

THE HOME GARDENER

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The Home Gardener

LSU AgCenter
East Baton Rouge Extension Office
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LOUISIANA MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

The Louisiana Master Gardener Program is a service and educational activity offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. The program is designed to recruit and train volunteers to help meet the educational needs of home gardeners while providing an enjoyable and worthwhile service experience for volunteers. The program is open to all people regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, gender, religion or national origin. Master Gardener programs are all-volunteer organizations sanctioned by land-grant institutions in each state and function as an extension of the college or university. In Louisiana, the program is sponsored by the LSU Agricultural Center and is directed by the Center's Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service and Extension's local county agents.

For more information regarding the Louisiana Master Gardener Program, call 225-763-3990

The Home Gardener is a publication of the East Baton Rouge Parish Master Gardeners Program.

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**Direct Questions or Comments to:
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**East Baton Rouge Extension Office
4560 Essen Lane
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Louisiana Master Gardener Objectives

- To expand the capacity of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service to distribute horticultural information to individuals and groups in the community.
- To develop and enhance community programs related to horticulture. Depending on community needs, these may be environmental improvement activities, community and school garden programs or public horticultural events.
- To enhance 4H programs by complimenting co-curricular and extracurricular horticulture programs.
- To develop a Master Gardener volunteer network under the direction of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service.

The Long Hot Summer

How to Freshen Up the Landscape

by Peggy Scott, Louisiana Master Gardener



As the kids go back to school, I am reminded that summer is drawing to a rapid close. We are now in that terrible period when the spring annuals and plantings are looking a little leggy and shabby, but it's too early for planting fall color.

What's a gardener to do? I stumbled upon some successful ideas by luck one year. In the process of removing a large tree in late July, the arborist leveled most of my annuals. By experimenting, I created an inexpensive, yet beautiful garden and learned some valuable lessons along the way.

Replanting Your Beds - Your first course of action is to refurbish your landscape with new plantings to add fresh color. The garden centers are still full of warm season annuals and perennials and the prices are really low this time of year. These new plantings should bloom from now until early November when you are ready to plant fall colors. Caution. Don't plant in the hottest part of the day (10 am to 4 pm) and spoil your fun. Venture out in the early morning (6 am to 10 am) and late evenings (6 pm to 8 pm) when it's a lot more pleasant. Also, remember to wear your sunscreen and mosquito repellent to keep you safe while outdoors.

Everyone, particularly beginning gardeners, will love the following tried and true choices that can stand the heat and won't let you down:

Sun – Tolerant

Lantana
Pentas
Torenia
Hibiscus
Periwinkle
Alamanda
Knockout Rose

Shade and Part Shade - Tolerant

Impatiens
Begonia
Coleus
Caladium
Fern
Ironwood
Endless Hyacinth

Reinvigorating Your Beds – Alternatively, if you are limited by time, money or energy, refreshen your beds rather than replant. By simply removing all dead or spindly plants, you will immediately improve the look of your landscape. Add a few new annuals to key areas, such as at your doorway, to brighten the entrance. Consider placing a pot of fresh plants as a focal point somewhere around your home or patio. As a last resort, a little fresh mulch over an annual bed will significantly improve the look of your landscape.

For more ideas, visit LSU's website at www.lsuagcenter.com for a world of information. There you'll learn more about landscaping in your area and answers to all your gardening questions.



I have never had so many good ideas day after day as when I worked in the garden." ~ John Erskine

Oregano: An Herb Profile for the Home Gardener

by Arlene Kestner Ph.D., Louisiana Master Gardener

Mention this culinary herb to any cook and thoughts of rich tomato pasta sauce come to mind. **Greek oregano** and **Italian oregano**, perennial herbs native to the Mediterranean, are easy to grow in our south Louisiana gardens. There are several varieties of oregano available in garden centers: **Greek oregano** (*Oreganum vulgare* *suspecies hirtum*) and **Italian oregano** (*Oreganum xmajoricum*). **Greek oregano** tends to spread as a mound form while **Italian oregano** grows upright to a height of 2 feet. Clusters of white flowers appear on **Italian oregano** in late May and early June.

Cultivation.

Although oreganos can be grown from seed, it is best to start with purchased plants from your local garden center. The best time to find the plants is in September or October when new plant materials arrive for the fall growing season. When transplanted during the fall, oregano will establish a vigorous root system. The plants can be grown in full sun or afternoon shade, but will have improved scent with at least 6 to 8 hours of sun. All oreganos need to be planted in a garden spot with well-drained soil. As with other herbs, oregano will benefit from a side dressing of organic fertilizer. Oregano may also be grown in a container. When watering containerized plants, be sure not to overwater. The soil should dry slightly between watering.

Culinary Tips.

Oregano is an essential ingredient in Italian, Greek and French cuisine. **Greek oregano** has the classic pungent and spicy flavor. Leaves of Greek oregano can be added to soups, casseroles, stew, stuffing, eggplant, onions and tomato based dishes. **Italian oregano** with its mild, sweet flavor compliments mushrooms, carrots, cauliflower, salad dressings, fresh tomatoes, seafood and pizza. Oregano can be harvested throughout the year. Avoid cutting into woody parts as this will hinder development of the plant

BAKED SHRIMP WITH HERBS AND FETA

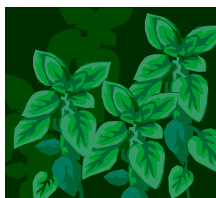
1½ pounds fresh large shrimp, shelled	1 teaspoon sugar
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice	¼ cup fresh Italian oregano leaves, coarsely chopped
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil	¼ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley, coarsely chopped
2 medium size garlic cloves, thinly sliced	Salt and pepper to taste
1 small onion, finely chopped	½ cup Feta cheese, crumble
1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes, drained	
¼ cup white wine, preferably Chardonnay	

Toss shrimp with lemon juice. Heat oil in large skillet over medium high heat. Add shrimp and sauté until pink, but firm. Transfer shrimp to bowl and set aside.

Reduce heat to medium and add garlic and onion to shrimp juice in skillet. Sauté until vegetables are soft—about three minutes. Add tomatoes, wine, sugar, oregano and parsley to pan. Heat sauce to boil and then reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Divide shrimp and tomato sauce among four individual baking dishes. If you do not have individual baking dishes use a glass baking dish (9-inch x 13-inch) to prepare the shrimp. Next, sprinkle top of the shrimp and sauce with crumbled feta cheese. Bake until cheese melts, about 8-10 minutes. Serve immediately. Serves 4

Recipe © Arlene Kestner





FALL FULL MOON NAMES

- **Full Corn Moon - September** - This full moon's name is attributed to Native Americans because it marked when corn was supposed to be harvested. Most often, the September full moon is actually the Harvest Moon.
- **Full Harvest Moon - October** - This is the full Moon that occurs closest to the autumn equinox. In two years out of three, the Harvest Moon comes in September, but in some years it occurs in October. At the peak of harvest, farmers can work late into the night by the light of this Moon. Usually the full Moon rises an average of 50 minutes later each night, but for the few nights around the Harvest Moon, the Moon seems to rise at nearly the same time each night: just 25 to 30 minutes later across the U.S., and only 10 to 20 minutes later for much of Canada and Europe. Corn, pumpkins, squash, beans, and wild rice the chief Indian staples are now ready for gathering.
- **Full Beaver Moon - November** - This was the time to set beaver traps before the swamps froze, to ensure a supply of warm winter furs. Another interpretation suggests that the name Full Beaver Moon comes from the fact that the beavers are now actively preparing for winter. It is sometimes also referred to as the Frosty Moon.



When “*Toad*” Meant Respect: “In such favor do toads stand with English market gardeners that they readily command a shilling apiece . . . and as toads possess no bad habits, every owner of a garden should treat him with the utmost hospitality.” – *British newspaper, 1890*

DO IT WITH NATIVE TREES

The East Baton Rouge Master Gardeners have available for home gardeners our publication, “*Do It With Native Trees*”. As the popularity of native trees increases, so does the availability of these hardy and resistant varieties. The publication provides a listing of large and small trees that are indigenous to the southeastern United States that can be grown with success in the East Baton Rouge area.

Whether your planting site has full sun, full shade, dry or moist soil conditions, you will learn which trees will grow best in your landscape. Read about the foliage characteristics and horticultural significance of each tree, the answer to common tree questions, and more! Call the East Baton Rouge Master Gardener office and request your copy of “*Do It With Native Trees*” today.

225-389-3056





DECORATING TIPS

- Begin gathering pinecones, ornamental grasses, wildflower seeds, magnolia seed pods, acorns, gourds, okra pods and ears of corn for decorating your home for fall.
- Gather green muscadine vines and bend them into wreaths before drying.
- Use pumpkins to make a lovely topiary, accenting with pine cones, fall leaves and vines.
- Croton leaves contain full fall color and do well with a few hours of direct sun every morning. Keep the soil moist, as dryness causes leaf drop. Remember, plants in small pots dry out quickly and require more attention than larger ones.

How Good Are You At Fashion Coordination? “Sure Thing” Flower Combinations for Colorful Carefree Gardens

by Peggy Scott, Louisiana Master Gardener



Are you one of those people who are good at coordinating your clothing and accessories? If so, lucky you. I'm terrible at it. I wear whatever the sales assistant says looks good or copy what I see on the mannequins. I envy those people who have a natural eye for coordination and always look carefree and great.

Successful flower gardens are a lot like dressing well. Spending a lot on your gardens, really doesn't work well if you get the colors and coordination wrong. Just like you must know how to put fabrics and colors together for a successful outfit, you need to know how to group plants by their size, water, and light needs. Finally, getting the color coordination of plantings right is a must.

The following are a few garden combinations that I have discovered over the years. They are especially useful right now when we are in that awful period of late summer and early fall and need to brighten our home landscapes. But, remember, don't cheat. Take the time to properly prepare the soil first, then dig in with the new plants. If you do, these combinations are absolutely fail proof and even beginner gardeners can achieve a stunning result.

Combinations for Colorful Carefree Flower Gardens:

Full Sun

Lantana/Pentas/Rose

Combine golden lantana (low growing) in the very front of the bed, followed with white or lavender pentas directly behind the lantana, and then complete with pink-colored knockout roses in the rear. This makes a splendid show with constant blooms that will last to frost. Combine this garden with a hummingbird feeder, and you will be delighted by the birds and butterflies that visit this colorful combination that requires little care.

Rosa de Montana Vine - This simple little vine comes alive in late summer and fall. If you have not already discovered it, you are in for a real treat. A 4" pot quickly sprouts into a bushy vine with profuse clusters of small

delicate pink flowers. If you don't have a fence for climbing, put it within an obelisk in your garden or even on a trellis in a container pot. You won't be disappointed with this beauty.

Periwinkle or Torenia- A solid bed of periwinkle flowers just can't be beat. They come in an abundance of colors to delight everyone, rose, white, lavender pink, and fuchsia, just to name a few. They thrive in the heat and require little watering. But, beware, periwinkles are susceptible to a disease that can quickly kill the plant. So, stick with Nirvana periwinkles which have bigger blooms and are disease resistant. This show can easily last until frost. Periwinkles also look great in hanging baskets. Alternatively, a bed of colorful torenia is a "sure thing". These little trumpet-like flowers are often overlooked, but are profuse bloomers and come in shades of white, pink, and lavender.

Shade

Impatiens/Coleus or Caladium - Impatiens are like the Energizer bunny, they just keep on going with constant blooms. Consider planting a bed of a solid colored impatiens and contrast it with a different shade of coleus along the back. White impatiens combined with a variegated green coleus makes a big statement. The white color really pops, especially from a distance. Coleus come in lots of colors: burgundy/green, solid burgundy, yellowish, variegated green, etc. If you prefer, white or pink caladiums can be substituted for the coleus along the back of the bed. Mix and match your favorite color of impatiens to arrive at an eye-catching contrasting combination.

Shade to Part Shade

Begonia – These hardy flowers are overall favorites. Begonias come in red, pink and white colors. Combining the red or pink with white begonias, by staggering or grouping within your garden is a winning combination. Avoid lining the plants in rows for a more powerful statement. Another interesting begonia is the dragon-winged begonia. The stems grow long and, yes, have a look of a dragon's wing covered with flowers. Try a smaller garden of the dragon-winged begonia to make a colorful and dramatic show.

I've had great success with these really easy care flower gardens and I know you will too. So happy gardening, and oh yes, good luck on that fashion coordination too!

* * * * *



NOVEMBER WEATHER LORE

A warm November is the sign of a bad Winter.

Onion skins very thin,
Mild Winter coming in;
Onion skins thick and tough,
Coming Winter cold and rough.

Flowers bloomin' in late August,
A sure sign of a bad Winter comin'.

Thunder in the Fall foretells a cold Winter.



JUDICIOUS PRUNING FOR THE FALL

by Vivian A. Neely, Louisiana Master Gardener

Cooler temperatures in the Fall bring out the gardeners and the tools; all the plans made while hunkering down in the heat can now be put to use. Digging, planting, cleaning up the gardens once again, fertilizing some plants and pruning others. Fall and Spring, our busy seasons... Just anticipating Fall makes me want to get busy.

Judicious pruning explicitly suggests judgments have been made before the clippers are put to use. Not only do we need to know what to prune in the Fall, but how to achieve the desired effect. The checklist for LSU's Horticulture Hints for this season mentions *root pruning*, an item that needs some attention.

Most gardeners have the highest respect for the root system of plants, and for good reasons. Many are reluctant to cut or prune roots for any reason. But it is a useful technique. Root pruning purposes are varied; in this case it is for wisteria and is good. Root pruning will encourage blooming in the spring. It requires a sharp, clean, and long blade spade. Cut the roots all around the plant at about 2 feet from the main trunk. The plant will form new roots, and flowers are (almost) assured in the spring.

Root pruning is also used to prepare a woody plant for transplanting in the next season. This can be done in the fall and needs to be done soon enough for new roots to form before transplanting. It is recommended that the root pruning be done one growing season before transplanting. Since planting transplanted woody plants is usually done in the fall, doing it now is the correct time. Again, using the spade with a long, clean and sharp blade, cut around the main trunk, considering the size of the root ball of the plant to be moved. It is wise to mark the place where you have pruned, since you will need to cut just outside of that pruned area when it is time to move the plant.

Root pruning may be recommended by the nursery when planting newly purchased plants. If the roots of plants just acquired are damaged or winding seriously around the plant, the damaged parts need to be pared away and the winding needs to be interrupted. Roots of trees that are winding around in a pot must be pulled away and not allowed to encircle the plant. If the only way to accomplish

this is to remove, cautiously, some of the roots, then it should be done.

Pruning for damaged limbs can be done at this time and should be done anytime it is needed. If pruning out damaged limbs, you may decide to work on the shape of the plant.

In the Baton Rouge area, fall is not the best time for pruning many plants. Roses were pruned in August, and will be pruned again in late winter, often cited to be done by Valentine's Day, February 14.

Pruning for shape and size should be done in a time appropriate to the specimen. Generally speaking, flowering plants should be pruned when they finish flowering. For camellias that would be in winter and early spring. Crepe myrtles need little pruning, but judicious pruning might be for water sprouts and suckers, for crossing branches and branches that touch, or to open them up for ventilation. Non-flowering woody plants generally need no pruning, but again should be attended to for the health of the plant.

Pruning to promote controlled growth at the time of planting is often done. Fall is a good time to plant woody plants as it gives the root system time to develop before a new growth season occurs. Check the root system and remove damaged roots. A healthy plant can be cut back as much as a third; a 3-foot plant can have as much as a foot removed. If a central leader is present and wanted, leave it not pruned. As with any pruning, always check for the healthy nodes from which new shoots will grow and be sure to cut just above the node, not damaging any of the growth tissue. Cut just above a node that is on the outside of the stem or trunk. Rarely would it be useful or needed for new growth to form to the inside of any specimen.



Judicious pruning does require we become well acquainted with the specimen we are about to wound, albeit for a good purpose. Prune for health, shape and size, ventilation, to promote growth, bloom and fruit set.

Show that plant your loving respect.

Welcoming Winter Wonders – Louisiana’s Hummingbirds

by Vicki Vance, Louisiana Master Gardener

For many people late September/early October means an end to enjoying the antics of ruby-throated hummingbirds as migration to Mexico and Central America winds down. However, this period should not be the time to bring in feeders, but instead to remain vigilant in feeding and attracting “winter” hummingbirds. Louisiana is a prime migration destination for several species of hummingbirds which nest and breed in the western U.S. states and Canada.

Banding statistics assist researchers with migration patterns, longevity records and seasonal changes. In April 2006 a banded adult male Broad-billed hummingbird was captured in Colorado Springs, CO. His band number showed that he was banded in New Iberia, LA in Dec. 2005 and traveled over 950 miles to reach Colorado Springs. Relatively few hummingbirds banded in Louisiana are recaptured elsewhere, so it is exciting to learn where our birds go when they leave our gardens. Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi also recorded recaptures of Louisiana birds. Louisiana banders recaptured a few birds that had been banded in Arizona, Texas and Florida. It is amazing to think of the long distances and the challenges faced by hummingbirds during their migration journey. May 2006 brought the identification of not only one, but two relatively rare Anna’s hummingbirds still present in River Ridge well after the traditional close of the “winter” season.

There are several books available to assist you in identifying the many species of hummingbirds which frequent our gardens year round. Louisiana author Barbara Nielsen and bander Nancy Newfield co-wrote **“Hummingbird Gardens: Attracting Nature’s Jewels to your Backyard.”** This book along **“Attracting and Feeding Hummingbirds”** by Arizona bander Sheri Williamson offer excellent information along with color photos of male and female hummingbird species and the plants that feed and attract them. Alabama bander Robert Sargent’s **“Ruby-throated Hummingbirds”** details the life cycle of the species most common to Louisiana from March – October. If you are just beginning to design a hummingbird garden, there are several fall blooming plants that are essential in attracting “winter” species to your garden. These include:

Cuphea Micropetala – Giant Cigar plant – Hardy upright perennial that can reach 5’. Yellow-orange flowers with red tips – abundant nectar, prefers sun.

Justicia brandegeana – Winter Shrimp – an absolute mainstay of a fall/winter hummingbird garden with its rose/burgundy blooms almost year round. Thrives in shade or sun, spreads easily and is easy to propagate from cuttings.

Malvaviscus arboreus v. Mexicanus or Pendulaflora – Giant Turks Cap – Sun loving shrub which may reach 8’ – 10’ and is favored by Buff-bellied hummingbirds. Large red or pink flowers droop from branches until first hard freeze. Semi-hardy depending on winter low temps.

Odontenema strictum – Firespike – very dependable perennial which prefers a shade garden. 6” bright red tubular flowers, plants may reach 3’- 5’ depending on amount of light, blooms late summer – first freeze. Cannot take direct afternoon sun, tolerates morning sun. Tropical foliage burns in first hard freeze, but returns from roots in spring.

Salvia elegans – Pineapple sage - Leaves have a strong pineapple scent. Long red tubular flowers, plant loves to sprawl out and can become invasive. Full sun.

Salvia leucantha – Mexican bush sage – Sun loving silver leaf perennial with fuzzy purple/white or solid purple flowers. Can reach 4’.

Salvia madrensis – Forsythia sage – Soft yellow flowers, plant can easily reach 6’ in height. Does well in shade gardens.



Vegetables Invite a Stuffing

by Donna Montgomery, MS, Nutrition Specialist, Retired, LSU AgCenter

Looking for a new interesting way to serve vegetables? Just stuff it! We have so many vegetables that lend themselves to stuffing.

Vegetables filled with whole grains, seafood, meat, rice, seasonal or dried fruits, nuts and spices provide a mouth watering array of colors, textures and flavors. They also boost nutrition to an already healthy food by adding extra fiber, vitamins and minerals. Best of all, many can be prepared ahead of time and simply heated before serving.

Stuffed vegetables can be served as an appetizer (*cherry tomatoes stuffed with seasoned cream cheese*), salad (*tomato stuffed with chicken salad*), vegetable (*squash stuffed with spinach*) or main course (*eggplant stuffed with shrimp and crabmeat*).

To create your own stuffed vegetable concoction, choose one of the many vegetables perfect for this cooking method, including bell peppers, artichokes, eggplant, mirlitons, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, summer and winter squash, mushrooms and cabbage. Scoop out a space for the filling of your choice. Some stuffed veggies are served hot and others cold. Some can be frozen for later use.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Filling should be moist, but not soggy.
- Sturdier vegetables (onions, winter squashes, onions and potatoes) should be partially cooked before stuffing. Quicker cooking vegetables can be stuffed and baked all at once.
- Some stuffed vegetables are excellent for freezing. To freeze, wrap individually in saran wrap (*the only moisture-vapor proof plastic wrap*); place in freezer bags, label and freeze. Use within 6 months for best quality.

Some stuffed vegetables take a little time to prepare, but the effort is worth it. I love having seafood stuffed eggplant, stuffed bell peppers and stuffed squash in my freezer. The time is worth the effort. If you're cooking for one, two or a crowd, you take out exactly what you need. Add a salad, steamed or roasted veggies, bread, beverage and you have a meal to please anyone's taste buds. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

Spinach Stuffed Squash

This is a great accompaniment to grilled meats, roast or chicken. It adds color, flavor texture and nutrition to a meal.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 4 large yellow squash | 1 teaspoon garlic salt |
| 2 (10-ounce) packages frozen chopped spinach | 1/2 teaspoon black pepper |
| 1/3 cup butter or margarine | 1/8 teaspoon ground red pepper |
| 1/2 cup chopped onion | 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese |
| 1 (3-ounce) package cream cheese, cubed | 2 tablespoons fine, dry breadcrumbs |



Cook squash in boiling water to cover 10 minutes or until crisp-tender; drain and cool. Cut squash in half lengthwise; remove and discard seeds. Place shells in a lightly greased 13x 9-inch pan.

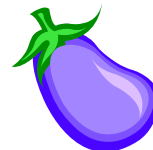
Cook spinach according to package directions; drain well. Melt butter in a large skillet. Add onion and sauté until tender. Add spinach, cream cheese and next 3 ingredients, stirring until cheese melts. Spoon evenly into shells. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and breadcrumbs. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes or until thoroughly heated. **Serves 8.**

Seafood Stuffed Eggplant

This is my all time favorite to have in the freezer. Of course you could do this in a casserole, however stuffing individual eggplant halves is a little more elegant for guest meals and allows you to take out only what you need from the freezer.

4 eggplant
1/4 cup olive oil
2 onions, chopped
1 bell pepper, chopped
2 ribs celery
4 cloves garlic, chopped
1 pound peeled shrimp
1/3 cup white wine
5 slices bread soaked in milk and squeezed out

Salt, black pepper and cayenne to taste
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano or 1 1/2 teaspoons fresh oregano
1 eggs slightly beaten
1/3 cup chopped green onion tops
1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley
1 pound crabmeat (*white or claw*)
Breadcrumbs



Wash eggplant and cut in half lengthwise. Scoop flesh out of eggplant and cut into small pieces. *A grapefruit spoon makes this job easy. (Most recipes call for parboiling eggplant. I never do.)*

Sauté onion, bell pepper, celery and garlic in oil for five to seven minutes; add eggplant and wine and continue cooking until eggplant is soft. Add shrimp and cook until shrimp turn pink. Fold in bread, seasonings, beaten egg, onion tops, parsley and crabmeat. If mixture seem dry, add a little more wine or another egg.

Spoon stuffing into eggplant shells. Sprinkle with seasoned breadcrumbs. At this point, eggplant can be individually wrapped and frozen. To serve, thaw, place in baking pan and bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 45 minutes or until heated through. **Serves 8.**

Stuffed Mirliton

Stuffed mirlitons are a south Louisiana favorite for holiday meals. This recipe is from Corinne Cook. Corinne is a native of Church Point, so I know she grew up eating and preparing mirlitons.

4 large mirlitons
3 tablespoons butter
1 medium onion, chopped
1 medium bell pepper, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 rib celery, chopped
1 to 1 1/4 pounds shrimp, peeled and cut into thirds

2 slices dry toasted bread, soaked in milk and squeezed out
1 egg, lightly beaten
Salt, cayenne and black pepper to taste
Additional 1/4 cup buttered bread crumbs for topping

Put mirlitons in a large pot and cover with lightly salted water. When water comes to a boil, cover and reduce heat. Cook 20 to 25 minutes or until mirlitons are tender when pierced with a fork. Drain and cut in half. Using a spoon, remove soft seed and carefully remove pulp, leaving 1/4-inch shell intact. Turn upside down on paper towel to drain. Reserve pulp for later use.

In skillet, melt butter and sauté onion, bell pepper, garlic and celery until tender. Add shrimp and cook over medium-high heat until shrimp are pink. Mash reserved mirliton pulp and add to the shrimp and seasonings. Add bread and lightly beaten egg. Season with salt, black pepper and cayenne. If mixture is too soupy, add dry bread crumbs; however, the egg will thicken it as it bakes.

Spoon dressing into shells. Top each with buttered bread crumbs. *(At this point, stuffed mirlitons may be individually wrapped in Saran, placed in freezer bags and frozen for later use.)* Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 20 to 30 minutes until hot and dressing looks set.

Serves 8.



Sausage Stuffed Onions

6 large Spanish onions
 1/2 pound hot bulk pork sausage
 1/3 cup chopped green pepper
 1 egg, beaten
 1 1/2 cups cooked rice
 1 egg, beaten

1/2 teaspoon dried whole oregano or 1 1/2
 teaspoon fresh
 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
 Breadcrumbs
 Butter or margarine

Peel onions and cut a slice from top. Cook onions in boiling salted water 12 minutes or until tender but not mushy. Cool. Remove center of onions, leaving shells intact. Chop onion centers and reserve 1/2 cup.

Cook sausage until browned, stirring to crumble; drain, reserving pan drippings. Sauté green pepper and reserved 1/2 cup onion in drippings until tender. Combine sausage, sautéed vegetables, egg, rice, oregano and parsley. Fill onion shells with sausage mixture and top with breadcrumbs. Onions may be individually wrapped and frozen at this point. To cook, place thawed onions in a greased shallow pan and top each with a pat of butter or margarine. Cover and bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 5 minutes. **Serves 6.**

Have fun stuffing and serving your favorite vegetables!



THOUGHTS FROM THE GARDEN

EGGSHELLS -- a good source of magnesium and calcium to be added to mulch or compost.

GOURD is the common name for some members of the *Cucurbitaceae*. The name *gourd* is applied to those members whose fruit have hard, durable shells, used for ornament and as utensils, e.g., drinking cups, dippers and bowls.

LADY BUGS -- early settlers thought it was a sign of good luck to see ladybugs coming into their cabins in the fall. It was often believed that if ladybugs showed fewer than seven spots, a good harvest could be expected in the year ahead. Ladybugs with more than seven spots foretold a harsh winter.



PORCH PLANTS – leave holiday cactus and kalanchoe outside through September, as they benefit from being exposed to the combination of strong daylight and longer nights—which are great triggers for a beautiful show of winter blooms.

PUMPKINS – The name pumpkin originated from “pepon” – the Greek word for “large melon”.

- Pumpkins are 90 percent water.
- Pumpkins are a fruit.
- Native Americans used pumpkin seeds for food and medicine.
- Colonist sliced off pumpkin tops; removed seeds and filled the insides with milk, spices and honey. This was baked in hot ashes and is the origin of pumpkin pie.
- Eighty percent of the pumpkin supply in the United States is available in October.



“FALL VEGETABLES TO PLANT” – CONFUSION OR EXCITEMENT?

by Gail “Slipper” DellaFiora, Louisiana Master Gardener

The list of vegetables to plant in fall is long, offering the home gardener many exciting planting options. In fact, there are over twenty-five such options listed in this newsletter alone. Even for the most enthusiastic of gardeners numerous options can be as confusing as they are exciting. By understanding a few basic facts about soil and nutrient requirements, most of the confusion of vegetable gardening can be alleviated, making way for the excitement.

Basic Soil and Nutrient Facts

All plants require certain soil nutrients for survival. Vegetables can be grown in soils with varying nutritional levels, however they will flourish and produce higher yields in circumstances where certain specific nutritional needs are met.

--Most vegetables grow best in soil with a pH (acidity) between 6 and 7.

--All vegetables require three basic primary nutrients (nitrogen, phosphate and potash) found in varying levels in most soils. These nutrient levels can be increased or enhanced with fertilizers applied to the soil before planting the seeds and/or transplants.

--With the exception of beans, peas and sweet potatoes, fall vegetables grow best with applications of nitrogen fertilizer applied during the growing season, a process known as “sidedressing”.

Soil pH

A soil sample analysis will show the pH of your soil within a range on a scale of 0 – 14. With 7 considered neutral, lower numbers denote an acidic soil, higher denote an alkaline soil. Since vegetables grow best in a soil pH between 6 and 7, it is said they prefer an acidic soil. (It is advisable not to attempt to alter your pH without first having your soil analyzed.)

Fertilizers – Primary Nutrients

The three primary nutrients of nitrogen, phosphate and potash required by vegetables are readily available packaged/bagged as granular fertilizers at your local nursery or garden center. The packaging will be marked with three numbers such as 8-8-8, 8-24-24, etc., denoting the specific ratio of nitrogen-phosphate-potash in that particular package. The three numbers are always in the same order. Assuming an analysis of your soil has not reflected some notable imbalance of these three nutrients, a supply of 8-8-8 and 8-24-24 will carry you through the initial planting stage.

The cultural recommendation (see chart below) for all vegetables regardless of the growing season will be a specific amount of one or the other of 8-8-8 or 8-24-24 fertilizer. This recommendation is the “preferred blend” for that vegetable.

The method of performing the initial application of fertilizer is to sprinkle the granules evenly over the soil where the seeds and transplants are to be grown. Lightly till or fold the granules four inches into the soil.

Fertilizers - Sidedressing

Many vegetables benefit from the additional application (sidedressing) of nitrogen fertilizer during the growing season. One method of sidedressing is to use a garden hoe to carefully form a thin trough about two inches deep and two to three inches from the stalk of the plant. Pour the granules into the trough and cover with the soil that was displaced when the trough was formed. The recommended sidedressing is nitrogen in the form of ammonium nitrate which is not readily available to the home gardener, or ammonium sulfate which is readily available for purchase. A urea/ammonium sulfate blend is also available.

Now For The Confusion

Confusion may arise in the initial fertilization application but even moreso in the sidedressing aspect. This is because recommendations vary among vegetables, calling for different amounts of specific initial fertilizers and varying intervals for sidedressing. When the nutritional needs of vegetables are considered separately for each vegetable to be grown in a season, the list of recommendations seems to be as lengthy as the list of vegetables. When vegetables are considered in groups, however, the list of applicable nutritional recommendations is reduced.

One easy way to group fall vegetables is to focus on the edible part of the plant. The chart below has done this for you. For example, if the edible part is a pod, that vegetable is of course either a bean or pea. The chart shows this group as sharing the same initial nutritional/fertilization needs and requiring no sidedressing. Root crops share the same needs. Leafy crops such as lettuce and spinach share needs; thicker textured leafy vegetables share needs and require additional sidedressing.

CROP (GROUPED)	FERTILIZER	SIDEDRESS	ADDITIONAL SIDEDRESS
Beans and Peas	2-3 lbs. 8-24-24 OR 2-5 lbs. 8-8-8	n/a	
Beets, Carrots, Radishes, Turnips, Rutabagas, Kohlrabi	6-7 lbs. 8-8-8 OR 4-5 lbs. 8-24-24	3-4 weeks after planting	
Lettuce, (Head or Leaf), Endive, Mustard, Parsley, Spinach	4-5 lbs. 8-24-24 OR 6-7 lbs. 8-8-8	3-4 weeks after transplanting	2-3 weeks after first sidedress
Cabbage, Collards, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cauliflower	4-6 lbs. 8-8-8 OR 3-4 lbs. 8-24-24	2-4 weeks after transplanting	Two to three additional sidedressings at 2-week intervals

Note: Amounts shown are based on 300 square feet of soil. The sidedress application should be $\frac{3}{4}$ pounds per 300 square feet of soil. (If ammonium sulfate is not available, apply 3 pounds of 8-8-8 as a substitute.)

Tip: One quart of fertilizer weighs about 2 pounds.

To provide you with more detailed information and helpful tips for growing vegetables the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center offers several publications available online or through your Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. The “Vegetable Gardening Tips” series addresses recommended cultural practices from seed to harvest including detailed information on insect, disease and weed controls specific to each vegetable. For a valuable overview of vegetable gardening including specific cultural recommendations, planting dates, seed depth, fertilizer and vegetable variety recommendations, see “Louisiana Vegetable Planting Guide”. The “Insect management in Home Vegetable Gardens” publication introduces the home gardener to types of insects found in vegetable gardens. It details the signs of infestation and includes recommended controls and techniques that aid in the management of these pests. To obtain these publications, go online to <http://www.lsuagcenter.com>. Click on the heading “Publications”, “Catalog”. These publications can be found under Lawn and Garden in the Vegetables subtopic. As always, your Louisiana Cooperative Extension agent can assist with answering your home gardening questions.

Hopefully some of the confusion has been alleviated surrounding soil and nutrient requirements. No doubt those of you who wish to learn even more will review the series of available gardening publications. With confusion gone, make way for excitement. Go forth and grow with enthusiasm!

FALL IN THE GARDEN!



THE HOME GARDENER

An East Baton Rouge Master Gardeners Program Publication

Baton Rouge Botanic Garden at Independence Park

7950 Independence Boulevard
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
225-928-2270

The Baton Rouge Botanic Garden volunteers work at 7950 Independence Boulevard every third Saturday from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m., weather permitting. The work is maintenance of the flower beds and propagation of plants to sell at the two plants sales held in the garden to raise money. Contact Claire Fontenot at clafon@eatel.net or 225-753-1100, for more information.

The Botanic Garden Volunteers recycle garden pots. The pots may be dropped off in the fenced area to the left of the parking lot near the storage shed. The pots are used to grow plants for the garden and for the plant sales. Proceeds of the plant sales go to the Garden.

Ione Burden Conference Center

4560 Essen Lane
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
225-763-3999
www.agcenter.lsu.edu

Native Plant Society

For a complete Louisiana calendar of upcoming events and membership information visit their website at: www.lnps.org

The Herb Society of America's Baton Rouge Unit

Meetings are held at the Baton Rouge Garden Center located at 7950 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge LA. All meetings start at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday from January through June and September and October. For more information contact Rita Salman at 225-291-5684.

The Herbarium of Louisiana State University

The Herbarium, located on the Baton Rouge campus of Louisiana State University, studies biodiversity—green plants, lichens and fungi—from the state of Louisiana and around the world.

The herbarium is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, exception University holidays. Be sure to call ahead to make sure someone is available to assist you. 225-578-8564 (www.herbarium.lsu.edu)

Hilltop Arboretum

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“When witches go riding and black cats are seen,
the moon laughs and whispers, ‘tis near Halloween.”

~ *Author Unknown*