



“Solutions for Your Life”

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

Things To Do in the Landscape

June 2009



Drought

As we go into June we are still in a serious drought. Many residents have expressed concerns about maintaining their landscape during drought conditions. Severe watering restrictions are still in effect for most of us. You can get complete information about the restrictions in your area by going to www.watermatters.org. Restrictions are listed by county and municipality.

With these water restrictions in force, it is very important that your automatic sprinkler system is working properly and that it is delivering $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch of water during each irrigation cycle. You can get the publication *How to Calibrate Your Sprinkler System* on the Internet at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/LH026>, or call your local Extension office and request a copy. For information about maintaining your landscape during drought, see *Coping with Drought in the Landscape* at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG026> or request a copy from your local Extension office.

Hurricanes

June also ushers in another hurricane season. If you have large trees in your landscape that have the potential to damage structures, you may want to contact an arborist certified by ISA to evaluate the damage potential and to do any pruning to open the canopy or remove dead branches. Always ask for references and proof of liability insurance from any contractor. You can find a list of certified arborists in your area on the Internet at: www.treesaregood.com/findtreeservices/TCSHome.aspx

Palms do not need “hurricane cuts”, in fact, pruning all but the top several fronds from a palm is very damaging to the plant. Removing many live green fronds starves the palm and leaves the growing bud (the top most part of the palm) vulnerable to breaking in the wind. All of those mature fronds actually protect the bud from damage. If you must prune, do not remove any fronds above the horizontal plane, or 9 and 3 on a clock face.

Look around your landscape before a storm is approaching and determine what your plan will be for patio furniture, plants in pots, hanging baskets, yard art, tools, and toys. Hurricane winds can create damaging missiles out of just about anything in your yard. You can turn patio tables top side down and bring chairs inside. If you do not have room to bring containerized plants inside, consider securing them between a dense hedge and a wall of your house or a fence.

Pests

Dingy brown moths flying around grassy areas are often an indication that eggs are being laid in your lawn by the **sod webworm**. These eggs will hatch into small green caterpillars in about five to seven days that primarily feed at night and remain in a curled position on or near the soil surface during the day. Injured grass has notches chewed along the sides of the blades. The foliage may be completely stripped in patches. A soap flush is a good way to detect sod webworms. Mix two tablespoons of dishwashing liquid in a gallon sprinkler can. Fill with water and drench a four square foot area. Observe the area for about two minutes. Soap is an irritant causing insects to surface. Pesticides labeled for sod webworm control are *Bacillus thuringiensis* (*Bt*, Dipel, Thuricide) and Carbaryl (Sevin). *Bt* is a bacterial product that will cause the caterpillars to stop feeding and die without harming beneficial insects (except butterfly caterpillars), wildlife, pets or humans. So, it is an environmentally friendly choice. Sod webworms may re-infest the lawn within one to three weeks after treatment. Continue to examine the lawn and re-apply pesticide as required.

Azaleas, pyracanthas, sycamores and other woody ornamentals may show signs of **lacebug** damage this month. Their feeding causes a gray, blanched, or stippled appearance on the upper surface of the leaves. Spray plants with paraffin based horticultural oil, fish oil, Neem oil, Malathion, or other approved pesticide. Follow the label carefully and be sure to spray the undersides as well as the tops of the leaves.

When croton leaves lose their color and appear blanched or faded, the cause is usually a **thrips** infestation. This sucking insect removes the juice from the leaves and plants often completely defoliate. Spray affected plants with insecticidal soap, Neem oil or paraffin based horticultural oil.

Leaf spots on ligustrum are usually caused by a fungal disease called *Cercospora*. Spray plants three times at ten day intervals, then once a month until spots stop appearing on new the growth. The old spotted leaves will not improve. Use a fungicide labeled for Ligustrum and carefully follow the label directions.

Garden chores

Prune **gardenias** as soon as they finish blooming if necessary to keep them in shape. Yellow leaves with green veins may indicate an iron deficiency. Correct by applying iron chelate or iron sulphate according to the label instructions.

Remember to keep old faded **crape myrtle** flowers clipped off to encourage more blooms, if you can reach them. Clip just behind the flower heads. When crape myrtles are allowed to produce seed flowering slowly declines as seeds are produced.

This is the month when **chrysanthemums** can be planted. Pinch back to encourage branching that will result in more blooms in the fall. **DO NOT** pinch or prune after August. Use a low nitrogen fertilizer with a higher potassium number such as 6-4-10.

June is the last month to safely prune **azalea** bushes if you want flowers next spring. Fertilize your plants four times each year (February, May, August, and November) with fertilizer labeled for acid loving plants.

Vegetable gardening is winding down except for those veggies that like hot weather. Harvest all ripened vegetables often. Warm weather brings on many insects and diseases so check your plants often. Be sure to check number of days to wait before harvest if using a pesticide. Many have a week or more waiting time and if your vegetables are almost ready to harvest, either be careful not to get the chemical on them or pick before spraying. Systemic pesticides are not suitable for vegetables since they not only get on the plant, but also inside of it.

As night temperature increase to 70 degrees and above, tomato production usually decreases. There are some types of tomatoes that will produce most of the summer. The varieties best suited for Florida are Florida Basket, Florida Petite, Florida lanai, Patio, Cherry, and Sweet 100's.

Good summer crops are sweet potatoes, black-eyed or southern peas, okra, and watermelons.

Vacations and plants

When you plan to leave on vacation, it is important to get your landscape and potted plants in order prior to your departure. You can ask a friend or neighbor to check on your plants while you are gone. Place your outdoor potted plants in a shady location. Potted plants may be placed in the ground up to the rim of the container. A thick layer of mulch will conserve moisture and reduce the amount of water needed while on vacation. Place indoor plants in an area that receives indirect light. Direct sunlight will dry out the soil faster. Do not leave plants in a darkened room because leaves will drop. The last thing to do before leaving on your trip is to thoroughly soak the plants. Houseplants should be O.K. for two weeks. If your vacation is to be longer, then move houseplants outdoors and sink pots in a shaded and cool garden bed. Line up someone to mow your grass if you will be gone longer than one week to keep your landscape looking neat.

[For Extension 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.