



“Solutions for Your Life”

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

www.pinellascountyextension.org



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Things To Do in the Landscape

November 2009



Now that it is finally a bit cooler and we are in between the goblins and turkey, it's time to give serious thought to fall gardening chores.

In the Vegetable Garden:

Thin **root crops** such as beets, carrots, turnips, and radishes when they are overcrowded by removing the smallest plants to give the remaining plants room to mature. Radishes and carrots should be about three inches apart and turnips and beets four to six inches apart. It is not too late to plant vegetables. Cool season crops like broccoli, cabbage, greens, and cauliflower still have plenty of time to mature before warmer weather returns.

Consider planting culinary **herbs** from seeds or plants now. A wide variety of herbs thrive in our cooler, dryer fall weather. Favorites such as basil, cilantro, dill, fennel, parsley, sage, and thyme can all be planted as seeds and many are available as plants. For more information, access *Herbs in the Florida Garden* on the internet at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH020>.

Scout your garden regularly for insect pests. Many **caterpillars** enjoy feeding on the leaves of your fall vegetables. Cabbage loopers, tomato hornworms, cutworms and pickleworms can be controlled by applying *Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)* formulations in products such as Dipel or Thuricide.

Also watch for **beneficial insects** like lady bugs, green lacewings, and minute pirate bugs. These will help control common pests like aphids, whiteflies and mites.

If you find that you need to treat with a pesticide, always try the least toxic method first. Pesticides like Neem oil, fish oil, and insecticidal soaps will control many insects and not contaminate your harvest. Use chemical pesticides with caution; read and follow the label carefully; and pay close attention to the number of days you must wait after spraying before you can harvest. Also, be certain that the product label lists the crop you are going to treat.

In the Landscape:

You may notice premature flower **bud drop** on Hibiscus and Gardenia. This can be caused by insects, as well as cultural or environmental problems. Insects called thrips and midges can damage the unopened bud. Thrips and midges are very small, but you can often see them if you open a bud that has dropped from the plant. Many times the best control is a systemic insecticide that contains imidacloprid or acephate. Remember to follow the label directions very carefully.

Temperature and water fluctuations can also cause buds to drop and random leaves to yellow. In addition, too much or not enough fertilizer can also stress the plant, resulting in bud drop. Nematodes can parasitize the root system, creating a water and nutritional stress on the plant that also results in bud drop.

Trees are a large part of any landscape and should be selected carefully. Shade trees should have moderate to dense foliage and should not have large or objectionable fruits, flowers, or seeds. They should have the ability to withstand high winds and be relatively free from insects and disease pests, and of a size suitable for the location. We have all seen the large oaks planted under utility lines and then severely pruned. You may want to use both deciduous and evergreen trees in your landscape. Some deciduous shade trees for our area are red maple, pecan, sweet gum, sycamore, water oak, and elm. Evergreen trees include live oak, pine, magnolia, red cedar, and Texas wild olive. For more information on selecting trees, visit *Selecting Quality Trees* on the Internet at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/EP/EP31300.pdf>. You may also want to read *Wind and Trees: Lessons Learned from Hurricanes* on the Internet at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FR/FR17300.pdf>.

An insect called **twig girdler** is very seldom seen but often very damaging to young trees. The female lays her eggs in the twigs of maple, oak, pine, and pecan trees. She then chews around the twig so it will drop to the ground where the life cycle will be completed. The damage occurs when leaders of small trees are girdled. This changes the trees structure and may result in a weakened tree. Larger trees are generally not damaged to any extent from the twig girdlers "pruning". The only control measure is to clean up the fallen twigs and destroy them. This eliminates the next generation.

Overgrown **vines** such as wisteria, ivy, flame, coral, honeysuckle and Confederate jasmine can be pruned now. Cut off excess tangled growth. Prune back 1/3 to 1/2 and remove rooted suckers which are growing in undesirable areas.

Many **annual weeds** grow in the cooler months and usually germinate from seed when night temperatures drop below 70 degrees F. Early November is the time to prevent annual weed growth. A pre-emergent herbicide (a weed killer that prevents weed seeds from growing) should be applied before the weeds emerge through the soil. If you fertilized your lawn last month, then it is best to apply herbicide **only** and not a weed and feed product. Be sure the herbicide you purchase is labeled as safe to apply to your type of lawn grass.

Citrus

There is still time to spray your **citrus trees** for the fall. Use horticultural oil, fish oil, or neem oil for aphids, whitefly, and spider mites. You may use Malathion for heavy infestations. Follow label directions carefully. Citrus leaves that are yellowing around the edge and distorted may be lacking a trace element. Apply minor elements to your citrus trees either as a foliage spray or as a

drench to the soil. Carefully mix sprays to apply only the recommended amount as stated on the product label. Minor elements will correct yellowing due to deficiencies of iron, magnesium and manganese, and will also supply copper, zinc, boron, and other needed elements.

Citrus fruit splitting and fruit drop may be a problem during the fall. This is a physiological problem that could be more pronounced just after a period of moisture stress followed by heavy rains. Splitting and drop will usually not be a serious problem if the trees are well cared for and furnished with adequate nutrition and irrigation.

[For Extension events information / registration](#)
www.pinellascounty.org/events or call (727) 582-2100

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