Homemade Potting Mix

Gardeners use various potting mixtures for seedlings, transplants, and container plants. These mixtures combine a variety of ingredients to provide a good growing environment for plant roots.

Commercial pre-packaged potting soils are widely available at nursery and garden supply stores, but you can also make your own potting mix at home. Making your own mix allows you to control the types and proportions of ingredients to customize your potting mix to meet your needs.

Ingredients

- A good potting mix should:
  - Be dense enough to support the plant.
  - Hold nutrients well.
  - Allow for air and water flow while retaining moisture.
  - Be free of pathogens and weed seed.

Potting mediums must meet plant root requirements for air, water, nutrients, and support, which vary for different plants and growth stages. Despite the differences in types of potting mixes, they share common ingredients, just in different amounts.

Soil

Soilless mixtures are common due to density and disease concerns. Some organic blends still use soil. Clean topsoil or garden soil can be used and should be sterilized to kill disease organisms and weeds. Spread soil in a tray and bake at 200° F for twenty minutes, stirring every five minutes.

Sand

Sand adds air space to a potting mix. Builder’s sand, or coarse sand, is best. Avoid plaster and fine sands; they create a dense mix. Because it is heavier than other ingredients, sand is a good choice for top-heavy plants that might tip over.

Compost

Compost is cheaper than traditional ingredients, holds water well, provides nutrients, and can be produced at home. The nutrient quality of compost will depend on the quality of the materials that were composted.

Pine Bark

Bark creates a light mix with air space but low water holding capability. It degrades slowly and is a good component for mixes for potted ornamentals. It may be partially substituted for peat moss.

Sphagnum Moss & Peat

Peat moss is the most common ingredient for soilless mixes because it is widely available and inexpensive. Peat moss decomposes slowly and holds large amounts of water; however, it has a high acidity. Lime is usually added to mixes to balance the pH. Ground-up newspaper can be used as a peat moss substitute.
Coir
Coir, a by-product of the coconut fiber industry, looks like sphagnum moss, but is granular, doesn’t contain twigs or sticks, and is more expensive. Coir typically is packaged as a compressed brick that will expand when wetted. It is important to note that coir may require less potassium and increased nitrogen supplementation. There is also the chance of salt damage since salt water is used in its processing.

Perlite
Perlite is a sterile and pH-neutral lightweight volcanic rock. It increases air space, improves water drainage, and is a good lightweight replacement for sand.

Vermiculite
Vermiculite is another lightweight addition to potting mixes. Handle it gently; if it’s handled roughly, it compacts and loses its air-holding ability. Medium grade is suitable for seedlings, while coarse grade is better for a soil mix for older plants.

Recipes
When making your own potting mix, working from a recipe is a good idea to start. Once you begin experimenting with your own blends, try small test batches to evaluate the mix’s quality. See the recipes below to get started making your own potting mixes.

Foliage Plants
• 2 parts peat; 1 part perlite; 1 part coarse sand
• OR
• 1 part peat; 1 part pine bark; 1 part coarse sand

Succulents
• 2 parts soil; 1 part peat moss; 1 part perlite; 1 part coarse sand

Bromeliads
• 1 part peat; 1 part bark; 1 part coarse sand

Seedlings
• 2 parts compost; 2 parts peat moss; 1 part vermiculite (pre-wet)
Program Announcements

Landscape Matters 10AM-11AM

**BATS**
Wednesday July 1
Master Gardener Cindy Steigner
Preregister by June 24

**VEGETABLES**
Wednesday August 5
Master Gardener Joseph Smith

Plant Clinics 10AM-2PM
Monday July 6
Monday July 20
Monday August 3
Monday August 17

**Location**
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.

100th Anniversary Celebration
JOIN US AT OUR OPEN HOUSE !

June 30  4pm–6pm
Callahan Extension Office
543350 US Hwy 1
530-6350
Rebecca L. Jordi
County Extension Director
Horticulture Agent

SERVING NASSAU COUNTY FOR 100 YEARS

-----

Soil-Based Mix

This mix is heavier than peat-based mixes, but it has good drainage. Vermiculite or perlite can be used for sand.

- 1/3 compost; 1/3 topsoil; 1/3 sand

Blocking Mix

This mixture is for use as soil blocks for seedling/transplant growing. Mix all ingredients together thoroughly. Ingredients can be measured with a standard 10-quart bucket.

- 30 quarts brown peat
- 20 quarts sand or perlite
- 20 quarts compost
- 10 quarts soil
- 3 cups base fertilizer (equal parts blood meal, colloidal phosphate, greensand)
- ½ cup lime

Adapted and excerpted from:
The 100th anniversary of the County Agent

Many of us have some very nostalgic sentiments regarding the title—"The County Agent." The title can conjure fond memories of the cover of the Saturday Evening Post painted by Norman Rockwell, which was printed in July 24, 1948. It is interesting to note Mr. Rockwell used real people as models and he used a real County Agent whose name was Harold K. Rippey, who actually served as an agent in Jay County, Indiana. Apparently Mr. Rockwell followed Mr. Rippey around as the agent conducted his normal tasks such as culling chickens, determining important livestock qualities, and soil testing. According to Mr. Rockwell’s after following the agent around for the day he was “worn to a nubbin.” This full day experience with Extension agent Rippey caused Mr. Rockwell to develop a great admiration for the job of County Agent. Agent Rippey selected a local 4-H family (the Steeds) from Portland, Indiana as the family farm to visit since everyone in the family was actively involved in Extension and 4-H. I had a print framed and hung it in my office to remind me of the humble beginnings of the Extension program over 100 years ago.

Much has changed over the last hundred years but many aspects of the County Agent’s job are essentially the same. Each County Agent, regardless of their specific area of expertise provides the best research information they need to find “solutions for their lives.” Rebecca L. Jordi

County Extension Director

Environmental Horticulture

University of Florida/IFAS

http://4-hhistorypreservation.com/History/County_Agent/

Science to their daily lives. These universities include, Rutgers, Cornell, Ohio State, Purdue, Texas A&M, University of California, etc. But remember, all 50 states have land grant universities. Here in Florida, we have two land grant universities – University of Florida and Florida A&M. We have 67 counties in Florida and all 67 of them have at least one faculty from the UF or Florida A&M.

In the early years, Nassau County only had one County Agent. This County Agent did agriculture, youth, horticulture - everything! As the years passed, 4-H Youth Development and Home Economics was included which is now Family Consumer Science (FCS). Currently, we have two 4-H Youth Development agents, one Agriculture/Natural Resource agent, one Family Consumer Science Agent and one Environmental Horticulture agent.

As County Extension Director, I oversee all program areas including mine specialty which is Environmental Horticulture. As the next few weeks follow, we will be introducing you to the specific aspects of each program area so you can become more familiar with what our job entails. We have indeed come a long way from the Norman Rockwell “County Agent” but you will also see there are several things which never change. Our deep desire to provide the residents of Nassau County with the most accurate and current information they need to find solutions for their lives.

Rebecca L. Jordi

County Extension Director

Environmental Horticulture

University of Florida/IFAS

http://4-hhistorypreservation.com/History/County_Agent/

The 4-H program in Nassau County began around 1917 and the method of program delivery was entirely through the school system. The county agent taught farming to the boys, and the home economics agent taught the girls subjects related to the home. In 1945, while Gordon Ellis was agent, he focused on teaching primarily dairy and forestry projects. The 4-H boys’ club had a tree farm with more than 50 diverse tree species planted. They also had a Christmas tree farm they used as an annual fundraiser.

When Judson Fulmer took over as county agent in 1969, 4-H volunteers began playing a critical role in delivering programs to youth, not only in the school system but also during after school hours. At this time the boys and girls began working together “To make the best better.”

Although farming topics are still popular for youth enrolled in 4-H today, members engage in a variety of subject matter including but not limited to: Communication and expressive arts, citizenship, leadership, photography and so much more. Nassau County 4-H currently offers 18 clubs, with some focusing specifically on specific projects such as robotics, marine science and others offering youth a variety of project opportunities as well as the chance to learn leadership skills and complete community service projects. 4-H is offered to youth ages 5-18 and approximately 50 youth are currently enrolled in the Nassau County 4-H Youth Development Program. 4-H agents and volunteers still offer school enrichment opportunities such as Tropicana Public Speaking, Embryology, Agriculture Extravaganza and these programs reach approximately 4,000 students annually.

Nassau County 4-H members have earned numerous accolades through the years such as trips to National Conference and Congress, as well as to National Competitions for Forest Ecology, Poultry Judging and other areas. This time of year Nassau County youth anxiously await their week-long opportunity to camp at Cherry Lake, which has not changed much through the years. 4-H communicates now via electronic newsletters and by using social media.

Numerous 4-H alumni have children who have graduated from or are currently growing up in the county program, and the stories of life skills gained and funny memories experienced constantly keep current extension agents entertained. If you would like to share your skills as a 4-H volunteer or enroll your child/children in the best youth development program in Nassau County, call toll free 1-855-212-1244 or look online for opportunities at Nassau.ifas.ufl.edu.

Amanda Thien is 4-H Youth Development Agent for Nassau County.
County Agent supports local food movement

The original “county agent” dealt with agricultural issues such as how to increase crop production and better manage of insect and disease problems on crops. This continues to be the mission of any agriculture agent if the county is involved in crop production. Until a few years ago, Nassau County had several dairy and chicken farms in which the agriculture agent provided vital research-based information to help make each of the farms successful.

However, with the economic down swing a few years ago, we lost our crop and livestock production here. So, exactly what does the agriculture/natural resource agent do in Nassau County? We must be constantly changing and adapting to the way agriculture changes.

At this point, Nassau has a need for a small farms agent. This specifically means we need someone who can help fill special niche markets. What better source than an agriculture agent from the University of Florida or Florida A&M? The modern agriculture agent uses the resources from the University of Florida to help with a business plan, marketing advice, and Best Management Practices (BMP) to reduce fertilizer costs, water usage and protect the environment from inappropriate pesticide leaching and runoff.

The agriculture agent must be an excellent diagnostician to recognize and prevent devastation of loss of production. This innovative agriculture agent also assists the local small farm owner with compliance to state laws so the farmer can obtain necessary pesticide licenses. Oh, and one more thing, like all faculty for the University of Florida, the agriculture agent also contributes some of their time to working with the 4-H youth program.

This cutting-edge agriculture educator must be innovative, adaptive and significant to the local clients. Now that is an excellent “county agent” - one Nassau County always strives to attain.

Rebecca Jordi, UF/IFAS County Extension Director

County Agents still work with women and families in the home

Officially, Florida family and consumer sciences extension agents began working with women in the areas of home economics in 1915. Their title was Florida home economic demonstration agent. They provided hands-on demonstrations to help low-income families stretch their resources. Home economics assisted families with education in gardening, canning, freezing, sewing, home furnishings including making mattresses out of cotton.

In 1963 the Extension Service in Florida experienced reorganization and the title home economic agent was changed to extension home economic agent. In the mid 90s Extension reorganized itself again, adjusting to societal needs and title was changed to family and consumer sciences agent (FCS). The University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), has faculty who are specialists in the areas of housing, nutrition, food safety, human development, financial management, and aging.

In 1917, Home Economics/FCS Agent Marianne Ruble began working in Nassau County and conducted classes which instructed citizens on how to preserve their home crops by canning.

Meg McAlpin Nassau FCS Agent III
The County Agent: Helping gardeners and landscapers

Horticulture is considered art of the overall agriculture extension program. The introduction of homeowner horticulture really began with a shift of land usage in agriculture production to suburban and urban development. As more families moved into single-family homes with individual landscapes, calls to Extension began to change from large vegetable questions to how to care for ornamental plants and home landscapes.

With the increase of homeowner calls into Extension offices it became obvious there was a need for horticulture agents – especially ones who could manage and train Master Gardener volunteers. Here in Nassau County, I was the first Environmental Horticulture agent, which means I developed the program from the ground floor. Horticulture agents must be strong diagnosticians but most problems deal with diseases and insect issues on backyard vegetable gardens, dooryard citrus, lawn grass and landscape trees and shrubs. Horticulture's Best Management Practice (BMP) program involves reducing leaching and runoff of nitrogen and phosphorus from landscapes into local water bodies. The horticulture BMP program also minimizes overuse of broad spectrum pesticides and decreases invasive plants and insects at local beaches and conservation areas.

Many horticulture agents also work with local landscaping businesses to train and assist them in complying with state pesticides licensing. The Nassau County horticulture agent specifically does this through the Limited Commercial Landscape Maintenance (LCLM) licenses. Nassau County currently has over 40 active Master Gardener volunteers who help maintain demonstration gardens that provide examples of Florida-Friendly Landscape (FFL) practices. These practices, which include proper plant selection, irrigation and mulching, can be easily adapted to any homeowner or commercial landscape.

Last year alone, the Master Gardener volunteers provided Nassau with over 5,000 hours of volunteer service which is valued at more than $106,000. Each agent is responsible for working with the 4-H youth program and the horticulture program does this through its Jr. Master Gardener program, active involvement in Ag Extravaganza and school enrichment programs.

Rebecca Jordi, UF/IFAS Nassau County Extension Director for Nassau County and Nassau County Horticulture Agent III, is a University of Florida faculty member. Extension locations are the satellite office at the County Building in Yulee and the main Extension Office in Callahan.

Hello everybody! Welcome back to Harvest Gold! This month we present the Second Annual Master Gardener’s Cookout. Following my column, you will find some great recipes Nassau County’s Master Gardeners enjoy at their summertime barbecues, cookouts, and parties. But before that, I would like to talk about several styles of regional barbecue here in the United States.

In the United States, styles of barbecue vary from region to region, and state to state. Barbecue enthusiasts recognize four major styles of American barbecue: Carolina, Memphis, Kansas City, and Texas. Carolina and Memphis styles are the oldest, whereas Kansas City and Texas styles came later. Pork is the most commonly used meat for barbecue, because when barbecue originated, pork was cheap and plentiful. Chicken, beef, and other cuts of meat are also used, depending on the region. Barbecue is the original “slow food,” cooked slowly over indirect heat. Flavor is imparted by the wood, sauces, and/or spices used in smoking. By cooking “low and slow,” cheap, tough cuts of meat become quite tender and flavorful. Barbecue most likely first came to what is now the United States from the Caribbean by way of the colony of Virginia. From there, barbecue was introduced into the Carolinas, where it soon became an institution. In the Carolinas, pork is the meat of choice, and is smoked over hickory or oak. In Eastern North Carolina, meat from the entire hog is used, and is usually served pulled, shredded, chopped, or sliced. Eastern North Carolina sauce is a thin sauce, usually made from vinegar and various spices (especially cayenne pepper). In Western North Carolina, pork shoulder and ribs are the preferred cuts of meat, and the sauce is primarily a tomato/vinegar based sauce. The most popular South Carolina sauce comes from central South Carolina, and is composed of a mixture of mustard, vinegar, brown sugar, and spices.

Memphis Dry Rub Ribs

Kansas City Burnt Ends
In Kansas City, a major meat-packing hub, many different kinds of meat are used for barbecue—everything from pork and chicken, to beef and turkey. Kansas City is known for barbecue chicken and ribs, and "burnt ends," the crispy tips of smoked beef or pork brisket, are a local delicacy. The meat is usually smoked with a dry rub consisting of brown sugar and spices, and a sweet, thick, and spicy tomato and molasses based sauce is served on the side. The wood of choice is hickory, although oak, pecan, apple, and cherry are also used. In Memphis, barbecue is served in two different ways: "Wet," in which the meat is mopped with sauce before, during, and after smoking; and "Dry," in which the meat is rubbed with a dry mixture consisting of paprika, salt, garlic, and other spices, and then smoked."Dry" is a little bit misleading here, because most people will mop their "Dry" barbecue with a vinegar based mop while smoking to keep the meat from drying out. When dry barbecue is served, it is often accompanied by a tangy, thin tomato and vinegar based sauce on the side for dipping. Memphis is well known for its barbecue sandwiches, consisting of pulled pork served on a bun and topped with barbecue sauce, pickles, and coleslaw.

In Kansas City, a major meat-packing hub, many different kinds of meat are used for barbecue—everything from pork and chicken, to beef and turkey. Kansas City is known for barbecue chicken and ribs, and "burnt ends," the crispy tips of smoked beef or pork brisket, are a local delicacy. The meat is usually smoked with a dry rub consisting of brown sugar and spices, and a sweet, thick, and spicy tomato and molasses based sauce is served on the side. The wood of choice is hickory, although oak and various fruit woods are also used. Kansas City style barbecue should be cooked slowly over low, indirect heat, or the sugar in the rub will cause the meat to burn. Because Texas has long been the major cattle producing state in the country, beef became the natural choice of meat for barbecue. Depending on the part of the state, hickory, oak, pecan, and/or mesquite are the preferred woods for smoking. Texas is a large state, and as such, has several distinctive styles of barbecue. The most well-known are East Texas, Central Texas, and West Texas styles. East Texas barbecue is similar to traditional Southern barbecue, and is served chopped or pulled instead of sliced. In East Texas, meat is marinated in a sweet tomato based sauce, and smoked over hickory wood until very tender. East Texas is known for its chopped brisket sandwich served on a bun topped with a spicy barbecue sauce. In Central Texas, meat is usually rubbed with a dry rub before smoking, and is cooked slowly over indirect heat using pecan or oak. Central Texas is famous for brisket and ribs, and sauces take a back seat to the meat. West Texas, or "Cowboy Style" barbecue is usually cooked over direct heat using mesquite wood. In West Texas, in addition to beef, mutton and goat are sometimes barbecued as well.

I hope you have enjoyed our survey of the major styles of American barbecue. Below, you will find delicious summertime recipes from our Master Gardeners (Thanks Master Gardeners!). Whether you barbecue, cookout, or just party during the summer, I am sure you will find a recipe or two that you and your family will enjoy. Until next time, take care, God Bless, Happy 4th of July, and Happy Harvesting!

Peace and Goodness,
Joseph

NB: All items in the following recipes that can be successfully grown in Nassau County are marked with an asterisk (*)

### Ingredients
- 1 Four Pound Beef Tenderloin (Trimmed of All Fat)
- 3 Tablespoons Olive Oil
- 8 Branches Chopped Fresh Marjoram* or Oregano*
  (Or 4 Tablespoons Dried Leaves)

### Mustard Caper Sauce
- 3 Tablespoons Course Grained Mustard
- 2 Egg Yolks (Room Temperature)
- 1 Small Green Onion* (Chopped)
- ¼ Teaspoon Fresh Marjoram* (Chopped)
- Juice of ½ Large Lemon* (About 2 Tablespoons)
- 1 Cup Olive Oil
- 1 Cup Heavy Whipping Cream
- 1 ½ Tablespoons Capers (Rinsed and Drained)

### Directions
Rub all sides of tenderloin with oil, and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, heat charcoal until gray ash forms. Spread coals into overlapping layer, and let burn for 15 minutes. Set barbecue grill rack 3 inches above hot coals. Set beef on grill, and cook about 8 minutes. Turn and continue cooking, frequently sprinkling coals with herbs, until meat thermometer registers 130 Degrees Fahrenheit for rare, or 135 Degrees for medium rare. When ready to serve, slice meat thinly and arrange on a platter in an overlapping pattern. For the mustard caper sauce, combine mustard, egg yolks, green onion, marjoram, and lemon juice in a food processor, and mix until pale and creamy. With processor running, gradually add oil through feed tube in a thin stream, stopping machine occasionally to be sure oil is absorbed. Add cream and capers, and mix until blended. Set aside, or refrigerate until use. Serve at room temperature.)

### Notes
I have been making this for years, and it is always a hit.

Recipe courtesy of Kathy Warner.
Tom’s Turkey Chili

**Ingredients**
- 4 Cans of Beans* (Navy, Kidney, Black, Etc.)
- 3 Cans of Rotel
- 3 Cans of “Mexican” Corn*
- 2 Packages (20 Ounce) Ground Turkey Breast
- 1 Package (20 Ounce) Hot Italian Turkey Sausage
- 1 Cup Water
- Olive Oil
- 2 to 3 Tablespoons Minced Garlic* (Or To Taste)
- 2 to 3 Tablespoons Red Pepper* Flakes (Or To Taste)
- Salt and Black Pepper (To Taste)

**Directions**
Brown garlic and turkey in olive oil. Add all other ingredients, and bring to a boil. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until ready to eat. (While cooking or reheating, add water as needed.) This chili gets better over time as flavors meld, and has only about 225 calories per cup. I mix and match the beans for variety. They are all about 110 calories per half cup.

**Notes**
This is a one pot meal. This chili gets better over time as flavors meld, and has only about 225 calories per cup. I mix and match the beans for variety—they are all about 110 calories per half cup.

Recipe courtesy of Tom Lohman.

Vicki’s Cold Pork Tenderloin Sandwiches

**Ingredients**
- 3 to 4 Pound Pork Tenderloin
- Freshly Ground Black Pepper (To Taste)
- ¼ Cup Soy Sauce
- ½ Cup Olive Oil

**Directions**
Rub meat generously with pepper, soy sauce, and olive oil. Let sit for one hour. Place tenderloin on a rack in a roasting pan, and roast at 425 Degrees Fahrenheit for 15 to 20 minutes (can also be grilled). Do not overcook. Cool slightly, and then thinly slice. (Tenderloin can be refrigerated and reheated when ready to serve.) To make sandwiches, put the sliced pork on small rolls spread with a mixture of mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, olive oil, garlic* powder, and paprika.

**Notes**
This is a great sandwich for any summertime party. Enjoy!

Recipe courtesy of Vicki Martin.
Father Bob’s Belly Bombers

**Ingredients**
- 1 1/2 Pounds (More or Less) Lean Ground Beef
- 2/3 Cup Beef Broth
- Salt and Pepper (To Taste)
- Olive Oil
- Hot Dog Buns
- 1/4 Cup Dry Minced Onion
- 1/4 Cup Hot Water
- Dill Pickle Chips
- Mustard
- Catsup
- Sliced American Cheese (Optional)

**Directions**
Combine ground beef, beef broth, and salt and pepper. Mix well, and chill in refrigerator for several hours to overnight. Cut ends off of each hot dog bun, and cut buns in half. Set aside. Mix hot water and minced onion. Let soak until soft, and set aside. Remove ground beef from refrigerator, and roll out hamburger between two pieces of wax paper until it is about 1/4 inch thick. Remove top piece of wax paper, cut meat into 3 inch square patties (or use a 3 inch round glass to stamp out round patties). Add a bit of olive oil to a skillet, and heat skillet. Fry hamburger patties. (To get patties to fry evenly, punch 3 holes in the shape of a triangle in each patty with the end of a wooden spoon.) Halfway through frying patties, place about 1 teaspoon of the prepared minced onion in the frying pan, and flip each patty over onto the onion. Continue to fry until done, and serve on prepared buns with pickles, mustard, and catsup (add a slice of American cheese for cheese belly bombers). Be careful not to over fry.

**Notes**
These hamburgers are similar to White Castle or Krystal burgers. (I got this recipe from a very good friend of mine, Father Robert Lee Napier. Bob passed into eternal life on May 19, 2015, on the 25th anniversary of his ordination to the Priesthood. He was 67. Rest in Peace, Bob. You were a true friend, brother, and confidant, and are sorely missed. JS)

Recipe courtesy of Father Bob Napier.

Aunt Henrietta’s Greek Herbed Hamburgers

**Ingredients**
- 2 Pounds Lean Ground Hamburger
- 2/3 Cup Finely Chopped Fresh Mint
- 2/3 Cup Finely Chopped Fresh Parsley
- Zest of One Lemon
- 1 Tablespoon Finely Chopped Fresh Rosemary
- 2 Tablespoons Grated Vidalia Onion
- 2 Teaspoons Sea Salt
- Freshly Ground Black Pepper (To Taste)
- Olive Oil (For Brushing)
- 1 Red Onion (Thickly Sliced)
- 4 Onion Rolls (Split)
- Romaine or Bibb Lettuce
- Crumbled Feta Cheese
- Catsup (To Taste)
- Mayonnaise (To Taste)

**Directions**
Combine hamburger with mint, parsley, lemon zest, Vidalia onion, salt, black pepper, and rosemary. Mix gently until just combined. Divide into four equal balls, and flatten into patties. Cover and refrigerate for at least several hours. Heat grill to medium high. Brush burgers with olive oil on both sides. Grill over direct, medium-high heat, flipping once (about 10 to 15 minutes for medium-rare to medium burgers—grill patties a little longer, or a little less, according preference). Remove burgers from grill, and set aside to rest. Brush red onion slices with oil, and grill for about 3 minutes, or until softened and slightly charred. Brush cut sides of rolls with oil, and toast on grill for about 1 minute, or until golden brown. Serve burgers topped with lettuce, red onion, feta cheese, catsup, and mayonnaise.

**Notes**
When I traveled to Greece many years ago, I picked up a taste for the cuisine. This recipe was inspired by the culinary experiences I had while there. In Greece, these burgers are usually made with ground lamb instead of hamburger. Hamburger or lamberger—either way I am sure you will enjoy it.

Recipe courtesy of Mrs. Henrietta Witherspoons.
Kathy’s Seafood Stuffed Green Peppers

**Ingredients**
- 6 Medium Green Peppers
- ½ Pound Shrimp (Cooked, Peeled, and Deveined)
- 1 (6 Ounce) Package Frozen Crab (Thawed and Drained)
- 1 ½ Cups Cooked Rice
- ½ Cup Celery (Chopped)
- ½ Cup Onions (Chopped)
- 2 Tablespoons Chopped Pimento
- ¾ Cup Mayonnaise
- 1 Teaspoon Curry Powder
- ½ Teaspoon Sea Salt
- Black Pepper (To Taste)
- Bread Crumbs
- Butter

**Directions**
Steam hulled peppers for five minutes. Combine mayonnaise and seasonings. Add all other ingredients except bread crumbs and butter, and mix well. Stuff this mixture into peppers. Top with bread crumbs and dot with butter. Bake upright at 350 Degrees Fahrenheit for 30 minutes.

**Notes**
I actually do not steam the peppers, but leave them raw and let them bake stuffed with a little bit of water in the pan. This means that they are a little crunchy, and reheat in the microwave better, but you might prefer yours cooked through. Also, I cut the peppers in half, and lay them on their sides, rather than have them standing upright. This makes more, and is easier. I usually use fewer peppers, since cutting in half makes twice as many. I use canned crab, and that seems to work just fine. Also, I do not cook my shrimp. They bake well in the recipe and do not end up rubbery. I found that putting a slice of cheese (your favorite kind will do) on top is better than the bread crumbs, which tend to get soggy. Give it a try, make the recipe your own, and enjoy!

Recipe courtesy of Kathy Warner.

---

Master Gardener Cookout Condiments

**Stephen’s “Carolina Gold” Barbecue Sauce**

**Ingredients**
- ½ Gallon French’s Mustard
- 4 Cups Apple Cider Vinegar
- 2 Cups Water
- ¼ Cup Cholula Hot Sauce
- ¼ Cup Tabasco Sauce
- 2 Tablespoons Sea Salt
- 1 Tablespoon Cayenne Pepper Flakes (Optional)
- ½ Cup Brown Sugar (Optional)
- ½ Cup Worcestershire Sauce (Optional)

**Directions**
Mix all ingredients together with a hand mixer (ingredients can be adjusted according to taste). Allow sauce to mature for several days to a week before use. Yields approximately one gallon.

**Notes**
If you prefer a not so spicy barbecue sauce, cut down on the amount of Cholula and Tabasco in the recipe. Also, add a little more vinegar and/or water, or a little less, depending on how thick or thin you like your sauce.

Recipe courtesy of Stephen Rhodes.
Stephen's Traditional Barbecue Sauce

**Ingredients**
- ½ Gallon Catsup
- 1 Cup Dijon Mustard
- 4 Cups Apple Cider Vinegar
- 2 Cups Water
- 1 Cup Worcestershire
- 1 Cup Fresh Squeezed Orange Juice
- 2 Cups Molasses
- 1 Box Brown Sugar
- 2 Tablespoons Sea Salt
- 1 Tablespoon Ground Black Pepper
- ¼ Cup Tabasco Sauce

**Vegetables**
- 6 Fresh Ripe Tomatoes (Halved)
- 1 Vidalia Onion (Peeled and Quartered)
- 1 Red Bell Pepper (Halved and Deseeded)
- 2 Jalapeno Peppers (Halved and Deseeded)

**Directions**
Roast all vegetables until done, and set aside. Combine all other ingredients, and mix well. Add roasted vegetables, and buzz mixture with a hand blender to desired consistency (chunky or smooth). Place over medium heat, bring sauce to a boil, and then reduce heat to low. Simmer for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Let age in refrigerator at least several days before use.

**Notes**
This is quite a good traditional barbecue sauce. If you like garlic, just add several cloves of roasted garlic to the sauce. Celery lovers could add a stalk or two of roasted celery. Adjust the seasonings according to your taste. Substitute any favorite hot pepper for the jalapeno. Any way you do it, this is a good sauce.

Recipe courtesy of Stephen Rhodes.

Bob Loepker's Beer Barbecue Sauce

**Ingredients**
- 1 Can Burger Beer (Or 1 Can Any Favorite Beer)
- 1 Bottle (16 Ounces) Kraft Hickory Smoked Barbeque Sauce
- 2 Cups Catsup
- ¼ Cup Apple Cider Vinegar
- Juice of 2 Lemons
- ½ Cup Honey
- ½ Cup Brown Sugar
- 1 Teaspoon Dried Minced Onion
- 1 Teaspoon Dried Celery Flakes
- 1 Teaspoon Garlic Powder
- 1 Teaspoon Paprika
- 1 Teaspoon Red Pepper
- 1 Teaspoon Lemon Pepper
- 1 Tablespoon Salt
- 1 Tablespoon Black Pepper

**Directions**
Combine all ingredients, and mix well. Place over medium heat, bring sauce to a boil, and then reduce heat to low. Simmer for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, and add a little more beer or vinegar if needed. Refrigerate until use. This sauce is best if allowed to age at least several days before using.

**Notes**
This is a sauce that an old buddy and I came up with a long time ago. Everyone who has tried it loves it. The amounts for the spices listed are only approximations, as I always adjust them according to taste, and have never written down the recipe until now. When you make it, you can adjust it according to your taste by using a little more of this or a little less of that. I think you will be happy with what you come up with. (Bob was a very good friend of mine. He was a retired banker from Jasper, Indiana, and died on August 15, 2014. He was 84. Rest in Peace, Bob. JS)

Recipe courtesy of Bob Loepker.
Stephen’s Memphis Style Dry Rub and Mopping Sauce

Ingredients

For the Dry Rub

• ½ Cup Paprika
• ⅓ Cup Dark Brown Sugar
• ¼ Cup Sea Salt
• 2 Tablespoons Garlic Powder
• 1 Tablespoon Cayenne Pepper
• 1 Tablespoon Freshly Ground Black Pepper
• 2 Tablespoons White Pepper
• 2 Tablespoons Onion Powder
• 2 Tablespoons Dried Thyme
• 2 Tablespoons Dried Oregano
• 2 Tablespoons Mustard Powder
• 2 Tablespoons Ground Cumin
• 2 Tablespoons Celery Seed

For the Mop

• ½ Cup Apple Cider (Or White) Vinegar
• ½ Cup Water
• ¼ Cup Dry Rub

Directions

Mix together all ingredients for the dry rub, and store in an airtight container until use. The day before you plan to barbecue, prepare mop by mixing together vinegar, water, and ¼ cup dry rub. Refrigerate overnight. Rub meat with dry rub (reserve a bit of the rub for sprinkling after meat is cooked), and refrigerate overnight. The next day, grill or barbecue meat low and slow over indirect heat until done, brushing with mop sauce every 20 minutes. When meat is done, mop one final time, and sprinkle with remaining rub. Remove meat from smoker, and serve with your favorite barbecue sauce on the side.

Notes

This Memphis style dry rub and mop goes great with any meat—pork, chicken, or beef, but is especially good with ribs. Seasonings can be adjusted according to taste.

Recipe courtesy of Stephen Rhodes.

Uncle Wilbur’s Kansas City Barbecue Sauce

Ingredients

• 2 Cups Heinz Catsup
• 2 Cups Tomato Sauce
• 1 ½ Cups Apple Cider (Or White) Vinegar
• 1 Cup Dark Brown Sugar
• 1 Cup Unsulfured Molasses
• 2 Tablespoons Butter
• 1 Teaspoon Cayenne Pepper
• 1 Teaspoon Paprika
• 1 Teaspoon Sea Salt
• 1 Teaspoon Freshly Ground Black Pepper
• 1 Teaspoon White Pepper
• ⅓ to 1 Teaspoon Garlic Powder
• ⅓ to 1 Teaspoon Onion Powder
• ½ to 1 Teaspoon Celery Seed
• ½ to 1 Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon

Directions

Mix together all ingredients in a large saucepan (ingredients can be adjusted according to individual taste). Simmer on low heat for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. (For a thicker sauce, simmer longer, or for a thinner sauce, simmer for only 10 to 15 minutes.) About 10 minutes before meat is done, mop with sauce. Serve extra sauce on the side.

Notes

Some of the best barbecue my late husband Wilbur and I ever had was when we visited Kansas City way back in the summer of 69. When we got back home, he set about to replicate the delicious sauces we had up there. This is what he came up with. Hope you all enjoy it.

Recipe courtesy of Mrs. Henrietta Witherspoons.
Phil’s Deer Hunter Sauce

Ingredients
• ½ Cup Mayonnaise
• ¼ Cup Catsup
• ½ Teaspoon Garlic Powder
• ¼ Teaspoon Worcestershire Sauce
• ½ Teaspoon Black Pepper (To Taste)

Directions
Mix together the mayonnaise, catsup, and garlic powder, and blend well with a hand blender. Add Worcestershire sauce and blend well. Add black pepper and blend well. Refrigerate overnight to allow flavors to mix. Serve with fried deer meat, hot wings, or chicken strips.

Notes
I also sometimes add a touch of ground horseradish to this sauce for a little kick.

Recipe courtesy of Phil Smith.

Uncle Wilbur’s Special Sauce

Ingredients
• 1/3 Cup Mt. Olive Sweet Pickle Relish
• 1/3 Cup Kraft Creamy French Dressing
• 1 Cup Miracle Whip Salad Dressing
• 1 Tablespoon Sugar
• 1 Tablespoon Ground Black Pepper
• 1 Tablespoon Dry Minced Onion
• Sea Salt (To Taste)

Directions
Stir all of the above ingredients until well mixed. Refrigerate at least overnight to let flavors blend. Serve with hamburgers or other sandwiches. (For a fancier version of this recipe, substitute Duke’s Mayonnaise for, or use half and half with, the Miracle Whip, substitute a bit of dill pickle relish for some of the sweet pickle relish, add a touch of white wine, and/or add a hint of catsup when preparing.)

Notes
This is my late husband Wilbur’s secret sauce, or as he liked to call it, his “Special Sauce.” Whenever he cooked out, he would always whip up a batch. Everyone always asked for the recipe, but he never gave it out. Here it is now for you all to enjoy.

Recipe courtesy of Mrs. Henrietta Witherspoons.
Candy’s Spaghetti Salad

Ingredients
- 1 Pound Angel Hair Spaghetti
- ¾ Bottle Italian Dressing (Not Creamy)
- 3 to 6 Tablespoons Supreme Salad Seasoning
- Salt and Pepper (To Taste)
- ½ Medium Onion* (Chopped)
- 1 Large Green Bell Pepper* (Chopped)
- 1 Cucumber*
- 1 Small Can Sliced Black Olives (Drained)
- Grape* or Cherry Tomatoes*

Directions
Break spaghetti in half and boil for 10 to 12 minutes in salted water. Drain, let cool, and set aside. In a large bowl, add ¾ bottle of Italian dressing, 3 to 6 tablespoons Supreme Salad Seasoning, salt, pepper, onion, and bell pepper. Mix in cooled spaghetti, and chill overnight. Two hours before serving, peel, slice, and salt both sides of cucumbers. After two hours, rinse and drain cucumbers on paper towels. Add olives, tomatoes, and cucumbers to chilled salad, and mix well. Serve.

Notes
This is a great recipe for those hot summer days when you don’t want anything too heavy. It’s great for luncheons too!

Recipe courtesy of Candy Lester.

Vicki’s Picnic Corn Salad

Ingredients
- 3 Cans Mexi-Corn* (Well Drained)
- 1 Cup Cheese (Grated)
- ¼ Cup Red Onion* (Grated or Finely Chopped)
- Catalina Salad Dressing
- Fritos (Crushed)

Directions
Combine corn, cheese, and onion. Refrigerate until use. Just before serving, toss with dressing and Fritos.

Notes
This is a great corn salad for any summer cookout or gathering!

Recipe courtesy of Vicki Martin.

Kathy’s Marinated Chick Pea Salad

Ingredients
- 1 (16 Ounce) Can Chick Peas (Drained)
- 1 Clove Garlic* (Minced)
- ½ Small Red Onion* or 1 Shallot* (Finely Chopped)
- 2 to 4 Tablespoons Fresh Parsley* (Chopped)
- 3 Tablespoons Red Wine Vinegar (Or Lemon* Juice, or Combination of Both)
- 3 Tablespoons Olive Oil
- Salt and Pepper (To Taste)

Directions
Drain chick peas. In a separate bowl, combine remaining ingredients, and whisk until well blended. Add chick peas and toss. Let marinate for 30 minutes or more. Serve.

Notes
This chick pea salad is great for any summertime gathering.

Recipe courtesy of Kathy Stevenson.
Vicki’s Rice Salad

**Ingredients**
- 3 Cups Cooked Rice
- 2 Hard Boiled Eggs (Chopped)
- 1/2 Cup Celery*
- 1/3 Cup Green Bell Pepper* (Chopped)
- 1/4 Cup Onion* (Chopped)
- 1 Jar (2 Ounce) Diced Pimentos (Drained)
- 1/4 Cup Dill Pickle Relish
- 1/3 Cup Mayonnaise
- 1/3 Cup Sweet Pickle Relish
- 1/4 Cup French Salad Dressing
- 1 Teaspoon Salt
- 1/4 Teaspoon Pepper
- Leaf Lettuce*

**Directions**
In a large bowl, combine rice, eggs, celery, bell pepper, onion, pimentos, and dill pickle relish. In a small bowl, combine the mayonnaise, sweet relish, salad dressing, salt, and pepper. Fold into rice mixture, and serve in a lettuce lined bowl.

**Notes**
This rice salad is great at any summertime gathering of family and friends.
Recipe courtesy of Vicki Martin.

Cindy’s Creamy Cucumber Salad

**Ingredients**
- 1 Cucumber*
- 1/2 Teaspoon Salt
- 1 Tablespoon White Wine Vinegar
- 4 Ounces Sour Cream
- 2 Teaspoons Oil
- 1 Teaspoon Sugar
- Black Pepper (To Taste)
- 2 Tablespoons Chopped Dill* (Or To Taste)

**Directions**
Peel and thinly slice the cucumber. Place the slices in a colander with salt, and toss. Let the slices drain for 20 to 30 minutes. Mix the dressing ingredients (vinegar, sour cream, oil, sugar, pepper, and dill) in a separate bowl. Rinse and drain cucumber. Add drained cucumber to dressing, and stir to coat. Serve chilled.

**Notes**
My garden always produces tons of cukes, and this is one of my favorite ways of using them.
Recipe courtesy of Cindy Steighner.

Susan’s Marinated Cucumber Salad

**Ingredients**
- 1/4 Cup Hot Water
- 1/3 Cup Sugar
- 1 (8 Ounce) Bottle Lite Zesty Italian Dressing
- 3 Medium Cucumbers* (Sliced into 1/8 Inch Rounds)
- 1 Medium Sweet Onion* (Sliced into 1/2 Inch Slices)

**Directions**
Mix hot water, sugar, and Italian dressing. Add cucumbers and onions. Toss well. Chill for at least two hours before serving.

**Notes**
This easy cucumber salad is a delicious way to use up any excess cucumbers you may have from your garden.
Recipe courtesy of Susan Bell.

Libby’s Cool Carrots

**Ingredients**
- 5 Cups Sliced Cooked Carrots*
- 1 Onion* (Diced)
- 1 Green Pepper* (Chopped)
- 1 Cup Sugar
- 1 Can Tomato* Soup
- 1/4 Cup Vegetable Oil
- 1/4 Cup Vinegar
- 1 Teaspoon Prepared Mustard
- 1 Teaspoon Salt
- 1 Teaspoon Black Pepper (If Desired)

**Directions**
Mix cooked carrots, diced onion, and chopped green pepper. Set aside. In a pot, combine sugar, soup, oil, vinegar, mustard, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil. Let cool, and pour over carrots. Chill before serving.

**Notes**
This carrot recipe would be great with a summertime barbecue.
Recipe courtesy of Libby Wilkes.
Kay’s Summertime Corn on the Cob

Ingredients
- 6 Ears of Silver Queen Corn* (Shucked and Desilked)
- Butter
- Old Bay Seasoning (To Taste)
- Salt and Pepper (To Taste)
- Sprigs of Fresh Oregano* or Rosemary*

Directions
Roll each ear of corn in foil with butter and your favorite seasonings. I usually use Old Bay seasoning, salt, pepper, and two springs of either oregano or rosemary per ear of corn. You could use any herbs and seasonings you like. Cook at 350 Degrees Fahrenheit for 15 to 20 minutes. (This corn is also great cooked on the grill.)

Notes
Simple but delicious.
Recipe courtesy of Kay Stephens.

Cindy’s Mediterranean Style Vegetables

Ingredients
- 2 Cups Zucchini* (Sliced)
- 2 Cups Red, Yellow, or Green Sweet Peppers* (Sliced)
- 2 Cups Broccoli* Florets
- 1/4 Cup Reduced Sodium Chicken Broth
- 2 Cloves Garlic* (Minced)
- 1 Tablespoon Fresh Chopped Basil* or Oregano* (Or 1 Teaspoon Dried and Crushed)
- ¼ Teaspoon Black Pepper
- 3 Medium Tomatoes* (Chopped)

Directions
In a Dutch oven or large kettle combine zucchini, sweet peppers, broccoli, chicken broth, garlic, basil or oregano, and pepper. Bring to a boil, and reduce heat. Simmer (covered) for 6 to 8 minutes, or until crisp-tender, stirring occasionally. Stir in tomatoes. Makes 6 to 8 side-dish servings.

Notes
This is a summertime recipe I make with vegetables fresh from my garden. Hope you all enjoy it.
Recipe courtesy of Cindy Steighner.

Master Gardener Cookout

Desserts

Kassandra’s Patriotic Strawberry Flagcake

Ingredients
- 1 Package Duncan Hines Yellow Cake Mix
- 1 (8 Ounce) Container Cool Whip (Thawed)
- 1 Pint Blueberries* (Drained)
- 2 Pints Fresh Strawberries* (Sliced)

Directions
Rinse and drain blueberries and strawberries. Cut stems off strawberries, and slice lengthwise into quarters. Prepare cake mix according to package directions, and bake according to directions in a 9x13 inch pan. Remove cake from pan, transfer to a serving platter, and let cool completely. Spread an even layer of whipped topping on top and sides of cake. Arrange blueberries in a square in the upper left-hand corner of the cake, then arrange strawberry slices in stripes to make an American flag. Refrigerate until serving. (For variations on this cake, different flavors of cake mix can be used—devil’s food, strawberry flavored, white cake mix—whatever type of cake your family likes best.)

Notes
This attractive and delicious cake is sure to be the hit of your 4th of July party.
Recipe courtesy of Kassandra Withakay.
Miss Alice’s Key Lime Pie

Ingredients
- 1 Can Condensed Milk
- 3 Egg yolks
- 1/3 Cup Lime juice
- Crust
- 1 Pack Graham Crackers (About One Cup, Finely Crushed)
- 3 Tablespoons Melted Butter
- 2 Tablespoons Sugar

Directions
Preheat oven to 350 Degrees Fahrenheit. For the crust, mix graham crackers, sugar, and melted butter together. Press into pie dish. Bake for 5 to 10 minutes at 350 Degrees Fahrenheit. Set aside. (A store-bought graham cracker crust could be substituted, but is not quite as good as homemade.) Beat egg yolks with condensed milk. Add lime juice, and mix well. Pour mixture into pie crust. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool, and refrigerate for several hours. Serve plain, or topped with whipped cream.

Notes
This key lime pie is a family favorite. I always make it during the holidays. Hope you all enjoy it. (This recipe is so easy, I even made it once—and it turned out great! JS)

Recipe courtesy of Mrs. Alice Marie Smith.

Candy’s Pecan Sandie Delight

Ingredients
- 8 Ounces Cream Cheese
- 1 Cup Confectionery Sugar
- 1 ½ Cup Whipped Cream
- 1 Package Pistachio Pudding
- 10 Keebler Pecan Sandies Cookies (Crumbled)
- More Whipped Cream (For Topping)

Directions
Mix cream cheese and sugar. Fold in whipped cream. Set aside. Prepare pistachio pudding according to directions on packet. In decorative dessert glasses, layer pudding, Pecan Sandies, and cream cheese mixture, layering several times. Top with more whipped cream. Chill for two hours before serving.

Notes
This recipe is a big winner at my house. The adults love it as much as the children! Great for summer cookouts!

Recipe courtesy of Candy Lester.

Marlee’s Thick Chocolate Milkee

Ingredients
- 1 Cup Milk
- ½ Cup Nestlé’s Quick
- 3 Cups Softened Vanilla Ice Cream

Directions
Softened ice cream in the refrigerator for about 1 hour. Mix then blend all of the above in a blender, and serve in a milkshake glass with a spoon. (Don’t blend too long—a good milkee should be thick enough to eat with a spoon.) If milkee thaws out too fast, place in freezer for about 20 minutes or so, then blend again to desired consistency.

Notes
Growing up on a dairy farm, we consumed a lot of milk and milk products. This is a treat my mom made for me when I was a little girl, and I still love it. This milkee is similar to a Wendy’s Frosty, but is twice as good.

Recipe courtesy of Marlee Frazel.
Cindy’s Chocolate Zucchini Bread

Ingredients
• 2 Cups Sugar
• 1 Cup Canola Oil
• 3 Eggs
• 3 Teaspoons Vanilla Extract
• 2 ½ Cups All Purpose Flour
• ½ Cup Baking Cocoa
• 1 Teaspoon Salt
• 1 Teaspoon Baking Soda
• 1 Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
• ¼ Teaspoon Baking Powder
• 2 cups Shredded Peeled Zucchini Squash*
• Cooking Spray

Directions
In a large bowl, beat the sugar, oil, eggs, and vanilla until well blended. Combine the flour, cocoa, salt, baking soda, cinnamon, and baking powder, and gradually beat into sugar mixture until blended. Stir in zucchini. Transfer to two 8x4 inch loaf pans coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350 Degrees Fahrenheit for 50 to 55 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely. Yield: 2 loaves.

Notes
If you plant Zucchini, you probably produce more than you can ever use. This is a great (and delicious) way to use up some of the excess.

Recipe courtesy of Cindy Steighner.

Master Gardener Cookout

Shawn’s Pear Ginger Fizz

Ingredients
• Juice of ½ Lime*
• 1 Ounce Pear Vodka (Or More, To Taste)
• Ginger Beer
• Slice of Lime*
• Ice

Directions
Vigorously shake lime juice and pear vodka with ice. Pour into a glass, top with more ice, then top with ginger beer. Garnish with a slice of lime. This recipe makes one drink.

Notes
This refreshing drink would go over well at any summertime party. I hope you all enjoy it.

Recipe courtesy of Shawn Wallace.
Diane and Lee Larson have lived here for 4 years and she said the earlier owners planted the gardenia and the camellia. They enjoy their garden so much because of the beautiful flowers year round. Blooming now is the enormous lovely gardenia bush. Their native oak trees and ancient sago palms get your attention as soon as you enter the yard. Also blooming now are the agapanthus, daylilies, fire bush and mop-head hydrangeas. It is definitely a lovely place.”

**June - Diane & Lee Larson**

View more photos online at [http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/horticulture/spotlight/spotlight.html](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 nncm@nassaucountyfl.com For more information contact Rebecca Jordi at 530.6350 or 530.6353.
Richard H. Miner has an amazing 2 acres of property in Yulee on Lofton Creek. He has lived there since 1986 and has 14 species of bamboo growing in his yard. His brother, James Miner, served in Vietnam, and when he came home in 1969 he operated a fish camp on this property.

Although Richard Miner has various types of bamboo the best type to plant is clumping. Clumping Bamboo is a non-invasive variety of bamboo which grows more slowly then running bamboo. This type of bamboo makes a wonderful addition to any landscape providing a very tropical look. Any running type of bamboo should be planted in heavy containers to restrict its growth. The photos include Buddha Bamboo, Black Bamboo and White Bamboo. Some bamboo can grow a foot a day and they all have interesting characteristics. Mr. Miner also has several productive citrus trees and amazing raised beds for his vegetable gardens.

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 530.6350 or 530.6353.
**Wildlife Happenings  July**

July brings on the dog-days of summer, our national independence day, and some great wildlife activity here in the state of Florida. Here are some interesting things to look for in July:

**Birds**
- Shorebird migration starts in mid-July, peaking in August.
- Swallow-tailed kites begin gathering as do purple martins and tree swallows in preparation for migrating south for the winter.
- Look for frigate birds flying overhead in south Florida.
- Look out for nesting shorebirds, and keep your vehicles and dogs from disturbing them.

**Reptiles**
- Later this month, young alligators and crocodiles will begin to hatch.

**Insects**
- Mosquitoes and chiggers are abundant, so watch out while you’re camping.

**Mammals**
- Baby raccoons, foxes, armadillos, possums, and bobcats leave dens and begin following parents
- Deer mating season in the everglades

**Plants**
- Sea oats flower along the Atlantic.
- Scrub morning glory and butterfly weed begin to bloom.

**Special date in July**
- July 22, 1982 First Florida bog frog discovered in a panhandle wetland.

---

**Wildlife Happenings  August**

August continues the traditional Florida summer of afternoon rains and sticky heat, but the wildlife don’t mind and there are some stellar activities for you to see. Here are some interesting things to look for in August:

**Birds**
- First flocks of blue-winged and green-winged teal arrive to winter on Florida lakes and wetlands.
- Yellow warbler migration begins.

**Mammals**
- Two-year old black bear cubs will wean from their mothers.
- Short-tailed shrews will begin a second round of breeding for the year.

**Reptiles**
- Young sea turtles are hatching so watch where you’re walking on the beach.

**Insects**
- Thousands of great southern white butterflies can be seen migrating through coastal areas.

**Invertebrates**
- Corals along the Keys spawn at the full moon
July Checklist

**Citrus:** Depending on citrus fertilizer label, apply fertilizer every six weeks as directed. Check for citrus insects and disease. If adding horticulture oil or insecticidal soap be sure to use it only before 10am or after 6pm. Also be sure to use ultra-fine horticulture oil rather than dormant oil. Weed as needed, keep much away from trunk. Water once a week unless it rains.

**Fruit:** Remove about 1/4 to 1/5 of the oldest blueberry canes (usually 1 to 3 of the oldest canes.) Apply 6-6-6 or 8-8-8 fertilizer to nectarine. Weed as needed.

**Flowers:** Annuals to plant include celosia, coleus, crossandras, excamum, impatiens, kalanchoe, nicotiana, ornamental peppers, portulaca, torneias, salvia, and periwinkle.

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

**Herbs:** Bay laurel, culantro, ginger, horehound, lavender, Mexican tarragon, mint, parsley, oregano, rosemary, sesame, and thyme can be planted now.

**Rotors:** Continue spray program. Water, water, water. Cut and remove spent blooms. Check for spider mites and aphids.

**Lawns:** Add iron sulfate to green up lawn but avoid high nitrogen fertilization or high amounts of sulfur, etc. with appropriate formulations. Use a slow release fertilizer. Many palms are deficient in potassium, in spite of using palm fertilizers. Apply Murate of Potash to correct this deficiency.

**Trees:** Remove crape myrtle seed heads before blooming begins. Remove old flower and seed stalks. Prune now for trees flowering in the winter. 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. Many palms are deficient in potassium, in spite of using palm fertilizers. Apply Murate of Potash to correct this deficiency.

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

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

---

August Checklist

**Citrus:** Depending on citrus fertilizer label, apply fertilizer every six weeks or as directed. Check for citrus insects and disease. Weed as needed, keep much away from trunk and grass out beneath the canopy. Water once a week unless it rains.

**Fruit:** Apply azalea fertilizer to blueberry shrubs, at 1/2 pound per 3 feet of shrub. Weed as needed. Check irrigation to ensure it is working. Make repairs.

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

**Roses:** Repeat July check procedure. Water, water, water.

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

**Herbs:** Bay laurel, culantro, ginger, horehound, lavender, Mexican tarragon, mint, parsley, oregano, rosemary, sesame, and thyme can be planted now.

**Lawns:** There is still time to install a seeded lawn but do not delay. Select good quality seed such as Argentine Bahia, common bermudagrass or centipede. Initially the seeds to need stay moistened but once they have germinated irrigation can be reduced. These grasses do well without heavy irrigation and high nitrogen fertilizers. They turn brown earlier than St. Augustinegrass in the winter. Contact your local Extension service regarding a test for your soil pH. Common bermudagrass has a wide range of pH numbers; bahia and centipede prefer acid soils so be sure to have soil tested before investing in a new lawn.

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

**Vegetables:** To produce fruit August plantings are especially important for corn, eggplant, pumpkins, peppers, tomatoes, and watermelons. Each of these crops takes about 90 days to come to fruition. Do not wait too late, or an early frost may reduce the yield. Other cold tolerant veggies to plant include snap beans, pole beans, lima beans, broccoli, cauliflower, collards, corn, cucumber, bunching onions, Southern peas, peppers, pumpkin, summer squash, tomatoes, turnips, and watermelons. One pest to be especially aware of is the cutworm.

---

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.
A: Swamp milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*, is difficult to find it locally, but we will have a few specimens of the native swamp milkweed at our spring plant sale Saturday, May 31 from 9am – noon. Ours are particularly large and beautiful. The monarch butterfly larvae have already found them and are eating the leaves – as I write this answer. As its name implies, Swamp milkweed does prefer moist soils and grows in sun to partial shade. The sap of this wetland milkweed is more clear than milky which is characteristic of other milkweed species. The genus, *Asclepias*, was named in honor of Aesculapius, the Greek god of medicine, undoubtedly because some species have long been used to treat a variety of ailments. The Latin species name, *incarnata*, means flesh-colored. With its showy flower clusters Swamp milkweed attracts butterflies, bees and hummingbirds. Swamp milkweed will inevitably have aphids. The insects are not a problem unless the plant looks sick, only then should you consider spraying the plant and aphids with soapy water. Another possible treatment is to support the plant part with your hand and blast it with high-pressure water. Swamp milkweed is good for wetland gardens and habitat. All parts of the plant are toxic but only when ingested in large quantities. Swamp milkweed is a host plant (which means the larvae eat the leaves) for Monarchs and Queen butterflies; it also provides nectar for pollinating bees.

Q: I purchased some swamp milkweed at one of your previous plant sales and I really want to get some more.

A: Thank you for bringing in a sample. However, without realizing it was some type of elephant ear. Can you identify it for me?

Q: I have some plant growing around my retention pond and it appears to be getting out of control. I was thinking larvae eat the leaves) for Monarchs and Queen butterflies; it also provides nectar for pollinating bees.

A: I found this wildflower in one of our reference books. Blackroot, *Pterocaulon pycnostachyum*, is native to pine flatwoods and sandhills of Florida and on the coastal plains of the Carolinas and westward to Louisiana. It often grows in moist, shady sites to dry areas in full sun. Blackroot is a member of the aster family and the sole species in Florida in this genus. The only other member of this genus in North America, wand blackroot (*P. virgatum*), is quite rare and only found in Louisiana and Texas. An unusual characteristic of black root (and where it gets its name) is the tuberous black roots. These roots allow the plant to store large amounts of food and survive prolonged periods of drought. It is similar to the tuberous roots of dahlia, tuberous begonia, and sweet potato. The foliage is distinctive. The stems and undersides of the linear leaves are densely covered by silvery "hairs", and the stems are conspicuously winged. The upper surface of the leaves is deep green in color and somewhat shiny. Propagation is by seeds. The flowers are attractive to a variety of butterflies such as the Gray Hairstreak, Whirlabout Skipper, and Zebra Swallowtail. The botanical name of the flower spike is spiciform – I added this note for all you botanical nerds like me.

Q: I heard you talk about a different hydrangea than the normal French mop head. What is it?

A: *Hydrangea macrophylla*, also called bigleaf, mopheads or French hydrangea, has either pink or blue flowers. Flower color is determined indirectly by the soil pH, which affects the availability of aluminum in the soil. In acid soils the flowers will be blue; in alkaline soils the flowers will be pink. Aluminum is available to the plant in acid soils. Research has determined the actual mechanism of color variation is due to the presence or absence of aluminum compounds in the flowers. For blue flowers, maintain a soil pH between 5 and 5.5. Apply aluminum sulfate or sulfur to reduce the pH to this range when you see new growth emerging in April. For pink flowers, maintain a soil pH of 6 or more by liming your soil. "Lace cap" was the other type of hydrangea you heard me discuss. The "lacecaps" have a center of fertile, relatively non-showy flowers and an outer ring of showy, sterile flowers, which together form a pinwheel effect. Hydrangea requires shade (either continuous shade or morning sun and afternoon shade), moist, but not wet soils, and cool winters. After plants are well established, French hydrangea is moderately drought tolerant and moderately salt tolerant. For more complete information on growing hydrangeas, please check out this University of Florida publication: http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep330

Q: Would you be able to identify this wildflower for me? It is growing all over the conservation area behind my house.

A: I found this wildflower in one of our reference books. Blackroot, *Pterocaulon pyrostachyum*, is native to pine flatwoods and sandhills of Florida and on the coastal plains of the Carolinas and westward to Louisiana. It often grows in moist, shady sites to dry areas in full sun. Blackroot is a member of the aster family and the sole species in Florida in this genus. The only other member of this genus in North America, wand blackroot (*P. virgatum*), is quite rare and only found in Louisiana and Texas. An unusual characteristic of black root (and where it gets its name) is the tuberous black roots. These roots allow the plant to store large amounts of food and survive prolonged periods of drought. It is similar to the tuberous roots of dahlia, tuberous begonia, and sweet potato. The foliage is distinctive. The stems and undersides of the linear leaves are densely covered by silvery "hairs", and the stems are conspicuously winged. The upper surface of the leaves is deep green in color and somewhat shiny. Propagation is by seeds. The flowers are attractive to a variety of butterflies such as the Gray Hairstreak, Whirlabout Skipper, and Zebra Swallowtail. The botanical name of the flower spike is spiciform – I added this note for all you botanical nerds like me.
Q. Can you tell me about this butterfly?

A: Since we were both standing outside and looking at the butterfly visiting the blackberry flowers at the Yulee Fruit Demonstration garden, it was easy to identify. The butterfly is called an American Painted Lady or American Lady, Vanessa virginiensis. The American lady occurs from southern Canada throughout the U.S. and southward to northern South America and is seen occasionally in Europe, Hawaii, and the larger Caribbean islands. The wing spread of adults is 1.75 to 2.40 inches (Daniels 2003). The upper surface of the wings is orange-brown with black margins. The front wings have white spots on the outer third. The lower side of the front wings has a bright pink area. Part of the forewing margin is concave — one of the characteristics that distinguishes it from the similar and closely related painted lady, Vanessa cardui (Linnaeus). The lower side of the hind wing has a characteristic “cob-web” pattern and two large eye spots near the margin. By contrast, the painted lady has a row of four smaller eye spots. Preferred plant hosts for larvae are “everlasting” or “cudweed” herbs and their close relatives in the aster family. https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/IN/IN82300.pdf