



Now Playing

By Leah Ray

If you see me sporting an iPod, you can be sure I'm listening to a gardening podcast. If you want to scare the bejeebers out of yourself, listen to programs like the KFBK Garden Show in California where Master Gardener Fred Hoffman can really enlighten us Floridians as to what they have been dealing with for years: lack of water when and where it is needed. That area of the U.S. has had a really rough time. Their Extension warns that it is not about the level of our lakes, rivers and canals, it is the level of our Ground Water! I see no reason why that could not be us in a short matter of time if we are not careful. Water is Florida's most precious resource.

Timing is Everything: Set your Irrigation Control to *manual*. May is a dry month but by June, hopefully, the rains will begin. Do not water a yard that has had rain. Keep it lean. Don't make a water junkie out of it. Also, water thoroughly and less often to encourage deeper roots and healthier plants. Check your rain sensor. Overwatering leads to more fungal and insect issues which leads to more products applied to the yard, which leads to polluted runoff. It makes no difference if you use city water or well water.

http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/maintenance_and_care/watering_and_irrigation.shtml

South Florida Gardening:

http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/pdfs/May_South.pdf

http://www.solutionsforyourlife.com/lawn_and_garden/calendar/pdfs/June_South.pdf

Fertilization: Things will begin growing rapidly. Apply slow release fertilizers on turf as well as ornamentals. Use organic nitrogen instead of synthetic nitrogen if possible. Evidence indicates that synthetic nitrogen releases and is consumed very quickly whereas organic is much slower. Remember, there is a fertilization ban during the rainy season (June 1 through September 30). Also, remember that fertilizers shall not be applied more than four times during any one calendar year to a single area in Naples.

<http://www.naplesgov.com/DocumentCenter/Home/View/389>

| | |
|---|--|
|  <p>FERTILIZER ORDINANCE</p> <p>To reduce the risk of fertilizer runoff contributing to nutrient pollution in county waters, Collier County adopted a Fertilizer Ordinance</p> <p>IT'S THE LAW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use only what you need and follow all label application rates. • Don't fertilize during identified storm "Watch" or "Warning" periods, or when soils are saturated. • Don't fertilize within 10 feet of water bodies, or near storm drains or drainage ditches. • Sweep any fertilizer and grass clippings that land on the driveway, sidewalk, or street, back onto your lawn/garden. | <p>KNOW WHAT YOU NEED DON'T OVER FEED</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Measure your yard. 2. Calculate the pounds of nitrogen and phosphorus in the bag based on the formulation. 3. Don't apply more than 1 pound total nitrogen or 0.25 pounds of phosphorus per 1000 square feet at any one time. 4. Calculate how many bags you need for your yard based on the number of pounds in the bag. <p>For more information on the Collier County Fertilizer Ordinance visit www.dontoverfeed.com or call (239) 252-2502</p> <p>If you live within City of Naples, please check City ordinances</p> |
|---|--|

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 2](#) →



Solarize Planting Beds: Most vegetables fare poorly during summer months, which make this the ideal time to reduce nematodes, weed seeds, and fungus with heat. Also, bare soil is an invitation for weeds and weed seeds to find a home. Soil solarization means the soil surface is covered with clear plastic, which allows sunlight to pass through and heat up the soil to temperatures that are lethal to pests. Soil amendments such as compost may be added in late July. By late August it should be ready for planting.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in856>

Mulch: Try to get mulch down before the rains come. Choose renewable resources such as pine straw, pine bark, and melaleuca mulch.

http://gomulch.com/index.cfm/name-cont.products/app_prodid-10

Mulch is a form of fertilizer. It's just *slow food*. Not convinced? Observe what is going on between the soil and the first contact with mulch. It is alive with organic material.

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fr079>

Bufos in the Garden: There are two sets of folks in SWFL - those who have Bufo Toads and those who will get Bufo Toads. By the way, Bufo means toad. *Bufo Marinus*, aka Marine Toads or Cane Toads, are toxic to mammals. Veterinarians are now very aware of what dogs who have encountered a Bufo look like. This link provides a comparison of the native *Bufo terrestris*, as well a sound recording:

http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/frogstoads/rhinella_marina.php

Should you choose to dispose of the invasive toad, here are some suggestions:

<http://palmharbor.patch.com/articles/backyard-danger-poisonous-toads-can-kill-pets>

Scout it Out: Insect populations are rising. Aphids may be sprayed with insecticidal soap. Mites are very active when it is hot and at dry locations. Watch for dappled discoloration on the older leaves. They live on the underside of the leaves and can be seen by shaking the leaves over a piece of white paper. They will be the little specks running around. Treat with a miticide. Areas that appear to be water stressed may be grubs (juvenile beetles) actively feeding on lawn roots. Apply grub control.

Ants: Ant are an indicator that you have a pest issue. Hang double-sided sticky tape around your garden and see what attaches to it. Ants will be foraging on residue from pests. Ants feed on the honeydew and will actually help to guard these pests from predators. Control with a 1 percent boric acid concentration in sugar water. However, a large amount of bait may need to be dispensed and made available to ants over several weeks.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ig080>

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 3](#) →



Palm Pruning for Hurricane Season: The removal of too many fronds and the supporting base or “boot” actually decreases the built-in stabilizing or -absorbing capacity design of the crown and makes the remaining fronds and the bud *more* susceptible to wind damage.

<http://collier.ifas.ufl.edu/CommHort/CommHortPubs/Palm%20pruning3.pdf>

Watch for Nutritional Deficiencies: Insects and diseases are not always the culprit with plant problems. Healthy plant growth requires 17 nutrients. This link will give you some great photos with explanations, and treatment options:

http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/Hort/Videos_Powerpoints_Podcasts/Plant_Deficiencies_2013.pdf

Planting a Tree: When a tree must be removed, try not to replace it with another tree in the exact same hole. The remains of the old tree will be working hard to digest nitrogen as part of the composting process. That nitrogen is something one would rather be going to the new tree. Try moving it over a tad so they won't compete.

<http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/planting-hole.shtml>

Plumerias: Plumeria can be propagated through rooted cuttings, seeds, grafting, or air layering, though the first option is the easiest and most common method. Plumeria originating from seeds often take three to four years to flower. Plumeria cuttings should be taken from mature wood (grayish hue) and should include the stem tip. Cuttings should be 12–15 inches long. If leaves are present on the cutting, remove them to reduce transpiration. Allow the cutting to dry for three to five days, so a *callus* forms on the cut end. Sink the cutting in about 3 inches. Do not water for the first five to six weeks, while the cutting is developing roots. Potting soil should drain well as Plumeria do not tolerate saturated soil conditions. Water lightly when new leaves begin to develop.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep489>

Quote of the Day: 90% of all garden problems are fertilizer related and 5% are water related. ~ Farmer Fred of KFBK Garden Show.

<http://farmerfred.com/> (UC Cooperative Extension)