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## Rain Lilies *Zephyranthes*

This group of charming bulbs, also known as pink fairy lilies, Zephyr lilies, and rain lilies is native to North America. In the wild, flowers bloom after a rain. Incredibly climatically diverse, they can be found wild in tropical lowlands, rain forests, and arid deserts. There are rain lilies for every climatic zone that does not experience long periods of freezing weather. They seem to be quite happy under domestication, and can be planted year round in North Florida.



*Zephyranthes grandiflora*

Rain lilies thrive in conditions not favorable for true garden lilies. They produce lush clumps of foliage in the fall when the weather is cool and can be mistaken during the winter for liriopse. Spectacular effects can be achieved when used in mass plantings.

Each species has a different time schedule for flowering, reaching a peak in July and August. With careful selection of at least six species you can have orange, pink, yellow, white, rose, or red rain lilies flowering for nine months of the year from mid-March until mid-November.

## What plant can that be?

Have you seen this plant displaying its bright dabs of red in hammocks, sand dunes, or along the roadside? This is a poinsettia, but not the variety you receive as a gift during the holidays. This is *Poinsettia cyathophora*, a perennial wildflower version of its impressive relative. It has some creative common names, including painted-leaf and fire-on-the mountain. A Florida native, it



*Poinsettia cyathophora*

grows year-round throughout most of the state, showing off its red leaves from January to December. Along with crown of thorns, various cacti, and some weeds, the wild poinsettia is a member of the Spurge family. These plants contain a milk-looking poisonous/irritant sap that the stems and leaves secrete. Do not ingest any part of this plant. Take care when handling.

# 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.

Call 904-879-1019 or send e-mail to [rljordi@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:rljordi@ifas.ufl.edu).

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.

Call 904-879-1019 or send e-mail to [rljordi@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:rljordi@ifas.ufl.edu).

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

## Landscape Matters

Wednesday 10 - 11AM  
January 12th and February 16th at the Peck Center Auditorium located at 516 S. 10th Street Fernandina Beach

Future programs will be March 16, April 13, May 18, June 15, July 13, August 17, September 14, and October 12. There will be no programs in November and December.

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



In 1945 the Florida Legislature designated the third Friday in January as State Arbor Day. This year it will be celebrated January 21st by schools and civic organizations with tree plantings and other activities. Check your local paper for announcements.

## What is Your Tree IQ?

### How much do you know about trees?

**Most trees planted in home landscapes have no taproots.**

**True.** Taproots are affected by raising trees in containers, digging, and transplanting. There are lots of surface roots but no taproots.

**Tree roots grow mostly under the spread of the branches.**

**False.** Over half the roots may grow beyond the dripline.

**Most feeder roots are near the surface of the soil.**

**True.** Most of the nutrient and water absorbing roots are in the upper 6 inches of the soil.

**Feed established trees at least once a year.**

**False.** An established tree of over 3 years old can supply its needs with nutrients provided for lawns and other plantings.

**Topping creates a dangerous tree.**

**True.** Cutting the top from a tree results in weak growth and can lead to rotting limbs that break during storms.

Adapted from Dr. Ed Gilman's website



River Birch



# Monthly "To Do" List for January



**Annuals:** Keep hay handy to protect your annual plantings on cold nights. When frost temperatures are expected, distribute the hay over the tops of the plantings. Pull the hay back once the cold days and nights are over. Annuals to plant now include carnations, pansies, petunias, snapdragons, delphiniums, larkspur, dianthus, and foxgloves.

**Bulbs:** Be ready to move container-grown and less hardy bulbs inside. Most others, like ginger and amaryllis may have their foliage damaged during severe cold, but they can be left in the ground and be expected to survive. Remove any bulbs that appear to be diseased. Tulips, hyacinths, and daffodils can be planted now if you refrigerated them for 8 weeks to meet their chilling requirements.

**Herbs:** Anise, Basil, Borage, Chives, Chervil, Coriander, Fennel, Garlic, Lavender, Marjoram, Mint, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Sesame, Sweet Marjoram, and Thyme can be planted now.

**Lawns:** This is the fertilize free month. Check the soil to determine water needs. When the grass blades fold it's time to water. As a rule, water once every 10-14 days in the winter. If you need to mow the lawn remember to keep your mower height at the highest level.

**Perennials:** Water when surface soil is dry to the touch, make sure you have 2-3 inches of mulch around the roots, and water during the morning hours only. Outdoor plants require less water in the winter months. Roses should be pruned once each year during December or January in north Florida.

**Trees:** Most trees can have dead limbs removed, suckers trimmed off, old seedpods removed, lanky growths trimmed, and crisscrossing limbs controlled anytime of year. Don't perform major pruning on any tree this month, especially flowering trees that produce their blooms during the spring months.

**Vegetables:** English peas, beets, broccoli, potatoes, cabbage, celery, carrots, bunching onions, radishes, turnips, and cauliflower can be planted this month in North Florida. It is always best to have your soil tested prior to starting a garden to determine what nutrients may be required for a successful crop.



Larkspur

# Monthly "To Do" List for February



**Annuals:** Remove all dead plant portions from the old flowers. Hand dig weeds from the garden. Work in organic matter. Test soil and adjust accordingly. Select plants that grow best in our area. Baby's' breath, calendulas, carnations, dianthus, dusty miller, Marguerite daisies, pansies, petunias, and snapdragons can be planted this month.

**Bulbs:** Prune out declining foliage as needed. Examine bulbs with necks out of the ground that may have been damaged by winter freezing. If aphids are detected, use insecticide soap to curb populations.

**Lawns:** Cut your St. Augustine lawn as needed, but keep the mowing height at 3-4 inches. Semi-dwarf species can be cut 2-3 inches in height. Cutting grass too short encourages insects damage and disease. No fertilizer this month.

**Perennials:** As winter finishes, some pruning may be required. However, don't be in a big rush to prune out the dead or declining portions, as some cold may linger until the end of the month or even March. Leaving the dead portions on may provide some protection in case another freeze occurs. Prune ornamental grasses. Remove all brown cut stems to 6-12 inches above ground. Feed!

**Trees:** Existing well-established trees and palms do not normally need special watering - the nearby irrigation of lawns, shrubs, and flower beds normally supply adequate moisture. Some exceptions may be dogwoods or red maples. Growing grass under trees is difficult, consider using shade loving plants instead.

**Vegetables:** This month you can plant collards, lettuce, endive, potatoes, and turnips. Before you start your garden, be sure to have the soil tested. The University of Florida will do a full nutrient test for only \$7. Come by the office to pick up a soil kit or call us at 904 879-1019 for more information.

"Prune ornamental grasses. Remove all brown cut stems to 5-12 inches above ground. Feed!"



Pampas Grass





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If you would like to receive this newsletter in color via e-mail, contact Rebecca Jordi at the above e-mail address.

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

Sincerely,

Rebecca L. Jordi,  
Environmental Horticultural Agent



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**We are on the web!**  
<http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/>



Cilantro

### Herb of the Month Cilantro/Coriander

Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*) is the seed of the plant also known as Chinese parsley, grown in Egypt, India, and China for thousands of years. It is a cool weather plant if you grow it as cilantro, which refers to the leaves. It is a very popular herb and well known for its use in salsa dip and "Tex-Mex" cooking. It is usually used fresh because it loses its flavor when dried or cooked.

Cilantro grows easily from seed. Plant it where you want it to grow, because it does not transplant well. Cilantro is short lived and will go quickly to seed. You will want to harvest it when the plant is 4-6 inches tall. You may cut leaves as needed or pull up the whole plant and use the roots in soup.

When the plant "Bolts" or starts to flower it becomes bitter and is no longer used as cilantro. It will take about 120 days until the coriander seed matures. You can plant more cilantro every 7-10 days to keep a steady supply. In the heat of the summer, especially in Florida, cilantro will not do as well. It is a good spring/fall herb to grow and will withstand temperatures down to 18 degrees.



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