

SPLendor IN THE GRASSES

Want to add beauty to your garden without adding to your work? Consider planting ornamental grasses. Most species are not picky about soil, though they appreciate good drainage. Once they're established, grasses tend to be fairly drought tolerant, and are susceptible to few pests. In the landscape they add new elements of color, texture, movement and sound. Choose from the following varieties for Zone 9:



Upland Sea Oats or Indian Wood Oats, *Chasmanthium latifolium*, resembles true sea oats of the beach dunes. They tolerate both wet feet and dry soils, making them very versatile. In mulched beds, they tend to self sow. The clumps expand slowly, are not at all aggressive, and should be divided every few years as their vigor diminishes.

Pink Muhly Grass, *Muhlenbergia capillaris*, produces giant puffballs of cotton-candy pink in the fall. It seems to thrive on neglect, beautifully withstanding heat, humidity, drought, and poor soil.

Pampas Grass Choose from many varieties. *Cortaderia selloana*, remains queen of the grasses for specimen effect, reaching 10 feet in height. There are dwarf varieties (*C. selloana* 'Pumila') for smaller spaces. Others have pastel flowers while some have variegated leaves, ('Silver Stripe', 'Gold Band'). Beware of "purple pampas grass (*C. jubata*) that is invasive in warm regions. Because of sharp leaf edges do not use pampas grass near walkways or play areas.

Maiden Grass, *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Yaku Jima' is a compact version of the popular 'ornamental grass. A height and width of 3 to 4 feet make it a perfect ornamental grass for smaller spaces. 'Yaku Jima' produces attractive copper color plumes in late August aging to bright silver in the winter.

Purple Fountain Grass, *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum', is a burgundy-hued fountain grass which has proved itself in landscapes both residential and commercial. It grows to 4 feet tall while its dwarf grows no taller than 2-3 feet.

Feather Top, *Pennisetum villosum*, describes this plant when it is in bloom. The flowers are creamy green and mature to grayish white, blooming in July and August. In some areas, it is treated as an annual, but is hardy to 10 degrees F.

Plant grasses in the spring or fall in well drained soil receiving full sun. Give plants a boost of compost or fertilizer and a deep watering. Mulch plants to help maintain soil moisture. Cut back annually and divide every few years in spring before new growth appears. Grass clumps may die out in the center as the plant ages. If so, dig up, divide and replant the healthy piece in the original site.

Inside this issue:

Announcements	2
Fairy Ring	2
Checklist	3
Thyme	4

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Neighborhood Stormwater/Landscape Program

Provide your neighborhood with information about proper landscape and pond maintenance practices that will protect Florida's natural waterways.

St. John's River Water Management/WAVE Representative Paula Staples and Rebecca L. Jordi, University of Florida/IFAS Horticulture Extension Agent will come for a free consultation.

This program must have a minimum of ten (10) participants.

Troubleshooting Florida Landscapes

Do you and your neighbors need a personal consultation on how to solve landscape problems? Are you concerned about your trees, shrubs, or lawngrass thriving?

Rebecca L. Jordi, University of Florida/IFAS Horticulture Extension Agent and Nassau County Master Gardener Volunteers will come for a free group consultation.

This program must have a minimum of six (6) participants.

Landscape Matters

September 20th, 2006
Wednesday 10 - 11AM

Wildflowers
Master Gardener
Claudie Speed

October 18th, 2006
Wednesdays 10 - 11AM

Pruning
Master Gardener
Bea Walker

Yulee Satellite Office
North Corridor
Conference Room A
96135 Nassau Place
Nassau County Govt.
Complex

These programs are free to the public, so please call us at 904-879-1019 or e-mail rljordi@ifas.ufl.edu if you plan to attend. If response is too small, the program will be canceled.

Crash Course in Florida Gardening

Saturday October 21st, 2006 9AM-4PM

Yulee Satellite Office Conference Room A North Corridor
Cost is \$25 for notebook. Register deadline is Friday, October 6th.
Phone 904 321-5715 or e-mail rljordi@ifas.ufl.edu to enroll.

FAIRY RING FUNGI

The sudden appearance of mushrooms on the lawn after a rain can seem like magic, especially when arranged in a circle. The size of the ring can range from a few inches to more than 50 feet in diameter. More than 40 species of fungi are responsible for the so-called fairy rings found on lawns. These fungi feed on dead organic matter of various types, from buried stumps to thatch. Their feeding releases nutrients, which encourage near-by vegetation to grow, resulting circles of

dark green turf.

Inside the ring, an area of brown grass may be present. In this area, a high concentration of thread-like structures (mycelia) composing the body of the fungus can often be seen upon close examination of the thatch and soil. The mycelia prevent water movement into the area, weakening or killing the grass.

Fairy rings expand outward until the food supply is used up, the soil becomes too wet, or better-adapted organ-

isms surpass the ability of the fungi to survive.

Fairy rings are difficult to control. There are no chemical controls available to homeowners. Removing the soil to a depth of 12 inches and replacing it with clean soil and new grass may be too much for some homeowners.

Hand pull and bag mushrooms as soon as possible; be careful not to spill any on the lawn. Apply fertilizer to surrounding turf to erase most of dark green ring. Do not over fertilize.

"Rake away and destroy old mushrooms; be careful not to spill any on the lawn. Apply fertilizer to surrounding turf to erase the dark green ring."



“TO DO” LIST FOR SEPTEMBER

Flowers: For instant color plant marigolds and garden chrysanthemums. Bulbs to plant include amaryllis, Aztec lily, calla, elephant ears, grape hyacinth, iris, leopard lily, narcissus, snowflake, watsonia, and zephyr lily.

Herbs: Plant anise, basil, borage, chervil, marjoram, parsley, sesame, and thyme.

Lawns: Fertilize with 15-0-15 or 16-4-8. Most Florida soils are high in phosphorous, the middle number, so this nutrient is rarely needed. Increase mower heights to promote deeper roots.

Perennials: Lots of pruning is in order this month. When pruning, make cuts back to the branch angle, or to the ground. If you want the plant to fill in from the base, make the cut about 1 foot above where you want the new branches to begin.

Trees: Fertilize palms with slow release palm fertilizer. For fall color plant deciduous trees such as bald cypress, Chickasaw plum, crape myrtle, redbud, red maple, river birch, sugarberry, sweet gum and winged elm. Trees to plant include black olive, dogwood, golden raintree, hollies, loquat, southern juniper, sugarberry, and wax myrtle.

Vegetables: Snap beans, pole beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, endive/escarole, lettuce, cucumber, bulbing onions, bunching onions, radishes, summer squash, and turnips. Plant tender vegetables very early in



“TO DO” LIST FOR OCTOBER

Flowers: Buy spring flowering bulbs (narcissus, tulips, etc.) and store in the refrigerator for 60 days. Plant bulbs immediately upon removal. Keep them away from ripening fruit during storage. Plant cool season flowers like dianthus, pansy, petunia, shasta daisy, snapdragon, viola, million bells, status, Thunbergia, flowering kale and cabbage. Bulbs to plant include Agapanthus, gladiolus, kaffir lily, marica, moraea, society garlic, spider lily, anemone, hyacinth, pineapple lily and star-of-Bethlehem.

Herbs: Plant parsley, sage, thyme, and rosemary.

Lawns: Do not fertilize the lawn this late in the year. For a green winter lawn that will have to be mowed, overseed with ryegrass. Watch for brown patch fungus disease, chinch bugs, sod webworms, army worms, and mole crickets.

Trees: Remove diseased or dead limbs any time of year. If you plant a tree, remember that water is the most important part of early tree care. Be sure to dig the hole wider than deep. Do not fertilize now, wait until next spring. Let the tree put its effort into producing roots.

Vegetables: Plant strawberries in late October through November. Plant in rows 36” apart and 12” apart within the row. Elevate rows 6” above existing soil to insure good drainage. Use pine straw to reduce weed problems and slugs.



**UF/IFAS
Nassau County Extension**

543350 US Highway #1
Callahan, FL 32011

Tel: 904-879-1019

E-mail: rljordi@ifas.ufl.edu

To receive this newsletter
in color via e-mail, contact
Rebecca Jordi at the above
e-mail address.

Visit us online at
<http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Nassau County is proud to provide you with this information. Horticulture News is a joint project with contributions by county agents and Master Gardener Volunteers.

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Callahan, FL
Permit No. 27

Sincerely,



Rebecca L. Jordi,
Horticulture Agent II



The enclosed material is provided as one of the many services relating to the educational programs offered by the University of Florida/Nassau County Cooperative Extension service. Our nationwide network of faculty is prepared to provide current information on food, agriculture, marine and natural resource science, energy, nutrition, family, 4H youth, and related fields. We will be happy to help you with additional information upon request. For more information about this document contact the Nassau County Extension Service at 879-1019. (V/TDD via the Florida Relay service is 1-800-955-8771.) For individuals with documented print related disabilities, this publication is available in alternative format upon specific request. The use of trade names in this publication is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of the product named and does not signify that they are approved to the exclusion of others. Programs are available to all people without regard to sex, race color, creed or national origin.

HERB OF THE MONTH—THYME



Thyme, (*Thymus vulgaris*), a shrubby perennial herb, is represented by a fairly wide variety of shapes and sizes. Usually, it is a small-growing plant less than 1½ feet tall, with very tiny, ¼ inch long, gray green stems. Bees love the tiny blossoms. It makes an ideal edging plant, and is available in varieties with pink, lavender, crimson, or white flowers.

Its name may derive from

“Thymus”, Greek for courage, or the Greek term for “to fumigate”, since it was once burned to chase stinging insects from the house.

In Florida, start the plants from seeds sown ¼ inch deep in the fall or early spring, or even in winter in south Florida. Seeds are slow to germinate, and seedlings make slow initial growth. Space plants 12 inches apart. Replant thyme every three to four

years for best growth.

To use, remove the top one-third portion of the plant when in full bloom and spread on newspaper in a well-ventilated room to dry. Strip the leaves and flowering tops from the stem and store in tightly closed containers. Thyme works so well with many foods and cuisines, that there was once a saying “When in doubt, use thyme.”