



Horticulture News

Florida Native - The Needle Palm

Possibly the most cold hardy palm (to -20°F) in North America, the needle palm, *Rhapidophyllum hystrix*, was selected by the Florida Nurserymen and Growers Association for their 2004 Florida Plants of the Year promotional program. This palm is native to the Southeastern United States, and can be found growing naturally on wooded slopes and moist bottomlands along streams in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina.

The needle palm is a great choice for wet shady areas, but will adapt to full sun and become quite drought tolerant when established. Groupings of

needle palms provide low cover for wildlife. The tiny yellow to purplish-brown flowers attract bees, flies, and wasps, while the fruit is food for small mammals. A cluster of plants can serve as a security hedge because the needles form a barrier that will deter most animals, especially humans. Needle palms should not be planted near walkways or play areas for this reason.

For Florida Friendly



landscapes, this is an excellent plant. It is suitable for planting adjacent to overhead power lines, has no need for trimming, no

significant pests or diseases, requires only 2 light applications of fertilizer per year to grow quite quickly, can be propagated by seed or division of clumps, and will live for

approximately 50 years. **WARNING:** The state of Florida lists needle palm as endangered. It is illegal to transplant from the wild.



UF/IFAS Nassau County Extension

November/December, 2005

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Carolina Jessamine - Bright Spot in Winter

Carolina jessamine is one of the most beautiful vines of the South. It covers fences and trees in open woodlands and along roadsides throughout the Southeast. Sweetly



Carolina Jessamine (Gelsemium)

scented, yellow flowers bloom from February to April, and are attractive nectar sources for hummingbirds and a variety of native insects. It is the state flower of South Carolina. Carolina jessamine grows to 20 feet

or more when grown as a vine, but with regular clipping can be grown as a ground cover. Plant from containers during cool weather, spacing 3 feet apart for ground cover and 4 to 8 feet apart for wall or trellis climber. Carolina jessamine prefers full sun but will tolerate partial

shade. Do not over-feed, since excessive fertilizer can reduce flowering. Mow groundcovers every few years to maintain density. All parts of this plant are poisonous. The sap may irritate sensitive skin. Insects or diseases rarely trouble Carolina Jessamine.

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?

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

There will be no programs in November or December.

January 18th, 2006
Wednesday 10 - 11AM

Citrus
Free Citrus Fertilizer!
Rebecca Jordi
Horticulture Agent II

New Location!
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.

Read Horticulture News in Color!

Horticulture News is available in color online and via e-mail!



To receive this newsletter in color via e-mail, contact Rebecca Jordi at

rljordi@ifas.ufl.edu.

Current and past issues of Horticulture News can also be viewed in color online

in the horticulture section of the Nassau County Coopera-

tive Extension web site at <http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/horticulture/horthome.htm>.

Adobe Acrobat Reader is required to open these .pdf documents. You may download the FREE software from the Adobe web site at (www.adobe.com).

Poinsettias

After the holidays, poinsettias can be planted outdoors. In North Florida, replant in larger pots, and bring them indoors during freezing weather. If poinsettias have dropped lower leaves and become leggy,

cut them back to 4 to 6 inches to induce new growth. Water as needed, and fertilize. Keep tips of new growth pinched until Labor Day so plants stay bushy and compact. Colorful bracts should develop

by the following Thanksgiving.



“To Do” List for November

Flowers: Sow seeds of larkspur, bachelor's buttons, sweet peas, and California poppies in full sun for a colorful spring show. Set out hardy plants such as sweet alyssum, petunia, dianthus, and snapdragon.

Lawns: Allow grass to go dormant from October through February. Check your mower. Resharpen blades, change the oil, and clean debris from underneath.

Perennials: Plant now for fall color. Mexican bush sage has spikes of purple-and-white flowers that will wave in the wind. Pineapple sage has brilliant red blooms and leaves that smell of pineapple. Firespike with its red bloom spikes is great for partial shade. Philippine violet brightens fall days with its lavender flowers. The brilliant yellow of swamp sunflower will stop traffic a block away. Cigar flower has an abundant display of small orange-and-yellow, tubular blooms.

Trees: If you are planting a new tree, staking may not be necessary. New trees become stronger if some movement is allowed. Planting too deeply causes future problems for the tree. Plant your tree so the top root is just below soil level.

Vegetables: Keep crops picked to encourage new production. Water during morning hours.



Firespike

“To Do” List for December

Annuals: Plant carnations, digitalis, pansies, petunias, shasta daisies, and snapdragons this month.

Bulbs: Check for declining plant portions and pests. Examine bulbs in storage and remove adhering soil or damaged portions.

Herbs: Anise, basil, bay laurel, borage, caraway, cardamom, chervil, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, ginger, horehound, lemon balm, lavender, lovage, marjoram, Mexican tarragon, mint, nasturtium, oregano, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme and watercress can be planted now.

Lawns: Do not feed. Keep mowing height the same year round. Brown patch may occur this time of year. Water once every 7-10 days to once every two weeks.

Trees and Shrubs: Late December is the ideal time to begin transplanting plants if the weather has turned cool. If there hasn't been much cold weather, do not begin to transplant until the plants are dormant. Prune roots two to three months before digging by severing roots with a spade just inside the intended root ball to generate new root hairs and reduce transplant shock. Be sure to keep plants out of the ground as little time as possible.

Vegetables: Choices for this month include beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, Chinese cabbage, English peas, onions, and radishes.



Selected from *Florida Vegetable Guide* by JM Stephens, RA Dunn, G Kidder, D Short, & GW Simone, University of Florida and *Month-by-Month Gardening in Florida* by Tom MacCubbin

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,

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

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

Herb of the Month - Dill

Dill or *Anethum graveolens* is a wonderfully scented annual herb that is used as dill weed and dill seed to enhance many recipes. The weed is gathered from the feather-like leaves of the plant, while the seeds come from the yellow flower "heads" after they have matured.

The word Dill comes from the Saxon word "Dilla" meaning soothe. It has long been taken as an aid to digestion and as a tranquillizer. It is an erect, fennel like plant that grows to a height of 4 feet. Dill grows well in Florida. It is

produced commercially to a small extent and is grown in many home gardens. "Dill" does not transplant well. It is best to plant your own seed. Sow seed at 12" spacing 1/4 inch deep. Although it can be planted in the spring, November through December is the best planting time. Dill grows best in full sun, and will only need watered once a week if there is no rain. Dill will re-seed itself yearly if the plant is allowed to go to seed. (It takes 65 days.) To



gather the dill weed, trim the leaves as soon as the plant has been established. While you can dry dill weed, it is actually better to just stick it in the freezer. Chop up what you need, and then return the rest to the freezer. When the flowerheads turn brown the seeds are ripe. Cut the whole plant down and dry the seed-heads indoors. Shake the seeds from the seed heads and store in airtight containers.

Caterpillars are fond of dill, and can be handpicked if they become a nuisance.