Do you dream of a tropical paradise somewhere far away filled with beautiful blooms? Why dream when you can have our own tropical paradise right here in Nassau County? We do have some light freezes, but we still have an almost limitless supply of plants which can transform our gardens into a mass of scented, bright colors.

Many of our plants come from exotic sounding origins - such as the Vinca (periwinkle) from the Old World Tropics of Madagascar, hibiscus from East Asia and bougainvillea from Brazil. Bougainvillea is very easy to grow, will tolerate some salt air and is what I call a "don't" plant. Don't over water, don't over fertilize and don't plant it in the shade. Vinca will reward you with tropical purple or red bracts in a blooming hanging basket or climbing on a trellis in your garden.

The tropics are rampant with vines, and your landscape can also be lush with vines such as mandevilla, white or pink blossoms or the passion vine, purple flowers which attract butterflies.

Announce your tropical garden with a yellow trumpet shrub with unique hanging blooms. The flowers resemble a trumpet and fill the evening air with a sweet scent.

Cannas bloom nearly all summer with vibrant colors of yellow, red, orange and fuchsia. There are new varieties of canna with beautiful foliage too.

Try mixing some heart-shaped elephant ears in the background for fabulous display of tropical foliage. For tropical flowering year-round, African irises flowers best in full sun. It is very low maintenance, tolerates nearly all soil conditions and can be used as a specimen plant or incorporated into flower beds.

When planting your tropical garden, always remember "right plant for the right place" following soil, water, light and fertilizer requirements.

Once you have completed your garden and it's awash with colorful blooms and foliage and native palms rustling in the breeze, it might be time to put on the grass skirts and invite your neighbors for a tropical luau.

If you are a seaside gardener, a number of plants are salt tolerant as well as drought resistant. These plants can also be planted countywide.

Gaillardia produces bold tropical colors all summer and is often found near lakes and oceans. Yarrow in an array of yellows, oranges, white and pink is drought resistant and loves to grow in any sunny garden. It's great for cut flowers and lovely as a dried flower.

Hydrangeas look delicate but can tolerate some wind and salt, but do require water and a shady section. Verbenas and lavender produce beautiful colors from shades of delicate lavender to hot pink.

Not to be forgotten, an all-time favorite of gardeners everywhere - the daylily, which are available in many colors and like to just be a part of your sunny garden.
Program Announcements

Landscape Matters 10AM-11AM

Bulbs
Wednesday September 5
Master Gardeners Lisa Goins & Sue Ray

Cut Flowers
Wednesday October 3
Master Gardener Kay McAllister

Plant Clinics 10AM-2PM
Monday September 17
Monday October 1
Monday October 15

These programs are free to the public, so please call us at 904-491-7340 or 879-1019 or e-mail rljordi@ufl.edu if you plan to attend. If response is too small, the program will be canceled.

Bring us your tired, diseased, insect infested plants yearning to be free of problems. When possible place your plant in a plastic bag to prevent chances of spreading issues to other plants. You will receive current researched based information on proper plant care, disease management and insect control. These sessions are free to the public. No registration required. Come anytime between 10AM - 2PM for expert advice.

Trouble-shooting Landscapes: Efficient Irrigation

County Extension Director/Horticulture Agent, Rebecca Jordi and Master Gardener volunteers Paul Gosnell and Nelson Peterson will assist homeowners in reducing insect and disease issues on lawns and landscapes. These problems often result from too much water, shallow irrigation, or uneven coverage. They will demonstrate how to properly measure irrigation at one zone and then provide solutions for correcting discrepancies. Other cultural practices such as fertilization, proper mulching, planting depth of trees and shrubs, etc. will also be provided. In addition, Jordi and the Master Gardeners will diagnosis disease or insect issues on ornamentals at the site. The goal is to reduce frustrations and the cost of managing North Florida landscapes. Jordi requires at least 6 homeowners and will come to your subdivision for these free sessions. To schedule a "Trouble-shooting Landscapes" session for you and your neighbors, please call the Extension office at 904-879-1019, or email Ms. Jordi at rljordi@ufl.edu.

Spotlight on Nassau Gardens

August Winner - Debbie and James Hobbs

Debbie and James Hobbs have an extensive and impressive vegetable garden in Hilliard. Tomatoes, onions and watermelon were giving a show earlier in the spring and summer. The heavy rains did not make it easier, but they are now producing beautiful okra, beans and peppers. What a marvelous accomplishment.

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 ncmg@nassaucountyfl.com For more information contact Rebecca Jordi at 491-7340 or 879-1019.
Five species of venoomous spiders occur in Florida: the southern black widow, northern black widow, red widow, brown widow and brown recluse.

The four species of widow spiders are very similar in body shape. All are about 1/2" long with legs extended. Their life cycle is also similar. The female lays about 250 eggs in a pear-shaped egg sac that is about 1/2" to 5/8" in diameter. The eggs hatch in about 20 days. As the young spiders mature, they construct a loosely woven web and capture progressively larger prey.

In Florida, all the widows except the northern black widow breed year-round.

Anyone bitten by a spider should preserve it in rubbing alcohol for positive identification. Most spider bites are not considered dangerous, but if you suspect one of the widow or brown recluse spiders, get medical attention immediately.

**Southern black widow**

This is the most widespread widow spider in Florida. It is glossy black and has a complete hourglass marking on the underside of the abdomen. The northern black widow has the same general appearance, but has two red triangles resembling an hourglass and a row of red spots on top of the abdomen. The northern species is found west of Tallahassee, primarily in forests, with its webs three to 20 feet above the ground. The southern black widow is usually found outdoors in protected places, such as under rocks and boards, and in and around old buildings. The bite of the black widow and other widow spiders usually feels like a pin prick. The initial pain disappears rapidly, leaving local swelling and two tiny red marks. Muscular cramps in the shoulder, thigh and back usually begin within 15 minutes to three hours. In severe cases, pain spreads to the abdomen, the blood pressure rises, and there is nausea, sweating and difficulty in breathing. Death may result, depending on the victim's physical condition, age and location of bite. Death seldom occurs if a physician is consulted and treatment is prompt.

**Red widow**

This species has a black abdomen and reddish-orange head, thorax and legs. The top of the abdomen usually has a row of red spots with yellow borders. This spider lacks a complete hourglass on the underside of the abdomen and instead usually has one or two small red marks. The red widow constructs its web in palmettos and has been found primarily in sand-pine scrub habitats in central and southeast Florida.

**Brown recluse**

This is not an established species in Florida. It is recognized by the distinctive dark violin-shaped mark located on the head and thorax. The brown recluse is a medium-sized spider about 1/4" to 1/2" long. It is light tan to deep reddish-brown. It is usually found in sheds, garages or areas of homes that are undisturbed and contain a supply of insects to serve as food. Favorite hiding places include arms and legs of garments left hanging for some time or beds that have been unoccupied for long periods of time. Persons bitten by this spider usually do not feel pain for two to three hours. A blister arises at the site of the bite, followed by inflammation. Eventually the tissue dies, leaving a sunken sore. Healing may take as long as six to eight weeks.

**Brown widow**

This spider varies from light gray to light brown to black. The abdomen has variable markings of black, white, red and yellow. The underside of the abdomen has an orange or yellow hourglass. It is found most often south of Daytona Beach along the coast. It usually makes its web on buildings in well-lighted areas.
Herbs for Fall

Herbs are grown for their special flavors and aromas and are used to season and improve the taste of food. Fall is the perfect time to plant a number of common herbs.

Growing Herbs at Home

Most of the common herbs can be grown seasonally in Florida for home use. In South Florida, many herbs may be grown in the home garden throughout the year.

Because the plants are generally small and only a small portion is needed at any one time, herbs are perfect for container gardening. But they can also easily be used as a border planting or part of a flower garden since herbs are visually appealing. If they receive enough sunlight, a few herbs can even be grown indoors.

Herbs in containers take the same care recommendations as growing vegetables in containers.

Herbs for Fall Planting

Throughout most of the state, the following herbs are perfect for fall planting. Some of them may even be planted during the winter months in South Florida.

Seeds and transplants of most common herbs are generally available at local retail stores or seed retailers. Some may be harder to find, but can generally be obtained from herb specialty businesses.

Anise

Anise (*Pimpinella anisum*) is grown for its seeds. It has many white flowers and would be attractive in a flower garden or as a border plant. Leaves may be used fresh.

Harvest the seeds when they turn brown. Separate the seeds from the fruiting structures (umbels). You may need to dry the umbels before the seeds can be separated, cleaned, and stored.

Basil

Sweet basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) is a pleasant-smelling herb with a spicy taste. The tender leaves may be used fresh at any time or dried along with the white flowers.

Borage

Borage (*Borago officinalis*) is also known as "burrage" and "common bugloss." The plant has a cucumber-like odor and flavor. It grows into a large, spreading plant with whitish hairy bristles and blue star-like flowers. The flowers may be used fresh as a garnish for beverages and salads.

Chervil

Chervil (*Anthriscus cerefolium*) is grown for its aromatic, decorative leaves. It looks like parsley in growth habit but tastes and smells like tarragon. Some forms of chervil have thick roots that can be eaten like carrots. Pick the leaves as needed to garnish salads, soups, and other foods.
Coriander

Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*) is a grown mainly for its aromatic seeds. The fresh foliage of coriander is also used in cooking and is called "cilantro."

When the tiny fruits mature and turn brown—about three months after seeding—remove them from the plant and dry them on a screen. Once dried, thresh the seeds and store them in a dry, airtight container.

Dill

Dill (*Anethum graveolens*) is a flavoring plant that gives dill pickles their name. It is a strong-smelling, fennel-like plant with yellow flowers that develop into fruiting structures. The fruiting tops, leaves, and stems may be used fresh or dried.

Fennel

The term "fennel" is confusing because there are two kinds. Common fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) is grown for its shoots, leaves, and seeds, used as flavoring agents in foods. Florence fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare var. azoricum*) is grown mainly for its thickened, bulbous leaf base, which is eaten as a cooked vegetable.

Except for the swollen, above-ground base of the leaves on Florence fennel, the two are very similar in appearance and their licorice-like flavoring. The plants looks like dill, with narrow, fine leaves, bright yellowish-green hollow stems, and umbrella-like seed structures.

Garlic

Garlic (*Allium sativum*) is similar to onion, except that instead of producing a single bulbous stem, it produces bulb made up of a group of spicy, pungent cloves. Growing garlic is similar to growing onions.

The suggested planting time is October through January. Plant garlic by dividing the bulb and planting the cloves.

Ginger

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) is a perennial plant which produces well from Homestead to Pensacola. It grows from thick underground rhizomes that are very aromatic.

Harvest the roots about a year after planting, when the stalks die down. After cleaning, scraping, boiling, and peeling the roots, dry them in the hot sun for about a week.
**Lovage**

Lovage (*Levisticum officinale*) is a perennial that smells, tastes, and looks like celery leaves. The leaves and stems are used fresh as needed. Other useful parts are seeds and oil extracted from the roots.

**Parsley**

Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) grows well in Florida gardens. The leaves are used fresh or dried as flavoring or a decorative garnish. The rooting types are useful as a cooked vegetable, particularly in soups.

**Rosemary**

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) is a hardy perennial with a spicy aroma. Small pink flowers form in the second or third year. The mildly bitter-tasting leaves are used in cooking, fresh or dried.

**Sage**

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*) is a hardy perennial grayish-green, oblong leaves. Purple flowers bloom in the second year. The leaves can be used fresh or dried. In the landscape, sage is an attractive, low-growing border plant.

**Thyme**

Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*), a perennial, has a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Usually, it is a low-growing plant with tiny, gray-green leaves. Purplish flowers are formed at the ends of the stems.

**Location**

Only a small amount of space is required for an herb garden because you will only need a few plants of each type of herb. No matter what size, an organized garden can make the plants easier to care for. Perennial herbs live from year to year, so group these plants together where they will not be disturbed by tilling or digging in the rest of the garden. Annual herbs also may be grouped together so that you can easily replant each year.

**Propagation**

Most annual and biennial herbs are grown from seed rather than transplants. Perennials, however, grow best when they are started in plant beds or boxes using seed or cuttings, then transplanted into the garden or growing containers.
Preparation & Care

Most herbs will grow under the same sunlight and soil conditions as vegetables. Check our vegetable gardening guide for more specific information about soil preparation, liming, fertilizing, and watering.

Some herbs are sensitive to soil moisture conditions and need special care. Sage, rosemary, and thyme require a well-drained, slightly moist soil, while parsley and chervil grow best in damp soil. Herbs are shallow-rooting, so adding organic matter to sandy soils will be beneficial.

Keep in mind that some herbs tend to grow rapidly and become weeds if allowed.

Harvesting & Curing

Depending on the herb, its seeds, leaves, flowering tops, or roots are used for flavoring purposes. The flavor comes from oil contained in these parts. Flavors are retained longer if the herbs are harvested at the right time and properly cured and stored.

Leaves

Young, tender leaves can be gathered and used fresh at any time during the season. To save the leaves for later use, harvest them when the plants begin to flower. Dry the leaves in a well-ventilated, darkened room. If the leaves are dusty or gritty, wash them in cold water and drain them thoroughly before drying.

Seeds

Harvest seeds when the plants are mature or when their color changes from green to brown. You may want to leave a few of the annual herbs undisturbed to so they flower and mature seeds for planting the next season.

Dry the seeds thoroughly before storing them to prevent molding, loss of quality, or loss of viability for planting. After curing the seeds for several days in an airy room, dry them in the sun for a day or two.

Storage

When the leaves or seeds are dry, remove stems and any other debris. Pack the herbs in suitable containers; glass, metal, or cardboard containers that can be closed tightly will preserve the aroma and flavor. Glass jars should be painted or stored in a dark room to prevent the green leaves from being bleached by light.

For more information about herbs or gardening in general, contact your county Extension office.

Excerpted and adapted from:

J. Stephens, Herbs in the Florida Garden (CIR570), Horticultural Sciences Department (rev. 6/2011).
Hello everybody. Welcome back to Harvest Gold!

I am so glad September is finally here, and the weather is starting to cool down a bit. This has been one long, hot summer! I imagine a lot of us have either started, or are getting ready to start, our fall gardens. In many parts of the country, “fall” and “garden” are two words that are not usually heard together, because further north, “spring” is the time to plant your “garden”, whereas “fall” is the time to “harvest”. (We are so blessed here in Florida to be able to plant and harvest year round!)

In more northern areas, the harvest season reaches its peak in September and October. Many refer to the full moon closest to the autumnal equinox as the “Harvest Moon.” The Harvest Moon usually occurs in September, but in one out of every three years, it appears in early October. The name “Harvest Moon” itself goes back to the Native Americans, who had a proper name for each full moon of the year. The Harvest Moon gets its name from the fact that not only did it occur near the peak of the harvest season, but due to its brightness, it allowed farmers to work late into the night to harvest their crops. (This year, the Full Harvest Moon occurs on September 29th, at 11:19 P.M.) As a side note, the first full moon after the Harvest Moon was known to the Native Americans as the Hunter’s Moon, because it allowed hunters to track and kill their prey at night, enabling them to stockpile meat for the long winter ahead.

Although fall was a time of hard work in preparation for the coming winter, it was also considered a time of celebration and thanksgiving in commemoration of the harvest. Throughout history, many communities and cultures organized fall festivals to coincide with the end of the harvest. These celebrations involved the entire community, and were fun for all ages. Many involved church services, games, barn dances, and different types of activities and competitions for children and adults. And don’t forget the food. After all, what good would a harvest festival be without a great feast prepared from the many and diverse fruits of the harvest?

A lot of these traditions survive to this very day in various forms. Think about it: Halloween, Thanksgiving, and even county fairs, agricultural, 4-H, and other exhibits. Today, these exhibits are my favorite parts of the fair. (I don’t dress up in a cowboy outfit any more, but if it is cool, I do wear a flannel shirt.) All of this is a true celebration of the harvest season in the spirit of the harvest festivals of old; games, various activities, exhibits, competitions, and foods that celebrate our agricultural and cultural heritage.

I heartily encourage all of you to visit the Northeast Florida Fair this year, especially if you have not been in a while. Also, think about entering something for competition or show in the fair. If you do not raise livestock, you could consider entering something in the horticulture, produce, canned and
baked goods, and/or handcrafts exhibits and competitions. It doesn’t have to be anything fancy, and it would be fun. The fair this year will run from October 18-28. Go to the Northeast Florida Fair website at http://www.neflfair.org for more information about the fair, and for the rules pertaining to entering products for exhibit or competition.

One of my favorite fall vegetables is the pumpkin. I have loved pumpkins since I was a little kid. I am not talking about those large, bright orange monstrosities that are sold in stores around Halloween and Thanksgiving that are not good for anything but carving into Jack-O-Lanterns and then throwing in the compost pile. I am talking about the good old fashioned eating pumpkins, the ones that are tan colored, and come in various shapes from true “pumpkin-shaped”, to oblong and pear-shaped. These pumpkins can be used for decoration and carved as Jack-O-Lanterns, but are best used for cooking as pies, soups, pumpkin breads, and so forth. Here in Northeast Florida, depending on when you plant them, pumpkins can be harvested anywhere from June to November.

Pumpkins are native to the New World, and were a major food source for the Native Americans. Native Americans referred to pumpkins, along with maize (corn), and beans, as the “Three Sisters”, and often planted all three together. They noticed that planting these three crops together resulted in a better yield than planting them separately. This method would come to be known as “companion planting”, that is, planting several different types of plants together that benefit from one other. In the case of the “Three Sisters”, the corn supports the bean vines eliminating the need for poles, the beans fix nitrogen into the soil that the other plants utilize, and the pumpkins spread along the ground, with their large leaves creating a “living mulch” that blocks the sunlight, helping to suppress weeds and retain moisture in the ground.

When the Pilgrims arrived and established Plymouth Colony in 1620, the Native Americans introduced them to pumpkins. Pumpkins soon became an important food source for the Pilgrims because they stored well, were nutritious, and would be a major part of the colonists’ diet during the cold, cruel New England winters. Pumpkins were crucial to these early settlers’ survival during these long winter months, and without pumpkins, many might have died of starvation.

One early Pilgrim rhyme (c. 1633) serves as a testimony to how important pumpkins were to the settlers at Plymouth Colony:

“For pottage and puddings and custards and pies,
Our pumpkins and parsnips are common supplies:
We have pumpkins at morning and pumpkins at noon,
If it were not for pumpkins, we should be undone.”

Not a bad tribute for a large winter squash!
And here’s another tribute:

Pumpkins are packed with nutrition. Naturally low in calories (one cup contains only 49 calories), Pumpkins have no cholesterol, fats, or sodium, and are a rich source of dietary fiber, and anti-oxidants. Pumpkins are also a good source of Vitamins A, C, and E, B-complex vitamins such as niacin, thiamin, and Vitamin B-6, as well as minerals such as copper, calcium, potassium, phosphorus, iron, magnesium, and manganese.

Since we are approaching the Feast of the Great Pumpkin, also known as Halloween, I will end with a story about where we get the Halloween Jack-O-Lantern. Jack-O-Lanterns originated in Ireland. According to Irish legend, there was this stingy, mean, ornery old man named Jack. Stingy Jack they called him. He never did a good deed for anyone. He enjoyed going around playing tricks on people, and even played tricks on the Devil himself. When he died, Jack went to Heaven, but St. Peter would not admit him because of the miserable life he had lived on Earth. He then went to the Other Place, but the Devil would have nothing to do with him (because of the tricks Jack had played on the Devil), and so condemned Jack to wander the Earth until Judgment Day. Jack expressed his concern that in his wanderings, he would not be able to see where he was going. At that point, the Devil mockingly tossed him a flaming ember that would never burn out. Jack placed the ember inside of a hollowed-out turnip, fashioning a lan-

tern to guide his way as he wandered endlessly on the Earth. People then began to make their own versions of “Jack’s Lanterns” by carving scary faces into turnips and placing them in windows or near doors to frighten away Stingy Jack and other wandering evil spirits. When Irish settlers arrived in the New World, they found that pumpkins were much more suitable for carving than turnips, and thus the modern Jack-O-Lantern was born.

Well, my friends, I guess that is about enough for today. Before I go, I will leave you with a few Great Pumpkin recipes that my family enjoys this time of year (see following pages): Aunt Henrietta’s Pumpkin Soup, Miss Alice’s Pumpkin Dessert Bread, the ever popular Traditional Pumpkin Pie and Harvest Wild Rice Salad with Pumpkin Vingrette.

Until we meet again, take care, God Bless, and Happy Harvest Moon!

Peace and Goodness,
Joseph
Aunt Henrietta’s Pumpkin Soup

Ingredients
3 Cups All-Purpose Flour
1 Teaspoon Baking Soda
1 Teaspoon Salt
3 Teaspoons Ground Cinnamon
2 Cups Sugar
2 Cups Pumpkin Puree
4 Eggs, Beaten
1 ¼ Cup Mazola Oil or Melted Shortening
½ Cup Pecans, Chopped

Directions
Place all of the dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Mix well with a spoon. Make a deep well in the center of mixture. Into this well, add all the other ingredients, and stir carefully, just enough to dampen all the dry ingredients. Grease and flour loaf pans. Pour mixture into loaf pans (makes about 2 loaves). Pre-heat oven to 350 Degrees Fahrenheit. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until golden brown and a toothpick comes out clean when inserted into loaf.

Note: Do not substitute Pumpkin Pie Filling for Pumpkin Puree above.

Recipe courtesy of Alice Marie Smith

Miss Alice’s Pumpkin Dessert Bread

Ingredients
4 Cups Fresh Pumpkin, Cubed
6 Cups Chicken Stock
1 Cup Onion, Chopped
1 Clove Garlic, Minced
½ Teaspoon Fresh Thyme, Chopped
1 ½ Teaspoons Salt
5 Whole Black Peppercorns, Crushed
½ Cup Heavy Whipping Cream
1 Teaspoon Fresh Parsley

Directions
Wash pumpkin. Remove and discard seeds and pulp. Peel, and cut pumpkin flesh into half inch cubes. Place pumpkin, chicken stock, onion, garlic, thyme, salt, and peppercorns in a pot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Puree soup in small batches, about 1 cup at a time, using a blender or food processor. Return soup to pot and bring to a boil again. Reduce heat to low, and simmer uncovered for another 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in heavy cream. Pour into soup bowls, and garnish with fresh parsley.

Note: Canned Pumpkin Puree (not Pumpkin Pie Filling) may be substituted for the Fresh Pumpkin above.

Recipe courtesy of Mrs. Henrietta Witherspoons
Traditional Pumpkin Pie

Ingredients
1 Cup Pumpkin Puree
2/3 Cup Light Brown Sugar
½ Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
¼ Teaspoon Ground Ginger
¼ Teaspoon Ground Nutmeg
2 Teaspoons Molasses
2 Eggs, Well Beaten
1 ¼ Cups Evaporated Milk
1 Tablespoon Butter, Softened
¼ Teaspoon Salt

Directions
Mix ingredients and pour into an unbaked pie shell. Preheat oven to 450 Degrees Fahrenheit. Bake for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 300 Degrees, and continue to bake for 50 to 60 minutes, or until a silver knife comes out clean when inserted in the filling. Top with Cool-Whip or meringue (optional).

Notes: One Teaspoon Pumpkin Pie Spice may be substituted for Cinnamon, Nutmeg, and Ginger above. Also, do not substitute Pumpkin Pie Filling for Pumpkin Puree above.

Recipe courtesy of Alice Marie Smith

Harvest Wild Rice Salad with Pumpkin Vinaigrette

Ingredients
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1 (6-oz.) package long-grain and wild rice mix
1/2 cup sweetened dried cranberries
1 cup finely chopped celery
3/4 cup chopped green onions
1/4 cup canned pumpkin
1/4 cup white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon honey
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/3 cup olive oil

Directions
Preheat oven to 350°. Bake pecans in a single layer in a shallow pan 8 to 10 minutes or until toasted and fragrant. Prepare rice according to package directions; let cool completely (about 25 minutes). Stir in cranberries, celery, green onions, and toasted pecans. Whisk together canned pumpkin, next 5 ingredients, and 2 Tbsp. water. Gradually whisk in olive oil in a slow, steady stream, whisking until blended. Pour pumpkin vinaigrette over rice mixture; stir gently to coat. Cover and chill 2 to 24 hours. Serve at room temperature. For a quick-and-easy meal, serve over a bed of greens and top with sautéed or grilled chicken.

Recipe courtesy of Kathy Warner
“To Do” List for September

**Citrus:** Depending on citrus fertilizer label, apply fertilizer every six weeks or as directed. Check for citrus insects and disease. Weed as needed. Water as needed. Last month to fertilize citrus.

**Fruit:** Weed as needed.

**Flowers:** For instant color plant marigolds and garden chrysanthemums.

**Bulbs:** Bulbs to plant now include amaryllis, Aztec lily, calla, elephant ears, grape hyacinth, iris, leopard lily, narcissus, snowflake, watsonia, and zephyr lily.

**Roses:** Apply organic materials (same as February). Water, water, water. September 1, apply granular rose fertilizer. September 1, prune back just beyond previous cut (about 1/3 down the stem).

**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. Watch for large patch fungus disease, which attacks lawns when the weather is cool and wet. It is most commonly found in St. Augustine, centipede and Bermuda lawns. The grass dies in roughly circular areas 5 to 6 feet in diameter. In St. Augustine grass, the leaf blades rot where they attach to the runner. Apply an approved lawn fungicide according to label directions.

**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:** Palms should have a “palm special” fertilizer applied over the root system under the spread of the fronds. The configuration should be 8-2-12-4 (N-P-K-Mg). Ideally this would also include manganese, boron, sulfur, etc. with appropriate formulations. Use a slow release fertilizer. If not using slow release, make monthly applications during the warmer months. Many palms are deficient in potassium, in spite of using palm fertilizers. Apply Muriate of Potash to correct this deficiency. 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.

Selected from *Florida Vegetable Guide* by JM Stephens, RA Dunn, G Kidder, D Short, & GW Simone, *Month-by-Month Gardening in Florida* by Tom MacCubbin
**Citrus:** Check for citrus insects and disease. Apply horticulture oil if insects are detected. Weed as needed.

**Fruit:** Weed as needed. Apply azalea fertilizer to blueberry shrubs at 1/2 pound per 3’ of shrub.

**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.

**Roses:** Continue spray program. Water, water, water. Cut and remove spent blooms. Fertilize with liquid fertilizer (same as March).

**Herbs:** Anise, basil, bay laurel, borage, caraway, cardamom, chervil, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, garlic, 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 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 large patch fungus disease, chinch bugs, sod webworms, army worms, and mole crickets.

**Trees:** You can remove diseased or dead limbs any time of year. If you plant a tree this month, remember water is the most important part of early tree care. Be sure to dig the hole wider than deep. Do not fertilize now, wait until next 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 ensure good drainage. Use pine straw to reduce weed problems and slugs. Beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, Chinese cabbage, collards, kohlrabi, bulbning onions, bunching onions, radishes, spinach, and turnips may also be planted this month.

*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*
Q: I have a short, dark green plant popping up in several places in my yard. It has red berries hanging on it. Can you tell me what it is?

A: Thanks for bringing samples into the office of this plant as it makes it so much easier to identify. The plant is called coral ardisia, Ardisia crenata. It is a non-native, invasive plant which is generally found in clumps and goes by the common name of Christmas berry. It used to be sold in nurseries but now Coral ardisia is classified as an invasive and I know of no legitimate nurseries who would sell it. The “invasive” classification is the result of Coral ardisia finding its way into various wildlife areas replacing native food habitats. Birds and raccoons disperse the berries into wooded areas. This plant easily grows back after fires and cutting it to the ground will not destroy it. The best way to manage it is to cut the stem and paint it immediately with a non-selective herbicide such as glyphosate. It can be controlled by 2-4D but be sure you read the herbicide label before applying any of the chemicals mentioned. Removal of red berries would be beneficial to prevent the plant from spreading to other areas. Hand pulling smaller seedlings works well too. However, Coral ardisia has the potential to reach heights up to 6 feet; it is too difficult to pull tall specimens. We appreciate your interest in getting rid of this pesky, invasive plant from your landscape. The attached publication is from the Center of Aquatic and Invasive Plants, which contain more information and several photos of different stages to help identify the plant. [http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/42](http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/42)

For more Garden Talk” questions answered by Ms. Jordi, see our website at [nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/GardenTalk - Coral Ardisia by Rebecca Jordi](http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/GardenTalk - Coral Ardisia by Rebecca Jordi)