

# Horticulture News



## Passion Flower - *Passiflora*

Nassau County  
Extension  
May/June 2008

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The exotic and beautiful passion vine originated in the tropical rain forest regions of the world. Before 1900, the purple variety was partially naturalized and flourishing in coastal areas of Australia. Seeds of the fruit were brought from Australia to Hawaii and first planted in 1880. It wasn't long before it became popular in home gardens.

To attract pollinators such as bees, moths, butterflies, other insects, bats, and hummingbirds, *Passiflora* have developed a wide variety of colorful, fragrant flowers. The fruits also contain a juice with a unique aromatic taste & smell.

There are over 400 species in the genus *Passiflora*. Most are tender evergreen tropical vines which prefer a frost-free climate. *Passiflora incarnata* is an exception in that it is deciduous, can

survive winter freezes, is native to the southeastern United States, and is commonly called maypop as well as passion flower. It is a fast-growing perennial vine which uses its tendrils to attach to fences, trees, or other supports, usually reaching heights of 10-20ft. Winter frosts will kill it back to the ground, but it will happily reappear in the spring, earning its name "may pop."

Maypop is a wonderful addition to a butterfly garden. The gulf fritillary, zebra heliconia, and checkered fritillary butterflies lay their eggs on the leaves. After the eggs hatch out, caterpillars eat the leaves, and leave the plant quite ragged.

Another cultivar which can take temperatures into the upper 20's (F) without serious damage is the "Blue Passion

Vine" *Passiflora caerulea*. It is cold hardy and salt tolerant, but the plant does not grow well in intense summer heat.

The purple variety, *Passiflora edulis*, is the common edible passion fruit. Grown around the world, it produces egg sized fruit filled with wonderfully tart, bright orange pulp. The pulp is often eaten fresh, and the seeds are edible. It is also used as a flavoring in drinks, desserts, sauces, and many other foods. It is only hardy to 32°, so it must be protected from frost.



## 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

##### Herbs

Wednesday May 21st, 2008 10 - 11AM  
Master Gardener Claude Speed

##### Turfgrass

Wednesday June 18th, 2008 10 - 11AM  
Master Gardener Nelson Peterson

#### Location

Demonstration Garden  
Nassau County  
Government Complex  
96135 Nassau Place  
Yulee, FL

## Spotlight on Nassau Gardens

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### March Winner - Betty Mills

The March selection for Spotlight on Nassau Gardens is Betty Mills, who lives in Flora Parke. She planted her Canary Island palm when she moved into the neighborhood six years ago. Mills and her husband, Ray, enjoy the beauty of a large lawn, which provide beautiful background to highlight her palm.



### April Winner - Vicki Martin

Vicki Martin, a Callahan gardener takes pride in her roses. Vicki's beautiful hybrid tea roses are cared for with love and fertilized with banana peels, tea, and a rose fertilizer. Vicki also amends her clay soil by composting.



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.

## Master Gardener Volunteer Program

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Do you love plants, trees, and gardening? Would you enjoy volunteering your time to help teach youth and newcomers in your community? Are you a team player? Then perhaps you should become a University of Florida/IFAS Master Gardener Volunteer!

It requires 75 hours of volunteer time to be given back to Nassau County Extension the first year and 35 hours every year thereafter.

Ten training sessions held on Wednesdays will begin in the middle of August and end in November. Textbooks will cost \$85.

If you are interested and would like an application packet please call 904 548-1116 or email [rljordi@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:rljordi@ifas.ufl.edu).

You may also want to come to the Master Gardener Overview. The overview will provide information on

the various Master Gardener projects and specifically how to become a Nassau County Master Gardener Volunteer. The overview will be held at 10am, Thursday, June 5 at the Yulee satellite office located at 86026 Pages Dairy Rd.

Interviews for the Master Gardener Program will begin near the end of July and selection will occur by the first week of August.



# May Checklist

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**Flowers:** Annuals to plant this month are celosia, coleus, coreopsis, crossandras, gaillardias, gazanias, hollyhocks, impatiens, kalanchoe, marigolds, nicotianas, ornamental peppers, pentas, portulacas, salvia, thunbergia alata, torenias, verbenas, periwinkles, and zinnias. Perennials may die back to a small rosette then grow back during the spring season. This is a good time to give all perennials a label so they won't be forgotten during the dormant season.

**Lawns:** Check St. Augustine for chinch bugs. It is the beginning of mole cricket season for bahia, Bermuda, and zoysia lawns. The mole crickets have been busy laying eggs that can start hatching this month. Fertilize with 15-0-15 or 16-4-8 this month, water as needed (every 5-10 days).

**Trees:** Some magnolias may drop their leaves during the spring months. This is normal, as they replenish the foliage. Some magnolias will even drop most of their leaves before putting on new growth.

**Vegetables:** Scout for insects and hand remove if possible. Check the underside of leaves for eggs and aphids. Remember some of the insects are predators. These predators are important part of keeping the pests from totally taking over your vegetables. Vegetables to plant this month are lima beans, eggplant, okra, Southern peas, and sweet potatoes.



# June Checklist

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**Flowers:** If growth appears too slow and the foliage turns yellow, they may need an extra feeding. Too much growth and a lack of flowers indicates the plants have all the nutrients they need and you can skip a feeding. Globe amaranth, melampodium, pentas, portulaca, purslane, salvia, zinnia, lantana, buddleia, daylily, verbena, purple coneflower, plumbago, and sun coleus can be planted in full sun. Plant agapanthus, blackberry lily, clivia, gloriosa lily, achimenes, crinum, and iris.

**Lawns:** Keep mower blades sharp (once a month is a good rule). This is a good month to apply iron in liquid or granular form to St. Augustine lawns.

**Perennials:** Some pests to check for are grasshoppers and katydids. Both may be chewing holes in plant leaves. Try to handpick them from the plants, or if needed, use a synthetic insecticide as instructed on the label for chewing insects.

**Trees:** Pests may be noticed in many trees. Their damage is minimal and sprays are seldom needed. Look for aphids, borers, mites, etc.

**Vegetables:** June is not the best month to be starting a garden or planting new crops. Wait until August before putting in new plants. You may still plant tomatoes in containers if you want something to harvest. This is a good month to solarize your garden to fight against nematodes.





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in color via e-mail, contact  
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Visit us online at  
<http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/>

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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.



Rebecca L. Jordi,  
Horticulture Agent II



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
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**T**he Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*) is named after the red fritillary flower and is common in locations which border the Gulf of Mexico. Although it wanders northward to the central United States in summer, it cannot survive freezing temperatures at any stage in its life. As fall approaches, adults begin a mass southward migration eventually arriving in

## Butterfly ID - Gulf Fritillary

the warm confines of South Florida to overwinter.

The habitats they prefer are subtropical forest edges, fallow agricultural lands, roadsides, open/sunny areas, and canyons. The Gulf fritillary frequently stops to nectar at colorful flowers and is a very common garden visitor.

The larvae of the Gulf Fritillary feed on plants such as maypop (*Passiflora incarnata*), blue passionflower (*P. caerulea*), and corky-stemmed passionflower (*P. suberosa*) all of which are passionflower vines. The adult is only able to feed on fluids and tends to favor tall verbena (*Verbena bonar-*

*iensis*), pentas (*Pentas lanceolata*), tread softly (*Cnidoscolous stimulosus*), drummond phlox (*Phlox drummondii*), and lantana (*Lantana camara*). In return, the butterfly transfers pollens for the benefit of these plants.

