

Highlights in

*Horticulture*

Baker County

November 2012

Dear Extension Friends,

We've been busy these last few months, but we're never too busy to take your questions! Let us know if you have a landscape question or garden problem that you'd like help with, and we'll be happy to assist you! Also, a huge 'thank you' to everyone who supported our fundraiser and purchased strawberry plants! We wish you success with your strawberries and happy fall gardening!

Best Regards,

*Alicia*

Alicia R. Lamborn  
Horticulture Extension Agent  
Baker County Extension Service

**Inside this issue:**

Seasonal Container Gardening	2
Bulbs: To Dig or Not To Dig?	3
Sulfur Boosts Tomato Yields	3
Fall Vegetable Gardening: Your Questions Answered	4



**Master Gardener Volunteer Training  
Coming in February - Apply Now!**

The Master Gardener program is a national program of volunteers who help the Extension Service by extending unbiased, research-based horticultural information to people in our community. This is a great opportunity for anyone who enjoys helping others and wants to volunteer their time.

In Baker County, Master Gardener volunteers work in the Extension office answering homeowner questions, creating educational materials, and planning educational programs. Volunteers also help plant and maintain demonstration gardens at the office and help conduct gardening programs for adults and youth.

The training will take place at the Baker County Extension Office starting February 5th through March 21st on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00am to 1:00pm. The cost of the training is \$50 (\$60 for couples).

For more detailed information on the Master Gardener Program, please read the 2013 Master Gardener Application Packet, available on our website ([baker.ifas.ufl.edu](http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu)) or from the Baker County Extension Office.

# Seasonal Container Gardens

*Don't like the gray days of winter? Growing plants in pots can brighten any winter landscape!*

Planting container gardens is a fun and easy way to add instant impact to your home, especially during the sometimes drab days of winter. Plus, you can start with a fresh canvas for each season. There are almost endless choices for plants that can take the heat. But when the cooler temperatures set in, you'll need to switch to cold tolerant plants.

Plants such as petunias, snapdragons, dianthus, and pansies, all produce colorful flowers that won't get zapped by our freezing temperatures. Small splashes of color, such as that provided by a pot of pansies on your patio, can brighten your mood on cold, dreary winter days. But don't be afraid to mix colorful flowers with colorful foliage. Ornamental kale, dusty miller, cold-hardy succulents, and evergreens such as junipers (look for cultivars with blue or yellow foliage for a more unique look) can complement those flowers by mixing colors, plant forms and textures in the container.



Even the container you choose to plant them in can add interest to your container garden. Some containers are brightly colored and demand attention, while others are more muted and compliment or enhance your plant colors. Containers also come in different shapes and sizes. If you are planting several, consider using containers of different sizes and shapes for added effect.

No matter what you plant, always choose a pot with good drainage and use high-quality potting soil containing perlite for good aeration. Once the container has been assembled, place it outdoors on a porch, patio or deck that receives at least six hours of full sunlight each day. Remember to water and fertilize your plants as needed. Annual plants usually require a light application of fertilizer each month to remain vigorous. As flowers fade, clipping off old blooms rather than letting them go to seed, will encourage re-blooming and provide longer lasting color. Lastly, keep an eye out for any insect or disease problems. One good thing about fall and winter gardening is that insect and disease pressure is typically lessened, but this is Florida after all, so you can't ever let your guard down.

By investing a little time and effort into your container gardens, you'll enjoy a beautiful display throughout the season. For more information, ideas, and photos on container gardening, be sure to read *Container Gardens for Outdoor Spaces* at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep326>

## References:

- Gardening in a Minute. (2012). *Seasonal Container Gardening*. University of Florida. [http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/giam/planning\\_your\\_garden/container\\_gardens/seasonal\\_containers.html](http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/giam/planning_your_garden/container_gardens/seasonal_containers.html)
- Knox, G. (2008). *Container Gardens for Outdoor Spaces*. University of Florida. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep326>
- Mullins, D. (2004). *Create Colorful Pots of Color for Winter*. University of Florida. [http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/News\\_Columns/2004/110404.pdf](http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/News_Columns/2004/110404.pdf)



This container features a tall evergreen as an "anchor" plant, along with variegated ivy trailing out the sides, allowing you to change out the featured flowering plant for seasonal color and interest.



# Bulbs: To Dig or Not To Dig?

*Some bulbs require digging and storage to survive or re-bloom, while others can be left in the ground.*



**Amaryllis:** Plants may be left in the ground for many years or dug and reset in September if crowded.

**Caladium:** Dig and divide tubers leaving at least one bud per section to make more plants. In south FL tubers can be left in ground until crowded. In north FL dig up each winter and store clean, dried tubers in a dry, well-ventilated area at a minimum of 70°F (21°C).

**Calla:** Dig and divide rhizomes to make more plants. Can remain in ground or be dug up and stored until planting.

**Canna:** Frost kills foliage to the ground but it will come up again from rootstock. Dig and thin out rhizomes to rejuvenate plants and increase production of blooms. Cut plants to the ground in late winter and dispose of the plant material to reduce populations of the Canna Leafroller caterpillar.

**Dahlia:** Dig and separate tuberous roots (each must have a piece of stem with a bud) to make more plants. Will do better in north FL; Dahlias do not tolerate high summer temperatures. Roots should be dug and stored during winter.

**Gladiolus:** Frost will kill plants in N. FL. Corms should be dug when foliage begins to yellow. Dry in a ventilated place for a week and then clean the corms of tops, exhausted mother corms, cormels, roots and soil. Store corms at 40° to 50°F until they are ready to replant in spring.

**Hurricane Lily:** Bulbs should only be dug when crowded.

**Marcia (Walking Iris):** Should be protected from cold in north FL. For best results, use as a potted plant.

**Narcissus:** The polyanthus narcissi-paper white, Chinese sacred lily, Pearl White lily, Grand soleil d'or and a few others do well and do not require digging, but little success can be expected with the true daffodil.

**Spider Lily (*Hymenocallis spp.*):** Bulbs can be dug up and divided every 4-5 years.

**Tritonia:** Named varieties of tritonia with large blossoms can be grown for one season. The variety *miniata* grows from year to year in FL; clumps can grow several years without digging.



For more information on these and other bulbs, visit our source: *Bulbs for Florida* @ <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg029>

## *Sulfur Shown To Boost Tomato Yields*

Florida tomato farmers may increase their yields by adding sulfur to their soil before planting, according to a University of Florida study published in the current issue of the journal *HortTechnology*. Adding 25 pounds of elemental sulfur per acre (1 acre = 43,560 sq. feet) boosted yields by 1.7 tons per acre in the study. Sulfur is an important major nutrient and some farmland may not have the same sulfur content it once did. There are no field tests available for soil sulfur content so adding a sulfur amendment to the soil once each year may be beneficial. Adding more sulfur had little additional benefit in the study. Possible sulfur sources include gypsum, elemental sulfur and sulfate-based fertilizer.

*Adapted and excerpts from: Nordlie, T. (2012). Sulfur Shown to Boost Tomato Yields, Western Farm Press,*

*Retrieved from: <http://westernfarmpress.com/vegetables/sulfur-shown-boost-tomato-yields>*

### *A Few Additional Words on Sulfur*



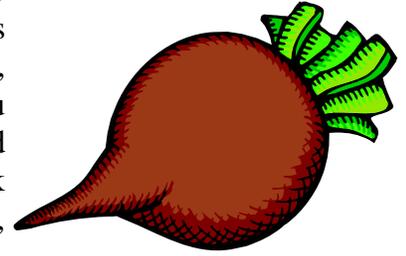
Elemental sulfur and sulfate-based fertilizers containing ammonium sulfate, iron sulfate, or aluminum sulfate, will also decrease soil pH (1 pound of elemental sulfur per 100 sq. feet of soil will decrease pH by 1 unit), if only for a short period of time. Never apply sulfur in excess of 5-10 pounds per 1000 sq. feet per application. Thoroughly water-in sulfur after application, taking care to wash off all aboveground plant parts. Repeat applications should not be made more than once every 3 months. Sulfur oxidizes in the soil, reacting with water to form sulfuric acid, which can severely damage plants roots, so it must be used cautiously (unless used in extremely low doses as in the 25 pounds per acre mentioned above).

*Source: Shober, A. & Denny, G. (2008). Soil pH and the Home Landscape or Garden. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ss480>*

# Fall Vegetable Gardening: Your Questions Answered

**Q: I'm having trouble with my beets while everything else I planted is growing nicely. Any suggestions?**

**A:** Beets require ample moisture at seeding or poor germination results. Soaking the seeds before planting will help increase germination rates. Because several plants sprout from each seed, you'll need to thin your plants by selecting the biggest, healthiest plant to keep and removing the rest so roots have room to enlarge. You can use scissors to snip out the unwanted plants (so the roots aren't disturbed) and use the early thinnings in salads. For a continuous supply, plant at three week intervals from September through March. Depending on the variety and weather, beets mature in about 50 to 70 days, or harvest 2-3 weeks early for baby beets. For the most flavor, harvest your beets when the roots are the size of a golf ball.



**Q: A strange looking worm has been eating the leaves of my beans and peas. Can you tell me what it is?**

**A:** This worm you speak of is actually the caterpillar stage of the Long-tailed Skipper. The adult butterfly lays its eggs on legume plants, including beans and peas, during late summer and early fall. The caterpillars that hatch then eat the foliage until they are ready to pupate into an adult butterfly, when the cycle begins again. Since it is the end of the season for your beans and peas, there is really no reason to be concerned about the leaf damage and therefore no control measures are needed. If you were to notice this damage during the growing season, do not panic and start spraying at the first sign of leaf feeding. Most plants can withstand a 10% to 20% loss of leaves without loss of potential yields.



**Can you tell the difference between adult Butterflies, Skippers, and Moths?**

**Butterflies** have *clubbed* antennae.  
**Skippers** have *curved* antennae.  
**Moths** have *feathered* or *plumose* antennae.

Butterflies & Skippers fly in the daytime and feed on colorful flowers. Moths tend to fly during nighttime and feed on white flowers.



Photo Credit: Jaret C. Daniels, University of Florida, [www.flmnh.ufl.edu/wildflower/](http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/wildflower/)



**Baker County Extension Service**

1025 West Macclenny Avenue  
Macclenny, FL 32063



Phone: (904) 259-3520

Email: [alamborn@ufl.edu](mailto:alamborn@ufl.edu)

Website: <http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu>

For Extension Programs offered around the state, see the IFAS Extension Web Calendar at <http://calendar.ifas.ufl.edu/calendar/index.htm>.

Extension programs are open to all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, handicap, or national origin. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in any activity, should contact the Baker County Cooperative Extension Service at 1025 West Macclenny Avenue, Macclenny, FL 32063 or telephone (904) 259-3520 no later than ten (10) days prior to the event. Hearing impaired persons can access the foregoing telephone by contacting the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770 (voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).