

## MAY PLANTING GUIDE

**VEGETABLES** – Eggplant, pepper, Southern peas, okra, lima beans and sweet potato can go in this month.

**HERBS**- Plant basil, parsley, Greek oregano, lemon verbena, Cuban oregano, sage, and lemon balm in the herb garden.

**ANNUALS** -Heat tolerant flowers like marigold, zinnia, salvia, portulaca, vinca, Dusty Miller and begonia can be installed.

**Bulbs**-Plant gladiolus bulbs every two weeks for summer cut flowers. Additionally plant caladium, blood lily, ginger, canna, Amazon lily and rain lily.

## Chores

### Chinch Bugs

Damage in St. Augustine lawns from chinch bugs will start appearing this month. Chinch bugs like it hot so they will be in sunny areas near concrete or paved surfaces. They also associate themselves with west or south facing sunny slopes.

If you had a trouble spot with chinch bugs last year, inspect that area often for they tend to flare up in the same spots. When treating for chinch bugs treat the affected spot and five feet beyond. Do not spray the entire yard for you will kill off the chinch bug's natural predators and then you are dependent on chemicals as your sole source of control. A treated area is good for about two months. You can have a resurgence of chinch bugs in late summer and they will stay active into November.

### Fruit Trees

Production trees like fruit trees are typically fertilized in May or June. Blueberries can be given an azalea-camellia fertilizer. Other fruit trees can be given citrus special, composted manure or a slow release fertilizer. Follow the instructions on the fertilizer bag for application rates. Water in the fertilizer to reduce the chances of burning plant roots. Most active

feeding roots are at or near the drip line of the tree so make sure fertilizer is placed there.

### Mulch

Once the rainy season arrives weeds will become more prevalent. Make sure you have adequate mulch in your planted beds to act as weed suppression. A three inch layer should be adequate. Another benefit to the mulch is that when weeds do occur and root into it, they are easier to pull than weeds that are rooted into the soil. The mulch will also help to conserve moisture in the beds so reduce irrigation frequency when we have substantial rain.

### Stay Sharp

Check the cut on your grass blades to make sure the mower is giving a clean cut and not a tattered one. A clean cut heals faster than a tattered one and so tattered grass blades often allow disease in. As we get more rains the environment for disease activity improves. Sharpen or replace dull mower blades. Even if you do not cut your own grass you should check the cut, so you can have your maintenance company sharpen their mower blades.

### Scout

The vegetable garden will be getting bombarded by insects and diseases as summer approaches. Scout your garden every couple of days so you can react to problems quickly. This is especially important if you are trying to grow organically or with minimum pesticide usage. Minor pest outbreaks can often be mechanically controlled through pruning.

Because the humidity is on the rise try not to water plants over the top but soak the ground around them instead. Wet foliage will be more likely to become diseased and insects like high humidity so the wet plant is beneficial to them.



## **VEGETABLE GARDENING CONTEST**

Entries are now being taken for the 2009 St. Johns County Vegetable Gardening Contest. The deadline to enter your garden is May 16. The nine categories of the contest are: Container/Hydroponics, Landscape garden, Small garden, Medium garden, Large garden, Market garden, Organic garden, Youth garden, Youth group garden. Consider entering your garden because you can learn a lot from the judge's critique. There will also be an awards dinner and contest review where all gardens entered will be featured. For more information call 209-0430.

## **BECOME A MASTER GARDENER**

Applications are being accepted for the 2009 St. Johns County Master Gardener class. The Master Gardener program recruits volunteers for horticultural activities of the Extension Service. In exchange for 50 hours of intensive horticultural education the volunteer commits to donating 75 hours of volunteer time to Extension Service projects.

Examples of volunteer projects are arboretum care, demonstration vegetable garden, phone desk, plant clinics and educational outreach, to name a few. If you are interested in the program call, 209-0430 for an application form.

## **HURRICANE PARTY**

Come to our 'Hurricane Party' and learn how to prepare for the tropical storm season. On Wednesday, June 3 we will have a daylong event at the Resource Conservation Center, also known as the 'Hurricane House' at 3111 Agriculture Center Drive. In observance of the start of the 2009 hurricane season we are planning a day of events to help you prepare.

The events will start at 10 AM and run until 2 PM. A free cook-out will be served at lunch. Classes will be offered on storm water retention, making home upgrades for wind resistance and preparing the landscape for a hurricane. To learn more about this free event call 209-0430.

## **PLANT PROPAGATION CLASS**

Landscape plant purchases can be reduced if you know how to propagate plants. A class on this topic will be held on Friday, June 5 at the St. Johns County Extension Office from 10 until noon. In the class you will learn how to make semi-hard wood cuttings and stick a container full of them, which you will keep. Setting up a propagation unit will also be featured in the class.

There is a \$5.00 fee for the class to cover materials. If you attend the class you are asked to bring a pair of pruning shears. To sign up or for additional information call 209-0430.

# *Calendar of Events for May 2009*

## May 2009

- 2<sup>nd</sup> ..... Plant Clinic (Saturday) - Ace Hardware US 1 - 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 9<sup>th</sup> .....Plant Clinic (Saturday) - Farmers Market St. Augustine Amphitheatre  
1340 A1A South St Augustine-9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- 9<sup>th</sup> .....Plant Clinic (Saturday) – St. Johns Creek Shopping Center County Rd 210 West  
2 1/2 miles west of I-95 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM
- 12<sup>th</sup> .....Plant Clinic (Tuesday) -Home Depot-1750 US 1 South St. Augustine  
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 21<sup>st</sup> .....Plant Clinic (Saturday) - Bartram Trail Library - 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 23<sup>rd</sup> .....Plant Clinic (Saturday) - Bartram Trail Library - 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
- 23<sup>rd</sup> .....Plant Clinic (Saturday) - Farmers Market St. Augustine Amphitheatre  
1340 A1A South St Augustine-9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- 26<sup>th</sup> .....Plant Clinic (Tuesday) -Home Depot-1750 US 1 South St. Augustine  
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**Master Gardeners are available at the Agricultural Center**  
***Monday - Friday - 9:00 AM - Noon***  
**Call with horticulturally related questions**  
***Call 209-0430 or TDD service at 1-800-955-8771***

Sincerely,

Keith Fuller,  
Horticulture Agent St. Johns County



Madeline Samec, Contributing Editor

**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE**  
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