

HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2009

**VEGETABLES, FLOWERS AND
FRUITING PLANTS**

by Raymond Zerba

August to early September marks the time to start preparation for our fall garden. Newcomers to our area, that have gardened in the North, find it unique that it is possible to have a



second “spring” garden here in the fall – if we “beat the frost.” Don’t expect that fall garden to be better than the spring one, however, since garden pests have had the full summer to peak to their highest level and they are just “begging” for another garden to feast on, before winter comes. None-the-less, give a fall garden a try. After all, anything at all harvested will be more than would have been gotten in a northern garden.

What to Plant Now?

Vegetables to be planted starting late August (and before September 15) include snap beans (tender), pole beans (tender), broccoli (cold hardy, so no worry about when we get these in), cauliflower (cold hardy), and turnips (cold hardy). The crops listed as “tender” need to be in the ground and growing as plants by the middle of September (at the latest!). If these plants can be bought as transplants and planted in August that would be even more advantageous to the gardener who wants to harvest long before that first killing frost. As we get a little cooler (by mid September), you can begin planting those

cold hardy vegetables that are less tolerant of August heat such as beets, cabbage, mustard, and strawberries. For more information on varieties to try and other important things to consider in the fall garden read the “Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide” which can be found on the web at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/VH/VH02100.pdf> In addition for information about some lesser used vegetables you may want to visit the UF’s minor vegetable information site at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_hs_minor_vegetables

Some Tips for Having a Healthier Fall Garden

Plant the garden in a sunny area of the landscape. As days grow shorter in the fall, this is very



important. As a general rule, the University of Florida tells us that the most productive gardens require a minimum of 6 hours of direct sun each day. Gardens that receive more will do even better. When faced with a choice between having full morning sun or full afternoon sun, in the fall, go for that full morning sun by 8:00 AM (picture illustrates how shade in the

garden can make an area colder than an adjacent area just a few feet away)!

Use disease resistant varieties of vegetables whenever available, and be sure to stick with those varieties that have been tested and shown to do well under Florida growing conditions.

To reduce disease, water the roots of your vegetables by using drip irrigation systems or turn a soaker hose upside down so it sprays to the ground and not up into the air. Since most diseases need moisture to spread, keeping foliage drier helps discourage disease.

Pick off diseased leaves/fruit as soon as they are observed to the level of actual disease in the garden, and check over your garden at least twice a week to detect possible insect pests before they have a chance to get started.

Note: After picking off diseased vegetable parts, take them out of the garden entirely. Dropping them back into the walkways permits their pathogen to spread back to your vegetables.

In October there are a host of cold-hardy annuals we can set out which will flower through most of the winter. It's too early to plant those now though. For more information on growing flowering plant beds read the UF Fact Sheet "Perennial Gardening in Florida" at

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/MG/MG03500.pdf> and "Bedding Plants: Selection, Establishment and Maintenance" at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/MG/MG31900.pdf>

Bulbs, tubers or rhizomes for August planting include Aztec lily, Butterfly lily, Gladiolus, Iris, Kaffir lily, Leopard lily, African lily, Spider lily, and Walking Iris. For more reading on those go to the fact sheet "Bulbs for Florida" at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/MG/MG02900.pdf>

In September, begin dividing and replanting over-crowded clumps of some of the perennials. This is the way to increase a number of plants such as Daylily, African Iris, Shasta Daisy, Society Garlic, Ajuga, the Border Grasses (Mondo and Liriope – not really grasses at all but Lilies), Fern, Hosta, Stokesia, and the Ornamental Grasses. Before replanting divisions, work into the soil plenty of organic matter (well rotted compost). Be sure to replant the divisions at the same depth or slightly higher than they were growing before. This is especially critical for some plants. Daylilies, for instance, slowly die if they are planted too deeply after being divided. To learn more about growing many of these plants go to http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_bedding_plants

TREES AND SHRUBS

by Raymond Zerba

Dealing with the Pests

Among the pests to be on the lookout for now are those large lubber grasshoppers. These are yellow, black, and brown grasshoppers that have been mating for months and laying their eggs in the soil. They are a major problem for plants of the lily family such as the Agapanthus, Crinum lily, and Amaryllis. I have seen these eat those plants all the way back into the bulb, to the point the bulb dies. These large

grasshoppers are the adult form of those small black with red or yellow striped grasshoppers we saw in our landscape back in April and May. They are full-sized now and not controlled with insecticidal sprays.

Our only real control is to handpick each one (they move very slowly, so this is doable) and drop them in a jar of alcohol or else physically destroy them by crushing or decapitation. It is important to eliminate as many as possible by the end of September to reduce the number of their eggs laid in your yard this fall. To read more about this late summer to fall pest go to

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/IN/IN13200.pdf>



LAWNS

by Raymond Zerba

Mowing

Keep that blade sharp and keep mowing high. This shades the grass runner and the soil from the intense sun that beats down on it each day. You know how shade helps you get through mid-day temperatures – the same goes for grass. Further still, in order for your grass to continue to make enough food so it not only survives, but produces the extra food reserve necessary to build deep, strong roots, it needs lots of leaf surface to catch the sunlight and make food – especially as daylight hours grow shorter!

As nights get cooler, we may not have to mow as much, but still make sure when you do cut, that you are not removing more than 1/3 the leaf blade at one time. If you are, then either raise the blade higher, or mow more frequently – and keep that mower blade sharp!

Early Fall Pests

Wet summers (as this has been) lead to more lawn caterpillars in the fall. The Fall Armyworm (pictured) is likely to be a serious problem this year. If areas of the yard look closer cut than others and your examination reveals half-eaten grass blades, caterpillars are present. To control them check with your local retail garden center and see what they have that you might spray on the afflicted areas. For more information on this and other lawns pests go to the UF IFAS fact sheet entitled “Insect Management in the your Home Lawn” found at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/LH/LH03400.pdf> Whenever small

brownish moths fly up as you mow, caterpillars are not far behind. The moths are there laying eggs and the caterpillars show up 2-3 weeks later.

Diseases will also be common now on lawns.

Gray Leaf Spot will appear as a grayish or purplish spot on the leaf blade (pictured). Brown Patch appears as brown to yellow rot at the base of the leaf. Several sprays 10-14 days apart with a lawn fungicide will give control for these two pests. If no insects are found and the grass is yellowing in spots, a fungus is probably involved and you should be spraying the affected areas and a 5-10 foot buffer around them with a lawn fungicide.



Spot spraying rather than spraying the whole lawn is again the Florida-friendly way to go. Catch fungus diseases early to keep the grass healthy going into the fall and winter. To read more about common lawn diseases go to the UF Fact Sheet entitled "Key for Identification of Landscape Turfgrass Diseases" at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/LH/LH06400.pdf>

Wet weather also brings with it lots of mushrooms. Most of these are not important to plants since the fungi that produce them live mostly on decaying organic matter and are part of nature's rotting-of-dead-material process. A few do come from fungi that feed on plant roots. Unfortunately, there are no sprays that will kill the mother fungal structure (called Mycelia). In the case of one (the Fairy Ring Mushroom), although there is nothing we recommend spraying to reduce the numbers of these large white mushrooms in a lawn, it is suggested they be picked and thrown away as soon as they are seen, as they are poisonous to pets and other animals if eaten.

HAPPY GARDENING!!

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