

**July/August 2008**

**Nassau County Extension**

# Clivia

The Genus Clivia is one of the more primitive members of the Amaryllis Family, or Amaryllidaceae. They have neither bulbs (unlike most members of the Amaryllis Family) nor rhizomes, but possess an abundance of thick rope-like, bulbous roots. They are also known by the common names of Kaffir Lilies, Bush Lily, St John's Lily and Fire Lily.

The Clivia is native to the shade of forest floors in South Africa. Plants were taken to England in 1854, where they were named to honor Lady Charlotte Clive, Dutchess of Northumberland. The first flowers created a sensation, but then disappeared due to the upheavels of the First and Second World Wars in Europe. Today, interest has been revived, with single plants reputed to sell for as much as \$10,000.

Clivias are evergreen and have predominantly orange, red or salmon colored flowers. They are suitable for grow-

ing as houseplants and outdoors in frost-free climates. (They can tolerate temperatures as low as 36°.) They can also survive extended dry periods. With their undemanding requirements for light, water and fertilizer, they have become a much sought after plant because of the many beautiful hybrids now available and their ease of care.

Most clivia enthusiasts grow their plants from seed. Clivia seeds are large, easy to handle, and germinate quickly. Purchase a commercial cactus or African violet potting mix, lay the seed on top of the dampened mix, and do not cover. Ten to twelve seeds may be planted in one pot. If the emerging taproot does not penetrate the planting medium, use a pencil to make a hole and gently tuck the root in. Seedlings should be

separated and planted in individual containers after a year to 18 months. Flowers will appear within three to five years.

Plants grow best in indirect sunlight. Even a short time in direct sun may scorch the leaves. Keep plants cool (about 50°) during their winter rest period, with little water and no fertilizer. When growth begins in spring, resume regular watering and feeding with a water soluble fertilizer. During summer, plants may benefit from a bright sheltered location outdoors. When temperatures drop in the fall, flower spikes should appear. Water and fertilizer can be then be scaled back to winter levels.



## Program Announcements

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These programs are free to the public, so please call us at 904-548-1116 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.

### ***Troubleshooting & Neighborhood Stormwater/Landscape Program***

Solve landscape problems and 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. Fifteen participants are required.

### ***Landscape Matters***

There will be no programs in July and August.

## Spotlight on Nassau Gardens

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### ***May Winner - Nancy Beggs***

Nancy Beggs and her dog Lucy, in their beautiful landscape in Hilliard. When Nancy started a few years ago, the land had nothing on it. With the help of a local landscape company, they have converted her property into a virtual botanical garden. Located on a busy corner lot, Nancy's garden looks nice for her neighbors and everyone driving by.



### ***June Winner - George W. Watts***

Amelia Island homeowner Claudia Watts submitted this photo of her husband, George W. Watts, Jr. and Seve, their black standard schnauzer dog, at home on Amelia Island. With some design assistance from James Loper, George created an oasis, where they thoroughly enjoy time in the back yard. In addition to the privacy created by the lush ever greens, the fragrance from the ligustrum, orange, lemon & grapefruit trees is intoxicating. Hummingbirds love the Carolina jasmine, which spills off the arbor. Butterflies enjoy the butterfly bushes and an array of birds find the re-circulating fountain & the two bird baths a nice respite from the heat. Add the Adirondack chairs, a gentle sea breeze, and the Watts have a perfect perch to take it all in with their favorite libations.



View more photos online at <http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/horticulture/spotlight/spotlight.html>. To be considered for Spotlight on Nassau Gardens, send a digital photo, with a description of your garden, along with your name, address and phone number to [bwalker105@bellsouth.net](mailto:bwalker105@bellsouth.net). For more information contact Rebecca Jordi at 548-1116.

## Blossom End Rot Tomatoes

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**D**ark brown or black blotches on the bottom of tomato fruit are a sure sign of blossom-end rot. It is caused by a shortage of calcium in developing fruit. This may be due to a lack of calcium uptake from the soil or to extreme fluctuations in water supply. The problem generally is more severe when plants are fertilized too heavily with nitrogen fertilizer.

To control, ensure an adequate calcium supply by application of lime to acid soils

to achieve a pH of 6.5 to 7.0. Elsewhere, gypsum can be used to provide calcium without changing the pH.

Blossom-end rot is also related to moisture supply. Be watchful, monitor soil moisture, and irrigate before signs of moisture stress are apparent. Generally, during the growing season, tomato plants need at least one inch of water per week. Consider mulching your tomato plants, to help maintain uniform soil moisture conditions.

If blossom-end rot should begin to show up, apply several sprays of calcium chloride (available at garden supply stores under a variety of trade names). Spraying will help to prevent further development of the problem but will not cure fruits already affected. Remove fruit showing symptoms of blossom-end rot when the problem is first observed. This will reduce the drain of food and nutrient materials from other fruit not affected by blossom-end rot.



## July Checklist

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**Bulbs:** Separate bulbs and give away to friends. Bulbs planted too deeply need to be removed. Transplant bulbs if the area is receiving too much water.

**Lawns:** Add iron to green up lawn but avoid nitrogen fertilization this month. “Take-all-root-rot” will be in full force during the summer - be sure to avoid over watering and over fertilizing.

**Perennials:** Cut off old flower heads, prune off dead or insect infested areas, and pinch off tips of stems to encourage denser growth.

**Trees:** Remove crape myrtle seed head to encourage blooming through September. Remove old flower and seed stalks. Prune now for trees that flower in the winter. Fertilize palms and fruit trees.

**Vegetables:** It’s too hot to be planting anything now. However, this is a good month to solarize your fall garden. Till your plot, moisten the soil, cover the ground with clear plastic. Place heavy objects around the edges to keep the plastic from blowing away. Let the sun bake your soil. It will help control fungi and nematodes. After 30 days till soil, replace the plastic and bake another few weeks. Plant your August or September garden.



## August Checklist

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**Flowers:** Plant asters, balsam, begonias, black-eyed Susan, blue daze, cats whiskers, coleus, cosmos, cockscombs, dianthus, forget-me-not, gaillardia, golden globe impatiens, marigolds, melampodium, moon vine, pentas, periwinkles, petunias, phlox, porterweed, portulaca, purslane, salvia, scabiosa, strawflowers, sunflowers, tithonias, torenia, verbena, and zinnias.

**Bulbs:** Plant African Iris, agapanthus, amaryllis, cannas, crinum, daylilies, gladioli, gloriosa lilies, society garlic, and rain lilies (Zephyranthes).

**Lawns:** Now is a good time to install a seeded lawn. Select good quality seed such as Argentine Bahia, common bermudagrass or centipede. Initially the seeds need to stay moistened but once they have germinated irrigation can be reduced. These grasses do well without heavy irrigation and high nitrogen fertilizers. They turn brown earlier than St. Augustinegrass in the winter.

**Perennials:** Start salvia, violets, ruellia, lion’s ear, gerbera daisy, butterfly weed, and blanket flower from saved seeds. Let seeds dry on the plants. When pods open, dry seeds inside on screen or cheesecloth. Put into a plastic bag or a jar and label. Keep the seeds in the vegetable section of the refrigerator. Use within one year. Do not store in the freezer!

**Trees:** Cut back unwanted limbs to a branch angle or the trunk. Remove old fronds and seed stalks from palms. Do not apply paints or coverings to wounds. Remove old seedheads from crape myrtle trees to encourage additional blooms.

**Vegetables:** August plantings are especially important for corn, eggplant, pumpkins, peppers, tomatoes, and watermelons. Beware of cutworms.



*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/>**

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## ***Moles***

**T**he eastern mole, *Scalopus aquaticus*, occurs throughout Florida. Moles are not rodents but belong to the order Insectivora, which means insect eater. Moles are beneficial because they eat mole crickets; beetle larvae (white grubs, wire worms, etc.); ants and ant brood; moth larvae and pupae (cutworms and armyworms); and slugs. They also help to loosen and aerate the soil by creating tunnels as they search for food. In loose soil, moles can tunnel up to 18ft per hour.

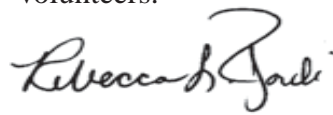
The damage caused by moles is almost entire-

ly cosmetic. Although moles are often falsely accused of eating the roots of grass and other plants, they actually feed on the insects causing the damage. 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.

Moles may be captured and removed without a permit by homeowners, renters, or employees of the property owner. Lawn or pest control services must obtain a permit from the Florida

Fish and Wildlife commission. No poison (bait or fumigant) may be used on native wildlife without a Poison Permit issued by the executive director of the FWC. Flooding mole tunnels rarely works in sandy soils like those common in Florida. Vibrating de-

vices to drive moles away have not been proven effective in scientific trials. Repellents are available that use emulsified castor oil to keep moles away. The effectiveness of these products is related to soil type and the amount of rainfall.



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