As a result, many people who encounter them in their landscape consider them to be bad.

b. They have a basic structure whose foundation is an egg-like, white sac with roots. If this egg-like sac is found in the landscape, it may be possible to nip the fungus in the bud by removing it, its roots and surrounding organic matter. It may be possible, but is not guaranteed, which might also be considered bad.

c. Through their strong smell, and a yucky, sticky discharge from the plant, they attract flies and other insects who spread them around. These insects get spores stuck to their legs, as well as ingest spores, from the fungus that are later dropped or expelled, thus spreading them to other locations. Attracting flies and/or insects might be considered bad, too.

d. As with many other fungi, the stinkhorns like dead organic material, which they help to break down. In particular, the stinkhorn likes to grow on dead wood and helps this wood to rot further, creating more organic material. This is good, and is also why the stinkhorns are considered a beneficial fungus in the landscape.

Despite its one good quality, stinkhorns tend not to be a favorite of homeowners when they plan out their gardens. In fact, many homeowners, when confronted with stinkhorns near their homes, visit their local UF extension office to find out what they've got and how to get rid of it.



Stinkhorn mushroom emerging from the "egg" stage - Larry Williams, Okaloosa County

Given the smell that gives the fungi their name, this is very understandable. It's also very understand-

able that the average homeowner does not want to be told that the smelly things in their landscape are doing good things for them and that they should close their windows if they're offended, but this is the recommended solution.

Furthermore, the only sure way to get rid of the stinkhorn once it's made its presence known, is to get rid of it and all of its residue as well as any dead tree material that may be in the landscape. This can put a damper on what kinds of mulching material can be used in the landscape – anything derived from trees can support stinkhorn growth.



A mature stinkhorn mushroom - Theresa Friday, Santa Rosa Cty

As mentioned previously, if a stinkhorn is encountered in its infant, egg-sac-like stage, it can be removed, along with its roots and surrounding organic material. Everything can be put in a zipped bag to ensure no spores escape; the bag, with its stinkhorn cargo, should then be placed in landfill waste.

What does the stinkhorn look like? There are many possibilities. One good source for verifying a stinkhorn diagnosis is the "Stinkhorn Hall of Fame," which can be found online at [mushroomexpert.com](http://mushroomexpert.com). However, the real proof of the pudding is a stinky, sticky goop on what might otherwise look like an innocent mushroom.

Since there are no legal effective or practical chemical controls, management options for the stinkhorn fungus include:

- **Tolerance:** Learn to live with them as they represent beneficial organisms to the soil ecology. Keep windows closed during periods of mushroom production to minimize odor problems.
- **Eradication:** Hand-pick the "egg" stage before it ruptures and put it in a zipper bag and discard. Small or new colonies may be eradicated through complete removal of an area of mulch to the depth of the native soil. No guarantees with this method.
- **Environment alteration:** Use of non-mulch ground-covers, such as ivy, jasmine, lirioppe, mondo grass, etc., will reduce stinkhorn incidence in a landscape. Distance large mulched areas away from the house and "fluff" the mulch regularly.



# and the Bugglies

## Tomato Fruitworm

*Blake Layton, Extension Entomology Specialist,  
Mississippi State University Extension Service*

**About:** Although the much larger tomato hornworms are capable of causing impressive damage, tomato fruitworms are really a much greater threat to homegrown tomatoes. This is because, as their name implies, these caterpillars go directly for the fruit. Although tomato fruitworms have a very wide host range and occur on many other garden vegetables, including peas, okra, and eggplant, they are especially fond of tomatoes and tomatillos. However, when in the silking stage, corn is the most preferred crop.

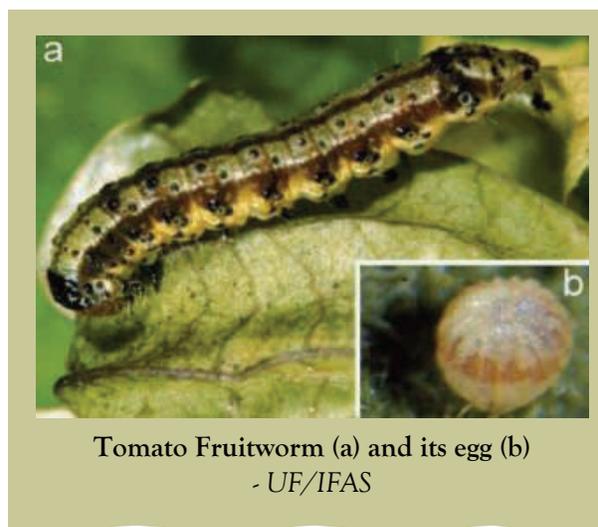
The night-flying moths lay their small round eggs individually on the leaves and bloom clusters of tomatoes. Initially the eggs are pearly white, but become darker as they mature. Damage is caused by the caterpillars, which feed briefly on foliage before attacking fruit. Immature marble-sized tomatoes may be damaged, as well as large mature fruit. A single larva may damage several tomatoes over a period of about two weeks. Mature larvae are approximately 1.5 inches long. They are robust, nearly hairless caterpillars that can vary in color from green or light yellow to brown or black. Once they are mature, the caterpillars pupate in the soil near the base of the plant, emerging as mature moths in about 10 to 14 days.

**Management Practices:** Because there are several generations per year, with the population increasing with each generation, early plantings normally experience lower infestations than fall plantings. This is an important pest of commercial row crops, such as corn,

soybeans, and cotton, and egg-laying pressure in home gardens can become especially heavy late in the growing season after these crops have matured.

**Control:** Tomatoes are not normally attractive to egg-laying moths until they begin to bloom. However, after bloom begins these pests can appear at any time during the growing season. Begin checking tomatoes at first bloom for the presence of eggs and/or caterpillars. Apply treatments at five to seven day intervals when necessary. Many of the labeled insecticides can be tank mixed with tomato fungicides and tank mixing an insecticide such as permethrin with a routine fungicide spray can be a time-efficient method of treating for this insect pest. However, be sure to check the labels of both products, the fungicide and the insecticide, before tank mixing. [...] Note that some of these products are only labeled for use on a limited number of vegetables. Be sure to read labels carefully.

Source: MSU *Bug Wise* newsletter, No. 8, June 1, 2005.



"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

## Tomatoes

Sharon A. Treen, County Extension Director and Family & Consumer Sciences Agent

### Did you know that:

- Approximately 31,500 acres were under cultivation for the fresh tomato market in 2007-08.

- Florida ships more than 1.1 billion pounds of fresh tomatoes to the US, Canada and abroad.

- About 33,000 workers are needed to hand pick the fruit.

- Total crop value at the farm level exceeds \$619 million.



Tomatoes - UF/IFAS

- The cost of producing and harvesting tomatoes averages nearly \$12,000 per acre.

- Tomatoes comprise nearly one-third the total value of all fresh vegetables produced in Florida each year.

### Florida's Tomatoes are:

- High in vitamin C. Vitamin C helps to heal cuts and keeps teeth and gums healthy.

- A good source of vitamin A. Vitamin A aids in normal vision, healthy skin, and protects against infections.

- High in lycopene. Studies show that heat-processed tomatoes such as tomato sauce and tomato paste make the lycopene available for absorption by the body. Lycopene, which acts as an antioxidant, helps protect the body's cells from oxygen damage and may reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers.

- A good source of potassium. Potassium helps to control blood pressure.

- Naturally free of cholesterol and fat, and low in calories and sodium.

### Is it a Fruit or a Vegetable?

Botanically, the tomato is a fruit of the vine. In the kitchen, it is almost always treated as a vegetable. In

fact, in 1893 the United States Supreme Court ruled, for the purpose of levying a tariff, that the tomato is a vegetable.

### When can you buy Florida tomatoes?

You can buy Florida tomatoes from September through June. This is ten months out of the year!

### How do you select Florida tomatoes?

- Unrefrigerated tomatoes because they have more flavor.

- Fresh tomatoes. If you buy unripe tomatoes, put them in a warm area or in a brown paper bag to help them ripen.

- Tomatoes that are slightly soft without bruises and cracks.

- Tomatoes that have soft spots, sunken areas, or mold are usually decayed and should not be selected

### Growing Tomatoes:

- There are many varieties of tomato developed just for Florida's growing conditions.

- Start plants from seed or buy seedlings from a nursery.

- Plant only after threat of frost has passed.

- Plant deeply to encourage root development.

- Stake tall varieties.

- Water and fertilize regularly.

- For more details, see the UF/IFAS publication: [Tomatoes in the Florida Garden](#)



## Gazpacho

Yield: 6 Servings / Time: 20 minutes;  
leave chilled

- 8 large **tomatoes**, peeled
- 1 large **cucumber**, peeled, seeded, and finely diced
- 1 large **green bell pepper**, finely chopped
- 1 medium-size **red onion**, minced
- 3 Tbsp **red wine vinegar**
- 1 Tbsp **olive oil**
- 3 Tbsp **lemon juice**
- 2½ Tbsp chopped **fresh parsley** or 2 tsp **dried basil**
- Salt and pepper** to taste
- Hot pepper sauce** to taste

- 1) Core the tomatoes and squeeze out the seeds. Coarsely chop half of the tomatoes and purée the other half in a blender or food processor.
- 2) Combine the purée and chopped tomatoes in a large mixing bowl.
- 3) Add the remaining ingredients.
- 4) Cover and refrigerate for at least an hour before serving.
- 5) Serve chilled; garnish with herbed croutons if desired.

**\*Nutrition info per serving:** Calories: **90 cal**; Total Fat 3g; Sodium 65mg; Total Carbohydrates 14g; Fiber 4g; Protein 3g; Vitamin A 45%; Vitamin C 100%; Calcium 4%; Iron 6% \*  
Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium and Iron listed as % of daily value based on 2,000 calories.

Adapted from: [http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/downloads/explore\\_recipe\\_cards.pdf](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/downloads/explore_recipe_cards.pdf)

## Provençal Roasted Florida Tomatoes

Yield: 4 Servings / Time: 30–40 minutes;  
serve warm

- 4 large ripe **tomatoes**, sliced ¼ -inch thick
- ½ cup grated **Romano cheese**
- ½ cup fresh **breadcrumbs**
- 1 **garlic clove**, minced
- 2 sprigs fresh **parsley**, chopped
- Salt and pepper** to taste
- ½ tsp **dried oregano**
- Olive oil or nonstick olive oil spray**

- 1) Preheat oven to 400° F.
- 2) Coat a shallow baking dish with cooking spray or olive oil. Place tomato slices close together in prepared baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese, breadcrumbs, garlic, parsley, salt, pepper, and oregano.
- 3) Drizzle lightly with olive oil or spray with nonstick olive oil spray.
- 4) Bake for 20 minutes in preheated oven or until top is lightly toasted.

**Nutrition info per serving:** Calories: **110 cal**; Total Fat 2g; Cholesterol 2mg; Sodium 180mg; Total Carbohydrates 17g; Protein 4g. Good source of Vitamin C.

Adapted from: [http://www.florida-agriculture.com/pubs/pubform/pdf/The\\_Florida\\_Chef\\_Flavorful\\_Seasons\\_Cookbook.pdf](http://www.florida-agriculture.com/pubs/pubform/pdf/The_Florida_Chef_Flavorful_Seasons_Cookbook.pdf)



# The Urban Forest

## **Why Hire an Arborist?**

*Carol Bennett, Urban Forester, City of Palm Coast*

Arborists are knowledgeable about the needs of trees and are trained and equipped to provide proper care. Hiring an arborist is a decision that should not be taken lightly. Well cared for trees are attractive and can add considerable value to your property. Poorly maintained trees can be a significant liability. Pruning or removing trees, especially large trees, can be dangerous work. Tree work should be done only by those trained and equipped to work safely in trees.

### **What is a Certified Arborist?**

Certified Arborists are experienced professionals who have passed an extensive examination developed by some of the nation's leading experts on tree care covering all aspects of trees. The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) certification is a nongovernmental, voluntary process by which individuals can document their base of knowledge. However, certification is not a measure of standards of practice. Certification can attest to the tree knowledge of an individual but cannot guarantee or ensure quality performance.

### **Services That Arborists Can Provide**

#### **Pruning**

An arborist can determine the type of pruning necessary to maintain or improve the health, appearance, and safety of trees.

#### **Planting**

Some arborists plant trees, and most can recommend types of trees that are appropriate for a specific location. The wrong tree in the wrong location could lead to future problems as a result of limited growing space, insects, diseases, or poor growth.

#### **Removal**

Although tree removal is a last resort, there are circumstances when it is necessary. An arborist can help decide whether a tree should be removed. Arborists have the skills and equipment to safely and efficiently remove trees.

#### **Other Services**

Many arborists also provide variety of other tree care services, including:

- ◆ plant Health Care, a preventive maintenance to keep trees in good health
- ◆ fertilization
- ◆ cabling and bracing for added support
- ◆ aeration to improve root growth
- ◆ installation of lightning protection systems
- ◆ spraying or injecting to control certain insects and disease problems

### **How to Select the Right Arborist for the Job**

- ◆ Check for membership in professional organizations such as International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), or the American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA).
- ◆ Check for ISA arborist certification. Certified Arborists are experienced professionals who have passed an extensive examination covering all aspects of tree care.
- ◆ Ask for proof of insurance and then phone the insurance company if you are not satisfied. A reputable arborist carries personal and property insurance. Many home owners have had to pay out large amounts of money for damages caused by uninsured individuals claiming to be tree experts. You could be held responsible for damages and injuries that occur as a result of the job.
- ◆ Check for necessary permits and licenses. Some governmental agencies require contractors to apply for permits and/or to apply for a license before they are able to work. If you live in the City of Palm Coast a tree removal permit is required for any tree 6" diameter or greater on your property. Currently, there is no fee for this permit if you have further questions please contact the Code/Urban Forestry Division at 386-986-3758.
- ◆ Ask for references find out where the company has done work similar to the work you are requesting. Don't hesitate to check references or visit other work sites where the company or individual has done tree work. Remember, tree care is a substantial, long lasting investment; you would not buy a car without a test drive!
- ◆ Get more than one estimate, unless you know and are comfortable with the arborists. Don't always accept the low bid. You should examine the credentials and the written specifications of the firms that submitted bids and determine the best combination of price, work to be done, skill, and professionalism to protect your substantial investment.
- ◆ Be wary of individuals who go door to door and offer bargains for performing tree work. Most reputable companies are too busy to solicit work in this manner. Improper tree care can take many years to correct itself and, in some cases, it can never be corrected.

### **Be an Informed Consumer**

One of the best methods to use in choosing an arborist is to educate yourself on some of the basic principles of tree care. Your local extension agent or city arborist is excellent sources of information if you should have further questions.

# Garden Calendar

Jack Resser, UF/IFAS FL Master Gardener

**A**pril is usually the start of our dry season. If no rain, water twice per week, putting down one half to three fourths inch of water each time.

## Lawn

Mow weekly to ensure that no more than a third of the grass blade is cut at a time. Cut St Augustine-grass to three and one half to four inches high. Do not bag grass clippings. They recycle nutrients back to the lawn.

This is a good time to repair dead or damaged spots in the lawn with sod, plugs, or seeds. Keep them well watered during establishment (at least two weeks). Fill uneven spots in lawn with sand/soil. If needed, topdress with no more than one inch on top of grass to avoid damage to the lawn. Do not bury St Augustinegrass.

After mid April most weed killers and weed and feed products should *not* be applied to your lawn. Wait until cooler weather returns in the fall.

## Food Garden

Do not allow new seedlings to dry out. They should be kept moist, but not soaking wet. Vegetables that can be planted are cantaloupes, okra, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, watermelon, squash, pumpkin, and cucumber.

Oklawaha, Brazos, and Floridagrass blackberries should be checked for ripeness by the end of the month.

Treat citrus for scab (small bumps on fruit and leaves) with copper sulfate two weeks after petal drop and repeat once more, in two weeks.

## Landscape

Prune spring flowering plants: camellias, azaleas, spirea, and indian hawthorne after they have finished flowering. You can transplant these shrubs at

this time if needed.

Fertilize azaleas and camellias with an acid forming fertilizer.

Monitor your azaleas for lace bugs. If present, treat them with insecticidal soap. Apply to the undersides of leaves.

Bedding plants to be planted are celosia, coleus, coreopsis, dusty miller, exacum, gaillardia, gazania, geranium, impatiens, Marguerite daisy, marigold, nicotiana, pentas, phlox, portulaca, rudbeckia, salvia, verbena, periwinkle, and zinnia.

Potted poinsettias that you've been holding since the holidays can now be planted outdoors away from artificial light sources. Since they will get bushy, leave three feet around them for growth. Prune about a third from the plant and fertilize with an azalea, citrus or palm fertilizer.



Navaho blackberry - UF/IFAS

Fertilize roses with a slow release fertilizer. Watch for black spot on roses. Begin weekly spraying with a fungicide for black spot as necessary. Follow the instructions on the label. Avoid overhead irrigation.

Add mulch to flower beds, shrubs, and trees to a depth of two inches. Do not mulch around your citrus trees.

Check your oleanders for orange caterpillars with black stripes. Use bacillus thuringensis (Bt.), either as a powder or liquid to treat them. Bt is a bacteria that is ingested by the caterpillar and stops them from eating. Apply late in the day or on a cloudy day for best results, since these bacteria are sensitive to strong sunlight. Bt is effective on most caterpillars. It is relatively safe, but should not be ingested or inhaled. Store in a cool dry place.

# Garden Calendar (continued)

**M**ay usually remains dry and very warm.

Keep a close eye on your landscape and if it does not rain, water no more than twice a week. Put down one half to three-fourths of an inch of water each time.

## Lawn

Mow lawns weekly to ensure no more than a third of the grass blade is cut each time. This will also help to reduce thatch build-up.

If you had problems with mole crickets last year, apply an insecticide labeled for them now.

## Food Garden

Harvest your winter vegetables. Pull up the plants and compost to reduce diseases.

Vegetables to be planted: eggplant, okra, New Zealand spinach, sweet potatoes, and Southern Peas. For best results plant these crops at the beginning of the month.

Sharp Blue blueberries should be checked for ripeness by the end of this month. Watch for the various blueberry festivals...enjoy!

Peaches, nectarines, and plums begin ripening by the end of the month.

Fertilize citrus trees with a citrus or palm fertilizer.

If no rain, water citrus regularly to reduce fruit splitting.

## Landscape

Mulch all flower beds to aid in water retention for the warm weather.

Fertilize poinsettias with a slow release or organic fertilizer.

Fertilize palm trees with palm or citrus fertilizer.

Fertilize roses with a slow release or organic fertilizer.

Bedding plants to plant this month include: celosia, coleus, coreopsis, crossandras, gaillardias, gazanias, hollyhocks, impatiens, kalanchoe, marigolds, nicotianas, ornamental peppers, pentas, moss rose, salvia, thunbergia alata, torenias, verbenas, periwinkles, zinnias, purslane, portulaca, and wax begonias.

**J**une can still remain very dry and warm. Water no more than twice a week. If no rain, put down one half to three fourths of an inch of water each time.

## Lawn

Apply an iron product at beginning of the month to green up lawn without causing excessive growth.

Due to spring/summer rapid growth, you may need to raise your mower height or cut more often to ensure no more than a third of the grass blade is cut at a time. Make sure that the mower blade is sharp.

## Food Garden

Crops that can be planted: okra, southern peas and sweet potatoes. Tomatoes, lima beans, and cucumbers should be ready to harvest this month.

Fertilize your citrus trees with a citrus fertilizer.

Some citrus will drop fruit now. This is natural, since the tree drops excess fruit it cannot support. The tree uses the available nutrients for the remaining fruit .

## Landscape

Check mulch levels around all landscape beds. If less than 2", add more being careful to pull it away from the stems of the plants.

Fertilize poinsettias and roses with a slow release fertilizer.

Spray roses weekly with a fungicide labeled for black spot fungus.

Bedding plants to plant this month include: celosia, coleus, crossandras, exacume, impatiens, kalanchoe, nicotianas, ornamental peppers, moss rose, salvia, periwinkles, and zinnias.

June is the last month to prune azaleas, camellias, and gardenias. Pruning any later in the year may harm next year's flower production.



Red Penta - D. Cortés



# Discover Natural Florida

## Palm Coast's Linear Park

Karen Suggs, UF/IFAS Florida Master Gardener

If you're looking for a great place to take a leisurely walk or ride a bike, discover Palm Coast's Linear Park. The park is located east of Interstate 95 in the hammock between the eastbound and westbound lanes of Palm Coast Parkway. The round-trip distance from the park entrance on Club House Drive to the Intracoastal Waterway is about two miles. You can shorten this distance by starting at the Linear Park playground off Colbert Lane or lengthen it by adding numerous side trails.



Linear Park - K. Suggs

To begin your journey, park at the Palm Coast Community Center on Club House Drive. The entrance to the park is easily visible across the street from the parking lot. The trail begins on the St. Joe Walkway, a paved trail that follows the St. Joe Canal on your right. On this part of the trail you can see cabbage palms and saw palmettos.



Cabbage Palm  
- K. Suggs

Cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*) is Florida's official state tree and can reach heights up to 80 feet. In the past, the tree trunks were used for cabin

walls and dock pilings. Seminole Indians made homes roofed with cabbage palm fronds.

Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) often grows in clumps more than 20 feet in diameter and up to 9 feet high. Its stem usually remains below ground or runs horizontally along the surface. In some cases, it develops an upright or arching stem. Today, the fruits are collected for herbal medicines.

In a natural setting, the easiest way to tell a young cabbage palm from a saw palmetto is to look at the way the leaf fan is attached to the stem. In a cabbage palm, the

stem appears to continue into the leaf fan in a triangular shape, giving the fan a folded appearance. In a saw palmetto, the stem appears squared off where it connects with the fan.

Eastern red cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*) are another common sight in Linear Park. At one time, red cedar was the primary wood used to make pencils. Today, the heartwood is prized for its pleasant fragrance and insect-repellent properties.

Once you've traveled about 100 yards along the Walkway, you will see a wooden bridge on your right. This is the Magnolia Trail. Follow this path into the woods for a completely different view of the hammock. Here you will encounter holly trees, live oaks and slash pines.

Yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) is the most common type of holly in the park. The tree is an important wildlife food especially during winter months when the bright red berries are eaten by numerous birds and mammals. American Indians used the foliage of this tree for medicinal and ceremonial purposes. Tribes would gather the leaves to brew a tea-like drink called "Black drink." Since leaves and twigs of yaupon holly contain caffeine, the black drink would be high in caffeine. Black drink also caused vomiting, hence the species name of vomitoria.



Yaupon Holly  
- K. Suggs

Live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*) are one of the most recognizable trees in the south. They can reach heights of 65 to 85 feet with crowns over 100 feet wide. They are also one of the heaviest native hardwoods, weighing 55 pounds per cubic foot when air dry. The live oaks in Linear Park are host to two



Oak with Resurrection Fern  
- K. Suggs

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Oak with moss  
- K. Suggs

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unique plants: resurrection ferns and Spanish moss. Resurrection fern (*Polypodium polypodioides*) is an air plant or epiphyte, which means it attaches itself to other plants and gets its nutrients from the air and from water that collects on the outer surface of bark. It gets its name because it can survive long periods of drought by curling up and ap-

pearing dead. When just a little water is present, the fern will uncurl and reopen, appearing to resurrect.

Spanish moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*) is not a true moss; it is also an epiphyte. For years, it was harvested as a stuffing material in automobile seats, furniture, and mattresses. Today, many floral arrangements use Spanish moss around the plant base to hold in moisture.

Slash pines (*Pinus elliottii*) reach heights of 80 to 115 feet. Historically, they were a major resource for the naval stores industry. Pines produced turpentine and crude rosins that were used for a variety of purposes. Today, the trees are the backbone of Florida's timber industry. Though they grow rapidly, it takes 30 years to become saw-timber size (greater than 9 inches in diameter).



Slash pine bark  
- K. Suggs

When you reach the end of Magnolia Trail, you'll be at the intersection of Colbert Lane and Palm Coast Parkway SE. Cross Colbert Lane, turn left and head north on the sidewalk until you reach Greenway Court on the right. Travel down this road a short distance to the Linear Park playground.



Carolina Jessamine  
- K. Suggs

In addition to the playground, this area includes picnic tables and restrooms. As you're walking along Greenway Court, be sure to notice the magnificent southern

magnolia tree (*Magnolia grandiflora*) on the left side of the road and the Carolina jessamine vines (*Gelsemium sempervirens*). The magnolia's flowers will bloom in late spring/early summer. The yellow jessamine blooms in March and April.

Leave the playground area via a wooden bridge that connects with the St. Joe Walkway. After crossing the bridge, turn right and follow the Walkway until it intersects Palm Coast Parkway. Cross the street and head through a live oak canopy that ends at the Intracoastal Waterway. The St. Joe Canal will be on your right. Along the side of the trail be sure to notice the smilax vines (*Smilax spp.*) that are climbing up many of the trees.

Retrace your steps to return to the Community Center. (You can skip the Magnolia Trail and stay on the St. Joe Walkway to shorten the distance.) If you want to extend your walk along the water, you can cross a wooden bridge on your right before you reach the Intracoastal Waterway. The bridge crosses the Canal and leads to a scenic paved trail that will eventually connect with Waterside Park off Colbert Lane (The park's Colbert entrance should be completed in fall 2010). Or if you're in the mood for food, turn left when you reach the water and walk along the Canopy Walk condos toward the Intracoastal Waterway toll bridge and European Village.



Southern Magnolia  
- K. Suggs



Smilax vine  
- K. Suggs



Intracoastal Waterway- K. Suggs



# Master Gardener Spotlight

## Family Garden Project

*Ruth Micieli, Horticulture Program Assistant and Master Gardener Coordinator*

Master Gardeners don't let the weather stop them from planting a garden!

The cold wet weather on February 27<sup>th</sup> was a perfect day to set up, eleven gardens, in fact!

The Family Garden Project is sponsored by a grant from the University of Florida that provided funds for selected families in the county to participate in this pilot project.

Why are we doing this? To encourage folks to help feed themselves through gardening. The 3 ft. x 4 ft. raised bed garden can grow tomatoes, beans, egg-plant, radishes, peppers, cabbage, lettuce and anything else they can squeeze in! These families are part of a pilot project coordinated by the Flagler County Extension Service Family Nutrition Program and Master Gardener Volunteers.

The garden soil was donated by Jungle Growth and the grant funds were used to purchase materials such as edging, seeds, transplants, watering cans, gloves, hand tools and other supplies needed to document the progress of the gardens. Each family was given a record book to monitor the garden, when vegetables were planted, what was planted

and when and what was harvested. They are also asked to keep record of the number of servings for the harvested vegetables they got out of the garden. This project can help these families in so many ways. Not only will they have the experience of growing their own vegetables, but it will get the children outdoors in the garden, teach them how plants grow, scout for problems, harvest their own food and eat healthier meals. There are lots of health benefits as well which is why the Department of Health is a part of this project, too.



Master Gardeners Elma Chung, Corky Rivera, Kathy Fisher (FNP Assistant), Jerry (homeowner), David Tibbets and Carmen Carrasquillo creating a raised-bed garden - *R. Micieli*



The Canna family gives Master Gardener Elma Chung a hand with their new garden - *R. Micieli*

They want to be able to help the childhood obesity problem as well as the hunger issues we face in Flagler County. What better way to do both! Master Gardener Volunteers David Tibbets, Corky Rivera, Carmen Carrasquillo, Elma Chung, Flagler County Housing Authority Section 8 Assistant Jean Johnson and Family Nutrition Program Assistant Kathy Fisher are working with the eleven families to guide and assist them with their gardens. The project will end in June.

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that we are in Daylight Savings Time, you may water twice per week, **if your landscape needs it**. Odd numbered addresses can water on Wednesday and Saturdays and even numbered addresses and those with no address can water on Thursday and Sunday. Watering is not allowed at all between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Also, only three quarters of an inch per irrigation zone and no more than one hour per zone is permitted.

**Q:** The top part of my citrus tree appears dead, but new green shoots are coming from the base. Does that mean my tree survived our cold winter this year?

**A:** Maybe, maybe not. If the shoots are coming from below the grafted area (the small bump a few inches above the trunk's base), it means that the citrus variety (orange, lemon, grapefruit, etc.) that was growing above that area has died and the new growth is coming from the rootstock, usually a variety of bitter orange. Unfortunately, you will need to replace your tree.

**Q:** What can I do to keep squirrels from eating my citrus fruit before I have a chance to harvest it from the tree?

**A:** Frustratingly, there is no reliable way to stop squirrels from getting your produce before you do. Just keep an eye on the fruit and harvest as soon as you can. Think of it as race to get the goodies!



Citrus sucker from below graft (red line) -Fourwinds Growers



## Slow-Release Fertilizers

Have you heard of slow-release fertilizer and wondered whether you should use it?

Excess nutrients from fertilizers can be washed from our lawns into our waterways by rain and irrigation runoff. Slow-release fertilizer can reduce these pollution problems, because it has less potential to leach or run off.

Bags are marked “slow release,” and the ingredients on the back of bags list the percentage of slow-release nitrogen. The higher the percentage, the less chance there is of leaching. Slow-release fertilizers can also be applied less frequently than regular fertilizer, making them more cost-effective.

For plants, it's like being fed with light but frequent doses of fertilizer, which will help them to thrive.

Look for a fertilizer with at least 30% slow-release nitrogen, and help protect our environment!

For more information on fertilizer, 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.*