

May 2015

Message from Flagler Horticulture Agent

Dear Horticulture Friends,

I am happy to announce that Flagler County Horticulture and Master Gardener Volunteer Program has revamped the quarterly newsletter! We have many new and exciting upcoming programs and initiatives!

If you would like to submit information for the newsletter, please send it in to the extension office or contact me directly. Please note that this newsletter will cover April through June of 2015. The next issue will be released in July 2015.

If at any time you wish to have an email address removed or would like an email added to the newsletter email list, please contact the Extension Office: mfloyd@flaglercounty.org or 386-437-7464.

Happy Spring Gardening!



Maxine Floyd

UF/IFAS Flagler County Extension
Horticulture Extension Agent I,
Master Gardener Coordinator

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The “New” Fertilizer License by Maxine Floyd

Florida Friendly Landscaping practices are now common throughout the state, with demonstration gardens and public training available to teach the nine principles to homeowners and landscape professionals through the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Cooperative Extension Service (UF-IFAS Extension). However, there is another step for landscape professionals to complete to apply fertilizer to urban landscapes. Anyone applying fertilizer in urban landscapes for commercial gain (for-hire) is required to have a Limited Commercial Fertilizer Applicator Certificate also known as the “fertilizer license.” Landscape professionals must attend the Green Industries Best Management Practices training and obtain their Limited Commercial Fertilizer Applicator Certificate as of January 1, 2014.



The University of Florida IFAS Extension in partnership with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) offers the Green Industries Best Management (GI-BMP) training courses that satisfy the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Service (FDACS) requirements for obtaining a license to apply fertilizer per the 2009 statutory amendment to chapter 482.156. The GI-BMP training program provides science-based landscape education that enhances the landscape professionals’ skills and knowledge, while also encouraging the adoption of good landscape cultural practices (Rainey, 2014). The training is offered in three languages and can be taken in person at your local extension office, online, or on DVD. For more information or to find a class,

please contact your local extension office or visit: <https://gibmp.ifas.ufl.edu>

The Limited Commercial Fertilizer Applicator Certificate only applies to the application of fertilizer and does not authorize the following: 1) the application of pesticides to turf or ornamental plants, including pesticide fertilizer mixes such as “weed and feed” products; 2) the operation of a pest control business; 3) the application of pesticides or fertilizers by unlicensed or uncertified individuals under the supervision of a certified person. For questions regarding pesticide licensing please see: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pi006>

Compliance to obtain the Limited Commercial Fertilizer Applicator Certificate is a two-step process. First, applicants must complete the 6 hour GI-BMP training program (UF IFAS Flagler County Extension does offer this training, please call 386-437-7464 for assistance). Secondly, once the individual has completed the approved training and passed the exam with a score at least 75%, they will receive their GI-BMP Certificate. The certificate holder may then apply for a “fertilizer license” online at <https://aesecomm.freshfromflorida.com> or by mailing the completed FDACS application form, a copy of the training certificate, a passport size photo, and the \$25 fee for the cost of the certificate to 3125 Connor Blvd Bldg 8, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1650.

The FDACS Bureau of Entomology and Pest Control began issuing the LCFAC in 2010, and these licenses must be renewed every four years by completing four Continuing Education Units (CEUs), two of which must address fertilizer best man-

agement practices. It is also important to note that local governments may require more frequent refreshers or may have additional requirements under their own fertilizer ordinances.

Currently, grounds staff directly employed by a golf course do not need the state fertilizer license, however, any landscaper contracted by the golf course would need the fertilizer license. Municipal and county governments are required to adopt fertilizer ordinances based on standard model ordinances to meet impaired watershed regulations. GI-BMP is also required for “institutional applicators” which includes anyone who applies fertilizer to an employer’s property.



In conclusion, it is very important for homeowners and landscapers to stay up to date with state and local fertilizer ordinances to be compliant with Chapter 482 which encompasses GI-BMP training and LCFAC licenses. GI-BMP training is encouraged for everyone mowing, trimming, pruning, applying pesticides, and managing irrigation in urban landscapes. For training, questions, or additional information please contact the Flagler County Extension Service.

Growing Amaryllis in the Southern Garden by Barbara Sharf

Southern gardeners can enjoy using 'The Southerner's Tulip' in our landscape design. Hippeastrum species and hybrids, commonly known as Amaryllis, bloom and thrive without the sub-freezing dormancy that is necessary for tulips, large-flowered daffodils, and other spring bulbs that are garden staples in cold climates.

Some of the older hybrids, such as Red Lion and Apple Blossom, do very well in the Southern garden. Some of the H. species are also quite successful, such as H. striatum and H. vittatum. My own favorite are the 'pass-along' Amaryllis, unnamed varieties that have been passed along from garden to garden, over many generations. They are ideally adapted to the conditions of the South and thrive in spite of neglect, inclement weather, disease, and pests. My 'pass-along' bulbs came from the yard of an abandoned neighborhood home. The original seven bulbs have spread to form a large bed of beautiful spring blooms.

The potted Amaryllis can be planted outdoors as soon as the nights are consistently above freezing. Bulbs can also be purchased locally or from internet sites for direct outdoor planting. After the spring bloom is finished, dig up any bulbs that have started to heave out of the ground, separate off the mature bulblets, and replant them at the proper depth. During active foliage growth in spring and summer, regular applications of a slow-release fertilizer and regular water will

help the bulb to recover and produce next year's buds, deep inside the bulb. The 'Xmas gift' Amaryllis bulb has been specially forced by the grower and is depleted after blooming. This bulb can take up to three years to recover and to bloom in the garden.

Amaryllis do well in a good garden soil. The major danger is boggy soil that stays wet, encouraging disease. It helps to redirect sprinkle heads, used for lawn irrigation, away from the Amaryllis. Hand watering is better, when rain is sparse. During winter dormancy, lawn irrigation is especially dangerous for the bulbs, which need to dry out while dormant. In areas of questionable drainage, raised beds are a good solution.



Amaryllis need at least ½ day of sun to bloom well. In the deep South, they can be grown under a high dappled shade if they get direct sun in the early morning and late afternoon.

The bulbs need to be protected from a hard or prolonged freeze, which will damage the basal plate, where buds are formed. Choosing a sheltered microclimate, such as

near a wall which radiates heat at night, will extend the northernmost limit of growing Amaryllis. Planting at proper depth and mulching will also help in protecting the bulbs. Even in warmer zones, a frost blanket or dry leaf mulch will provide protection when a frost is expected. Remove the blanket as the day warms up.

Amaryllis have a short winter dormancy in zone 9. In response to decreasing day length, cooler nights, and dryer soil, they will die back to the ground, usually in December or January. New growth will appear, sometimes flowers will appear before leaves, as early as mid February. Growing a variety of cultivars can extend the blooming season into early May. The foliage sometimes dies back in mid summer, putting out a second set of leaves in August. In rare cases, the bulb will bloom again in the fall.

Pests and diseases seem to be a result of overly wet soil. Slugs and snails can be a real problem during a wet spring. They eat holes in the buds, which are not evident until the bloom opens. I have used a rose/flower systemic fungicide when disease is evident.

Without cool basements, Southern gardeners have less success in forcing their potted Amaryllis to re-bloom. Northern gardeners are able to produce the necessary conditions to force the late summer dormancy needed for winter blooms. Instead, enjoy the spring blooms of the Amaryllis in our garden.



May To-Do List by Maxine Floyd

If no rain, water twice a week, applying $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of water each time. Follow appropriate water ordinances! If you have consistent lawn problems in certain areas or want to reduce the amount of turfgrass area, consider expanding your flower and shrub beds. If you need help, check with the local nurseries or landscape companies that offer landscape designing. It takes a bit of skill and training to properly plan a landscape. If you want to take a shot at doing it yourself, there are some great references available through the Flagler County Extension Office and the University of Florida. The Master Gardener Volunteers can assist you with plant information and advice on your landscape.

Mow your lawn weekly to ensure no more than a third of the grass blade is cut each time. This will also ensure no thatch build-up. St Augustinegrass and Bahiagrass should be cut at 3- 4 inches high, Zoysiagrass at 2- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches and Centipedegrass should be kept at 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 inches and Bermudagrass $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches high.

If you had problems last year with mole crickets in your Bahiagrass lawn, then apply an insecticide labeled for them by the end of May. Mole crickets start hatching in the beginning of June and can be better managed when young.

Watch your lawn for brown spots which can be caused by either improper irrigation or chinch bugs at this time of year. Run your sprinkler system manually to ensure that you are getting uniform spray in each zone. Chinch bugs like hot, dry areas near sidewalks and driveways. If in doubt, bring a sample of the area with both the grass and roots in the soil to the Flagler County Extension Office. Treat with insecticide labeled for chinch bugs. Follow the label instructions for application rate and frequency. Rotate your insecticides each time to prevent chinch bugs from building up resistance to a single product.

According to research by the University of Florida, products solely containing bifenthrin are no longer effective for chinch bug control. Pyrethroids, carbamates, and organophosphates will only kill nymphs and adults, and their residuals can last up to approximately 2 months depending on the product and environmental conditions. Common natural enemies of the southern chinch bug are big-eyed bugs (*Geocoris* spp.), predatory earwigs (*Labidura ripara*), and spiders. A small wasp, *Eumicrosoma benefica* Gahan, parasitizes chinch bug eggs. Big-eyed bugs are similar to chinch bugs in size and shape and can be mistaken for them. Unnecessary insecticide use will reduce these natural enemies and their ability to suppress pest populations. Natural enemies are often not abundant and efficient enough to keep chinch bug populations under control by themselves. However, their populations may build after chinch bug population's increase. Another important factor to keep in mind, do not apply fertilizer to the lawn when you have chinch bug infestations. This will encourage new growth of the grass which will provide more food for the chinch bugs. For more information about chinch bug control visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>. Reference ENY-325 (LH036)

Fertilize citrus trees with a citrus or palm fertilizer. If no rain, water citrus thoroughly by hand each week to reduce fruit splitting. Fertilize palms this month with palm fertilizer. In addition to fertilizing, apply a palm nutritional spray to provide the much needed minerals that fertilizers lack.

This month plant coleus, coreopsis, crossandras, gaillardias, gazanias, hollyhocks, marigolds, nicotianas, ornamental peppers, osteospermum, pentas, moss rose, salvia, thunbergia alata, torenias, verbenas, periwinkles, zinnias, purslane, portulaca, and wax begonias.

**UF/IFAS Flagler
County Extension**

150 Sawgrass Rd
Bunnell, FL
32110

Phone: 386-437-7464

Fax: 386-586-2102

E-mail:

mfloyd@flaglercounty.org



A CENTURY OF SERVING FLORIDA

University of Florida Master Gardener Volunteers

Our Mission

To assist Extension Agents in providing research-based horticultural education to Florida residents.

Our Vision

To be the most trusted resource for horticultural education in Florida.



Confederate Rose (Hibiscus mutabilis 'Plena') Jack Schaper © 2005 FloridaData.com

**Stay Connected with Flagler County
Horticulture!**

Flagler County Extension.....<http://www.flaglercounty.org/index.aspx?nid=110>

University of Florida Solutions for Your Life.....<http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/>

Florida Friendly Landscaping.....<http://http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/>

University of Florida Gardening Solutions.....<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/>

University of Florida Master Gardener.....<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener>

If you are interested in joining the Flagler County Master Gardener Program, please contact Maxine Floyd at mfloyd@flaglercounty.org or 386-437-7464.

The Flagler County Master Gardener and Horticulture program is open to all regardless of gender, race, color, nationality, creed or disability.