Dear Extension Friend

It’s May, it’s hot, and we need some rain! Your plants are feeling the change in weather, too. Just when you wish you could head indoors to the air-conditioning, they need your help. This month’s newsletter has some recommendations for getting your trees, shrubs, and grass through this droughty period. I’ve also included a section on watering restrictions for our area. Another consequence of drought is wildfire. A burn ban is now in effect for Baker County. Go to our website for more information on landscaping for drought, landscaping for prevention of wildfires, and details on the burn ban. Enjoy the bounty of your vegetable and flower gardens this month. Hope to see you at one of our programs.

Respectfully,

Barbara A. Smith
Extension Agent-Horticulture

Upcoming Events:

Ornamental Grasses & Groundcovers
Monday, May 21st
6pm - 7:30 pm

Butterfly Gardening in a Container
Wednesday, May 30th
9am - 11:30am

Mother’s Day is Sunday, May 13th.

If you’d like to send a virtual flower to someone, go to this fun link:
Gardening Guide for May

Annuals for May planting include celosia, coleus, gaillardia, gazania, impatiens, kalanchoe, marigold, nicotiana, ornamental pepper, pentas, periwinkle, portulaca, salvia, sunflowers, tithonia, thunbergia, torenia, verbena, vinca, and zinnia. To keep annuals blooming throughout the summer, fertilize at planting with a slow release fertilizer for blooming plants. One such product is Osmocote. There are many others. This coated fertilizer will last for about 12 weeks and does not leach through the soil and out of the rootzone like quick release fertilizers.

Now is the time when lubber grasshoppers become noticeable. Young lubbers are black with either a yellow or red stripe down their back. They quickly increase in size and develop big appetites. During the first several weeks, they stay clustered together. For control without chemicals, hand pick at this early stage.

Take care when using insecticides in the home garden. The bees that we count on for pollination of many crops are active early in the day and can be killed when we use these products on our plants. Avoid using dust formulations since these materials never dry and bees are easily killed by them. To help protect the bees, it is best to apply liquid insecticide, and wait until late in the afternoon when bees are less active.

Scout for insect and disease every few days. That way you can take care of any problems in the earlier stages when they are easier to eradicate. A 10X hand lens or magnifying glass may be helpful.

Prune and fertilize azaleas this month before next year’s buds form. Use an azalea, gardenia, camellia fertilizer. Attend to watering and make sure azaleas are mulched because they have shallow roots.

Insect and disease pressures later in the summer limit vegetable planting in May. The following are a few of the more successful vegetables which can be started now.

**Beans, Lima** - Fordhook 242, Henderson, Jackson Wonder, Dixie Butterpea, Florida Butter (Pole), Sieva (Pole)

**Eggplant** - Florida Market, Black Beauty, Dusky, Long Tom, Ichi-ban, Tycoon

**Okra** - Clemson Spineless, Perkins, Dwarf Green, Emerald, Blondy

**Peas, Southern** - Black-eye, Mississippi Silver, Texas Cream 40, Snapea, Zipper Cream, Sadandy, Purplebull

**Potatoes, Sweet** - Porto Rico, Georgia Red, Jewel Centennial, Coastal Sweet, Boniato, Sunor

Muscadine Grapes

Are you looking for a new fruit crop to grow? How about one that can be eaten straight off the vine, or processed into juice, jelly, or even wine. Muscadine grapes are easy to grow. They tolerate insects and disease well, and as a result, they can be grown without spraying pesticides. That makes muscadines an easy, rewarding crop for home vineyards and small farmers. We have information on all aspects of grape culture. Ask for our grape publications at the extension office or find it at our website: http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu. Just follow the GRAPES link. Here is a list of some of the recommended cultivars of muscadine grapes for eating and processing:

**Muscadine Grapes for fresh fruit:**

Fry. Fry is the most popular muscadine grape cultivar. Produces a very large bronze grape. Needs a pollenizer (plant this cultivar near a self-fertile grape cultivar)

Summit. Summit is an excellent fresh fruit cultivar that produces a slightly smaller bronze grape than Fry, but with higher yields and disease resistance. Needs a pollenizer.

Nesbitt. Nesbitt produces a black grape that is medium-large in size. Yields are high and crop is mid season. It is self-fertile. This is a multi-use grape for fresh market or processing.

Southern Home. Southern Home is from the University of Florida grape breeding program and is a patented interspecific V. rotundifolia x V. vinifera hybrid. This cultivar has a leaf more like a bunch grape and is valuable as an ornamental as a result. It is a female cultivar and produces a black berry with more berries per cluster than usual (about 12). Berry size is medium and berry flavor is different from the flavor of other muscadine grapes.

**Muscadines for processing into wine, juice, or jelly:**

Carlos. Carlos is an extremely heavy producer of medium-sized bronze grapes. It is self-fertile and will provide the tonnage and quality required for juice or wine production. Carlos is the number one bronze juice or wine grape in the southeast.

Doreen. Doreen is a self-fertile, black muscadine cultivar that produces a large crop of small to medium-sized berries and is one of the best cultivars for juice production. Harvest season is late.

Noble. Noble is the most popular red muscadine grape for wine or juice production. It is self-fertile. Yields and disease resistance are high. Flavor is less musky than most muscadine grapes.

Welder. Welder is a self-fertile, bronze grape cultivar which makes a good juice and wine.

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*For individuals with disabilities requiring special accommodations, please contact the Baker County Extension Service at least 5 working days prior to the program in order for proper consideration to be given to the request.*

*For TDD service, call the Florida Relay Service Center at 1-800-955-8771*
Watering Restrictions

We are not officially in a drought situation, yet. However, landscape water restrictions are in effect from the St. Johns Water Management District. These restrictions limit how often we can water our home landscapes with sprinkler systems. Irrigation is not allowed between 10 am and 4 pm and is limited to two days per week. These restrictions apply to private wells, surface water, and water from public utilities. There are exceptions for newly installed landscapes, for micro-irrigation (drip) and for watering by hand using a hose with a nozzle that can be turned off. For details on water restrictions, go to our website and click on the “DROUGHT” link.

Dealing with Drought in the Landscape

Lawn:
Apply 3/4 in when turf shows water deficit symptoms. Don’t water again until symptoms return. If there is no rain, this is about 2 times per week. Mow lawns at the highest height for your grass. Remove no more than 1/3 of the blade at one mowing because this further stresses the grass. Higher mowing encourages deeper rooting, which is a key factor in drought tolerance. Use a sharp mower blade because a leaf cut with a sharp blade heals faster and requires less water than a leaf torn by a dull blade. Adjust irrigation frequency, not the amount of water applied. Deep roots are the goal and can generally be created by applying ½ - ¾ inches of water when you irrigate. Calibrate sprinklers so you know how much you are applying. Ask at our office or go to our website for publication, ENH61, How to Calibrate Your Sprinkler System, if you need help. If you have spots of grass that look dry (folded leaves, bluish-gray color), you may be missing some areas when you water. Check your sprinkler to make sure you have an even distribution of water over the area. Irrigate in the early morning so excess moisture will dry during the day. Turf disease is encouraged when you water late in the day. And irrigating late morning and afternoon wastes irrigation water because it evaporates.

Trees, Shrubs, & Bedding Plants: Water, Water, Water this month

Newly planted trees and shrubs should be watered daily for best establishment. Trees less than 2 inches in caliper need water daily for 2 weeks, every other day for 2 months after that, and weekly for 2-3 more months. Larger caliper trees take longer to establish than smaller trees and when under-irrigated, they will take even longer. For more on this, call our office and ask for publication ENH 860, Fertilization and Irrigation Needs for Florida Lawns and Landscapes.

Newly planted shrubs will need water daily for the first few weeks. Taper off frequency of watering to every other day and eventually to every third day until established. If you use mulch around trees and shrubs, it helps moderate temperatures and hold moisture when the temperatures are very high and we have no rain. Bedding plants need to be watered in at planting and then daily until established. Drought puts more stress on fruit trees and vegetables. Don’t forget to water them as well.

Beef Cattle Management Calendar

- Harvest hay if ready and weather permits.
- Plant warm season perennial pastures.
- Fertilize warm season pastures.
- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for spittlebugs and treat if necessary.
- Apply spot-on agents for grub and louse control.
- Check dust bags.
- Vaccinate and implant with growth stimulant any later calves.
- Reimplant calves with growth stimulant at 90-120 days, when you have herd penned.
- Update market information and refine marketing plans.
- Remove bulls May 21 to end calving season by March 1st of next year.
Summer Legumes for Pastures

Several warm season legumes are now available for use in pastures. These include aeschynomene, alyceclover, and hairy indigo. These legumes save on energy, provide nitrogen to grasses grown in combination with the legumes, and generally provide a higher level of nutrition to grazing animals. Hairy indigo and alyceclover are adapted to the better drained soils.

These legumes can be overseeded on established grass pastures or planted at the same time a new pasture grass is planted. There is a better chance of successful establishment of legumes if they are seeded on a tilled seedbed as compared to waiting and overseeding on a fully established grass sod. Drought and grass or weed competition are the two most critical factors during establishment. Usually the best time to plant is June or when the summer rains start. If weeds become a serious problem, they should be controlled by mowing.

Herbicides used on grass during establishment cannot be used on legumes.