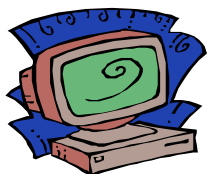


POLK COUNTY URBAN HORTICULTURER NEWSLETTER

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COMPUTER WEB SITES



There are several useful Web-Sites supported by the University of Florida as well as several supported by private organizations. One of the most common and useful UF Web-Sites is at the URL <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>. The edis stands for “electric data information source” and contains a wealth of information on just about any imaginable subject including horticulture. Select advanced search on the home page. The advanced search allows you to type in the words on the subject matter, the IFAS publication number or the EDIS publication number. The titles for all of the available literature will appear on the screen. Select the title of your choice.

Another interesting UF Web-Site is at <http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu>. This web site has several hundred publications on spiders, insects, centipedes, millepedes and crustaceans. This web site does not have a search engine, but lists the critters alphabetically by common and scientific name. Most of these publications have great colored pictures.

The University of Florida Horticulture Web Site <http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu> is filled with information on Florida horticulture. The home page lists

subject areas in research, teaching, extension, information center and publications. The information center is one of the more interesting subject areas. The information center is divided into 7 categories: children’s gardening, floriculture, foliage, home gardening, turfgrass, trees and shrubs and plant information databases. The tree and shrub section has information on all aspects of selecting, planting and maintaining trees and shrubs. The plant information database has 3 sections: 1) a database of plant propagation in which methods of propagation are described for selected trees and shrubs, 2) 680 tree fact sheets and 3) 514 shrub fact sheets. Check out all the sections.

Another very useful Web-site is at the URL <http://www.floridata.com>. This not a UF supported Web-Site, but it has a few hundred circulars on Florida plants with many colored pictures. It has a search engine in which you can type the common or scientific name of the plant.

Finally, you are welcomed to visit my Web-Site <http://polkhort.ifas.ufl.edu>, the Master Gardener Web-Site <http://polkmastergardeners.ifas.ufl.edu> and the Florida Yards and Neighborhood’s Web-Site <http://polkfyn.ifas.ufl.edu>. On my Web-Site, which has a search engine, you will find information on current local Extension programs including the Master Gardener program, most

frequently asked questions, feature articles, watering restrictions, 23 links to other horticultural Web Sites and all of the old Urban Horticulturer Newsletters.

CREATING A FLORIDA YARD

**by Anne Yasalonis, Florida
Yards and Neighborhoods Program**

Designing a landscape is a daunting task. You may not be able to figure out where to put that new plant, much less create a new mulched bed or revamp an existing area. There are many tips that can help make this process much easier for you.

1. Decide why you want to landscape. Aesthetics, environmental protection, improving resale value, noise reduction, climate control and wildlife habitat are just a few reasons people decide to landscape.

2. Determine how you will use your property. Determine how much lawn you need for children or pets and how much time you want to spend caring for your plants.

3. Analyze the existing site. Walk around your property with a clipboard and paper making notes of all the things you see. The factual information about your site is very important in creating your plan.

4. Prepare a land-use plan. Using a ruler and graph paper you can create a scaled drawing of your property and include all the factual information you obtained from the walk around your yard. You will also want to make notes of your ideas for the new landscape on this paper.

5. Add the landscape plan to the sketch. Determine what type of plants you want to put in your yard. Sketch them into your plan remembering to keep them away from the house, group them according to water needs and give them plenty of room to grow.

6. Incorporate the irrigation plan. If you are planning on using an irrigation system of some kind, now is the time to draw a plan or contact an irrigation contractor to do so for you.

7. Select landscape materials. Considering your maintenance requirements, it is now time to select plant material. Consult gardening books, local nursery professionals and the extension service for help.

8. Implement. Purchase quality plants and make sure that you install them correctly.

9. Maintain. Proper maintenance including irrigation, fertilization, pruning, mowing, mulching and pest management are crucial to the health of your plants. Make sure that you are environmentally aware when maintaining your landscape.

10. Enjoy! The final step takes a long time and a lot of hard work to get to, but if you follow the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods principles and attend a landscape design workshop you will have a low maintenance landscape to enjoy! Go to <http://polkfyn.ifas.ufl.edu> or call (863) 519-8677 ext. 121 to learn more about upcoming landscape design workshops.

NUISANCE WILDLIFE

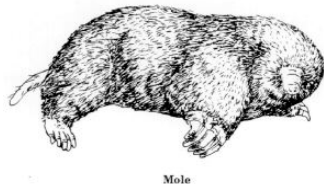
Pocket gophers - This is a small rodent with a 6-8 inch long head and body and a 3-4 inch long tail. They are rarely seen above ground. The pocket gopher is also known as a sandy-mounder or salamanda.



This little critter requires deep, well-drained sandy soil. Pocket gophers dig extensive tunnels which average about 145 feet and one tunnel was discovered to be over 500 feet. The soil gophers

remove while digging tunnels is pushed to the surface making characteristic rows of sandy mounds which may be several inches wide and tall. The tunnels are usually about 2 inches to 2 feet below the surface, but some may be as much as 5 feet. Gophers are a problem because they feed on tap roots, crown roots, fleshy rhizomes, plus bulbs and tubers of a wide variety of plants and also push up unsightly mounds which look like fire ant mounds. A quick check of the mound will tell you if the mound is a fire ant one or not. About the only way to control pocket gophers is with a trap. You have to find a tunnel under a mound in which the gopher is pushing up dirt and set the trap in the hole. Poisons may not be used to control pocket gophers. Call the Extension Office for more detailed information.

Moles - These creatures are about 7 inches long and 3-4 ounces in weight. Moles create tunnels 6-8 inch below the surface which form raised areas on the surface. They make small mounds of soil approximately 3 x 2 inches - much smaller than pocket gophers. The tunneling of moles may cause some physical damage to the root systems of ornamental or garden plants and may kill grass by drying out the roots, but this damage is usually minor. Actually, the moles are eating the grubs and other insects which damage our plants.



If moles become an intolerable nuisance, about the only effective way to control them is by using a bayonet-style trap. Moles also can be discouraged from digging foraging tunnels in turf by controlling populations of insects, which they eat, like white grubs and mole crickets. However, chemical treatment may have a negative effect. When their food supply is diminished, they actually may do more tunneling looking for a scarcer food supply. Poisons cannot legally be used to control moles. Call the Extension Office for more detailed

information.

Armadillos - One of the worst burrowing animals is the armadillo. The burrows are usually located under brush piles, stumps, rock piles, dense brush, or concrete patios and are about 7-8 inches in diameter and up to 15 feet long. Armadillos have one litter per year which includes four identical young of the same sex, because they develop from a single egg.

Leprosy in wild armadillos has been reported at rates ranging from 0.5% to 10% in Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi and Mexico, however in the more than 2500 specimens examined in Florida no infections have been found.

They feed primarily on insects and their larvae. They also eat earthworms, scorpions, spiders, snails, and small vertebrates and their eggs. When looking for these bugs in the soil, they dig numerous holes in golf courses, lawns, flower beds and gardens. The holes are typically 1-3 inches deep and 3-5 inches wide. They also uproot flowers and other ornamental plants.

Control of these critters in the home landscape may be a difficult task. Keeping soil insects in the lawn under control may discourage armadillo digging, however insecticides may not have much impact on earthworms which is another favorite armadillo food. Creating a barrier with a fence may help, but my experience has been that they can readily dig under fences.

Live animal traps have worked best for me personally, particularly in my fenced yard. Armadillos often travel the same route under a fence and a trap can be placed in front of the hole with two pieces of wood in a v-shaped pattern in front of the trap. I have not had any luck with baits such as over-ripe fruit or earthworms in soil. Catching the armadillo is only the first problem, because by law the trapped animals cannot legally be relocated.

Armadillos can be discouraged from returning to burrows by filling the hole with a mixture of dirt and mothballs after you are sure they have left for

the night. Also, constant filling of the hole will often prevent them from returning. Check with the Extension Office for more detailed information.

MISC. JULY GARDENING

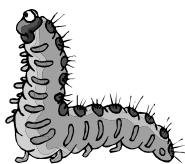
Flowers to plant - Angelonia, begonia, black-eyed Susan, blue daze, bush daisy, cat's whiskers, coleus, coreopsis, crossandra, golden globe, impatiens, marigold, melampodium, moon flower, pentas, periwinkle, porter weed, portulaca, purslane, salvia, sunflower, torenia and zinnia.

Herbs to plant - Anise, basil, bay laurel, chive, dill, ginger, lemon balm, Mexican tarragon, mint, oregano, rosemary, sage, sweet marjoram and thyme.

Mid-August vegetables - Beans, collard, cucumber, eggplant, lima bean, okra, pepper, pumpkin, Southern pea, squash, tomato and watermelon.

Turf - Be watching for chinch bugs in your St. Augustinegrass, particularly in hot dry areas and areas where you have had problems with chinch bugs before.

Pecans - I have been inundated with calls from homeowners concerned about worms eating their pecan and hickory tree foliage. I believe this is the walnut caterpillar. The larvae are nearly black and covered with long white hairs. There appears to be 2 or more longitudinal stripes that run the length of the body.



The eggs are laid on the tree foliage. The eggs hatch and the larvae feed voraciously on the leaves of the tree. When they are ready to molt, they gather in a mass on the trunk. After molting, they then go back to feeding on the leaves leaving behind a ball of cast skins and

head capsules. The mature larvae eventually wander down to the ground and find a place to pupate, usually in the soil. Walnut caterpillar does not make silken webs in the foliage like tent caterpillars.

A single mid-summer defoliation will have little impact on the tree health. However, a second defoliation in the same year could seriously injure the tree. If you notice larvae feeding on new growth later this summer, than it would be prudent to make an insecticide application. This would have to be done by a professional with specialized high pressure spray equipment.

Flowering perennials - A summer plant for color you might want to try in your garden is golden globe (*Lysimachia procumbens*). This is a mat-forming perennial with whorled ovate leaves. The flowers are upturned and cup-shaped, yellow with red throats and are borne in the leaf terminal. The 'Aurea' cultivar has red-tinged, yellow variegated, green leaves.

The plant flowers from spring to summer and grows 4 inches high and 12 inches wide. It makes an excellent groundcover, and is suited for sun or shade in hardiness zones 6-9. The plant does well in moist soil, but not in areas where water stands. It is very important not to let the plant totally dry out as damage may occur.

Have a good gardening day,

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For more gardening information:
<http://polkhort.ifas.ufl.edu>

Polk County Web Site
<http://polk.ifas.ufl>