



GN Gardening Magazine

April 2023

## In This Issue:

Look at Me  
Bottlebrush Tree  
(*Callistemon sp.*)

By: Anna Timmerman

Okra Greaxing Guide

By: Dr. Joe Willis

Weed of the Month Henbit  
(*Lamium amplexicaule*)

By: Will Afton

Pest Control Using Items  
Around the House

By: Aaron Ashbrook

Lawn Mower Maintenance

By: Chris Dunaway

What's Bugging You—  
Green Peach Aphid &  
Melon Aphid

By: Dr. Joe Willis

April Planting Guide  
In the Kitchen with Austin  
Local Garden Centers  
April Garden Checklist  
Lawn Care Do's & Don't's

Cover Photo:  
Okra growing in the New  
Orleans Botanical Gardens.  
By: Chris Dunaway





# Look at Me!

## Bottlebrush Tree (*Callistemon sp.*)

**A**n evergreen native of Australia, the bottlebrush tree (*Callistemon*), and its smaller shrub cultivars, thrive here in southern Louisiana and are in bloom now. They provide an exotic pop of color in the form of bright crimson and pink blooms, which are shaped exactly like their namesake, a bottle brush. It can adapt to many soil conditions provided the site drains well. Bottlebrush prefers full sun, and once established does not need irrigation and has few pest or disease problems. The blooms of the bottlebrush are especially attractive to hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees. If you want to include a “natural” hummingbird feeder in your landscape, the bottlebrush plant is an excellent choice to draw plenty of hummers in. Bottlebrushes are hardy from USDA zone 9B to 11.

The traditional tree form of bottlebrush (*C. citrinus*) is often sold as a shrub, but can reach mature heights as tall as twenty-five feet, through ten to fifteen feet is more common. It can be pruned into a focal point

plant, a tree form, or can be left to grow as a privacy screen or hedge if several are planted in a row, about four feet apart. It has an upright, erect growth habit. This traditional red bottlebrush is recommended for

use under utility lines as it will not mature into the line easement.

A weeping version of the bottlebrush tree (*C. viminalis*) is also in the nursery trade, though more uncommon. It is especially attractive when pruned into a single or multi-trunk form. The blooms and foliage cascade downward in an umbrella shape. ‘Red Cascade’ is a common weeping cultivar.

A pink flowering bottlebrush tree, (*C. viminalis*) ‘Bottle Pop Neon Pink’ is currently thriving in the LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station field trials. It has bright neon pink blooms that are very attractive to



Photo by Gary McMillan

A bottlebrush tree in a backyard garden.

pollinators, just like the red-flowering cultivars. This one is just now being evaluated for the nursery industry but is doing well and may be in a local garden center near you in a year or two.



If you lack the space for a ten-to-twenty-foot tree or shrub, there are dwarf bottlebrush shrubs available! A close cousin to the full-sized *Callistemon* species, “creek bottlebrush” types are also native to Australia, *Callistemon viminalis* ‘Little John’ grows in a short, shrubby form, reaching a height of three feet, with a spread of up to five feet at maturity. ‘Little John’ is a common cultivar available at the garden centers. It is slightly more cold hardy than the full sized bottlebrushes and can be planted into Zone 8. It does just fine in a five gallon container or larger.

All bottlebrushes prefer full sun and well-draining soils. They are drought resistant and handle our excessive occasional rainfall just fine if they don’t sit in wet soil too long. They are also deer resistant if you struggle with the deer nibbling your landscaping. They can be slow to start growing and establish, but tend to really take off after a couple of years in the ground. They can be pruned anytime, and hard

pruning is generally never needed. The blooms are a copious source of nectar for the hummingbirds and other pollinators, and make long-lived cut flowers in a vase. Bottlebrush trees can be somewhat killed back by a hard freeze but tend to re-emerge from the roots and larger branches. Cover young, newly planted bottlebrushes in the event of a freeze. As they mature and harden over the years, bottlebrush trees become more resilient to frost, drought, and even saline conditions, making it a good choice for coastal landscapes. It can handle some salt in the soil if you have an area with elevated sodium levels.

Consider adding a bottlebrush tree or shrub to your landscape, especially if you want to draw crowds of hummingbirds, butterflies, and other pollinating insects to your landscape with a beautiful low maintenance plant with an exotic touch.

~Anna Timmerman



A hummingbird flies in to feed on nectar from a bottlebrush flower.

# April Vegetable Planting Guide

Crop	Recommended Variety
Snap Beans (bush or pole)	Bush-Blue Lake 274, Bronco, Derby, Lynx, Strike Pole-Blue Lake, Kentucky Blue, McCaslin
Sweet Corn	Merit, Silver Queen, Honey 'n Pearl, Ambrosia
Summer Squash	Gold Rush, Justice III, Multipik, Patriot II
Hot Peppers (transplant)	Grande, Tula, Mariachi, Mitla,
Cantaloupe	Ambrosia, Aphrodite, Athena, Primo, Vienna
Southern Peas	Queen Anne, California #5, Quickpick, Colussus
Tomato (transplant)	Better Boy, Big Beef, Cupid, Pink Girl, Juliet, Sweet Milton, Bella Rosa, Carolina Gold
Collards	Champion, Flash, Georgia, Top Bunch, Vates
Cucumbers	Dasher II, Diva, Fanfare, General Lee, Indy, Olympian, Sweet Success, Sweet Slice
Cucuzza	None Given
Lima Beans (bush or pole)	Dixie Butterpea, Jackson Wonder, Thorogreen Florida Speckled, King of Garden
Bell Peppers (transplants)	Aristotle X3R, Jupiter, Lilac, Plato, Tequila
Kohlrabi	Early Purple Vienna, Early White, Vienna, Winner
Okra	Annie Oakley, Cajun Delight, Clemson Spineless
Pumpkins	Atlantic Giant, Baby Bear, Prankster, Sorcerer
Radishes	Cherriette, Champion, White Icicle, April Cross
Swiss Chard	None Given
Winter Squash	Honey Bear, Sweet Mama, Table Queen, Tivoli
Eggplant	Dusky, Night Shadow, Epic, Santana, Calliope

# Okra Greaxing Guide

**O**kra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*) is one of the iconic southern vegetables that every gardener should grow. It is a nutritious easy to grow veggie that can double as an attractive landscape ornamental. (See GNO Gardening May 2018 for previous article on okra).

As shown here, okra is a low-calorie vegetable that is high in fiber, Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, calcium, magnesium, potassium and even almost 2g of protein.

Amount Per 1 cup (100 g)			
Calories 33			
% Daily Value*			
Total Fat 0.2 g		0%	
Saturated fat 0 g		0%	
Cholesterol 0 mg		0%	
Sodium 7 mg		0%	
Potassium 299 mg		8%	
Total Carbohydrate 7 g		2%	
Dietary fiber 3.2 g		12%	
Sugar 1.5 g			
Protein 1.9 g		3%	
Vitamin C	38%	Calcium	8%
Iron	3%	Vitamin D	0%
Vitamin B6	10%	Cobalamin	0%
Magnesium	14%		

**Table 1:** Nutritional content of okra. USDA National Nutrient Database.

In fact, okra has over 40% as much Vitamin C as citrus and only 15% of the sugar.

Research on different parts of okra plants have shown nutraceutical properties that include: antibacterial, anticancer, antidiabetic, antioxidant, gastro-protective, immunomodulatory, lipid lowering, neuro-pharmacological, and trypsin inhibition.

## Botany

Okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*) is a member of the Malvaceae or mallow family which also includes such ornamentals as Hibiscus, hollyhocks, musk mallow and rose-of-sharon as well as economically important food, fiber and lumber plants like cotton, cocoa, cola tree, durian fruit, jute, linden (basswood), and balsa wood and such natural wonders as the baobab and bottle tree.

Okra is a perennial plant in tropical environments but is most often grown as an annual. Many commercial okra varieties grow as tall plants with a central main stem and minimal lateral branching. Varieties have been selected that produce a central main stem but have prolific lateral branching. Depending on variety, okra can grow from 4'-12'+ tall. During cultivation, you can top okra plants if they are getting taller than you want. This will encourage lateral branching creating a bushier plant.

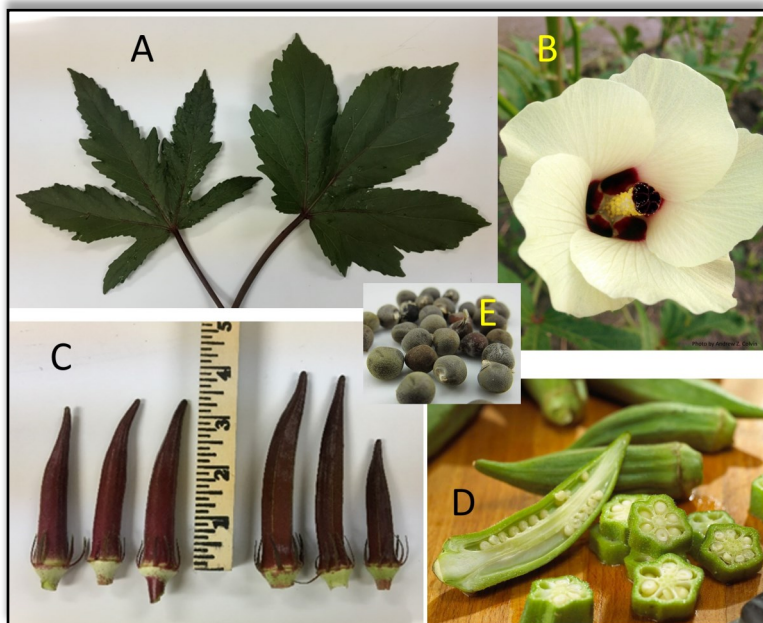
Okra plants have a deep tap root system.

Okra leaves are arranged alternately with long petioles. The leaves are heart-shaped (chordate) with three to five deep lobes and palmate venation and generally hairy. Leaves are light to dark green; purple or burgundy varieties have purplish petioles. Young okra leaves may be cooked similarly to the greens of beets, spinach or dandelions, or used raw in salads.

Okra produces showy 1.5"-3.0" diameter flowers. The attractive complete flowers (having sepals, petals, stamens and pistils) are white to light yellow with a crimson center. Okra is self-fertile. Okra flowers are produced continually throughout the growing season. The flowers have 5 sepals and 5 overlapping petals. The stamens are numerous and united to form a tubular sheath which surrounds the pistil except for the exposed style and stigma at the tip. The style varies in length and splits near the apex into 2-9 parts corresponding to the number of carpels. An individual flower will open just after sunrise and will

Okra flowers are edible and can be used similar to squash flowers.

The fruit or “okra pod” is an elongated, conical or cylindrical capsule, comprising for the most part, five cavities containing ovules. It is generally ribbed though smooth-podded varieties are available. Cultivated okra varieties for the most part are spineless. The fruit is normally yellowish green to green, but is sometimes purple or whitish green depending on variety.



**Figure 1:** A - Okra leaves from Candle Fire (L) and Burgundy (R), B – Okra flower, C – Okra pods from Candle Fire (L) and Burgundy (R), D – Okra pods cut vertically and longitudinally. Note the abundant immature seed. E – Mature okra seed.

The okra pod contains numerous round to oval, smooth, striated and dark green to dark brown seeds about the size of a BB – about 0.2” in diameter. Okra seeds may be roasted and ground to form a caffeine-free substitute for coffee.

### Site

Okra is a sun-loving, heat-loving vegetable growing best in southern climates. Optimal soil conditions is a well-draining, light sandy to medium loam, high in organic matter with a pH between 6.0 and 6.8. However, okra will grow and produce in a wide range of soil conditions including clay soil. A full sunlight location with 8 or more hours of sun daily is ideal. Soil temperatures should be at least 65°F with optimal growth occurring at soil temperatures

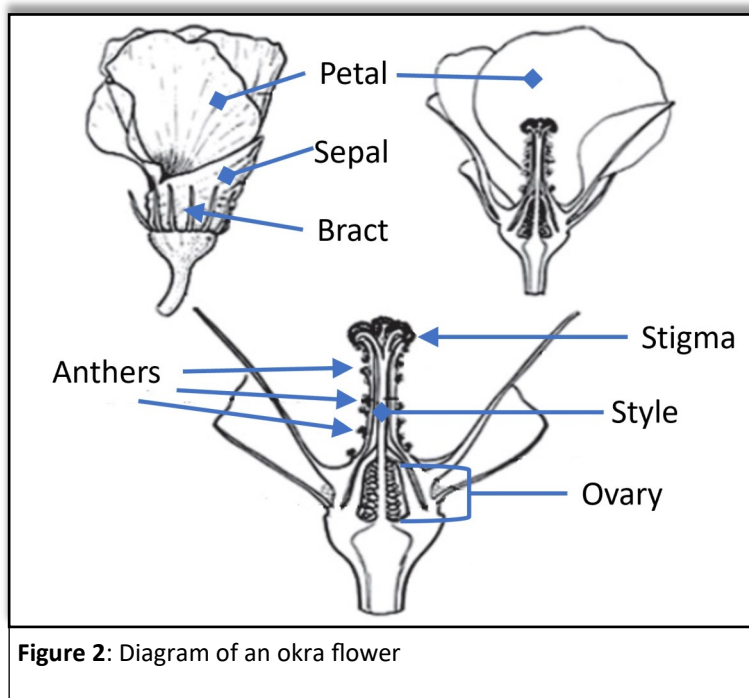
between 75–90°F.

Though not regularly grown in containers, okra will perform very well in containers of 5 gallons or more especially if using the shorter bushier varieties.

### Planting

Okra can be direct-seeded into the garden or started early in the greenhouse and planted as transplants. Plant the seed 0.5”-1” deep. Okra seed have a hard seedcoat. Soaking the seed overnight in water or abrading gently with sandpaper prior to planting will enhance germination. Rows should be 3’ apart and plant final spacing should be about 18” (spacing may be adjusted depending on variety).

Soil temperature should be higher than 65°F before planting seed or transplanting seedlings. For southern Louisiana, that’s usually from mid-March till the end of May for Spring planting. Optimal seed



**Figure 2:** Diagram of an okra flower

germination temperature is 75-90°F. Seedlings will emerge in 5-14 days depending on the soil temperature and variety. When purchasing seed, it’s good to know that there are about 20 okra seeds per gram.

If stored properly, seed will remain viable for 2+ years.

Days to maturity depend on variety but range from 50-80 days.



## Culture

Okra is a heat-loving vegetable that continues to produce a nutritious abundant crop right through the hottest summer as long as it gets the nutrients and water it needs.

Always do a soil test prior to planting your vegetable garden to determine what nutrient supplements need to be added. If you don't do a soil test, the general recommendation is to incorporate 1-1.3 lb. (2-2.6 cups) of 8-8-8 per 100 ft<sup>2</sup> at planting. Like most of our vegetables, okra is a heavy feeder and should be side-dressed with 2/3 lb. (3/4 cup) of calcium nitrate (or nitrogen equivalent) per 100 ft<sup>2</sup> at first fruit-set and every 4-6 weeks thereafter until frost.

For optimal production, okra needs about 1.5" of water every 7-10 days which is about 3 quarts of water per square foot. Flowrate depends on a lot of variables – water pressure, hose diameter, hose length, hose end attachment, etc. Make it simple – water thoroughly and deeply once a week if there is little to no rain. If growing in containers, water once to twice daily during active production.

## Harvest

To maintain production and get the highest quality pods, okra should be harvested every 1-2 days. Pods are best when 2"-4" long. Tender edible pods will easily snap from the plant. You can also harvest by cutting the pods. Most varieties tend to get fibrous and inedible if longer than 6". However, smooth pods (as opposed to ribbed pods) tend to be less fibrous as they grow and can generally be harvested at lengths up to 8" and still be tender. It is a good practice to wear long sleeves when harvesting to avoid skin irritation from okra's leaf trichomes.

As mentioned earlier, you can also harvest young leaves to eat as greens or flowers to eat as well.

The best storage conditions for harvested pods is 45-50°F and 90-95% relative humidity or 3-5 days in a normal refrigerator.

For a continual supply of fresh okra pods for eating, you'll need 2-3 plants per person. If you want to make

pickled okra or preserve for winter eating you'll need more.

## Pollination

Okra flowers are complete and self-pollinating. Okra flowers are regularly visited by bees and other pollinators so they may also be cross-pollinated.

## Recommended Varieties

Louisiana climate is ideal for okra production and I've never seen a variety yet that failed to produce.

However, based on variety trials done by LSU AgCenter, the following varieties are recommended:

*Ribbed* – Clemson spineless, cowhorn, Annie Oakley, cajun delight, burgundy, Lee, Louisiana green velvet, jambalaya;

*Smooth* – emerald, candle fire.

## Specialty varieties:

*Container varieties* (these varieties are shorter and bushier): jambalaya, baby bubba, dwarf long green, cajun jewel, cow's horn.

*White podded varieties*: blondy, silver queen.

*Red/purple podded varieties*: burgundy, candle fire, bowling red, carmine splendor.

## Common Diseases (ALWAYS read and follow label instructions on pesticides).

**Cercospora Leaf Spot:** caused by *Cercospora abelmosch* and *Cercospora malayensis*. **Symptoms:** Most of the disease is on the leaf underside. On the top of the leaves, only small spots are visible. On the bottom of the leaves, yellow to brown spots can be seen. The spots are limited by leaf veins. In general, *Cercospora* leaf spots are favored by frequent rain or heavy dew and temperatures below 90°F. **Control:** Fungicides containing chlorothalonil or tebuconazole have been shown to be effective.

**Powdery mildew:** caused by fungus *Oidium asteris-punice*. **Symptoms:** Powdery white covering on leaves. Patches may coalesce to cover the entire plant. If plant is heavily infected, leaves may roll upward and appear scorched. Pathogen overwinters on plant debris or an alternate host. The disease emergence is favored by warm, dry weather with cool nights that



**Figure 3:** A – Powdery mildew on okra, B – Cercospora leaf spot on okra.

result in dew formation. **Control:** Fungicides containing chlorothalonil or copper hydroxide have been

shown to be effective. Neem oil is an alternative choice for organic gardeners.

**Common Pests** (ALWAYS read and follow label instructions on pesticides).

**Caterpillars (armyworms (beet, southern, and fall), cabbage looper, and corn earworm)** (*Spodoptera exigua*, *Spodoptera eridania*, *Spodoptera frugiperda*, *Trichoplusia ni*, *Helicoverpa zea*): The larvae of these lepidopteran insects chew on the leaves and cabbage looper and corn earworm will also bore into the stem. Regular scouting for damage is the best means of monitoring. **Control:** All of these insect larvae are effectively controlled using B.t. or Spinosad. Insecticides containing carbaryl or bifenthrin are also effective.

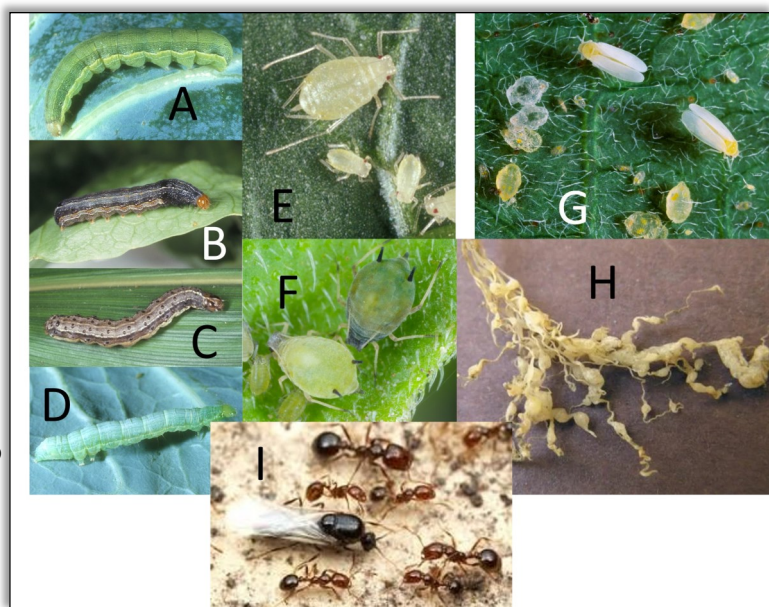
**Aphids (Green peach aphid, Melon aphid)** (*Myzus persicae*, *Aphis gossypii*): Aphids are found mostly on the leaf underside and on succulent leaf tissue. They are piercing-sucking insects that cause plant stress and reduced vigor. Infested leaves may be deformed. **Control:** Aphids are controlled naturally by predatory insects like ladybeetles and assassin bugs. Insecticides containing pyrethrin, bifenthrin, imidacloprid, or malathion are labelled for control. Horticultural oil and insecticidal soaps are also effective.

**Silverleaf Whitefly** (*Bemisia tabaci*): Whiteflies are piercing-sucking insects that are found primarily on the leaf underside. Heavily infested plants may be

severely weakened. Adult insects create a white cloud of flying insects when an infested plant is disturbed.

**Control:** Insecticides containing malathion, bifenthrin, imidacloprid, or pyrethrin are labelled for control of whiteflies. Azadirachtin, and horticultural oil are also effective and more suited for organic gardeners.

**Southern Root-Knot Nematode** (*Meloidogyne incognita*): Nematodes feed on plant roots by piercing the root with their stylet (syringe-like mouth) and causing the root to create protective galls around the nematode. This inhibits root growth and function with the generally symptomology of weakened,



**Figure 4:** Common okra pests. A – Beet armyworm, B – Southern armyworm, C – Fall armyworm, D – Corn earworm, E – Green peach aphid, F – Melon aphid, G – Silverleaf Whitefly, H – Southern root-knot nematode, I – Red imported fire ants.

stunted, yellowing plants with greatly reduced growth and production. **Control:** There are no chemicals labelled for nematode control in the home garden. Solarization of infested beds can greatly reduce nematode populations.

**Red Imported Fire Ants** (*Solenopsis invicta*): The prevailing thought has been that ants did not hurt okra and were mainly visiting okra plants to get honeydew produced by aphids or other sucking insects. That has changed with the advent of the imported fire ant. Fire ants feed on the base of developing blooms before the bloom buds open



causing them to abort. **Control:** Applying an ant bait is the most effective means of managing fire ants in a vegetable garden. Baits are a granular material that includes an insecticide and an attractant, usually soybean oil. The ants

collect and carry the granules back to the colony where the insecticide kills colony members. A single bait application can reduce fire ant populations by around 80%. Baits that contain bifenthrin or Spinosad have been shown to be effective. Be sure to use only baits that are specifically labeled for use in vegetables.

- Dr. Joe W. Willis

### Selected References:

Elkhalifa, A.E.O. et. al. 2021. Okra as a potential Dietary Medicine with Nutraceutical Importance for Sustainable Health Applications. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33525745/>

Fontenot, K. et. al. 2020. Louisiana Vegetable Planting Guide. LSU AgCenter pub. # 1980.

Hayes, B. 2022. 19 Best Okra Varieties To Grow In Your Garden Or Container. <file:///D:/Joe's%20LSU%20Computer%20Files/LSU%20AgCenter%20Publications/Vegetables/Okra%20-%2019%20Best%20Okra%20Varieties%20To%20Grow%20In%20Your%20Garden.pdf>

Noling, J.W. 2019. Nematode Management in Okra. UF-IFAS pub. #ENY-043

Okra Growing Guide. 2023. Territorial Seed Company. <https://territorialseed.com/blogs/spring-growing-guides/okra-growing-guide>

Qureshi, J. A. et.al. 2003. Insect Management for Okra. UF-IFAS pub. # ENY-466.

Tripathi, K.K. et. al. 2011. Biology of *Abelmoschus esculentus* L. (Okra). [https://biosafety.icar.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Biology\\_of\\_Okra1.pdf](https://biosafety.icar.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Biology_of_Okra1.pdf)



Okra being grown by Master Gardener volunteers at the New Orleans Botanical Gardens.



# Weed of the Month

## Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*)

**W**eeds can be frustrating. Especially, when maintaining a home lawn and unwanted plants start popping up all over. These weeds compete with turfgrass for light, water, and nutrients. They take away from the beauty of an intensively managed area of turfgrass. And then, once you become familiar with the common weeds, a new species will appear and run wild. It can be exhausting but we work hard to keep out home landscapes looking good. All we can do is learn about these new plants and implement control methods to prevent their establishment.

The above paragraph can be said about all the various lawn weeds that are seen throughout South Louisiana lawns and flowerbeds. One plant that I would like to highlight is henbit. I can remember seeing that name on a bag of St Augustine weed & feed back in the early 1990s. It can grow in a lawn or in the flowerbed because it's an opportunistic plant that will put down roots in whatever space you provide.

Henbit, *Lamium amplexicaule*, is a species of dead-nettle introduced to the United States. It's classified into the plant family, Lamiaceae, which includes many common herbs and other interesting

horticultural plants like salvia, coleus, and Swedish ivy. It is considered an annual plant, meaning that it completes its life cycle in one growing season. In Louisiana, it's considered a cool-season plant because it germinates in the fall and matures in the spring. Once it has flowered and produced seed, the mother

plant will fade as the weather turns warm. Those seeds are then deposited into the soil's seed bank where they can produce new plants in future years.

The plant itself has somewhat of an ornamental look to it because of its pretty purple flowers. The leaves of henbit appear opposite each other as you make your way



Henbit plants can come up wherever the seed falls. Here is henbit coming up in a crack between the pathway and a raised planter.

down the stem. The leaves themselves are broadly egg-shaped with a scalloped margin and very noticeable veins on the underside. Leaves on the upper portion of henbit directly attach to the stem (sessile) whereas the lower leaves use an appendage called a petiole to attach themselves. The plant can reach a mature height around 16 inches if unobstructed. The flowers are a reddish-purple color. If you look close enough, you can see darker colors within the spots on the lower petals. Henbit enters maturity after the first of the year where it will eventually flower and produce seed.



To manage this plant in a Louisiana lawn it is important to provide optimum growing conditions for the species of grass in your lawn. Whether you grow bermudagrass, St Augustinegrass, zoysiagrass, or centipedegrass all will suppress weed growth when in good health. All common lawn grass species with grow thick enough to out compete other plants growing within them. Its only when the lawn becomes stressed that weeds start appearing. Follow the proper cultural control methods for your lawn. Things like soil sampling/ fertilizing, mowing height, mowing frequency, supplemental irrigation, aerification, and pest control should all be considered in a weed control program.



Notice the small reddish-purple dots on the light colored petals. Along with the sessile leaves near the tip of the shoot, these are two identifiable features on henbit plants

However, if herbicide is warranted there are options. Three-way herbicides that contain 2,4-D, dicamba, and mecoprop will control henbit growing in a warm-season turfgrass species. Some examples include Fertilome Weed-Out Lawn Weed Killer, Bio-Advanced Southern Weed Killer for Lawns, or Ortho Weed B Gon Weed Killer for Lawns. Some folks may have Fertilome Weed Free Zone in their toolboxes. It's considered a four-way herbicide because of the addition of carfentrazone and will work on henbit too. Metsulfuron-methyl (MSM Turf) will also help to control henbit growing in warm-season turfgrasses. Pre-emergent herbicides are used to help manage annual weeds in the lawn because they kill the germinating seed before it is seen. Atrazine is a special active ingredient that displays some post and

pre-emergent qualities. It does a very good job on annual broadleaf weeds like henbit. Time an application for September to prevent henbit germination. Dithiopyr (Hi-Yield Weed and Grass Stopper Containing Dimension) and isoxaben (Fertilome Broadleaf Weed Control with Gallery) are two other options available. Always remember that when using herbicides to always read and follow the

label instructions. Make it a habit to review the label every time you use the product. Management of henbit in a flowerbed situation is straight forward. It can be hand pulled with ease to remove immediately. A 3-4 inch layer of mulch will block sunlight to the soil and help prevent the seeds of henbit from germinating. Pre-emergent herbicides

can also be used in flowerbeds as long as the product label provides directions for use.

## References

- Bryson, C.T. and M.S. DeFelice. 2009. Weeds of the south. University of Georgia Press. Athens, GA. ISBN 0-8203-3046-9
- Colvin, D.L., R. Dickens, J.W. Everest, D. Hall, and L.B. McCarty. 2004. Weeds of southern turfgrasses. UF Extension Gainesville, FL. ISBN 0-9746963-0-7
- Morgan, E.J. and J. Williamson. 2021. Henbit. Clemson Cooperative Extension. Clemson, SC. HGIC 2321

~William Afton

# Pest Control Using Items Around the House

There are many household items that can kill pest insects. However, it is important to note that just because something is considered a pesticide, does not mean it can kill insects. For example, many households' cleaners are considered pesticides, because they can kill bacteria, fungi, and viruses, but not insects. Insecticides are often based off compounds extracted from plant parts that are insecticidal, such as pyrethrum in the Chrysanthemum plants and nicotine from tobacco, which are neurotoxins. These plant-based insecticides have led to the development of synthetic insecticides such as pyrethroids and neonicotinoids. As you would expect, household cleaners do not contain neurotoxic compounds. This article will focus on how different household items can be used to control insects and their most practical uses.

Many of the household items that can kill insects do so by causing physical damage or suffocating them. Soaps and oils kill insects by suffocating the insects or removes the outer waxy layer of their exoskeleton, thus causing desiccation. To make a soap spray, combine 2.5 tablespoons of natural dish soap with no degreasers, bleach or fragrance with one gallon of water. The mixture can be applied directly to insects on plants. Cooking oils (vegetable or olive are best) can be mixed with soap and water to make an emulsion (2.5 tbsp/1 gallon), which can be sprayed onto insects as well. This mixture works well on aphids, scales, and mealy bugs. However, soapy water alone can kill a variety of crawling or flying insects. Vacuums can kill many crawling insects and spiders

around the house. A nylon sock can be placed on the house and catch insects, so they do not enter the bag. Alternatively, after vacuuming, the bag can be sealed with tape and placed in the freezer for 24-48 hours to kill any insects that survived initially. Tweezers can

also be used to physically collect insects, then they can be placed in soapy water causing them to drown. Similarly, tapes, extra sticky lint rollers, and butterfly nets can be used to collect pest insects. Afterwards, they can be placed in the freezer.

Maintaining biocontrol agents, or predatory insects, will also help control pests in the garden and around the house, but the strategy for preserving them varies based on the organism. First is to not apply broad spectrum insecticides which would kill biocontrol agents as well as pests. Because predators need to feed on pests, it is important to tolerate some pest



Apply a solution of mild soap and water as an effective insecticide.

insects for the biocontrol to be present in the area. Other strategies focus on maintaining the insect's preferred environment, such as providing a 2-3-inch layer of mulch for ground beetles and crawling spiders. Avoid knocking down spider webs in areas around pests containing environments as it takes substantial time and resources for them to make a new web. Providing native flowering or nectar producing plants will help maintain assassin bugs, robber flies, and minute pirate bugs. If you have any questions on these control methods, be sure to contact your parish agent or the LSU Department of Entomology.

~Dr. Aaron Ashbrook



# Lawn Mower Maintenance

With the coming of the long days and warm weather, we will be needing our lawnmowers once again to keep our

lawns neat and trimmed. Now is a good time to perform some general maintenance to keep our mowers running smoothly.

Two of the most important items that need to be replaced occasionally are the engine oil and the air filter. The engine oil helps keep the engine cool and lubricated and just like in a car, needs to be changed

periodically. You should check the oil level every time you use the lawn mower and add oil as needed.

Consult your owners manual for instructions and interval periods for changing oil. Low oil is the number one cause of severe engine damage.

The air filter is also very important in engine performance.

Combustion engines need fuel and air to run. The filter is designed to remove dust and debris from the air that the engine uses in the combustion process.

Clogged filters will reduce the flow of air to the

engine causing it to run poorly. Furthermore, dust and debris entering the engine can also cause major damage. I like to check the air filter on my mower

every time I use it. By lightly tapping it I find that I can remove a lot of the larger particles of dirt and plant material that were trapped by the filter.

The other major component of a lawn mower that needs to be inspected regularly is the blade. It is important that the blade be sharp and balanced. We recommend that the

blade be removed and sharpened at least annually. Sharp blades make for healthier turfgrass because

cleanly cut grass will heal better than grass that is torn and broken. Eventually normal use will wear down the blade necessitating its replacement.

Recently I purchased a complete tune-up kit containing a new blade, air filter, spark plug, and engine oil. In less than 30 minutes I had all the parts installed and was mowing away...



Tune-up kit with blade, air filter, spark plug, and fresh oil.



The old blade and air filter from my lawn mower compared to the new replacement parts.

~Chris Dunaway

# What's Bugging You—Green Peach Aphid & Melon Aphid

**A**phids are piercing-sucking insects that love to feed on young, tender, developing plant tissue. This can be buds that are just beginning to swell, flowers that are just beginning to open, leaves that are just beginning to emerge. When they feed, our plants suffer. And to add insult to injury, some viruses are vectored by aphids. While aphids are around the entire growing season, they are particularly prevalent and damaging in Spring when our plants are just waking up from their long winter's nap.

There are over 4000 species of aphids and more than 250 of these are pests on crop and ornamental plants. Two species that are common on a lot of our vegetable, fruit and ornamentals are the green peach aphid (*Myzus persicae*) and the melon aphid (*Aphis gossypii*).

## Green Peach Aphid

The adult green peach aphid is light to dark green or pink with red eyes and three dark lines may be visible running down its back (Figure 1). Adults may or may not have wings. Winged adults are formed in early Spring to disperse from their overwintering host. Green peach aphid overwinters as eggs on *Prunus* sp. Winged adults are also formed when high population density exists. The winged adults are the dispersal stage of the insect. Winged aphids are 1.8-2.0 mm long with a black head and thorax, and a yellowish green abdomen with a large dark patch on their back. The green peach aphid has moderately long cornicles the same color as their body with dark tips. Cornicles are tubes that project from the abdomen of an aphid and are an important identifying characteristic. Cornicles produce a quickly hardening defensive fluid called cornicle wax. All generations between Spring and Fall are female and produced through parthenogenesis or asexually and viviparously which means nymphs form inside the adult and are released rather than through laying eggs. Each adult aphid lives 20-30 days and can produce 50-100 offspring. Rate of maturity and reproduction are directly influenced by temperature. When temperatures cool and days shorten, both male and female aphids are

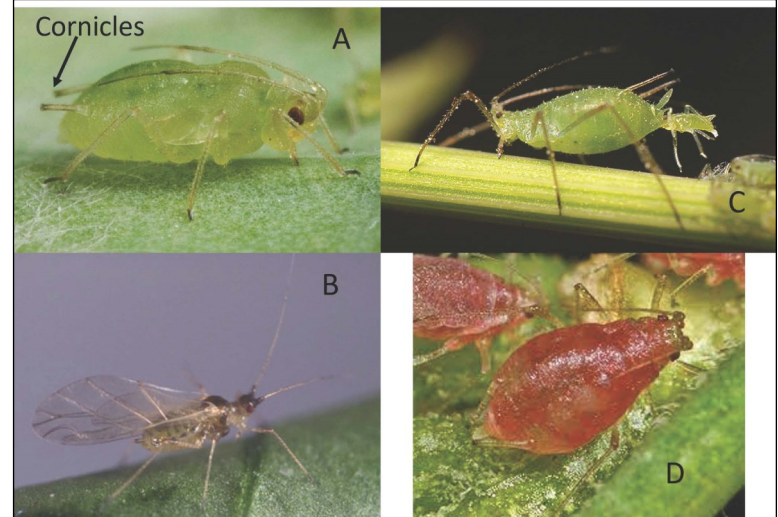


Figure 1: *Myzus persicae* - A: Wingless adult showing cornicles with dark tips; B: Winged adult; C: Adult giving birth to nymph; D: Alternate color form.

produced. They mate and the female lays eggs on the overwintering host plant. In warm climates, the aphids can overwinter as nymphs and adults on weed hosts. Green peach aphids have over 500 host plants. In addition to the damage the insect causes, green peach aphids also transmit several plant viruses. Indeed, this aphid is considered by many to be the most important vector of plant viruses throughout the world. Over 100 viruses have been found to be transmitted by green peach aphid including: potato leafroll virus, potato virus Y, beet western yellows virus, beet yellows virus, lettuce mosaic virus, cauliflower mosaic virus, turnip mosaic virus, cucumber mosaic virus, and watermelon mosaic virus.

## Melon Aphid

The adult melon aphids are 1-2 mm long and come in a range of colors that include light yellow, green, dark green, or almost black. Regardless of the body color, the cornicles will always be dark (Figure 2). Overwintering hosts for melon aphids include: catalpa (*Catalpa bignonioides*), rose of sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*), *Rumex crispus*, *Lamium amphlexicaule*, boneset (*Eupatorium petaloidum*), and citrus (*Citrus* spp.). The life cycle is very similar to the green peach aphid with winged adults dispersing in the Spring followed by viviparous



reproduction in wingless adults followed by winged mated females in the Fall. Adult viviparous females produce 70-80 offspring during their 20-day lifespan. The melon aphid has over 700 hosts including many of our vegetable and fruit crops and cotton – the reason for the alternate common name of cotton aphid. Melon aphid is also a vector of many plant viruses including: cucumber mosaic virus, watermelon mosaic virus 2, and zucchini yellow mosaic virus.

### Sooty Mold

All aphids, including the green peach aphid and melon aphid, produce a liquid waste product high in sugars called honeydew. This sweet liquid is what ants are after as they protect and tend to aphid colonies. This material also drips onto plant leaves and stems below the feeding site where it becomes the food for saprophytic fungi that turn the foliage black as they grow. Fungi that most commonly cause sooty mold on garden and landscape plants are in the genera *Capnodium*, *Fumago*, and *Scorias*. The fungi are not infecting the plant but merely feeding on the honeydew. Removing the honeydew and associated fungi with warm soapy water can return the plant to its original luster.

### Natural Enemies

Aphids are very prolific and their plump soft bodies are food for many natural enemies. Some of the more common aphid feeders are ladybeetles, flower flies, green lacewings, brown lacewings, aphid midges, minute pirate bugs, bigeyed bugs, damsel bugs, earwigs, ground beetles, and parasitic wasps (see GNO Gardening July 2018, “Aphid Mummies”). One good way to control aphids in your gardens and landscapes is to maintain an environment conducive to beneficial insect proliferation. With that many other insects looking to

munch on aphids, other means of control may not be necessary.

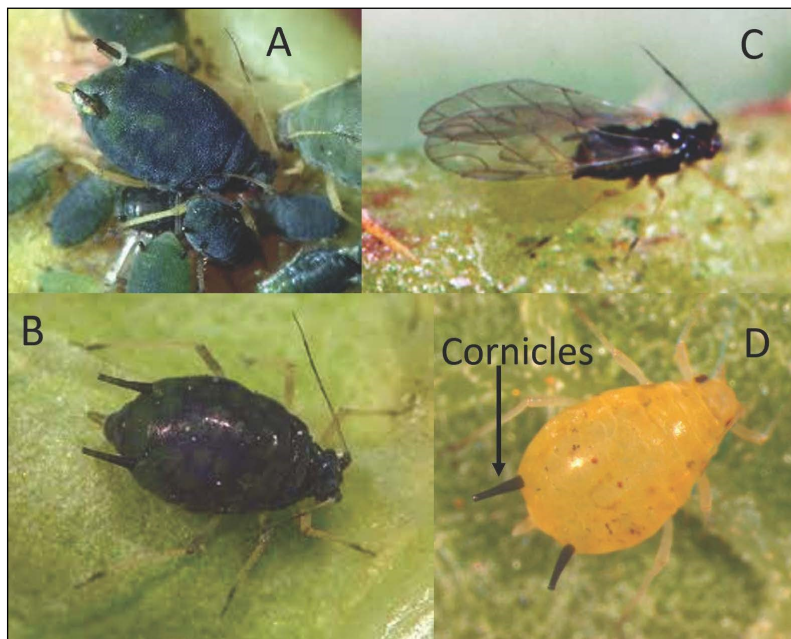


Figure 2: *Aphis gossypii* – A: Dark blackish form; B: Alternate color form; C: Winged adult; D: Light color form showing cornicles. Note the cornicles are dark in all color forms.

### Control

In addition to beneficial natural predators, several fungi, including *Beauveria bassiana*, *Paecilomyces fumosoroseus*, and *Verticillium lecanii*, will infect and kill aphids. There are commercially available biocontrol pesticides that contain these fungi as the active ingredient.

Light-colored, reflective mulches have also been shown to repel flying insects thus keeping aphids from invading.

Aphids can also be easily dislodged with a stream of water directed at the feeding site.

If the aphid population is not being controlled by other means, many insecticides are available. These include the relatively soft insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils. Always read and follow label directions for any and all pesticides.

~Dr. Joe Willis

### Selected References

- Aphids Found on Flowers and Foliage. 2023. NCSU Extension. <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/insect-and-related-pests-of-flowers-and-foliage-plants/aphids-found-on-flowers-and-foliage>
- Aphids, In-Depth. 2023. University of Wisconsin-Madison. <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/aphids-2/>
- Capinera, John. 2021. Green Peach Aphid. UF-IFAS. <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN379>
- Capinera, John. 2021. Melon Aphid or Cotton Aphid. UF-IFAS. <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN330>
- The Aphid Life Cycle. Backyard Nature. [https://www.backyardnature.net/aphid\\_lc.htm](https://www.backyardnature.net/aphid_lc.htm)

# Farmers Markets in the GNO Area

## Orleans Parish

### **Crescent City Farmer's Market- Mid-City**

500 N. Norman C. Francis  
Thursdays from 3-7PM  
Walk-up and curbside pre-orders at  
[www.crescentcityfarmersmarket.org](http://www.crescentcityfarmersmarket.org)

### **Crescent City Farmer's Market- City Park**

Tad Gormley Stadium parking lot at  
Marconi and Navarre  
Sundays from 8AM-Noon  
Preorder contact-free drive through only,  
info at [www.crescentcityfarmersmarket.org](http://www.crescentcityfarmersmarket.org)

### **Crescent City Farmer's Market- Uptown**

200 Broadway  
Tuesdays from 8AM-Noon  
Walk-up and curbside pre-orders, info at  
[www.crescentcityfarmersmarket.org](http://www.crescentcityfarmersmarket.org)

### **SPROUT NOLA ReFresh Market-Truck Farm Table**

200 N. Broad (In Whole Foods lobby or in  
parking lot, weather permitting)  
Walk up

### **SPROUT NOLA ReFresh Market-Lafitte Greenway**

2606 St. Louis  
Mondays from 3-6PM  
Walk up and pre-orders at [https://  
app.sourcewhatsgood.com/markets/refresh-  
farmers-market/products](https://app.sourcewhatsgood.com/markets/refresh-farmers-market/products)

### **Vietnamese Farmer's Market**

14401 Alcee Fortier Blvd., New Orleans East  
Saturdays, 5:30AM-8:30AM

### **Marketplace at Armstrong Park**

901 N. Rampart  
Thursdays from 3-7PM

### **New Orleans French Market**

Lower Decatur Street  
Daily, 9AM-6PM

### **Know Dat Grow Dat Microgreens & Produce**

Online Sales  
<https://www.knowdatgrowdat.com/shop>

### **Mid-City Arts and Farmer's Market**

Comiskey Park, New Orleans  
Market dates vary and are on hold due to  
Covid-19, check <http://midcityaf.org>

### **Laughing Buddha Farm Hubs**

Pick up points vary, pre-orders available  
Bywater, Broadmoor, Lakeview, Irish  
Channel, Mid-City, Algiers Point, Uptown  
Locations  
[https://www.laughingbuddhanursery.com/  
events](https://www.laughingbuddhanursery.com/events)

### **Barcelo Gardens Farmer's Market- Upper 9<sup>th</sup> Ward**

2301 Gallier Street  
Saturdays from 10AM-1PM

### **Bywater Market at Trap Kitchen-Bywater**

1043 Poland Ave  
Sundays from 10AM-3PM

### **Paradigm Farmer's Market-Central City**

1131 S. Rampart  
Sundays 9AM-Noon

### **Lot 1701 Small Business and Farmer's Market-Central City**

1701 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.  
Every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday from 11AM to 3PM

### **BOUNYFUL Farmer's Market-Algiers Point**

149 Delaronde St.  
First and Third Sundays of the month, from  
11AM-3PM

### **Edgewood Park Market-Edgewood**

3317 Franklin Ave.  
First market Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 11AM-  
3PM

### **New Orleans East Hospital Farmer's Market- New Orleans East**

5620 Read Blvd.  
First Tuesday of the Month- 3PM-Dusk  
Third Thursday of the Month- Noon-3PM

### **Sheaux Fresh Sustainable Foods- Tremé-Lafitte**

585 N. Claiborne at Lafitte Greenway  
(under overpass)  
Wednesdays from 2-5PM  
Saturdays from 10AM-2PM  
Check for current dates/times at  
[www.sheauxfresh.org](http://www.sheauxfresh.org)

### **Holy Cross Farmer's Market- Holy Cross/ Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward**

533 St. Maurice  
First & Third Saturday of the month,  
10:00AM-2PM

---

## St. Tammany Parish

### **Covington Farmers' Market**

Covington Police Department  
609 North Columbia St., Covington, LA 70433  
Saturday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM (rain or shine)  
Covington Trailhead  
419 N. New Hampshire  
Wednesday: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM (rain or  
shine)  
[www.covingtonfarmersmarket.org](http://www.covingtonfarmersmarket.org)  
General information: 985.966.1786

### **Mandeville Trailhead Community Market**

Mandeville Trailhead  
675 Lafitte St, Mandeville, LA 70448  
Saturday: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (rain or shine)  
[https://www.facebook.com/  
TheMandevilleTrailhead](https://www.facebook.com/TheMandevilleTrailhead)  
985.624.3147

### **Madisonville Market**

Riverside Park South  
Water St., Madisonville, LA 70447  
Sunday: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
[www.madisonvillemarket.org](http://www.madisonvillemarket.org)

### **Folsom Village Market**

Hwy 40, one block east of Hwy 25  
Saturday: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (weather per-  
mitting)  
Every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday  
985.507.6496 (daytime only)

### **Abita Springs Art and Farmers' Market**

22049 Main St., Abita Springs, LA 70420  
Sunday: 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM (rain or shine)  
[https://www.townofabitasprings.com/  
farmers-market](https://www.townofabitasprings.com/farmers-market)  
985.892.0711

### **Camellia City Farmer's Market**

Old Towne Slidell  
333 Erlanger St. (Corner of Third St.)  
Saturday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM (rain or shine)  
[https://www.facebook.com/  
CamelliaCityMarket/](https://www.facebook.com/CamelliaCityMarket/)  
985.640.7112



# Farmers Markets in the GNO Area

## Jefferson Parish

### Gretna Farmer's Market

739 Third Street, Gretna  
Every Saturday, except the Saturday of  
Gretna Fest, 8:30AM-12:30PM

### Nawlins Outdoor Market

1048 Scotsdale Dr., Harvey  
Every Saturday & Sunday, 9AM-5PM

### Old Metairie Farmer's Market

Bayou Metairie Park, Between Metairie Lawn  
Dr. and Labarre  
See calendar on their website for dates and  
times: [https://  
www.oldmetairiegardenclub.com/](https://www.oldmetairiegardenclub.com/)

### Westwego Shrimp Lot

100 Westbank Expressway at Louisiana St.,  
Westwego  
Daily Mon-Thurs 8AM-6PM, Fri 8AM-7PM,  
Sat 7AM-7PM, and Sun 7AM-6PM

### Lafreniere Park Market-Metairie

3000 Downs Blvd.  
Wednesdays, from 2-7PM

### Laughing Buddha Farm Hub-Clearview

4516 Clearview  
Store Pickups, preorder online at [https://  
www.laughingbuddhanursery.com/buy-  
groceries-1](https://www.laughingbuddhanursery.com/buy-groceries-1)

### Jean Lafitte Town Market-Lafitte

920 Jean Lafitte Blvd.  
Last Saturday of the month, 9AM-1PM

### Harahan Farmer's Market

6437 Jefferson Hwy., Harahan, LA  
Sundays, 10 Am—2PM

### Good Time Guild Farmer's Market at St. Martin's Episcopal Church- Metairie

Metairie Rd.  
1<sup>st</sup> Thursdays monthly, 2PM-7PM  
3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday monthly, 10AM-3PM

## St. Charles Parish

### German Coast Farmer's Market at Westbank Bridge Park

13825 River Road, Luling, LA  
Wednesdays, from 1-5PM

### German Coast Farmer's Market

160 West Campus Drive, Destrehan, LA  
Saturdays, from 8AM-Noon

## In the Kitchen with Austin

### Loquat Jam

I'm going out on a limb with this one...LOL. If you are looking for something to do with that yearly bumper crop of loquats, this is the recipe for you!

#### Ingredients:

8 cups loquats  
3 cups sugar

1 Tbs. lemon juice  
½ tsp. cardamom

#### Directions:

Wash, seed, and quarter loquats. Place fruit in pot and cover with sugar. Let sit for 30 minutes. Stir in lemon juice and cardamom. Simmer mixture over low heat for about 40 minutes, stirring frequently. Allow to cool for 30 minutes before blending to your preferred consistency.

Spoon jam into sterilized jars, leaving ¼" space between jam and lids. Seal fingertip tight and process in boiling water for 10 minutes.

Remove jars and allow to cool. When you hear the lids pop, you know they have sealed properly.

Jam may be stored for a year, if it lasts that long.



A jar of loquat jam

*Bon Manger!*

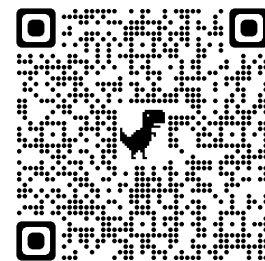
# Help Support Horticulture programs in the Greater New Orleans Area

Funding helps the LSU AgCenter agents provide help for:

- School and Community Gardens
- Educational Training Events
- Seed Libraries
- Demonstration Gardens
- Educational Scholarships
- Local Research
- and Much More



Visiting school children holding young chicks at AgMagic on the River



Scan the QR code above to go to the LSU Foundation donation webpage.

Or Click here: <https://securelb.imodules.com/s/1585/17/interior.aspx?sid=1585&gid=1&pgid=666&cid=1464&bledit=1&dids=5517>

## Local Independent Garden Centers

### Jefferson

Perino's Garden Center	3100 Veterans Memorial Blvd., Metairie, LA 70002	(504) 834-7888
Rose Garden Center	4005 Westbank Expressway, Marerro, LA 70072	(504) 341-5664
Rose Garden Center	5420 Lapalco Blvd., Marrero, LA 70072	(504) 347-8777
Banting's Nursery	3425 River Rd., Bridge City, LA 70094	(504) 436-4343
Jefferson Feed	4421 Jefferson Hwy., Jefferson, LA 70121	(504) 733-8572
Nine Mile Point Plant Nursery	2141 River Rd., Westwego, LA 70094	(504) 436-4915
Palm Garden Depot	351 Hickory Ave., Harahan, LA 70123	(504) 305-6170
Double M Feed Harahan	8400 Jefferson Hwy., Harahan, LA 70123	(504) 738-5007
Double M Feed Metairie	3212 W. Esplanade Ave., Metairie, LA 70002	(504) 835-9800
Double M Feed Terrytown	543 Holmes Blvd., Terrytown, LA 70056	(504) 361-4405
Sunrise Trading Co. Inc.	42 3 <sup>rd</sup> St., Kenner, LA 70062	(504) 469-0077
Laughing Buddha Garden Center	4516 Clearview Pkwy., Metairie, LA 70006	(504) 887-4336
Creative Gardens & Landscape	2309 Manhattan Blvd., Harvey, LA 70058	(504) 367-9099
Charvet's Garden Center	4511 Clearview Parkway, Metairie, LA 70006	(504) 888-7700
Plumeria Insanity Nursery	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Plumeria-Insanity-Nursery-102123651930419">https://www.facebook.com/Plumeria-Insanity-Nursery-102123651930419</a>	

### Soil Vendors

Schmelly's Dirt Farm	8301 Olive St., New Orleans, LA 70118	(504) 535-GROW
Laughing Buddha Garden Center	4516 Clearview Pkwy., Metairie, LA 70006	(504) 887-433
Reliable Soil	725 Reverand Richard Wilson Dr., Kenner, LA 70062	(504) 467-1078
Renaissance Gardens	9123 W. Judge Perez Dr., Chalmette, LA 70043	(504) 682-9911
Rock n' Soil NOLA	9119 Airline Hwy., New Orleans, LA 70118	(504) 488-0908
Grow Wiser Garden Supply	2109 Decatur St., New Orleans, LA 70116	(504) 644-4713

If you would like your licensed retail nursery listed, please email [gnogardening@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:gnogardening@agcenter.lsu.edu)



# Local Independent Garden Centers

## Orleans

Urban Roots	2375 Tchoupitoulas St., New Orleans, LA 70130	(504) 522-4949
The Plant Gallery	9401 Airline Hwy., New Orleans, LA 70118	(504) 488-8887
Harold's Plants	1135 Press St., New Orleans, LA 70117	(504) 947-7554
We Bite Rare and Unusual Plants	1225 Mandeville St., New Orleans, LA 70117	(504) 380-4628
Hot Plants	1715 Feliciana St., New Orleans, LA 70117	<a href="http://www.hotplantsnursery.com">www.hotplantsnursery.com</a>
Pelican Greenhouse Sales	2 Celebration Dr., New Orleans, LA 70124	(504) 483-9437
Grow Wiser Garden Supply	2109 Decatur St., New Orleans, LA 70116	(504) 644-4713
Jefferson Feed Mid-City	309 N. Carrollton Ave., New Orleans, LA 70119	(504) 488-8118
Jefferson Feed Uptown	6047 Magazine St., New Orleans, LA 70118	(504) 218-4220
Ninth Ward Nursery	2641 Deslonde St., New Orleans, LA 70117	(504) 296-8398
Crazy Plant Bae	800 N. Claiborne Ave., New Orleans LA 70119	(504) 327-7008
Canopy Plant Company	6030 St. Claude, New Orleans, LA 70117	(504) 381-4033
Too Tall Nursery	2817 N. Roman, New Orleans, LA 70117	<a href="mailto:tootallfarm@gmail.com">tootallfarm@gmail.com</a>
Nice Plants Good Pots	Pop Up and Online Sales	<a href="https://etsy.com/shop/NicePlantsGoodPots">Etsy.com/shop/NicePlantsGoodPots</a>
Plantery NOLA	Pop Up Locations	<a href="http://www.planterynola.com">www.planterynola.com</a>
Canopy Plant Co.	Pop Up and Online Sales	<a href="http://www.canopyplantco.com">www.canopyplantco.com</a>
New Orleans Succulent Boutique	Online Sales	<a href="https://sites.google.com/view/nolasucculentshop/home">https://sites.google.com/view/nolasucculentshop/home</a>
Root Life Mobile Plant Nursery	Pop Up Locations	<a href="https://rootlifeplantnursery.com/">https://rootlifeplantnursery.com/</a>
New Orleans Green LLC	Online Sales	<a href="http://www.neworleans-green.com">www.neworleans-green.com</a>

## Plaquemines

Southern Gateway Garden Center	107 Timber Ridge St., Belle Chasse, LA 70037	(504) 393-9300
Belle Danse Orchids	14079 Belle Chasse Hwy., Belle Chasse, LA 70037	(504) 419-5416

## St. Charles

Plant & Palm Tropical Outlet	10018 River Rd., St. Rose, LA 70087	(504) 468-7256
Martin's Nursery & Landscape	320 3 <sup>rd</sup> St., Luling, LA 70070	(985) 785-6165

## St. Bernard

Plant Pricks	Pop Up Locations	<a href="https://plantpricks.com/">https://plantpricks.com/</a>
--------------	------------------	---

## St. Tammany

The Boho Being	1184 Front St., Slidell, LA 70458	(985)707-1623
----------------	-----------------------------------	---------------

## April Checklist/Garden Tips

1. Constant watering rapidly leaches nutrient elements from the soils of container grown plants. To replace them it is best to use either soluble fertilizers or slow release fertilizers. Soluble fertilizers are easy to apply especially when you use a hose end applicator, but they must be applied every two weeks to maintain a constant supply of nutrients. Slow release fertilizers provide nutrients over several months from one application and so cut down on labor.
2. If crape myrtle aphids have been a problem on your trees in the past, treat this month with Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub Insect Control with Merit. This is applied as a drench to the base of the trees and is absorbed by the roots. The insecticide travels through the tree's circulatory system up into the foliage making it toxic to the aphids. One treatment protects the tree all summer, preventing aphids and the unsightly black sooty mold they cause
3. Spray crape myrtles with mancozeb , chlorothalonil or other labeled fungicides to control serious infections of powdery mildew. Powdery mildew appears as a white, powdery material on the leaves. Unlike many fungus diseases that are worse when weather is rainy, this disease is favored by humid, warm weather without rain. It is also occurs on a variety of other landscape plants such as dogwood, euonymus, gerbera daisy, rose and hydrangea, to name a few.
4. Oak trees infested with buck moth caterpillars should be sprayed before the caterpillars begin to migrate down the trunk. Contact local tree care companies to get your trees sprayed.

# April Checklist/Garden Tips

5. Aphids are a real problem on roses and many other plants in spring. Control with insecticidal soap, oil spray, Malathion or Acephate.
6. As much as is practical, continue to deadhead or remove faded, dead flowers from cool season bedding plants such as pansy, snapdragon and dianthus to promote extended flowering.
7. Keep your Louisiana irises well watered now while they flower and through mid summer. Remove any developing seed pods after flowering is finished.
8. Small birds called sapsuckers peck holes in neat rows. The holes just penetrate the bark and cause sap to bleed from them. Later, the sapsuckers return to feed on the sugary sap and any insects that may have been attracted to it. The damage is usually minor, and control is generally not necessary or practical.
9. Do not delay planting many of the warm season vegetables beyond the middle part of this month. Tomatoes, snap beans, lima beans and bell peppers all set fruit poorly when temperatures are hot. Squashes and corn are both far more likely to have major insect and disease problems when planted later.
10. Cool season herbs and those that thrive during mild weather, such as parsley, dill, tarragon, thyme, sage, cilantro, borage, lavender, chamomile, chervil and arugula, are at their peak this month. They will begin to decline toward late May and finish in early June, so harvest them generously over the next six to eight weeks. Extra harvest can be dried or frozen for use during the summer.
11. If you need to prune spring flowering shrubs such as spirea, viburnum, quince, azalea, camellia, jasmine and mock orange, you may do so as soon as they finish flowering. Remember to prune with a specific purpose in mind, and, unless you are trying to create a clipped formal hedge, try to preserve the natural shape of the shrub.
12. Watch for spider mite damage on many vegetables and ornamentals during dry weather. Very tiny, spider mites are not readily visible to the naked eye. Use a magnifying glass to inspect the plant and look for the tiny red or green eight legged mites. Infested plants get a dull, dusty, unhealthy look to the foliage which eventually turns brown. The spider mites are primarily under the leaves. Spray with a horticultural oil, insecticidal soap, Malathion or Kelthane.
13. It is very important to pull up and dispose of cool season annual weeds such as henbit, bedstraw and chickweed now. These weeds are currently setting thousands of seeds that will plague you next winter if not removed now.
14. Save some of your own seed from your cool season annuals to plant again in your garden this fall. This time of year collect seeds from sweet peas, violas, nicotiana, poppies, calendulas and cosmos. Make sure the seed pods are mature before harvesting.
15. Tomatoes are staked to keep the plants from sprawling on the ground where the fruit would be more likely to rot. Wait for the first cluster of flowers to appear, and place the stake on the opposite side of the plant's stem. All of the flower clusters will grow from the same side of the stem, and this will keep developing fruit from getting caught between the stake and the stem.
16. Azaleas with leaves that have tiny light spots all over them have been attacked by azalea lacebugs. Treat with Malathion or Acephate as needed through the summer and fall. Any damage that has already occurred will not go away, but treatment will prevent any more damage.
17. Pay careful attention to thoroughly watering newly planted trees, shrubs, bedding plants, ground covers and lawns during dry spring weather. Continue watering about twice a week until there is significant rainfall.
18. After planting bedding plants, water them in with a half- strength solution of your favorite water soluble fertilizer. This gets them off to a good start.



# Lawn Care Do's & Don't's

## Do:

1. This is the prime planting season for warm season grasses such as St. Augustine, centipede, Bermuda and zoysia.
2. Take a soil test.
3. Apply sulfur or lime to adjust the pH if necessary according to soil lab recommendations.
4. Make the first application of the recommended rate of nitrogen fertilizer for your turf variety if you have not done so. See the fertilizer recommendations on page 5 of the Louisiana Lawns Best Management Practices Guide. [Go to https://www.lsuagcenter.com/~media/system/7/c/8/e/7c8e4b17a12a51839443d9296bd03edc/pub2940louisianalawnsmarch2008.pdf to see the guide.](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/~media/system/7/c/8/e/7c8e4b17a12a51839443d9296bd03edc/pub2940louisianalawnsmarch2008.pdf) Do not apply phosphorous or potassium fertilizer unless recommended by a soil test.
5. Apply selective herbicides and sedge killers to kill off weeds growing in the lawn. You may also scout the lawn and remove weeds by hand. Make a game out of it with kids and grandkids.
6. One of the biggest hurdles to growing a good lawn is soil compaction. Continuous foot traffic, rainfall and the depletion of soil organic material has compressed the soil particles eliminating pore space. This pore space allows water and air to enter the soil and is critical to growing plants.  
Use a core aerator to open up channels in the soil. Spread a mix of fine compost and sand over the lawn in a 1/4 inch layer.
7. Dethatch the lawn if necessary.
8. Set your mower to the correct height for your turfgrass type. This is one of the most important things that you can do. See Table 1 on page 5 of the Louisiana Lawns Best Management Practices guide. The link may be found at point #4 above.
9. Continue to scout for disease and insect pests and apply treatment if necessary.
10. Find a list of informative videos on lawn care from the experts at the LSU AgCenter by going to <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2hr6qmeDGT5zaBnUbeeJ-tA3-nlbYPg>

## Do Not:

1. Do not cut more than 1/3 of the height at a single time.
2. Do not let winter weeds go to seed in the lawn. Use the bagging mower to collect clippings and dispose of them if seed heads are present.

**Your Local Extension Office is Here to Help**

**E-mail us at: [GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu)**



**Follow us on Facebook at GNOGardening**

**For more information visit [LSUAgCenter.com](http://LSUAgCenter.com)**

**Dr. Joe Willis**  
Orleans Parish  
Horticulture Agent  
[JWillis@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:JWillis@agcenter.lsu.edu)

**Anna Timmerman**  
Plaquemines & St. Bernard  
Parish Horticulture Agent  
[Timmerman@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:Timmerman@agcenter.lsu.edu)

**Chris Dunaway**  
Jefferson Parish  
Horticulture Agent  
[CDunaway@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:CDunaway@agcenter.lsu.edu)

**Will Afton**  
St. Tammany Parish  
Horticulture Agent  
[WAfton@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:WAfton@agcenter.lsu.edu)

To subscribe to this newsletter please send a request to [GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu).

The LSU AgCenter is a statewide campus of the LSU System and provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.