Love spiders? Well, you will certainly enjoy this one. If you don’t like spiders, this huge hairy guy will send you running! Meet the wolf spider, member of the family Lycosidae, taken from the Greek word “lukos” meaning “wolf”.

“Wolf spider” is a common name for any of a group of ground-dwelling hunting spiders that are not associated with webs. There are more than 2000 species worldwide and 100 in the United States. Many are large enough to sometimes be mistaken for tarantulas.

Stare at a wolf spider, and he stares back, with two very large forward looking eyes in the middle of his face. Actually wolf spiders have eight eyes arranged in three rows. The bottom row consists of four small eyes, the middle row has two very large eyes and the top row has two medium-sized eyes. Their eyes reflect light well, and one way of finding them is to hunt at night using a flashlight strapped to one’s forehead so that the light from the flashlight is reflected from their eyes directly back toward its source.

They depend on their eyesight, which is quite good, to hunt. Like other hunting spiders, a wolf spider may ambush or run down its prey, which includes insects such as earwigs, ants, beetles, crickets, roaches, grasshoppers, and other spiders.

The hunting strategies of Florida wolf spiders are perhaps the most diverse of any spider group. Many are active, wandering hunters during the day in sunny areas along the ground and in vegetation; others hunt at night and remain in silk-lined “retreats” during the day. Others live and hunt in aquatic environments, walking on the surface of ponds or on submerged vegetation. Some wolf spiders dig burrows in which they lie in wait for passing insects and other prey. Of the Florida spiders that dig burrows, some add a moveable trap door at the burrow entrance while others build an elevated lookout point.

The female wolf spider lays eggs in a large sac, which can often be as large as her own body. She attaches the egg sac to her body, and carries it with her until the eggs hatch. She then tears open the egg sac and the newly hatched spiders climb onto her back where they remain for up to a week. They do not usually breed indoors or in homes.

Wolf spiders are not poisonous, and will typically bite only when handled. As with most spiders bites, they may cause reactions in certain individuals.

To control, keep grass cut low and vegetation from overgrowing in yards and gardens near the home. Disperse rock and lumber piles, and seal any cracks or spaces around plumbing pipes leading indoors. Also, as with most other pests, cover all vents with screening.
Program Announcements

Landscape Matters

Herbs
Wednesday November 9  10-11AM
Master Gardener Claude Speed

Spotlight on Nassau Gardens

September Winner - Faith Haselberger

The September selection for Spotlight on Nassau Gardens is Faith Haselberger, who lives in Yulee. She and husband Joe have about 3200 square feet of gardens which include: strawberries, asparagus, blueberries, pomegranates, vegetables, herbs, a butterfly garden, roses and olive trees. They have been working on the gardens for five years.

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 atwoodca@bellsouth.net. For more information contact Rebecca Jordi at 491-7340.

Mistletoe by Rebecca Jordi

Mistletoe is not like typical plants which obtain support, water, and nutrients from the soil in which they grow. Mistletoe is a parasite which lives in the tops and branches of trees. Look for round green branches in treetops - mistletoe is often found in mature laurel or water oaks and other hardwood trees.

The “roots” of mistletoe penetrate the tree’s bark and enter the wood of a tree. After established, mistletoe grows very quickly and can live for about ten years. Eventually the host tree is weakened and can decline in health; branches become weakened and often die. Pruning mistletoe branches from mature trees may reduce this drain on the host oak. Be sure to make the pruning cut at least six inches below the point of attachment.

Mistletoe has been used as a Yuletide decoration for centuries. The soft leaves of this woody plant, with its dark green, oval shapes and occasional white berries, symbolize peace and love. Many customs and beliefs have carried over to its use at Christmas time -- most notably to encourage passion by way of kissing. Hanging up a branch with white berries was a subtle challenge to kiss the unsuspecting (or suspecting) individual who stood beneath it. Use this plant carefully as a holiday decoration -- it is poisonous if eaten. In homes with curious pets or young children, a plastic or fabric replica may be a safer way to enjoy mistletoe at Christmas.
When you envision a tree that symbolizes the Old South, what comes to mind? Do you, like me, immediately picture the stately magnolia with its profusion of creamy white blossoms scenting the air, perhaps with Spanish moss gently draping from its limbs?

You might then be surprised to learn that fossil remains date the magnolia family to as early as 36 million years ago and that it survived the melting of the Ice Age. The trees are natives of Eastern Asia and are named for Pierre Magnolia, a French botanist, when it was first encountered in the Americas.

Magnolias grow well in a wide range of soils and climates and some will even tolerate salt spray. Little maintenance is required. When the lot for my previous home near the ocean was cleared, I found a tree, which I could not quite identify. It had grown tall to escape the underlying growth with limbs only at the top, all facing the south side of the tree. Foliage was sparse from its resistance to salt spray and northeaster winds. After several months of lawn cultivation I was wonderfully surprised one day to find that the tree had responded to this care and white blooms had appeared, so I decided it would be appropriate to name it my "beach magnolia."

The first magnolia to be widely planted, and recommended for North Florida, is the Southern Magnolia, *Magnolia grandiflora*, as it will tolerate moist or even the dry sites found in our coastal dunes, full sun to light shade. The tree grows up to 90 feet tall and 30 to 40 feet wide with glossy evergreen leaves. The fragrant flowers bloom in late spring and throughout summer, with red fruit that ripens in fall.

The Sweetbay Magnolia, *Magnolia virginiana*, is also recommended for our area. It is evergreen and ranges from 20 to 30 feet tall. It is regarded as a patio or specimen tree. Sweetbay Magnolia can withstand "wet feet" and adapt readily to average garden conditions, but it does require acidic soil and will not tolerate salt spray.

Some magnolias are harvested for timber and the glossy branches have long been popular for home decorations. The heady fragrance has often been copied by perfume chemists. Magnolias are pollinated by beetles of the *Nitidulidae* (sap beetle) family.

Ready to plant? Choose your location carefully; be sure to allow for mature height and width. Do not plant too deeply as roots need to be just at or above soil level. Give roots room so they will not crowd your driveway or foundation. The fruit, while a favorite of wildlife, can be a nuisance on a driveway. In just a few years, enjoy the shade, blooms and scents of your own southern nights!
SEPTEMBER 13, 2011

TALLAHASSEE – Thanks to a concerned homeowner, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has positively identified a population of giant African land snails (GALS) in the Coral Gables area of Miami-Dade County. The homeowner asked a department plant inspector, who was checking a fruit fly trap in the area, to identify a large snail she had found in her yard. State and federal agriculture officials have been on the lookout for the giant African land snail because they are considered a serious plant pest and potential threat to public health. Giant African land snails are illegal to import into the United States without a permit, and currently no permits have been issued.

“Florida is constantly challenged by invading pests and diseases that arrive in cargo, travelers’ baggage, on air currents, and in plant and animal agricultural products,” said Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam. “Enlisting the help of the public in the early detection of these pests and diseases is critical to stopping their spread,” Putnam added. “We are extremely grateful to the resident who chose to step forward and inquire about a potential pest – because of her responsible actions, we may be successful in stopping the establishment of this extremely harmful pest.”

Scientists consider the GALS to be one of the most damaging snails in the world because they are known to consume at least 500 different types of plants. The snails can also cause structural damage to buildings – they consume plaster and stucco due to the calcium required by the snails to grow what will be their large shells. In large numbers, GALS can cause extensive damage.

Public health concerns also surround this and other types of snails because they can carry a parasitic nematode which can cause meningitis in humans. Because of these health concerns, the following steps are recommended: to use gloves when handling snails and wash hands thoroughly afterwards; wash fresh produce well before eating; and do not consume raw snails.

The giant African land snail, *Achatina fulica*, is one of the largest land snails in the world growing up to 8 inches in length and 4.5 inches in diameter. When full grown, the shell consists of seven to nine whorls (spirals), with a long and greatly swollen body whorl. The brownish shell covers at least half the length of the snail. Each snail can live as long as nine years and contains both female and male reproductive organs. After a single mating session, each snail can produce 100 to 400 eggs. In a typical year, every mated adult lays about 1,200 eggs.

*Achatina fulica* is originally from East Africa and has established itself throughout the Indo-Pacific Basin, including the Hawaiian Islands. This pest has also been introduced into the Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe with recent detections in Saint Lucia and Barbados.

Prior to 2010, when several giant African land snails were confiscated by U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Services officials, it had been several decades since Florida had to deal with this pest. In 1966, a boy smuggled three giant African land snails into Miami as pets and his grandmother subsequently released them into her garden. Seven years later, more than 18,000 snails were found. It took almost 10 years and more than $1 million to eradicate this pest from Florida. This is the only known successful giant African land snail eradication program on record.

The public’s help is needed to determine the extent of the current infestation. Anyone who thinks they may have, or may have seen, a giant African land snail is asked to call the Department’s toll-free helpline at 888-397-1517 to make arrangements to have the snail collected. To preserve the snail sample, with gloved hands, put the snail in a zip lock bag, seal it, and put in a bucket or plastic container. Please do not release them or give them away. For more information on invasive snail species, visit: www.freshfromflorida.com
November Checklist

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

**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.

**Roses:** Continue spray program. Water, water, water. Cut and remove spent blooms. DO NOT fertilize. Have soil tested, especially pH. Make necessary soil corrections.

**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.

*Selected from Florida Vegetable Guide by JM Stephens, RA Dunn, G Kiddder, D Short, & GW Simone, University of Florida and Month-by-Month Gardening in Florida by Tom MacCubbin*
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*
Osage Orange (*Maclura pomifera*)

What orange is not orange and not an orange? The osage-orange, also known as the hedge apple because it was planted in rows before the advent of the barbed wire fence. This deciduous North American native tree rapidly grows 30 to 40 feet tall with a spread of 20 to 40 feet and creates a dense canopy, making it useful as a windbreak. The large, shiny, dark green leaves turn bright yellow in fall before dropping, although this color change is not quite as noticeable on trees grown in the southeastern United States. The bark is deeply furrowed and has an orange tinge to it, and the strong, durable wood is bright orange in color. Osage oranges are considered reclamation plants that have been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common.

It is reported that the Osage Indians made their hunting bows from this beautiful hard wood, and it is also used to make furniture. From April to June, Osage-Orange puts out its inconspicuous green flowers which are followed by very conspicuous and unusual fruits. The fruits are four to five-inch-diameter, rough textured, heavy green balls which ripen to yellow-green and fall in October and November. These fruits are not edible, the juice acid and milky, but squirrels relish the small seeds buried inside the pulp. When the fruits drop, they can be very messy and, for this reason, male, fruitless trees should be selected if you plant this tree.

Osage-Orange is thorny, just like true citrus trees, and forms thickets if left to grow on its own. However, there are thornless cultivars available. Osage-Orange should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil. This tough, native plant can withstand almost anything once established - heat, cold, wind, drought, poor soil, ice storms, and even some vandalism. It appreciates regular watering when young until it is established, which generally takes about 4 months. The thornless, fruitless cultivars include ‘Witchita’, ‘White Shield’, and ‘Park’. Propagation is by seed, cuttings, and root-cuttings. Young trees are easily transplanted. It has no pests or diseases of major concern. You can purchase Osage Orange, *Maclura pomifera*, at any local garden nursery; if they do not have it they should be willing to order it for you.