

Horticulture News

UF/IFAS Nassau County Extension

September/October 2008

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Golden dewdrop, also known as skyflower, pigeon berry, angels-whisper, and duranta, is native to the tropics and subtropics of the Gulf of Mexico and South America. The genus *Duranta L.* contains 17 to 30 species of tropical trees and shrubs; some are regionally cultivated as ornamentals. *Duranta erecta* 'GoldMound', a dwarf variety was selected as a Florida Plant of the Year for 2005 by Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association (FNG-LA). *Duranta erecta* was chosen as Texas Super-Star Plant for Gardeners in 2006 by the Texas Cooperative Extension of Texas A&M Univeristy.

Large cultivars of this fast-growing, multistemmed shrub are popular as a screen or background plantings. Smaller varieties make excellent container plants.

The full clusters of fragrant, pale blue flowers attract butterflies in summer and are followed by bunches of golden-orange berries, popular

with birds. Flowers and fruit are often found on the plant simultaneously and make an attractive show. Yellow fruit often hangs on the plant into the winter if the birds don't eat them. The attractive fruits, however, are poisonous to humans. Do not use this shrub in childrens' play areas.

Foliage is light green and can be variegated, branches are often droopy and vinelike, and the stems may have sharp spines. When frozen back in the winter, the canes make vigorous recovery and will bloom the next season in USDA hardiness zone 9. Preferring full sun and occasional irrigation, *Duranta* will tolerate a wide range of soils and requires no special care once established. It also toler-

ates light to moderate salt spray.

Ornamental plants need regular thinning and pruning to keep them under control and to remove dead branches, and grow best when watered and fertilized. Golden dewdrop plants live at least 15 years. Propagation is by seeds or cuttings of firm wood. Pests include caterpillars, nematodes, and scale. No diseases are of major concern.



Program Announcements

Biannual Master Gardener Plant Sale

Friday September 26th 9AM-2PM

Saturday September 27th 9AM-2PM

Our biannual plant sale has Master Gardener-propagated plants, select trees and shrubs and “goodies “ for your garden, including custom painted planters. Attend classes by horticulture experts including Rebecca Jordi - Horticulture Agent III, Linda Van Beck - Florida Daffodils, James Loper of Reflections of Nature - Native Plants, Priscilla Stapleton of Amelia Garden Center - Winter Annuals, and Dickie Andertson - Attracting Birds to Your Landscape. Don't miss the best sale Nassau County has ever seen! All proceeds benefit the Nassau County Master Gardener program and the volunteer community projects they perform in Nassau County.

Location

Yulee Satellite Office
86026 Pages Dairy Road
Yulee, FL

These programs are free to the public, so please call us at 904-548-1116 or e-mail rljordi@ifas.ufl.edu if you plan to attend.

If response is too small, the program will be canceled.

Landscape Matters

Rain Barrels & Micro-Irrigation

Wednesday September 17th, 2008 10 - 11AM

Master Gardeners Bonnie Johnson & Paul Gosnell

Perennials

Wednesday October 15th, 2008 10 - 11AM

Master Gardener Trish Kramer

Location

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

Spotlight on Nassau Gardens

August Winner - D.J. Beville



The August selection for the Spotlight on Nassau Gardens is “DJ” Beville. “DJ” and her husband Bruce live in Flora Parke. Their beautiful hydrangeas of all hues of pink and blue are 49 years old. They were inherited from her father and transplanted from the Beville's former garden on Amelia Island. They make an outstanding display along one side of their home, receiving the wonderful morning sun and shade in the afternoon. The sago palm to the left of the photo was initially planted 150 years ago by her great grandfather in his garden next door to First Baptist Church at 416 Alachua Street in Fernandina. The Beville's value antiquity.

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. For more information contact Rebecca Jordi at 548-1116.

Stinging Insects - IO Moth Caterpillar



Stinging spines are a well known chemical defense found in several families of caterpillars. A member of one of these, common to Florida and the Eastern United States, is the larvae of the IO moth (*Automeris io*).

The adult is easily recognized by the large eye-spots of the hindwings. The larvae have long yellow or green spines along with yellow and red stripes along their bodies, which often exceed two

inches in length.

The io moth caterpillar feeds on the leaves of a long list of over 100 plants, including roses, cotton, hibiscus, azaleas, willows, clover, and palms. In Florida, io moth larvae are commonly found on oaks and other hardwoods.

If present in large numbers, caterpillars can be sprayed with a bacterial spray (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) or any common insecticide. Larvae should not be touched.

Remedies for relief of pain include initial removal of any remaining inserted spines by the use of adhesive tape, followed by ice compacts, mentholated vaseline, or an antihistamine medicine.



September Checklist

Flowers: For instant color plant marigolds and garden chrysanthemums. Bulbs to plant include amaryllis, Aztec lily, calla, elephant ears, grape hyacinth, iris, leopard lily, narcissus, snowflake, watsonia, and zephyr lily.

Herbs: Plant anise, basil, borage, chervil, marjoram, parsley, sesame, and thyme.

Lawns: Use a slow release fertilizer such as 15-0-15. Most Florida soils are high in phosphorous, the middle number, so this nutrient is rarely needed. Keep mower heights on highest level all year to promote deep roots.

Perennials: This is the time of year to prune. When pruning, make cuts back to the branch angle, or to the ground. If you want the plant to fill in from the base, make the cut about 1 foot above where you want the new branches to begin.

Trees: Fertilize palms with slow release palm fertilizer. For fall color plant deciduous trees such as bald cypress, Chickasaw plum, crape myrtle, redbud, red maple, river birch, sugarberry, sweet gum and winged elm. Trees to plant include black olive, dogwood, golden raintree, hollies, loquat, southern juniper, sugarberry, and wax myrtle.

Vegetables: Snap beans, pole beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, endive/escarole, lettuce, cucumber, bulbing onions, bunching onions radishes, summer squash, and turnips. Plant tender vegetables very early in September.

October Checklist

Flowers: Buy spring flowering bulbs (narcissus, tulips, etc.) and store in the refrigerator for 60 days. Plant bulbs immediately upon removal. Keep them away from ripening fruit during storage. Plant cool season flowers like dianthus, pansy, petunia, shasta daisy, snapdragon, viola, million bells, status, Thunbergia, flowering kale and cabbage. Bulbs to plant include Agapanthus, gladiolus, kaffir lily, marica, moraea, society garlic, spider lily anemone, hyacinth, pineapple lily and Star-of-Bethlehem.

Herbs: Plant parsley, sage, thyme, and rosemary.

Lawns: Do not fertilize the lawn this late in the year. For a green winter lawn that will have to be mowed, overseed with annual ryegrass. Watch for brown patch fungus disease, chinch bugs, sod webworms, army worms, and mole crickets.

Trees: Remove diseased or dead limbs any time of year. If you plant a tree, remember that water is the most important part of early tree care. Plant tree just above soil level. Do amend the hole or wait to add fertilizer until spring. Let the tree put its effort into producing roots.

Vegetables: Plant strawberries in late October through November. Plant in rows 36" apart and 12" apart within the row. Elevate rows 6" above existing soil to insure good drainage. Use pine straw to reduce weed problems and slugs.



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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Visit us online at
<http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/>

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Horticultural Oils

In the past, horticultural oils were heavier and used only when plants were not in their growing season, so they were called dormant oils. They controlled pests that wintered over on woody plants, but were too heavy to be used on plants with foliage.

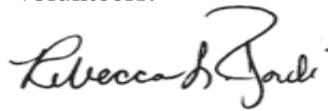
Today, lighter and improved, horticultural oils have made a comeback for quite a few good reasons. They are relatively nontoxic to the user, are relatively safe to beneficial insects in the landscape, and upon contact, will control egg, immature and adult stages of

soft-bodied pests such as aphids, thrips, whiteflies, mites, and scales. Horticultural oils may also control powdery mildew and prevent the spread of plant viruses transmitted by aphids. They are safe to use around mammals, birds, and reptiles (but are toxic to fish). In addition, it is difficult for pests to develop resistance to oils and soaps.

The oils work by smothering the insects or their eggs, poisoning them, or

disrupting the way they feed. The pest must be thoroughly coated with oil in order for it to work. It has no effect once it has dried on the plant. Applying oil in freezing conditions, extreme heat, during drought, or shoot growth could injure plants. Some plants,

including maples, junipers, cedars, and spruce are sensitive to these oils. Consider carefully before applying any pesticide and follow label directions.



Rebecca L. Jordi,
Horticulture Agent II



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