



HORTICULTURE NEWS



UF/IFAS Nassau County Extension

March/April 2006

ROSES



Everyone loves roses, but not everyone has success in growing them. Be realistic, roses have a reputation for being difficult to grow. It doesn't have to be that way. They simply need routine attention. So it is important to set up a habit to care for your roses.

In February, you pruned back your roses and now it's March and they are beginning to bud. Your roses should have been fed and a fungicide program started. Note the growth of your bushes. You may have to finger prune them if they send out too much growth. You just take your thumb and knock off the weaker of the growths. Remember you want as much sunshine and air circulation in the middle of the bush. Don't forget to water your roses.

ESTABLISHED ROSES:

- Finger prune weaker shoots
- Keep the center portion of the rose "open" to air and sunshine
- One cup of time release fertilizer (16-16-16) around the base of the plant; 1/4 cup for miniatures (a minimum of Spring and Fall)

- Work the fertilizer into the soil
- Consider a mixture of fish meal, blood meal and alfalfa meal
- Spray the underside of the rose leaves with a fungicide (follow instructions on product); alternate products every other month
- Mulch, up to four inches
- Throw a handful (1/4 cup) of Epsom salt around the rose (magnesia)
- Water at least one inch per week and two inches in hotter months.

NEW ROSES:

Now that you have decided on your new rose—and March is a good time to plant—you will need to prepare the site. Remember, right plant, right place, bare root or container.

- Amend soil with organic material (manure, sphagnum peat moss, compost, NO fertilizer)
- Raise the bed (8 to 12 inches) to provide better drainage
- Water the area well and let it settle
- After planting, mulch
- Stake small, young plants

Get in the habit of marking your calendar when you fertilized and sprayed fungicide. While you are marking your calendar, put down the 15th of April as the Jacksonville Rose Society's 51st show. Details will be in the paper. Then enjoy the beauty of this American flower.

by Master Gardener Paul Gosnell

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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 ten (10) participants.

Landscape Matters

March 15th, 2006
Wednesday 10 - 11AM
Bat Houses
Master Gardeners
Howard North
Bonnie Johnson
Blossom Baia

April 19th, 2006
Wednesday 10 - 11AM
Butterfly Gardening
Ginny Grupe

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.

Please phone the Extension Office at 904-879-1019 or 904-321-5715 by April 14th, 2006 if you wish to remain on the mailing list for Horticulture News.



CITRUS - MEYER LEMON

Like most citrus, Meyer lemons originated in China, where they have been grown for several hundred years. Frank Meyer, a plant explorer for the US Department of Agriculture, found them growing in Peking and introduced them to the US in 1908.

Scientists believe the Meyer lemon is a hybrid, a cross between a regular lemon and either an orange or a mandarin. The

complex flavor and aroma hints of sweet lime, lemon, and mandarin. It can be used in cooking wherever you would use a regular lemon.

Today most are grown in California, Texas, and Florida. To grow:

- Plant in full sun
- No wet feet
- Hardy to 25°
- Zones 9/10/11
- Can grow in pot
- Low salt tolerance

- Tolerates acid soil

The Meyer lemon bears heavily when mature. It may produce 10 or more lemons at 3 years old. The fruit matures in summer, and changes from green to yellow orange when ripe. In a tropical climate, it will bear fruit all year long.

Protect your tree from snails that can eat the buds and leaves. If potted, replace the soil after 3 or 4 years.



MARCH CHECKLIST

Flowers: Water as needed. Over-watering causes root and stem rot. Opt for drought tolerant plants such as purslane or periwinkle. Group your plants together according to their watering and light requirements. Bulbs will be in full bloom. To conserve plant energy, cut off the old seedpods after flowering. Fertilize perennials this month if you missed last month. Plant poinsettias in landscape during late March. Cut back plants to within 12 to 18 inches of ground level. Pinch back new growth every four weeks until September 10. Fertilize monthly from May to September. Choices for planting include lantana, pentas, salvias, purple coneflowers, buddleia, verbenas, dianthus, petunias, and snapdragons.

Lawns: Rake dead grass to allow new grass to grow. Complete fertilizer can be applied this month. Check your soil first. Phosphorus can accumulate in the soil. Select a fertilizer with a such as a 15-0-15 or 16-4-8. Follow directions on the label.

Shrubs: Prune and fertilize azaleas with acid fertilizer as soon as they finish blooming. Azaleas may be transplanted now as well. Overgrown shrubs can be cut back down to 12-24 inches.

Trees: Make sure your younger trees maintain a straight trunk as new growth begins. Remove or prune all limbs that compete with the central leader.

Vegetables: Have your soil tested prior to planting. The pH and the nutrient content of the soil is an important factor in production of vegetables. This month's choices for planting are cantaloupes, watermelon and beans.



APRIL CHECKLIST

Flowers: Annuals to plant now include celosia, coleus, coreopsis, dusty miller, geraniums, hollyhocks, impatiens, kalanchoe, lobelias, marigolds, portulacas, rudbeckias, salvia, verbenas, zinnias. Groom to reshape perennials. Prune hard to correct growth problems. Divide overcrowded fall flowering perennials and bulbs. Bulbs to be planted now include achimenes, agapanthus, amaryllis, Asiatic lilies, begonias, blood lily, caladiums, cannas, crinum, dahlia, gladiolus, gloriosa lily and zephyranthes.

Lawns: Water during early morning when the leaves curl and turn gray-green. Stop feeding during very dry times. Keep mower height at the highest setting for your grass type. Apply 1 inch of sand to uneven areas for leveling. Allow grass clippings to fall on the lawn.

Trees: Most older trees and palms are fine and can exist with the seasonal rains. Look for aphid, borer, and scale infestations. Caterpillars may be extra heavy this month.

Vegetables: Herbs to plant are anise, basil, borage, chives, dill, marjoram, mint, oregano, rosemary, sage, savory, and thyme. Vegetables to plant are cantaloupe, collards, cucumbers, lima beans, okra, pumpkin, yams, peppers, squash and watermelon.



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

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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.

Sincerely,



Rebecca L. Jordi,
Horticulture Agent II



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GINGER/ZINGEBAR



Ginger is a perennial plant, having more than one growing season. In Florida that may mean only 2 years. It has been grown in China and the Caribbean for centuries and used for medicine and in cooking.

The underground structure is called a rhizome. You may purchase one from a nursery or the grocery. It can be divided

into pieces about 1-2 inches long. In order for it to successfully grow each section must have at least one "eye" (much like the eye on a potato). Allow the cut pieces time to dry before planting to avoid rotting.

Ginger rhizomes should be planted in the early spring. You could put them in a pot to get them started earlier if necessary. The cut sec-

tions will produce a 2-3 foot narrow stalk of leaves. Gingers prefer partial shaded areas. You should plant them in a mixture of sand and cow manure. You can dig up the ginger rhizomes in the fall or once you see the tops dying. Keep fresh ginger refrigerated, wrapped first in a paper towel, and then in tightly wrapped plastic. It will last for several months.