



“Solutions for Your Life”

12520 Ulmerton Road
Largo, FL 33774-3602
(727) 582-2100

www.pinellascountyextension.org



Lawn & Garden | Commercial Horticulture | Families & Consumers | Florida Yards & Neighborhoods | 4-H Youth Development | Urban Sustainability

Things To Do in the Landscape February 2009



Veggies

It is time to plant your **spring vegetable garden**. You will want to spade up your garden area and incorporate organic matter. Add about 25 pounds of some type of organic material per 100 square feet of garden. Cow manure (allow four weeks before planting if it is not composted), compost, peat moss, or any combination of materials are great organic amendments. Almost any type of vegetables can be planted in the spring garden, so check the local garden centers for their new spring shipment of vegetable seeds. Some nurseries have starter plants for tender crops now. *Vegetable Gardening in Florida* by James Stephens is a great reference book for growing vegetables and the UF/IFAS Extension publication, *Florida Gardening Guide* is available on the Internet at: . <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH021>.

Blossom-end rot can be a serious problem in the vegetable garden. The bottom ends of tomatoes, peppers, or squash turn soft and dark. It is important for the soil to contain adequate calcium and for irrigation to be consistent. Correct this deficiency by using lime in the garden or treating existing plants with calcium chloride, commonly sold as Stop Blossom-End Rot. Also, be sure to water your garden regularly so the plants do not wilt during this dry time of the year.

Lawn and Landscape

It is time to treat for those annual **weeds** that grow in the lawn. They start from seed in the early spring, grow, flower, and re-seed all in one season. Summer weeds will sprout soon after night temperatures get above 70 degrees. Apply a pre-emergent herbicide before February 15th to help prevent these seeds from sprouting. There are many pre-emergent herbicides available and some are appropriate only on a particular type of grass. Check with your local garden center to find the one labeled safe on your type of lawn. Always read and follow the label directions. Mowing your grass at the right height for the type will also discourage weeds by depriving the seeds the light they need to germinate. Wait until March to fertilize your lawn.

Reading the pesticide label is very important. It lists the pests to be controlled, how to apply and how much, precautions to take while handling and mixing the product. There are also instructions of what to do in case of accidents. Taking time to read the label may save the life of your plant or even your own. Just because you can buy something over the counter does not mean that it can be used indiscriminately. Using

more than recommended is NOT better! Following the label directions will also protect Florida's fragile environment.

Check **needle-type evergreens** often for spider mites and spray with a miticide or Neem oil when necessary. Mites are very difficult to control on fine-needled junipers, so several treatments at seven to ten day intervals may be necessary.

This is normally the recommended time for **planting trees and shrubs**, but with the current watering restrictions, it will be better to wait until June to plant when rain is more likely. In our area, planting can be done anytime. If you must plant now, be sure to choose and plant the plants at the proper spacing. When plants are small, it may look like you have under-planted or that the plants are placed too far apart. Over-planting can be a serious and costly mistake. Crowded plants are less likely to thrive and crowding can reduce air circulation and promote disease.

Flowering Perennials

Now is the time to divide crowded **perennial** plants such as cannas, gerberas, daylilies, and Stokesia. Division involves cutting large clumps into smaller sections, making sure that each smaller clump has an adequate supply of stems, leaves, roots, and buds to survive transplanting. Ferns, orchids, daylilies, bulbous plants, nandina, and liriope are commonly propagated by division. Some plants can be pulled apart, but many must be cut. Transplant the separated clumps at the same depth they were growing originally. Do not divide plants when they are flowering, but any other time during the growing season is suitable as long as adequate care is provided after planting.

Prune **camellias** after flowering. Cut branches just above the point where last year's growth ends. Remove most of the new growth to control the plant's size. Rake up any fallen blooms and leaves and put down a fresh layer of mulch to help avoid petal blight next year. As new growth begins, look for aphids which cause the new leaves to be curled and distorted. Spray with a light horticultural oil for control. Oil should also control scale insects that normally live on the backs of leaves. You will need to spray two to three times seven to ten days apart. For more information, access the UF/IFAS Extension publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP002>.

Hibiscus should be pruned at the end of this month or early March. Hibiscus can be pruned throughout the summer to keep it from becoming leggy however you will sacrifice a certain amount of blooms whenever you prune. Provide a balanced fertilizer if there is evidence of nutrient deficiency on the leaves.

Azaleas will always perform better if they are planted in partial shade. They tend to become infested with lace bugs when they grow in full sun. Purchase azalea plants while they are blooming. The planting hole for containerized or balled and burlapped azalea plants should be twelve inches wider than the root mass but not quite as deep as the root ball or soil surface in the container. Fill the hole so that the azaleas are planted slightly above the depth they were in the container or nursery. Organic mulch applied to a depth of two to three inches will conserve water and reduce weed problems. Be sure to keep mulch two to three inches away from the base of the plant. November to February is the best season for transplanting; however, containerized azaleas may be transplanted any time if proper care is provided. Plants should be spaced according to mature size of the cultivar but generally three to five feet apart.

Upcoming Events at County Extension / Florida Botanical Gardens

(UF-IFAS / Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo 33774)

Saturday, Feb. 14

10 to 11 a.m.

Family Fun Learning at Pinellas County Market in the Park

Pinellas County Extension Parking Lot, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo

Take a tour in the herb garden and discover these useful plants. Make a mug cozy to add to the fun at this *Family Fun Learning - The Wonderful World of Herbs Program*. The program cost is \$2 per person. Also that day, explore *Pinellas County Market in the Park* and discover farm fresh produce, delicious gourmet food, beautiful plants and more. The Market is located off 125th Street between Walsingham and Ulmerton roads, next to Heritage Village. To register, log onto www.pinellascountyextension.org and click on the "Online Class Registration" button or call (727) 582-2100.

Wednesday, Feb. 18

12:15 to 12:45 p.m.

Solutions in 30 – Saving Money by Going Green

On-line at Your Computer with Pinellas County Extension Experts

Going green is not all about the environment. The economy and society also benefit from green decisions. James Stevenson, Urban Sustainability Extension Specialist, gives tips and research-based techniques that will save you green as you go green! To register, visit www.pinellascountyextension.org and click on the "Online Class Registration" button or call (727) 582-2100.

Thursday, Feb. 19

6 to 8:30 p.m.

Florida Style Gardening – Landscape Design Clinic

Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo

Want to uncover the secrets to gardening the Florida-Friendly way in Pinellas County? This class is intended as a follow-up to the Feb. 5 *Concepts of Landscape Design Class* or is great for those who have designed landscape plans on their own and would like to attend just this class. Landscape designers will be on hand to review plans and ideas. The series continues March 5. The tuition is \$15 per class. To register, log onto www.pinellascountyextension.org and click on the "Online Class Registration" button or call (727) 582-2100.

Thursday, Feb. 19

6:30 to 8 p.m.

Step into the Kitchen – Families Cooking Together

All Children's Education Center, 701 4th St. S., St. Petersburg

Join Pinellas County Extension Specialist Karen Saley on a five-week journey to learn how to turn meal time into fun family time. Through hands-on activities, children and parents learn the importance of the five food groups and how to prepare five recipes that contain those ingredients. Cost is \$25 for one adult and one child with each additional person costing \$5. This series begins Thursday, Feb. 19, and continues on the Thursdays of Feb. 26, March 5, March 12 and March 19. To register, log onto www.pinellascountyextension.org and click on the "Online Class Registration" button or call (727) 582-2100.

Wednesday, Feb. 25

12:15 to 12:45 p.m.

Solutions in 30 – The Green Family

On-line at Your Computer with Pinellas County Extension Experts

By working together, families can better understand how the decisions made today will impact future generations. Vestina Crayton, Urban Sustainability Extension Specialist, guides you through the journey to green and provides tips on getting children involved. To register, visit www.pinellascountyextension.org and click on the "Online Class Registration" button or call (727) 582-2100.

Saturday, Feb. 28

10 to 11 a.m.

Get Cooking Demonstration – The Wonderful World of Herbs

Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo

Start healthier eating habits with a free *Get Cooking Demonstration* by the pros at Pinellas County Extension. *The Wonderful World of Herbs* demonstration uses local produce to show how easy eating healthy can be with a little imagination. Citizens learn how to best purchase, store and prepare herbs. Recipes will be shared, and fact sheets offered. To register, log onto www.pinellascountyextension.org and click on the “Online Class Registration” button or call (727) 582-2100.

Every day

Explore Florida Botanical Gardens

Florida Botanical Gardens, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo

With more than 30 acres of cultivated gardens to explore, plan about two hours for this fun adventure. Before heading to the Gardens, visit www.flbg.org to see what’s in bloom. This site helps identify what is happening in the Gardens and provides links to University of Florida fact sheets to provide more information on how to use and care for these plants. The Gardens are open every day of the year from 7 a.m. Admission and parking are free. For more information, call (727) 582-2581 or visit www.flbg.org.

Market in the Park – Saturdays, thru April 18th

Location: UF/IFAS Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL

Details: Saturdays 9am – 1pm

More than just a farmer's market, Market in the Park will bring together healthy, farm fresh local produce, delicious gourmet foods, beautiful plants and much, much more. County Extension experts and Master Gardener's will hold educational seminars on gardening, nutrition and cooking during market hours. Every Saturday, November 1 - April 18, 2009.

**[For more events information / registration](http://www.pinellascounty.org/events)
www.pinellascounty.org/events or call (727) 582-2100**

Pinellas County Extension is part of a nationwide network of land grant universities providing unbiased, research-based information to America’s citizens. In our state, Extension’s land grant link is the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS). Pinellas County Extension serves as a bridge between the research labs of the university and the local community by providing educational opportunities for adults and youth.