Florida’s warm climate allows gardeners to choose from a wide variety of plant bulbs. With proper care, these plants will thrive and produce beautiful flowers year after year.

What Is a Bulb?
Bulbs are thick underground storage organs that help plants survive tough weather conditions, such as drought or cold. Bulbs are usually the plants’ reproductive organs as well.

Not all bulbous plants have true bulbs. Others have corms, tubers, tuberous roots, or rhizomes. In this article the terms “bulb” and “bulbous plants” will refer to all bulbous plants, not just true bulbs.

Choosing a Bulb
Florida’s climate lets growers raise a variety of tropical and subtropical bulbs in their garden for bedding plants or cut flowers. However, common northern species such as tulips, hyacinths, and some lilies do not do well this far south.

The types and varieties listed below are bulbs that do well in Florida. See Bulbs for Florida for specific growing and care information.

The Planting Site
Sunlight & Shade
Most bulbs thrive in a sunny location, but some (such as caladiums) do best in partial shade. Avoid planting bulbs in heavily shaded areas to prevent thin, spindly growth and poor flowering and foliage color.

Drainage
Bulbs require well-drained soil, so bed preparation is important. If the site does not drain properly, build raised beds filled with soil that has good drainage. You can also improve soil drainage by installing drainage tiles or digging ditches to carry water to lower ground.

Soil & Fertilizer
Till and amend the soil by adding a 3- to 4-inch layer of organic matter (such as peat, compost, or well-rotted manure) and 1 to 1 ½ pounds of 12-

Bulbs for Florida:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>African Lily</th>
<th>Caladium</th>
<th>Elephant Ears</th>
<th>Lily</th>
<th>Society Garlic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Amaryllis</td>
<td>Calla</td>
<td>Gladiolus</td>
<td>Walking Iris</td>
<td>Spider Lily</td>
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<td>Amazon Lily</td>
<td>Canna</td>
<td>Gloriosa Lily</td>
<td>Moraea</td>
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<td>Blood Lily</td>
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<td>Butterfly Lily</td>
<td>Day Lily</td>
<td>Kaffir Lily (Clivia)</td>
<td>Snowflake</td>
<td>Zephyr Lily</td>
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4-8 fertilizer or an equivalent amount of other complete fertilizers per 100 square feet of bed.

Particular bulbous plants may require additional soil preparation. For more information, contact your county Extension office.

**Planting**

Once you have prepared the site, you can plant the bulbs. The amount of space between bulbs will vary with the species and the effect you want to create.

Spacing and depth recommendations are similar for many bulbous plants, but some may require more room than others. Dig holes with a trowel or small shovel, and place bulbs in the holes with the points facing up. Then firm soil around and over the bulbs, and water them.

**General Care**

In order to have healthy plants and beautiful flowers, follow these general care recommendations (for specific information, see Bulbs for Florida):

Control weeds through mulching.

Fertilize with a complete fertilizer (12-4-8) once or twice during the growing season.

Keep the soil around the bulbs moderately moist at all times (except when you are drying off bulbs at the end of the season).

Remove dead blooms before they produce seeds. Seed set will reduce flowering the next season.

**Digging & Replanting**

Many bulbs grow best if left in the ground year after year. Others may become crowded and bloom poorly.

Digging them up and replanting will promote regular flowering and larger flowers.

Tropical bulbous plants in North Florida should be dug and stored to prevent injury from cold winter temperatures.

After digging up bulbs, store them for a few days in a dry, well-ventilated place away from the sun. Remove the roots, dead leaves, and soil, and place the clean bulbs in a single layer in trays to store them.

**Propagation**

Bulbous plants are easily propagated vegetatively.

**True Bulbs**

True bulbs develop bulblets (miniature bulbs). Once the bulblets are full-size, they are called offsets. Separate the offsets from the original bulb and use them as additional plantings.
The number of growing seasons required for the offsets to reach flowering size will vary with the kind of bulb and the size of the offset.

**Bulbous Plants**

Corms produce new corms on top of the old corms. Miniature corms (called cormels) are produced between the old and new corms. Cormels can be separated from the mother corms and stored along with the new corms over winter for planting in the spring. New corms usually produce flowers the first season, but cormels require two to three years of growth to reach flowering size.

Tubers, tuberous roots, and rhizomes are propagated by cutting them into sections that contain at least one bud each.

**Seeds**

Bulbous plants will also produce seed that will grow into flowering plants. This method of propagation is not recommended, however, since many varieties today are hybrids. Flower color and type may be highly variable in seeded plants, and results cannot be predicted.

**Diseases & Pests**

Bulbous plants are susceptible to damage by many diseases and pests.

**Viruses**

Insect-transmitted viruses are difficult to control. Symptoms of virus infection include stunted growth, mottled or striped leaves, and malformed foliage and flowers. The only treatment for viruses is to destroy infected plants and to control insect hosts.

**Rotting Bulbs & Roots**

Poor drainage can promote the growth of soilborne bacteria and fungi and lead to bulb rot. Once the pathogen has invaded the root zone, little can be done to control the disease. Increase the soil drainage and remove all infected plants to keep the disease from spreading to healthy plants.

**Chlorosis**

Chlorosis (yellowing of foliage) is a common symptom caused by lack of nitrogen, iron, zinc, magnesium or manganese. Chlorosis may be caused by an actual nutritional deficiency in the soil, or the roots may be unable to absorb these nutrients because of poor aeration, disease, or nematodes.

Your local Extension office can help you determine the cause of foliage chlorosis.

**Insect Damage**

Insects directly damage bulb plants and allow disease organisms into plant tissue. Bulbous plants are susceptible to chewing insects, aphids, thrips, spider mites, mealybugs, and nematodes. If pest infestations are severe or large numbers of plants are involved, chemical control may be needed. For recommendations on pesticide selection and application, as well as non-chemical control options, contact your county Extension office.

**Wildlife**

Moles, pocket gophers, rabbits, and squirrels can all damage bulbs and bulb-like structures. Contact your county Extension office to learn about the best control methods for wildlife damage.

**More Information**

For more detailed information on the best bulbs to plant in your area, how to grow bulbs, pest management, and other questions, contact your local Extension agent.

**Program Announcements**

**Landscape Matters 10AM-11AM**

**Compost**
Wednesday November 5, 2014  
Master Gardener Joanne Roach  
Yulee Satellite Office  
86026 Pages Dairy Road  
Yulee, FL

**Cold Hardy Citrus**  
**Wednesday January 7, 2015**  
**Rebecca Jordi**

Yulee Satellite Office  
86026 Pages Dairy Road  
Yulee, FL

**Roses**
Wednesday February 4, 2015  
Master Gardener Carol Ann Atwood  
Master Gardener Paul Gosnell  
Demonstration Garden  
Nassau County Govt. Complex  
96135 Nassau Place Yulee, FL

**Crash Course in Florida Gardening**

Saturdays  
February 14 and 21, 2015  
8:30AM-12:30PM

Yulee Satellite Office  
86026 Pages Dairy Rd.  
Yulee, FL

Registration deadline is Friday, February 6, 2015.  
Cost is $50 per person or $75 per couple. Notebook will be provided. Class will contain information on Florida Friendly plants, annuals, perennials, attracting wildlife, trees, shrubs, lawngrass, palms and citrus. Appropriate watering and fertilization methods will be discussed as well as proper pruning and plant selection.

Phone 904-879-1019 and ask for Winifred Favors or e-mail rljordi@ufl.edu to enroll.

Checks should be made out to Nassau County Extension.

**Plant Clinics**

Monday Nov 3  
Monday Nov 17  
Yulee Satellite Office  
86026 Pages Dairy Road  
Yulee, FL

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.

**No plant clinics in December**
Hello Everybody!

Welcome back to Harvest Gold! November is here, and the Holidays are upon us. And you all know what that means—it’s time for the Third Annual Master Gardeners’ Holiday Feast! This year, I have decided to devote the first part of my column to recipes that would make up a good menu for a delicious and memorable Holiday Brunch. After that, you will find a few varied and sundry Holiday recipes, and finally, some delectable Holiday desserts. Thanks to all the Master Gardeners who contributed their family favorites for our enjoyment. As always, all vegetables, herbs, fruits, and nuts marked with an asterisk (*) in the following recipes can be successfully grown here in Nassau County.

Since this is my last column of the year, I would like to wish you all a most Blessed and Peaceful Holiday Season. Thank you for the time we have spent together over the past twelve months, and until next year, Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, God Bless, and Happy Harvesting!

Peace and Goodness,

Joseph
Ingredients

- ½ Cup (1 Stick) Butter or Margarine
- 12 Ounces Cooked Country Ham (Chopped)
- 3 Garlic* Cloves (Finely Chopped)
- 1 Leek* Bulb or Onion* (Finely Chopped)
- ½ Cup Christian Brothers Brandy
- 2 Cups Whipping Cream
- ¼ Teaspoon Cayenne Pepper*
- 1 Teaspoon Chopped Fresh Sage* (Or 1/3 Teaspoon Dried)
- 1 ½ Pounds Fresh Small Shrimp (Peeled and Deveined)
- 3 Tablespoons Fresh Italian Parsley* (Chopped)
- 8 Puff Pastry Patty Shells (Baked According to Instructions)

Directions

Melt butter in a large skillet over high heat. Add country ham, and sauté quickly. Add garlic and leek. Sauté until the leek begins to wilt (about 1 minute). Remove from heat. Stir in the brandy. Return to heat. Stir in the whipping cream, cayenne pepper, and sage. Cook until thickened, stirring constantly (about 3 minutes). Add the shrimp. Simmer for 2 minutes, or until the shrimp turn light pink. Stir in the parsley, and serve on cooked patty shells.

Notes

Serve with champagne, and accept compliments graciously!

Recipe courtesy of Kathy Warner.
Becky’s Breakfast Casserole

Ingredients

• 2 Packages of Shredded Hash Brown Potatoes*
• 3 Cups of Sharp Cheddar Cheese (Shredded)
• 1 Package of Cooked Crumbled Sausage
• ½ Finely Diced Yellow Onion* (Sautéed)
• 1 Pound of Bacon (Cooked and Chopped)
• 2 Cups of Milk
• 8 Large Eggs
• ¼ Teaspoon of Cajun Seasoning
• Salt and Pepper (To Taste)

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 Degrees Fahrenheit. Spray a 9x13 inch baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside. Brown onions in butter until tender. Remove onions from pan, and cook sausage in the same pan until brown. Add onions back into pan with sausage. Chop up the bacon, and set aside. Press hash browns into the bottom and slightly up the edge of baking dish. Add shredded cheese (reserve ½ cup cheese for topping), then add the sausage, onion, and bacon. Beat together milk, eggs, Cajun seasoning, salt, and pepper. Slowly pour this mixture over the entire dish. Top with remaining cheese. Bake at 350 Degrees Fahrenheit for 45 minutes to one hour, or until a knife inserted into the center comes out clean. Allow to set about 5 minutes before slicing. Enjoy!

Notes

This dish is so good when family visits. You can prepare it the day before, refrigerate overnight, and pop it in the oven while everyone else is asleep. Your guests will wake up to a wonderful aroma. This breakfast casserole is great served with Monkey Bread.

Recipe courtesy of Becky Jordi.
Vicki’s Biscuit and Sausage Gravy Breakfast Pie

Ingredients

• 1 Package Refrigerated Large Biscuits (Such as Grands 8 Count)
• 16 Ounces Bulk Sausage
• 2 ½ Cups Milk
• 3 Tablespoons Butter
• ¼ Cup Flour
• 1 Teaspoon Salt
• ½ Teaspoon Pepper

Directions

Brown sausage—do not leave any large lumps. Set aside. Preheat oven to 350 Degrees Fahrenheit. Cut biscuits into quarters. Place half of the cut up biscuits on the bottom of a 1 ½ quart casserole dish. Bake for 10 minutes. Melt butter over medium heat in a medium sized sauce pan. Add flour (make a roux), and whisk until there are no lumps. Cook roux over medium heat about 2 minutes, stirring constantly. While whisking, add milk slowly, making sure there are no lumps. Add salt and pepper. Cook sauce until it begins to thicken. Add the cooked sausage. Remove the partially baked biscuits from the oven. Pour sausage gravy on top of the biscuit crust. Place remaining biscuits on top of the casserole. Return to oven and bake 25 to 30 minutes, or until top biscuits are golden brown. Serves 6 to 8.

Notes

This is an amazing dish! It is really great the day before or the day after a holiday. In fact, it is a great meal anytime.

Recipe courtesy of Vicki Martin.
Candace’s Farmer’s Casserole

Ingredients

• 3 Cups Frozen Hash Brown Potatoes*
• ¼ Cup Shredded Cheddar Cheese (Or Pepper Jack for a Slight Kick)
• 1 Cup Diced Cooked Ham, Sausage, or Canadian Bacon (Or a Combination)
• ¼ Cup Green Onions* (Chopped)
• 4 Eggs (Beaten)
• 1 Can (12 Ounces) Evaporated Milk
• ¼ Teaspoon Ground Black Pepper
• 1/8 Teaspoon Salt

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 Degrees Fahrenheit. Grease a two quart baking dish. Arrange hash brown potatoes evenly in bottom of prepared dish. Sprinkle with cheese, ham, and green onions. In a medium bowl, mix eggs, evaporated milk, pepper, and salt. Pour egg mixture over potato mixture in dish. (Cover dish, and refrigerate for several hours or overnight if desired.) Bake uncovered for 40 to 45 minutes (55 to 60 minutes if made ahead and chilled), or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Let stand for five minutes before serving. Makes 12 servings.

Notes

This is a great recipe for those who have a house full of family and need to give them a hearty breakfast on Christmas morning.

Recipe courtesy of Candace Bridgewater.
Kathy’s Cheese-Sausage Squares

Ingredients
• 1 Pound Bulk Sausage
• 2 Eggs (Beaten)
• 2 Cups Cheddar Cheese (Grated)
• 2 Packages Crescent Rolls
• Sesame Seeds (To Taste)

Directions
Cook sausage until done. Drain, and set aside to cool. Line a 9x13 inch dish with one package of crescent rolls. Mix eggs, sausage, and grated cheese, and spread over crescent rolls. Top egg/sausage/cheese mixture with second package of rolls. Brush melted butter on top, and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake according to baking directions on packages of rolls. Serve.

Notes
This is a great recipe for brunch—either cut into large sections and served with fruit for breakfast, or cut into small squares for an appetizer or snack. It is a great dish to take to a get-together where everyone brings something to share. The sausage/cheese/egg mixture can be made the day or evening before a gathering, refrigerated, and assembled right before baking.

Recipe courtesy of Kathy Stevenson.
Kathy’s Roasted Parmesan Cauliflower with Fresh Herbs

Ingredients
• 12 Cups Cauliflower* Florets (About 2 Heads)
• 1 ½ Tablespoons Olive Oil
• 1 Tablespoon Fresh Parsley* (Chopped)
• 2 Teaspoons Fresh Thyme* (Chopped)
• 2 Teaspoons Fresh Tarragon* (Chopped)
• 3 Garlic* Cloves (Minced)
• ¼ Cup Grated Fresh Parmesan Cheese
• 2 Tablespoons Fresh Lemon* Juice
• ½ Teaspoon Salt
• ¼ Teaspoon Pepper

Directions
Preheat oven to 450 Degrees Fahrenheit. Place cauliflower in a large roasting pan or jelly-roll pan. Drizzle with oil. Toss well to coat. Bake for 20 minutes, or until tender and browned, stirring every 5 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley, thyme, tarragon, and garlic. Bake 5 additional minutes. Combine cauliflower mixture, parmesan cheese, lemon juice, and salt and pepper in a large bowl. Toss well and serve.

Notes
This is an easy, delicious, and healthy appetizer. Dried herbs may be substituted if you do not have fresh on hand. Use about half the amount of dried herbs as fresh, or sprinkle to taste. Also, you can use any fresh herbs you have growing for this roasted cauliflower dish. While parsley, tarragon, and thyme make a nice combination, you can also try sage*, chives*, and rosemary* for this recipe.

Recipe courtesy of Kathy Warner.
Beverly’s Cornbread Salad

Ingredients

• Cornbread
• 1 Box (8 ½ Ounce) Cornbread Mix
• 1 Can Chopped Green Chilies*
• 1/8 Teaspoon Cumin
• 1/8 Teaspoon Oregano*
• 1 Pinch of Sage*

Dressing

• 1 Cup Mayonnaise
• 1 Cup Sour Cream
• 1 Package Ranch Dressing Mix

Vegetable Mixture

• 1 Can Pinto Beans* (Drained)
• 1 Can Whole-Kernel Corn* (Drained)
• 1 Large Tomato* (Chopped)
• 1 Cup Green Pepper* (Chopped)
• 1 Cup Onion* (Chopped)
• 2 Cups Spinach* (Chopped)
• 1 Cup Cheddar Cheese (Shredded)

Directions

Prepare cornbread according to directions on box. Stir in green chilies, cumin, oregano, and sage. Bake as directed. Remove from oven, and set aside to cool. Mix together mayonnaise, sour cream, and ranch dressing mix until smooth. Set aside. In a large bowl, combine pinto beans, corn, tomato, green pepper, onion, spinach, and cheddar cheese. Add dressing, and mix well. Set aside. Crumble ½ of the cooled cornbread into a large casserole dish. Top with veggie/dressing mixture. Sprinkle remaining crumbled cornbread on top. Serve.

Notes

I like to have this quick and easy salad on hand as family arrives during the holidays. For a delicious alternative, mix in 5 to 6 strips of cooked bacon (crumbled), or diced leftover chicken with the vegetable/dressing mix. Everyone will love it.

Recipe courtesy of Beverly Stormoen.
Kathy’s Trio of Mashed Roots

Ingredients
• 6 Carrots*
• 4 Large Parsnips*
• 3 Turnips*
• ½ Cup Butter
• ½ Cup Heavy Whipping Cream
• ¼ Teaspoon Ground Nutmeg
• 1 Pinch Cayenne Pepper*
• Salt and Freshly Ground Black Pepper (To Taste)

Directions
Peel and chop carrots, parsnips, and turnips, put into a pot and cover with cold, lightly salted water. Bring to a boil and cook until a fork easily breaks apart the vegetables (about 25 minutes). Drain. Return vegetables to the pot. Mix butter, cream, nutmeg, cayenne pepper, salt, and black pepper into vegetables, and roughly mash together with a potato masher until vegetables are broken down but individual colors are still visible. Lightly brown in oven if desired.

Notes
This makes a tasty holiday side dish. For a little variation on the recipe, potatoes could be added to, or substituted for, any of the root vegetables above.

Recipe courtesy of Kathy Warner.
Dottie’s Spinach Tarte

Ingredients

• 1 Pound Fresh Spinach*
• 2 Tablespoons Butter
• 1 ½ Cups Onion* (Chopped)
• 3 Eggs (Lightly Beaten)
• 4 Ounces Fresh Mushrooms (Sliced)
• ½ Pint Yogurt
• ½ Pint Sour Cream
• 1 Tablespoon Worcestershire Sauce
• 1/8 Teaspoon Nutmeg
• 4 Ounces Sharp Cheddar Cheese (Grated)
• Salt (To Taste)

Directions

Cook spinach in a bit of water, covered, until wilted. Drain thoroughly. Sauté onion in butter. Combine all ingredients in a 9x12 inch baking dish. Bake at 350 Degrees Fahrenheit for 40 minutes, or until eggs are set and mixture is firm. Serve hot or cold.

Notes

This recipe will make about 30 squares for an hors d'oeuvre, or serves 6 to 8 as a side dish. Make beforehand, and refrigerate before cooking if desired. Love to all, Dottie.

Recipe courtesy of Dottie Kelley.
Beverly’s Cranberry Relish

Ingredients

- 1 Bag Cranberries
- ¾ Cup Sugar
- ¼ Cup Water
- Zest of Half a Lemon*
- 1 Inch Piece of Fresh Ginger* (Grated)
- 2 Tablespoons Orange* Marmalade
- 1 Tablespoon Grand Marnier Liqueur

Directions

Combine cranberries, sugar, water, lemon zest, ginger, and marmalade. Mix well, and cook for 5 to 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat, and stir in liqueur. Serve at room temperature.

Notes

This dish is a long-time family favorite. I hope you enjoy it as much as my family does.

Recipe courtesy of Beverly Stormoen.
Becky’s Monkey Bread

Ingredients
• 4 Cans Refrigerator Biscuits (About 40)
• 1 ½ Tablespoons Cinnamon
• ½ Cup Butter
• 1 Cup White Sugar
• 1 Cup Brown Sugar (Packed)
• ½ Cup Chopped Pecans*, Raisins, and/or Coconut (Optional)

Directions
Cut each biscuit into four pieces. Pour sugar and cinnamon into a plastic bag, and mix well. Add biscuit pieces, several at a time, and shake to coat well. Place pieces in a buttered tube or Bundt pan until all are used, sprinkling each layer with nuts, raisins, and/or coconut. Bring brown sugar and butter to a boil in a saucepan. Cool for 10 minutes, then pour over top of biscuits. Bake at 350 Degrees Fahrenheit for 40 to 45 minutes. Allow to cool for 15 minutes before removing from pan. Turn upside down to serve.

Notes
This bread is super easy to make, and sooo good. I always add nuts and raisins to mine even though the recipe says they are optional.

Recipe courtesy of Becky Jordi.
Bea’s Bundt Pan Biscuits

Ingredients
- 1 Package of Refrigerated Biscuits (Grands are Preferred)
- ½ Stick of Butter (Or More to Taste)

Directions
Preheat a Bundt pan in oven set to 300 Degrees Fahrenheit. Place cold butter in Bundt pan prior to pre-heating. Remove pan when butter is melted, and the oven reaches 300 Degrees. (While oven is pre-heating, cut biscuits into quarters.) Increase oven temperature to 350 Degrees. Place biscuit pieces in the melted butter. You will have two layers of biscuit pieces—don't be too neat! Bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Variations include sprinkling the biscuits with poppy seeds*, fresh herbs*, or herb seasonings of your choice before baking. For a garlic* bread variation, mince 3 cloves of garlic, combine with ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, and 1 teaspoon of Italian seasoning (optional), and toss with biscuit pieces before placing in Bundt pan. Bake as above.

Notes
Most folks don't need extra butter on the table for this "bread." I've also made this recipe by not cutting the biscuits into pieces, and just standing them up on their sides. Unfortunately, this recipe is too easy to make, and if you don't have discipline, you will eat, eat, and eat! Enjoy!

Recipe courtesy of Bea Walker.
Joseph’s Sculpted
Holiday Cranberries

Ingredients
- 1 Can of Ocean Spray Cranberry Sauce (Jellied)
- 1 Sprig of Parsley* (For Garnish, Optional)

Directions
Open the can of cranberry sauce with a can opener (hand held or electric, it makes no difference). Turn the can upside down, and empty into a bowl. Top with a sprig of parsley if so desired. Voilà—you have Holiday Cranberries sculpted in the shape of a can!

Notes
When I am invited to a Thanksgiving dinner or Christmas party, I am usually expected to bring something to contribute to the meal. Since I can’t cook (the first time I tried, I almost burned down the house), I try to come up with something that even I cannot mess up. This is what I usually decide on. I hope you enjoy this easy, tasty, and beautiful Holiday dish.

*Recipe courtesy of Joseph R. Smith.*
Aunt Henrietta's Holiday Eggnog

Ingredients

- 6 Large Eggs (Separated)
- 3/4 Cup Sugar
- 2 Cups Heavy Whipping Cream
- 2 Cups Whole Milk
- 1 3/4 Cups Wild Turkey Kentucky Bourbon (To Taste)
- 1 Cup Christian Brothers Brandy (To Taste)
- Ground Nutmeg (For Dusting)

Directions

Beat egg yolks in a large bowl with an electric mixer, gradually adding sugar until the mixture is pale yellow. Set aside. In another bowl, beat cream until it holds soft peaks. Stir milk into egg-yolk mixture, then, using a large rubber spatula, fold in the whipped cream. Shortly before serving, gently stir in the bourbon and brandy. Transfer to a punch bowl. Beat the egg whites in a bowl with an electric mixer until they hold soft peaks, and then carefully fold into the eggnog. Sprinkle the top with nutmeg. Serve immediately.

Notes

This recipe will certainly get you into the Christmas spirit! I have made it for quite a few family gatherings and holiday Church socials, and it is always the first libation to vanish!

Recipe courtesy of Mrs. Henrietta Witherspoons.
Vicki’s Lemon-Rosemary-Garlic Chicken and Potatoes

Ingredients

• ½ Cup Oil
• 1/3 Cup Fresh Lemon* Juice
• 1 (3.5 Ounce) Jar Capers (Drained)
• 2 Lemons* (Sliced)
• 10 Garlic* Cloves (Smashed)
• 3 Tablespoons Fresh Rosemary* Leaves
• 2 Teaspoons Kosher Salt
• 1 Teaspoon Freshly Ground Black Pepper
• 3 Tablespoons Olive Oil
• 6 Chicken Legs (About 1 ½ Pounds)
• 4 Skin-On, Bone-In Chicken Thighs (About 2 ½ Pounds)
• 2 Pounds Small Red Potatoes* (Sliced)
• Crusty French Bread

Directions

Preheat oven to 450 Degrees Fahrenheit. Stir together oil, lemon juice, capers, sliced lemons, garlic, rosemary, salt, and pepper in a medium bowl. Set aside. Place a roasting pan on stove top over 2 burners (I use a large skillet, and then put chicken into a roasting pan to bake). Add 3 Tablespoons of olive oil, and heat over medium-high heat. Sprinkle chicken with desired amount of salt and pepper, and place skin sides down in pan. Add potatoes. Cook 9 to 10 minutes, or until chicken is browned. Turn chicken (this is where I put the chicken and potatoes into the roasting pan as I turn them), and pour lemon mixture over chicken. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, or until chicken is done. Serve chicken with sauce and French bread.

Notes

This is a delicious dish to serve at any festive occasion. Hope you all enjoy it.

Recipe courtesy of Vicki Martin.
**Libby’s Hot Turkey Salad**

**Ingredients**
- 4 Cups Cooked Turkey (Diced)
- ¼ Cup Milk
- 1 Can Cream of Celery* Soup
- 1 Can Cream of Mushroom Soup
- ½ Pint Sour Cream
- 1 Large Can Mushrooms
  (Fresh Mushrooms May Be Substituted)
- ½ Package Pepperidge Farm Dressing

**Directions**
Combine the turkey, milk, soups, sour cream, and mushrooms. Pour into a 9x13 inch buttered casserole dish. Sauté ½ package of Pepperidge Farm dressing in lots of butter, and sprinkle on top of the casserole. Bake for 45 minutes at 350 Degrees Fahrenheit. Serves 5.

**Notes**
This hot turkey salad is very nice made out of left over Thanksgiving or Christmas turkey.

*Recipe courtesy of Libby Wilkes.*

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**Beverly’s Radishes, Peas, and Onions**

**Ingredients**
- 1 Large Onion* (Chopped)
- 2 Large Bags of Radishes* (Halved or Quartered)
- ¼ Teaspoon Black Pepper
- ½ Teaspoon Sugar
- 2 Tablespoons Water
- 2 Cups Frozen Peas*
- Parsley* (To Taste)

**Directions**
Sauté onion in oil spray for about 10 minutes. Add radishes and pepper. Cook for about 5 more minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in sugar and water, and sauté until tender-crisp. Add peas until peas are heated, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat. Top with parsley and serve.

**Notes**
I like to serve this because it is light and colorful—perfect for the holidays.

*Recipe courtesy of Beverly Stormoen.*
Libby’s Festive Tex-Mex Appetizer

Ingredients

- 3 Ripe Avocados* (Medium-Sized)
- 2 Tablespoons Lemon* Juice
- ½ Teaspoon Salt
- ¼ Teaspoon Black Pepper
- 1 Large Clove Garlic* (Crushed)
- 1 Cup Sour Cream
- ½ Cup Mayonnaise
- 1 Package Taco Seasoning Mix
- 2 Cans (10 ½ Ounce) Jalapeño Bean Dip
- 2 Cans (3 ½ Ounce) Chopped Ripe Olives*
- 1 Large Bunch Green Onions* (Chopped)
- 3 Medium Tomatoes* (Chopped)
- 8 Ounces Sharp Cheddar Cheese (Shredded)
- 1 Large Package Round Tortilla Chips

Directions

Peel, pit, and mash avocados with lemon juice, salt, pepper, and garlic. Set aside. Combine sour cream, mayonnaise, and taco mix in a bowl. Set aside. To assemble, use a 12 inch round plate or platter. Place a layer of bean dip on the bottom. Spread on avocado mixture next. Then spread sour cream mixture on top of the avocado mixture. Sprinkle with a layer of ripe olives, then a layer of onions, and then finally a layer of tomatoes (save a few of each for a top garnish). Cover all ingredients with cheddar cheese. Sprinkle with reserved olives, tomatoes, and onions. Refrigerate for about 2 hours. Serve with tortilla chips.

Notes

This Tex-Mex Appetizer is very easy to prepare, and perfect for a New Year’s Eve party. I got the recipe from a special friend who grew up in Texas. She prepared this for us when we played bridge at her home. We all loved it. I often make it for friends, but sometimes substitute regular bean dip for the jalapeño bean dip, which can be too hot for me.

Recipe courtesy of Libby Wilkes.
Aunt Henrietta’s Christmas Grog

Ingredients
• 1 Pint Don Q Añejo (Or Don Q Gold) Puerto Rican Rum
• ½ Cup Fresh Lime* Juice
• 3 Tablespoons Brown Sugar (More or Less, To Taste)
• 1 Quart Hot Water
• Orange* Slices
• Cinnamon Sticks
• Sprigs of Fresh Mint* (Optional)

Directions
Mix the rum, lime juice, brown sugar, and hot water together until the brown sugar is dissolved. Serve warm garnished with a slice of orange, a sprig of mint, and a stick of cinnamon.

Notes
This recipe has been passed down in my family for generations. It is especially nice on a cold winter’s night. After a few of these, you won’t even notice the cold.

Recipe courtesy of Mrs. Henrietta Witherspoons.
Eddie Bear’s Favorite Eggnog Cake

**Ingredients**
- 1 Cup Butter (Softened)
- 2 Cups Powdered Sugar
- 5 Egg Yolks
- ¼ Cup Christian Brothers Brandy
- ¾ Cup Slivered Almonds (Toasted)
- 1 Angel Food Cake

**Topping/Icing**
- 1 Cup Whipping Cream
- 4 Tablespoons Powdered Sugar
- ½ Teaspoon Vanilla Flavoring
- ¼ Cup Slivered Almonds (Toasted)
- Freshly Grated Nutmeg (To Taste)

**Directions**
Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in brandy and ¼ cup almonds (I use sliced almonds and do not toast). Set aside. Next, slice cake horizontally into four layers, and spread creamed mixture between layers. Chill for 24 hours. (I buy the angel food cake at Publix, and after spreading the filling on the layers, I put the cake container in which the cake was baked back over the cake, and refrigerate—this keeps the cake moist and holds the shape.) Just before serving, whip whipping cream, powdered sugar, and vanilla. Spread whipped cream mixture on top and sides of cake, and sprinkle with ¼ cup toasted or sliced almonds, and freshly grated nutmeg.

**Notes**
This is my dear friend Ed Hardee’s favorite Christmas dessert. I make one for him every Christmas. I also make two for Pasta for Paws every year. I hope you all enjoy it as much as Eddie Bear does.

*Recipe courtesy of Kathy Warner.*
Mama’s Sugarplums

Ingredients

• ½ Cup Dried Figs* (Stemmed and Chopped)
• ½ Cup Dried Apricots* (Chopped)
• ½ Cup Dried Cranberries (Chopped)
• ½ Cup Toasted Pecans* (Chopped)
• ¼ Cup Crystallized Ginger* (Chopped)
• ¼ Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
• Pinch of Ground Allspice
• Pinch of Ground Cardamom
• Pinch of Ground Cloves
• 3 Tablespoons Honey
• 1 Tablespoon Christian Brothers Brandy (Or More, To Taste)
• 1 Tablespoon 10X Powdered Sugar (For Recipe),
  Plus Extra Sugar for Rolling

Directions

Finely chop figs, apricots, cranberries, pecans, and ginger. Add the remaining ingredients, and combine until well mixed, but still crumbly. Transfer the mixture to a sheet of wax paper. Using a spatula, gently smooth the mixture into a rectangle, and cut into 18 pieces roughly the same size. Spread a thin layer of sugar on a plate (sugar can be either granulated or powdered, and colored with a few drops of food coloring if desired). Lightly coat your hands with powdered sugar, and roll each piece into a ball. Roll the balls in sugar to coat, and place in a single layer on a serving plate.

Notes

Sugarplums are a well known, traditional holiday treat made with tangy dried fruits and roasted nuts, and seasoned with traditional holiday spices. This recipe is easy to make, and you could always adjust the spices according to your taste. Dried dates, prunes, or other favorite dried fruits could be added to, or substituted for, the dried fruits in the recipe above.

When my Mama made these goodies, she would call all us children into the kitchen, and as she prepared them, would tell us a story containing the following information about the ingredients:

• “The three dried fruits represent the Three Kings, who went in search of the Baby Jesus.”
• “Herod and his soldiers were the nuts.”
• “The golden color of candied ginger represents the purity of the Holy Innocents, martyred by the soldiers of Herod in their search for Jesus.”
• “Cinnamon was used in the Old Testament by the Hebrews to anoint their Priests, Prophets, and Kings. On Christmas, our Priest, Prophet, and King Jesus Christ was born.”
• “Since spices were always very expensive in ancient times, the pinch of three spices represents Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh, the precious gifts the Three Kings gave to the Baby Jesus.”
• “The three tablespoons of honey, one ingredient in three portions, represents the Holy Trinity.”
• “Sugar represents the sweetness of the Christmas Story to those who hear it, and put its message into practice in their lives throughout the entire year.”
• “The intoxicating Words of the Holy Spirit spoken unto Mary at the Annunciation are represented by the brandy.”
• “This recipe contains twelve ingredients in all, which stand for the Twelve Tribes of Israel that brought forth the Messiah.” (Or was it was the “Twelve Apostles who followed Jesus.” I don’t rightly remember, but that’s ok. Either way, Mama would have liked it.)

Recipe courtesy of Mrs. Henrietta Witherspoons.
Carol Ann’s Pineapple Bread Pudding

Ingredients

• 3 Cups Homemade Type Bread (Crust Removed and Cubed)
• 1 Stick Unsalted Butter
• 1 Cup Sugar
• 4 Large Eggs
• 1 ½ Cups Unsweetened Crushed Pineapple* (Drained)

Directions

Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs and beat thoroughly. Add bread and pineapple. Mix well, and transfer to a well buttered 1 quart casserole dish. Bake at 350 Degrees Fahrenheit for one hour.

Notes

I usually double this recipe. This pudding reheats well when and if there are leftovers. This dish can be used as a side dish or as a dessert. It serves 6 to 8 people, and is so easy and yummy.

Recipe courtesy of Carol Ann Atwood.
Vicki’s Blueberry Surprise Pie

Ingredients

**Pie**
- 1 Pie Crust (Deep Dish—Make Your Own or Use Premade)
- 1 Cup Sugar
- 3 Tablespoons Corn Starch
- ½ Teaspoon Lemon* Peel
- ½ Teaspoon Cinnamon
- ½ Teaspoon Nutmeg
- 1 Cup Water
- 4 Cups Frozen Blueberries*
- 2 Tablespoon Lemon* Juice

**Cream Cheese Pineapple Layer**
- 8 Ounces Cream Cheese (Softened)
- 20 Ounce Can Crushed Pineapple* (Drained)
- ½ Cup Sugar

**Streusel Topping**
- 6 Tablespoons Butter (Softened)
- 6 Tablespoons Brown Sugar
- 6 Tablespoons Flour
- Chopped Pecans * (Or Other Nuts)
- 1 Pinch of Cinnamon
- 1 Pinch of Salt

Directions

Mix dry ingredients for pie (sugar, corn starch, lemon peel, cinnamon, and nutmeg) in a saucepan. Stir in water gradually and bring to a boil. Add blueberries and lemon juice, stirring constantly, but be careful not to crush blueberries. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes until it is clear. Add lemon juice, and set aside. Mix cream cheese, crushed pineapple, and sugar until smooth. Set aside. Mix ingredients for streusel topping until crumbly. Set aside. Put ½ of blueberry mixture into pie crust. Add cream cheese layer, and finish with the rest of the blueberry mixture. Bake for 20 minutes. Add streusel topping, and bake until pie is done, and top is golden brown (approximately 30 minutes).

Notes

This is a really good pie. The surprise is the cream cheese layer in the middle. This dessert is always a favorite at our house, and is a great way to use blueberries.

*Recipe courtesy of Vicki Martin.*
Ingredients

- 1 Package Active Dry Yeast
- ¼ Cup Water
- 1 Cup Milk (Scalded)
- ½ Cup Butter
- ¼ Cup Sugar
- 1 Teaspoon Salt
- ½ Teaspoon Ground Cardamom
- 4 to 4 ½ Cups Sifted All-Purpose Flour
- 1 Slightly Beaten Egg
- 1 Cup Mixed Seedless Raisins (Dark, Golden, and Currants)
- ½ Cup Mixed Candied Fruits (Chopped)
- ¼ Cup Dried Cranberries
- 1 Tablespoon Grated Orange* Peel
- 1 Tablespoon Grated Lemon* Peel
- ½ Cup Pecans* (Chopped)

Directions

Softened active dry yeast in warm water (110 Degrees Fahrenheit). Set aside. Scald milk by heating in a heavy saucepan over low heat until bubbles begin to form around the inside edges of the pot (do not let milk come to a full boil), and then immediately remove from heat. Combine milk, butter, sugar, salt, and cardamom. Cool to lukewarm. Stir in 2 cups of flour, and beat well. Add the softened yeast and egg. Beat well. Stir in fruits, peels, and nuts. Add enough of the remaining flour to make a soft dough.

Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface. Knead until smooth and elastic (about 8 to 10 minutes). Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease surface of dough. Cover and let rise in a warm place until double (about 1 ¾ hours). Punch down, and turn out on a lightly floured surface. Divide into 3 equal parts. Cover, and let rest for 10 minutes.

Roll each of the 3 parts into a 10x6 inch rectangle. Without stretching, fold the long side of each part over to within 1 inch of the opposite side. Seal edge. Place on greased baking sheets. Cover and let rise in a warm place until almost double (about an hour). Bake in a 375 Degree Fahrenheit pre-heated oven for 15 to 20 minutes, or until golden brown. While warm, brush with glaze. (For the glaze, combine 1 cup sifted 10X powdered sugar, 2 tablespoons bourbon, 2 tablespoons warm water, and ½ teaspoon softened butter. Stir until smooth. If glaze turns out too thick, add a little more bourbon, or a sprinkling of warm water. If it turns out too thin, add a little more powdered sugar.)

For a more festive look, top stollen with additional pieces of candied fruit and whole pecan halves, or cut up bits of red or green candied cherries or other candied fruits and arrange to look like holly leaves and berries before brushing with glaze. Makes 3 loaves.

Notes

This is another recipe from Aunt Wilhelmina’s family cookbook, which she smuggled into America when she came to this country as a refugee from Baden-Baden, Germany, during the ravages of the Great War. I hope you all enjoy it. 

Recipe courtesy of Mrs. Henrietta Witherspoons.
Ginny’s Snap Crackle Pop Christmas Treats

Ingredients
• 16 Cups Popped Corn
• 1 ½ Cups Walnuts
• 1 ½ Cups Pecans*
• 1 Stick Butter
• 1 Cup Brown Sugar (Packed)
• ½ Cup Light Karo Syrup
• ½ Teaspoon Salt
• ½ Teaspoon Vanilla

Directions
Pop corn and place in large roasting pan (I use one bag of Orville's popped in the microwave). Add walnuts and pecans. Set aside. Bring remaining ingredients (except the vanilla) to a boil. Boil for 5 minutes, stirring often. Remove from heat and add vanilla. Pour this mixture over the popcorn and nuts. Stir well to coat. Place in a 250 Degree Fahrenheit oven for one hour. Stir every 15 minutes. Cool on aluminum foil or wax paper. Let cool, break apart, and serve.

Notes
This is a delicious snack that I make around the holidays. A friend gave me this recipe a few years ago. If not used right away, store in a Tupperware/Rubbermaid container for up to a week.

Recipe courtesy of Ginny Grupe.
Dottie’s Spanish Cream

Ingredients
- 1 Tablespoon Unflavored Gelatin
- 2 Tablespoons Sugar
- 1/8 Teaspoon Salt
- 2 Egg Yolks
- 2 Cups Milk
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla
- 2 Egg Whites
- ¼ Cup Sugar

Directions
Mix gelatin, 2 tablespoons sugar, and salt in top of a double boiler. Beat together egg yolks and milk. Add yolks and milk to gelatin mixture, stir, and cook over boiling water until gelatin is dissolved (approximately 5 minutes). Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla. Set aside. Beat egg whites. Gradually, beat ¼ cup sugar into egg whites. Fold egg whites into gelatin mixture. Pour into mold (or molds), and chill. (While chilling, dessert will separate into two layers.)

Notes
This dessert (similar to flan) is not only good during the holidays—it is good any time of the year. It’s one of those dishes that can be classified as “an old family favorite” I guess. Back in the day when I was growing up, dessert was a once-in-a-while treat, and then nothing really complicated. I think Mom would make this dish before she went to work, put it in the icebox (before refrigerators), and we’d have it for supper. It seems to have disappeared—perhaps it has other names now?? Hope you all enjoy it.

Recipe courtesy of Dottie Kelley.
Santa’s Peppermint Bark Reindeer Treats

Ingredients

• 11 Ounce Bag Dark Chocolate Chips
• 11 Ounce Bag White Chocolate Chips
• Several Peppermint Candy Canes (Crushed)
• Parchment Paper

Directions

Melt dark chocolate chips in a double boiler until smooth. Lay out a large sheet of parchment paper on a cookie sheet. Spread out an even layer of melted dark chocolate over the parchment (about ¼ inch thick). Cool in the freezer for 20 minutes. While dark chocolate is cooling, melt the white chocolate chips in a double boiler. Remove the cookie sheet from the freezer (the dark chocolate should be hardened), and spread a layer of melted white chocolate over the layer of dark chocolate (this layer should be about the same thickness as the layer of dark chocolate). Sprinkle chocolate liberally with crushed candy canes, and gently push crushed candy canes into the white chocolate just enough so they won't fall off when cool. Return the cookie sheet to the freezer, and let cool for 30 minutes, or until hard. Break the bark into ragged pieces. Place bark in cookie boxes lined with cellophane. Keep refrigerated for freshness.

Notes

These are the treats Santa brings along for his reindeer on their long Christmas Eve journey. He always complains I never send enough for the “reindeer,” because he “always runs out” before the trip is over. Personally, I think he snitches a few along the way for himself.

Merry Christmas to All!!!

Recipe courtesy of Mrs. S. Claus.
Chinese privet

Introduction

Chinese privet is frequently found growing in disturbed sites from the northern counties south to Hillsborough county and Miami-Dade county. It is native to China but escaped cultivation.

There are about 50 species of Ligustrum, all native to Europe, North Africa, and Asia. Ligustrum has been developed into an assortment of ornamental varieties in the U.S. and other parts of the world. In 1852, privet was introduced to the United States for use as an ornamental shrub and is still commonly used as a hedge. Because of Ligustrum’s ability to tolerate air pollution and other poor environmental conditions, it was regarded as a great landscape plant and planted extensively. Unfortunately, this was before its invasive characteristics were discovered. Establishment of privet in many natural areas of Florida has occurred through its escape from cultivation. Glossy privet (L. lucidum) is listed as a Category II species with the potential to disrupt native plant communities in Florida by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council. Chinese privet (L. sinense) is a Category I species that is currently disrupting native plant communities in Florida.

Description

Ligustrum spp. are perennial shrubs that can grow up to 16 feet in height. Ligustrum bark is tan to gray in color with a smooth texture. Leaves are elliptic to ovate in shape, oppositely arranged on twigs. Flowers have both male and female parts. Each flower has petals fused into a tube with four separate lobes. Flowers are borne on small panicles on short lateral branches on the end of the twig. The oblong, blue/black fruit is a drupe containing 1 to 4 seeds. Fruit clusters persist through the winter. Mature trees can produce hundreds of fruit.

L. lucidum (glossy privet) is a large shrub or tree that grows to 30 feet in height, with spreading branches. Leaves are ovate to somewhat lanceolate and 3 to 5 inches long. L. sinense (Chinese privet) is smaller than glossy privet, growing to only 20 feet in height. Leaves are elliptic to somewhat oblong, 1 to 3 inches long, and pubescent on the midrib below.

Ligustrum spp. grows readily from seed or from root and stump sprouts. Wildlife can aid in the dispersal of the seed, often relocating the plant over long distances.

Impacts

Ligustrum spp. is capable of invading natural areas such as floodplain forests and woodlands. The aggressive nature of privets allows for the formation of dense thickets that out compete desirable plants. The amount of seed produced by privet is another mechanism for its prolonged survival. Even though privet is still used in the landscape and available for purchase at garden centers and online distributors, it is an invasive weed and should be treated as such.

Management

Ligustrum spp. control methods include mechanical controls such as mowing and cutting, physical control such as seedling removal and burning, and chemical control such as herbicide application. Herbicide control measures include foliar spraying in late autumn or early spring with glyphosate, triclopyr, or metsulfuron; cut stump applications using glyphosate or triclopyr; and basal bark applications of triclopyr.
**Preventative**

The first step in preventative control of privet is to limit planting and removal of existing plants within the landscape. If possible, removal should occur before seeds are produced. Since seeds remain on the plant for several months, care must be exercised to prevent seed spread and dispersal during the removal process.

**Cultural**

Plant native or non-invasive alternatives. Avoid large disturbances that allow for invasive species to colonize.

**Mechanical**

For smaller infestations or areas where herbicide applications are not feasible, mowing and cutting are appropriate. Stems should be cut as close to the ground as possible at least once per growing season. Mowing and cutting will not eradicate *Ligustrum* spp., but it will provide some level of management. Continuous mowing will work, but frequency is key.

**Physical**

Hand pull young seedlings and small plants. Larger plants may need to be dug out. Plants should be pulled as soon as possible, before they produce seeds. The entire root must be removed to prevent resprouting.

**Biological**

*Ligustrum* spp. has no known biological control agents.

**Chemical**

Foliar applications of glyphosate or cut-stump applications of triclopyr or glyphosate are effective. Stems <0.5 inch diameter are susceptible to basal bark applications of 20% triclopyr-ester (Remedy) in oil. Larger stems must be notched or frilled.

Foliar sprays are effective for dense thickets of *Ligustrum*. Care must be taken to avoid non-target plants. The ideal time to treat is while plants are in leaf in late autumn or early spring but when many native species are dormant. Triclopyr at 1-2 quarts broadcast rate per acre or 2% solution are recommended.

The cut stump method should be considered when treating individual shrubs. Immediately after cutting stems at or near ground level, apply a 25% solution of glyphosate and water or triclopyr and water to the cut stump, being careful to cover the entire surface. Effectiveness of the herbicide is increased if holes are cut in the top of the freshly felled stump.

The basal bark method consists of a mixture of 25% triclopyr and 75% horticultural oil applied to the basal parts of the shrub to a height of 12 to 15 inches from the ground. Thorough wetting is necessary for good control; spray until run-off is noticeable at the ground line.
Save the bees; we need them

by Angela Daughtry

Have a bee problem on Amelia Island? Peter Smith, a local systems analyst with extensive knowledge about bees and their culture, will happily remove them. But it's not simply a matter of killing them with insecticides, Smith says. It takes strategy to completely remove a large bee colony from the cavity of a structure, because if not done properly a large wax honeycomb will be left behind and melt, and bee eggs will continue hatching long after the bees are gone. The hive entrance must also be properly sealed so bees don't re-establish a colony.

If the bee colony can be accessed, the best removal method is to move the queen bee, Smith says, along with the honeycomb that has been constructed by bees to keep the colony going. “The bees can be cut out and the colony can be moved from the house,” Smith says. “You can vacuum the bees from the honeycomb.”

“The queen is usually hiding,” Smith says. “You can rebuild the colony in a square box. If you’re lucky, you can capture the queen.”

The queen bee, which is raised from an egg by worker bees using a rich food called royal jelly, is twice as big as regular bees, and can lay up to 2,000 eggs a day for up to three years, Smith says.

Smith recently took out a large bee colony from the Pecan Roll Bakery at 122 S. Eighth St. During the trap-out, Smith was lucky enough to find the queen bee, which he put in a box. Most of the hive followed the queen into the box, which he brought home to add to his own bee colonies. The job yielded three gallons of honey that he is filtering for owner Jeff Weisfeld through a crushing and straining process.

Born in New London, Conn., Smith later moved to north Texas, where he first became interested in beekeeping. A Fernandina resident since 1985, Smith says he has recently been able to spend more time trapping bees since he does not travel for work as often as he once did.

“I started trapping earlier this year, as a favor to some of my neighbors to ‘please save but remove those bees,’” Smith says. “Removing bees … is also a cool way to acquire new colonies, and it saves nuisance bees from a potential visit from the exterminator.” Another of Smith’s recent bee projects is the trapping of a bee swarm that originated from a bee colony in a large tree in front of the News-Leader. Smith has set up a swarm trap on the roof of the Amelia Island Paint & Hardware across the street, in anticipation of a swarm. The trap contains a honeycomb and a special pheromone to attract the queen bee. Some bees have already been spotted in the trap.

“A swarm happens when the bees have outgrown the space,” Smith says. “The queen leaves the hive with about half the bees, then they go hang out in a ball, and scout bees look for new homes. One hive will eventually turn into two to six colonies.”

Smith has also set up two live active bee colonies on the roof of the hardware store.

Bees have a complex culture in which female worker bees toil non-stop to keep the colony going. The male drone’s only job is to mate with the queen. “They only live 35 to 42 days,” Smith says of the worker bees. “They work themselves to death.” New bees work as housekeepers the first two days of their lives, then go on to work as nurses for a week or so, feeding bees as they grow from an egg to an adult. After that, they work as guard bees, foragers or scouts. Some bees even work as undertakers, transporting dead bees to a spot outside the colony.

Bees can keep the hive at a steady temperature of about 92 degrees by moving their wings to keep it cool or vibrating to keep it warm.

Honey is used as food for the growing bees, and the flavor is affected by the type of nectar collected, Smith says. For honey production, beekeepers add hive frames one on top of another, and the bees just keep filling them with honey.

“Palmetto and palm tree berries make the second-best honey in Florida,” Smith says. Blooms from the tupelo tree, which grows in Florida swamps, make the best honey, according to Smith. Gallberry honey, made from the blooms of a type of holly, is also famous in Florida for its rich taste.

Another reason Smith renewed his interest in bees was because of the serious worldwide plight of dying honeybees. Called “colony collapse disorder,” the mysterious phenomenon, which has decimated 70-80 percent of the bee population, has baffled scientists for the past 15 years. But new studies indicate it could be related to use of insecticides called neonicotinoids.

The disappearance of honeybee colonies has had a huge effect on agriculture, because bees pollinate many types of crops. Ironically, crop growers also are the ones using neonicotinoids.

“Neonicotinoids insecticides are the culprit,” Smith says. “The are engineered to perform magic for the crop growers. By using neonicotinoids, their production is doubled.”

“These insecticides are absorbed by the plant,” Smith says, “and pushed out at the nectar and pollen levels. The pollen and nectar from these plants is deadly to any insect that forages on plants treated with these pesticides.”

Farmers contract with beekeepers to bring hives out to the crops for pollination, but with the disappearance of bee colonies, that has become more expensive, so food producers have a double problem, Smith says.

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The bee keepers are forcing crop owners to contractually obligate that they are not using these insecticides,” Smith says. One way to help keep these insecticides at bay is to make sure plants purchased at nurseries are free from neonicotinoids, which are put on seeds before planting, and stay with the plant for life.

Another relatively recent problem with bee colonies is the spread of Africanized bees in Florida, which are produced by the crossbreeding of African honeybees and European bees. “They are the preferred bees in Africa, South America and Australia,” Smith says. The first Africanized honeybees were discovered in the United States in the mid-1980s. They are a problem, Smith says, because they “are mean, nasty and aggressive, and more adept at surviving the environment.”

“If you disturb an African bee colony you will not only get more stings, they will also pursue you for a quarter mile,” Smith says. “Florida wants to raise as many European bee colonies as possible. The more European drones, the better.”

A recent Florida law makes it illegal for local governments to prohibit beekeeping on private property, but a beekeeping license is still required. The new law also states that no new community association restrictions are allowed on beekeeping.

Smith does free non-lethal honeybee removals on Amelia Island and is an amateur beekeeper. His website is www.hivepirate.com

For more information on beekeeping and a new bee club being formed in Nassau County, contact the Nassau County Extension Service at 879-1019 or go to http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/
Many homeowners in Nassau County have landscapes that include flowering trees, perennials and even a few fruit trees. Often a vegetable or herb garden is also added to the landscape in the form of raised beds or individual container gardens.

Many of the Extension office calls from homeowners growing fruits and vegetables are regarding their disappointment of certain crops like cucumbers, squash, orange or pear trees, which have beautiful green foliage, but no fruit. Nothing is more disappointing than putting in all the effort of growing fruits or vegetables and getting nothing in return.

After concluding the gardener has selected the appropriate plant (right plant/right place) for our zone and it is receiving the appropriate amount of sunlight, water and fertilizer and the soil pH is correct, then we discover one important missing factor for good fruit or vegetable production – pollinators!

Pollinators are important? Yes! According to the National Academies 2014 article titled The Role of Pollinators, “... more than three fourths of the planet’s angiosperms (flowering plants) rely on over 200,000 species of animal pollinators to various extents to meet their reproductive needs.”

Insect pollinators account for 87 of 124 main crops used for human consumption. Pollination is the act of transferring pollen grains from the female part (stigma) of the flower to form seeds, fruits or vegetables. This transfer can happen via bats, birds, wind and insects.

The four major groups of pollinating insects are: flies; butterflies and moths; beetles; and bees. Bees are the most important group of pollinators because they gather pollen and repeatedly visit one flower species per session. This ensures pollen is not transferred to a different species of flower, which is why beekeepers can be certain the honey made is wildflower or orange blossom or tupelo, etc.

Butterflies, moths, flies, wasps and beetles feed on different flowers and have less pollen contact as these insects are more interested in nectar. They are beneficial pollinators but these insects just happen to brush up on the pollen when visiting the flowers – they are not hunting for it.

All bees are important for pollination but native bees are a gardener’s best friend! Unlike honeybees, native bees are mostly solitary (they don’t live in colonies), and they are often non-stinging, unless provoked. Remember, honey bees were introduced to the United States by explorers and settlers; we had native bees long before colonization of Europeans. Native bees have narrow nests that are either below ground or in wood cavities. They are often specific pollinators. For example, the Squash Bee is dedicated to squash, pumpkin and similar cucurbits (gourds).
Unlike concerns about the decline in the honeybee population, native bees are plentiful. There are over 4000 species in North America. Florida is home to over 300 native bee species! Here are a few of the Florida native bees that benefit gardeners:

- The Metallic Sweat Bee is an important pollinator of flowering fruit and seed plants. [Link](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/IN/IN89700.pdf)
- The Southeastern Blueberry Bee pollinates orchards and flowering plants, in addition to blueberry shrubs.
- Long Horned Bees are ground nesters, often seen in native grasses. They prefer woodland and scrubs as a habitat. Some species of the Long Horned Bees are specifically attracted to daisies, asters and similar plants.
- Leafcutter Bees are solitary bees and will sting only if handled. They are important pollinators of native plants, alfalfa and blueberries. [Link](http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/misc/bees/leafcutting_bees.htm)
- Blue Orchard Mason Bees, native to the west coast of the U.S. and Canada, are important pollinators of fruit trees and blueberries. They nest in tunnels of wood cavities. Once they have completed the nests, the tunnel is sealed with mud. They are short-lived, living only about three months after male bees emerge in mid-February. [Link](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in982)

Since native bees can benefit our gardens, are generally non-stinging and are solitary (no hives), how can we attract them to our landscapes?

First, you can conserve existing habitats, such as decaying tree stumps or wood with cavities, which are attractive to nesting bees. Next, avoid insecticides, especially systemics with imidaclopid or other neonicotinoids. To be certain, read the labels. For insect problems, use organics or Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Learn to tolerate some insect “damage” to your plants and trees.

Also, leave some bare soil in undisturbed areas of your landscape, so ground-nesting bees can tunnel through the ground. Make sure mud is available for bees that build nests in wood cavities. If you don’t live near mud, artificially create some by placing wet soil in a dish or pan and keeping it moist. Finally, what every gardener loves to do: plant native and nectar flowers, shrubs and trees that our special friends love.

Some of these plants are: Tickseed (Coreopsis), Blanket Flower (Gaillardia), Beach Sunflower, Southern Sage Salvia, Tropical Sage, Climbing Aster, Partridge Pea (Cassia fasciculata), Powderpuff (Mimosa Strigillosa), Blazing Star (Liatris), Pennroyal (Pilolephis rigida), Bee Balm, Fiddlewood (Citharexylum frticossum), Walter’s Viburnum, Florida Privet, Porterweed, Goldenrod, Wild Coffee, Sea grape, Saw Palmetto, Cabbage Palm, herbs, fruits and berries, and bee nests.

Resources: Native Bees- Gardeners’ Best Friends, by Michelle Peterson Mater Gardener St. Lucie County

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Citrus: Weed as needed. Protect above and below grafted area if hard freeze occurs which is 28 degrees for 4 or more hours. Water root area before freeze occurs.

Fruit: Weed as needed.

Flowers: Sow seeds of larkspur, bachelor’s buttons, sweet peas, and California poppies in full sun for a colorful spring show. Set out hardy plants such as sweet alyssum, petunia, dianthus, and snapdragon.


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: Avoid the temptation to apply winter fertilizers in NE Florida. Check your mower. Resharpen blades, change the oil, and clean mower of debris.

Perennials: Plant now for fall color. Mexican bush sage has spikes of purple-and-white flowers that will wave in the wind. Pineapple sage has brilliant red blooms and leaves each with the hint of pineapple aroma. Firespike with its red bloom spikes is great for partial shade. Philippine violet brightens fall days with its lavender flowers. The brilliant yellow of swamp sunflower will stop traffic a block away. Cigar flower has an abundant display of small orange-and-yellow, tubular blooms.

Trees: If you are planting a new tree, staking may not be necessary. New trees become stronger if some movement is allowed. Planting too deeply causes future problems. Plant trees so the top root is just at or slightly above soil level. Irrigate well to encourage root development.

Vegetables: Keep crops picked to encourage new production. Irrigate during morning hours (6-10 AM) with drip irrigation to discourage disease. Hardy veggies to plant now include beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, Chinese cabbage, collards, kohlrabi, bulbing and bunching onions, radishes and spinach.
December Checklist

**Annuals:** Plant carnations, digitalis, pansies, petunias, shasta daisies, and snapdragons this month.

**Bulbs:** Check for declining plant portions and pests. Examine bulbs in storage and remove adhering soil or damaged portions. Consider replacing any bulbs which show discoloring sections as this may indicate fungal disease.

**Roses:** Water as needed. Continue spray program, if fungi or pests are present.

**Citrus:** Weed as needed. Protect grafted area if freeze occurs. If you think a freeze is coming: Leave the fruit on the tree. It may not freeze, and if it does, you still have several weeks to make juice or use the fruit before it deteriorates. The rule for fruit still on the tree is to consider it edible if it looks, smells, and tastes good. Leave the fruit on the tree if you suspect it is still not ripe. Fruit that has been frozen will develop white spots on the membranes between the sections and should be used as soon as possible.

**Fruit:** Weed as needed. DO NOT cut blooms. DO not fertilize.

**Herbs:** Anise, basil, bay laurel, borage, caraway, cardamom, chervil, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, 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 apply fertilizer or any nitrogen this time of year, wait until grass is fully growing and any cold temperatures have passed. Keep mowing height the same year round. Water 1/4 to 3/4 inch every 10-14 days if we receive no rain.

**Trees and Shrubs:** Late December is the ideal time to begin transplanting plants if the weather has turned cool. It is best to transplant trees and shrubs after they have gone into dormancy. Prune roots two to three months before digging by severing roots with a spade just inside the intended root ball to generate new root hairs and reduce transplant shock. Be sure to keep plants out of the ground as little time as possible. Do not put any amendments in the transplant hole, simply keep the plant irrigated well for 3-4 months.

**Vegetables:** Choices for this month include beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, Chinese cabbage, English peas, onions, and radishes.

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: What is the real difference between partial shade and partial sun? It seems I am forever transplanting plants because of the light.

A: We classify a plant’s light requirements into four categories: full sun, partial sun, partial shade, and full shade. There are several variations but most people in the plant business focus on those four groups. However, many in the horticulture business use the partial shade and partial sun interchangeably which makes it difficult for the average gardener. In general, full sun is at least 6 hours of unobstructed direct sun which is what most of the lawn grasses grown here prefer. Less than the optimal sunlight and the grass become stressed. Partial sun and partial shade usually mean 3-6 hours of sun/shade each day, preferably morning and early afternoon sun. Full shade is bright light but little or no direct sun; what we often refer to as dappled light. Most people assume full shade means no light but plants require some form of light to produce carbohydrates (sugars) for normal plant processes such as reproduction, protection and growth. It is often very difficult to determine exactly how much light your landscape plants are receiving - with the exception of full sun. Most of our landscape plants thrive with 3-4 hours or more of morning sun then some protection from the harsh afternoon sun. It is generally thought partial shade prefers 3 hours of the morning sun with dappled light or some protection from the afternoon sun. Usually we consider the protection starting around 2 pm and going through the five o’clock hour. Partial sun can handle up to 4 – 5 hours of sun but these plants still grow best in morning sun too but can handle some afternoon sun exposure. Remember, the longer the sun strikes an area, the warmer the area. In fact, shaded areas can be as much as 10 – 15 degrees F. cooler. The difference in temperature matters to us as humans, it will also matter to some plants. Really, in most instances, we all experience some successes and some failures when gardening. Do not be too hard on yourself if you realize plants must be moved from one location to another because of light conditions. We have all done it. I know of no gardeners, including me, who have put all their plants in the yard and never moved them. It’s what we do!

Q: What is wrong with my oxalis?

A: The bright, orange spots you see on the oxalis are caused by a fungus, *Puccinia sorghi*, which is a type of rust. Generally, rust fungi must live on 2 or more plant hosts before they can complete their life cycle. They are quite complex even for such a simple organism. The rust found on the oxalis growing in your garden can be a real problem on corn, especially sweet corn. The rust fungus lives through the winter on wood sorrel (oxalis) and when weather conditions are perfect, the spores of the rust are blown onto the corn. The ideal conditions for rust development are long, cool springs with temperatures ranging from 60° to 74°F plus high relative humidity. Usually rust does not cause enough damage to the oxalis to warrant any type of chemical control. Although clipping the infected oxalis leaves would benefit any corn growers in the area and keep your oxalis looking neat and clean. An application of a fungicide on the oxalis when leaves begin to develop next spring might also help.
Q: What is eating my grape vine?

A: Most likely the holes you see in the grape leaves are from the larvae of the Grape Flea Beetle, *Altica chalybea* (Illiger) or possibly *Altica woodsi*. Apparently, *Altica woodsi*, feeds on the underside of leaves, which is just what your larvae are doing. This flea beetle is so common it is found throughout most of the United States. Adults are dark metallic greenish-blue jumping beetles about 4-5 mm (1/5 in) long. They feed on buds and unfolding leaves. The larvae are brownish and marked with black spots. Larvae feed on flower clusters and skeletonize leaves. The larvae of these beetles also will eat Virginia creeper, apples, ashes, birches, elms, pines, and oaks. No wonder it is so common since almost any landscape will have at least one of these plants. Damage is often restricted to vineyard borders, particularly near wooded areas. Clearing uncultivated woodlands near the grapevines and removing weed species between the rows are preventative/control methods that can be used for grape flea beetle. To date, no monitoring guidelines have been developed. Some biological and neonicotinoid insecticides will reduce high populations of flea beetles during the growing season.

Q: I love pansies and I see them in the spring and fall here but which season is best?

A: Pansy, *Viola wittrockiana*, can be planted in the spring or fall when night temperatures are 40°F and day temperatures are 60°F. So either season will work and pansies have been known to tolerate freezing temperatures so they may last well into the winter for you. However, our summers are too brutal for this delicate little flower to remain so we consider it an annual. Once temperatures start to rise consistently into the 70s it will be time to pull pansies out of the ground. You can grow them from seed or purchase them in flats from the local garden center. Either way, you are sure to be happy with the results of adding pansies to your landscape. Please cluster annuals in one spot as they may require more attention (water and fertilizer) than most perennials. There is seemingly no limit to the variety of solid and multiple colors of this pretty little flower. The word pansy is believed to be derived from the French word pensee which means thought or remembrance. Whether that is true or not, it is a nice thought or pensee – sorry, I couldn’t help myself. The leaves and flowers of the pansy are edible and are high in vitamin A and C. I have seen them used as decoration along the edges or atop cakes and even added to soups and salads. In addition, the flowers have been used for organic dyes. Pansies can be susceptible to root rot so be careful to provide the plants with moist, but well-drained soil. Slugs and aphids are common pests so check your plants often for best management.
Q: You have borage listed as one the herbs to be grown in November. Please tell me more about this plant.

A: The herb borage, *Borago officinalis*, is a reseeding annual herb. The leaves can be eaten raw or sautéed like spinach or added to cheese, fish, or poultry dishes. In addition, like many other herbs, it can be added to enhance the flavor of vegetables, salad greens, and salad dressings. The bright, blue flowers make it a pretty addition to any wildflower garden but there is an added bonus of providing nectar to attract bees and butterflies. Borage originated in the Middle East and according to legend considered a sign of bravery. Ancient Celtic warriors supposedly drank wine flavored with borage before battle to make them courageous. Herbalists have suggested this herb can provide us with an inner calm and the Roman scholar Pliny considered it to be an antidepressant. Apparently, the flavor is similar to fresh cucumber, although I have never tasted it.

*For more Garden Talk” questions answered by Ms. Jordi, see our website at nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/