

THE HOME GARDENER

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SUMMER, 2010
June, July & August

The Home Gardener

LSU AgCenter
East Baton Rouge Extension Office
4560 Essen Lane
Baton Rouge LA 70809



FORCING MY HIBISCUS TO BLOOM
- GARDEN TIPS (p. 14)



LET'S GET CORNY (pp. 8- 11)

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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. Area home gardeners receive a variety of information on vegetable gardening, landscape ornamentals, fruit and nuts, turfgrasses, hummingbird and butterfly gardening, excerpts from the LMG curriculum materials, and a potpourri of entertaining and research-based information.

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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.



LOROPETALUM (CHINESE FRINGE-FLOWER) A TRUE BEAUTY, BUT WATCH OUT! LESSONS LEARNED

by: Peggy B. Scott, Louisiana Master Gardener™

About a decade or so ago, an eye-catching burgundy-leaved shrub called *Loropetalum Chinensis* hit the landscaping market. Immediately, it was a huge success and quickly added to Louisiana gardens. The burgundy foliage offered an interesting contrast to our many green plants and shrubs. Prior to the introduction of this burgundy variety, the white flowering shrub with green leaves had been largely ignored.

Commonly called the Chinese fringe flower, loropetalum is a member of the witch hazel family and was originally discovered in China, hence its common name. The word loropetalum comes from the Greek meaning strap, referencing the plant's narrow flowers.

Loropetalum is a true delight. It's a cold hardy evergreen shrub that can take partial shade, but prefers a sunny site. In spring, it flowers profusely with fuchsia fringe-like flowers set against the burgundy foliage. The fragrant flowers are strappy clusters somewhat resembling spider lilies. The shrub prefers neutral to slightly acidic moist soil, but is adaptable to most situations.

Growing easily in both commercial and residential landscapes *Loropetalum Chinensis* requires little maintenance. It is heat and drought tolerant with few pest problems, but welcomes mulch. The hardy shrub can be used as a foundation planting, hedge or groundcover.

Although a stunning addition to our gardens, the rapid adoption within our local landscapes has generated many painful lessons. Loropetalum resents being located in the wrong site, so it is critical that the gardener selects the correct variety or be prepared to pay the consequences. Certain varieties may grow to be 20 feet tall and equally wide. Some varieties grow only to a mature height of 4 feet, and others are as low as a groundcover. Plant the wrong variety and this loose, open growing shrub will surely disappoint, and may eat your house!

So carefully read the tags at the garden center and insure you purchase the right one for your landscape. Having learned the hard way, here are some guidelines for choosing the correct variety:

BURGANDY LEAF VARIETIES

Credit to Walter Reeves (retired University of Georgia) website "Gardening in Georgia" for some of the information on varieties.

Name	Size	Flower Color	Foliage Color
'Blush'	6 ft. tall/4 ft. wide	Rose-Pink	Rose-red turning green
'Burgundy'	6-10 ft. tall and wide	Pink	Reddish-purple turning greenish-purple turning to red
'Hines Purpleleaf'	6-8 ft. tall and wide Arching habit	Dark Rose	Rosy red turning to dark bronze
'Purple Majesty'	6-8 ft. tall/4-6 ft. wide/Rounded habit	Fuchsia	Dark burgundy turning purple
'Raspberry Fringe'	4-6 ft. tall and wide Compact	Pink	Bronze-red turning to olive-green
'Ruby'	3-5 ft. tall/4 ft. wide Compact/Dwarf	Fuchsia	Ruby red turning deep maroon
'Fire Dance'	3-6 ft. tall/2-3 ft. wide/Arching habit	Dark Pink	Ruby red turning reddish-purple
'Pipa's Red'	5 ft. tall and wide Upright/Fountain Shaped/Compact	Pink	Dark purple
'Zhuzhou Fuchsia'	10 ft. tall/4-6 ft. wide/Upright	Deep Pink	Blackish maroon
'Purple Pixie'	1-2 ft. tall/4-5 ft. wide/Groundcover	Pink	Deep purple
'Purple Diamond'	4-5 ft. tall and wide	Pink	Deep Burgandy

Purple Majesty



Pipa's Red



Purple Pixie



**Latest Addition to the Loropetalum Varieties
'Emerald Snow'**

Dwarf, white-fringe flowers with green foliage
Mature – 4 feet tall and wide; Tight layered growth habit



FULL MOON NAMES

Full Strawberry moon – June. Because the relatively short season for harvesting strawberries comes each year during the month of June . . . so the full Moon that occurs during that month was christened for the strawberry!

The Full Buck Moon – July. This is the month when the new antlers of buck deer push out of their foreheads in coatings of velvety fur. Another name for this month's Moon was the Full Hay Moon.

Full Red Moon - August . Known also as the Full Red Moon because, as the Moon rises, it appears reddish through any sultry haze. It was also called the Green Corn Moon or Grain Moon.



SUMMER IS A GOOD TIME FOR PLANNING

by: Vivian Adair Neely, Louisiana Master Gardener™

Summer is once again upon us, and chances are the heat is already beginning to make us think before acting in the garden.

Thinking before we act is an excellent place to start. Whether or not gardeners are advanced in years (as well as experience), we all need to consider what the heat can do to us personally. Good advice begins with hydration. Just as our treasured plants, we need to be sure we keep ourselves hydrated. Prepare in advance by hydrating, or drinking sufficient water, *before* going out into the heat; put containers of water in your work area so it is within easy access. Another idea is to have a battery-operated clock handy so you can keep an eye on the length of time you have spent in the heat. Many of us get so much pleasure from the gardens that we lose track of time. And take breaks to hydrate and catch your breath in a shady spot or indoors. A large fan used with an extension cord can provide moving air for some comfort. Be careful to unplug and move it before watering the area.

More and more attention is made by medical advisors to staying out of the sun or using hats and a good quality sunscreen. Take your doctor's advice on the sunscreen. Always wear a hat with a brim and

probably a light colored long sleeve shirt for more protection. The back of the neck needs to be covered as well.

Tetanus shots are recommended for every 10 years. If you do not remember when you last had your tetanus shot, it is better to error on the safe side. Or you can check with your doctor for records or recommendations.

Summer is an excellent time to do soil tests if they haven't been done in the past few years. Areas where failure has occurred may need a soil check. If you plan to install different kinds of plants than you have before, you might want to check the soil to see if it is appropriate for soil that you have. When you list the plants you want in that area, any needed changes will be recommended in the report.

Sanitation in the garden needs to continue even in the summer months. Keep the fallen leaves off the ground to avoid spread of disease or infestation. This is especially true for camellias, for instance. Clean up around lilies and iris. Keep mulch fresh and clean, adding mulch as needed. Weeding can be incorporated into this practice. This is a good time to inspect perennials and treat for any problem identified. Judicious pruning of dead limbs or diseased plant parts can be done now. Be sure to avoid putting any diseased plant material in the compost pile or bin. Remember, plant material left on the ground will "compost in place." Any diseased plant material will reintroduce the problem.

In the very hottest part of each day, stay out of your beloved garden. This time can be used fruitfully (pun intended) reviewing your accomplishments (and mistakes) and by reviewing your plans for your garden. Reviewing and planning go hand in hand so as you make, your determinations about what you have and what you want. Make notes for future use.

Look over your plants and beds. Are they scarcely planted, or perhaps too full? Are the plants healthy, in the right amount of sun or shade? Do they need to be thinned, or more plant material introduced? Is there contrast of size, color and form in your garden? Making notes of what needs you have will help in determining what new materials you will choose for fall planting. Always keep in mind the sun/shade available, contrast with existing plants, and the size in both height and width that your space will allow.

The answers to these questions, and perhaps others you think of, will help with the planning for fall planting. Also aiding in the planning will be looking at new plant materials. A good way to do that is to visit existing gardens. Websites are another good sources. Plant catalogs, nurseries and "field trips" with gardening friends can assist you with that. Make notes, with statements about the use of the plants you find, and how you can use them. Mention form, color and size of the plants in your notes.

* * * * *

THE NAMES FOR ATLANTIC STORMS FOR THE 2010 HURRICANE SEASON

Alex
Bonnie
Colin
Danielle
Earl
Fiona
Gaston
Hermine
Igor

Julia
Karl
Lisa
Matthew
Nicole
Otto
Paula
Richard
Shary

Tomas
Virginie
Walter

THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER



The Dog Days begin July 3, which actually has nothing to do with lazy dogs searching for cool spots to sleep. Through most of July, the Dog Star, *Sirius*, rises and falls with the sun. Ancient Egyptians thought that Sirius added to the sun's heat, making the Dog Days extra hot. Actually the heat is due to long days and the close proximity of the sun to the Earth. And as we know, July in Louisiana does get hot!



SUMMER SOLSTICE

June 21, 2010 is a very important day for our planet and its relationship with the sun, as it marks the beginning of summer in the northern hemisphere and concurrently heralds the beginning of winter in the southern hemisphere. This year, the solstice occurs and summer begins in the Northern Hemisphere on June 21, at 7:28 a.m. EDT.

“The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.”
~ *Dorothy Frances Gurney*, "Garden Thoughts"

IN THE YARD

There are a host of great heat-tolerant plants for colorful summer flowerbeds that can be planted. A few plants that grow less than two (2) feet are: Mexican heather, ornamental pepper, ornamental sweet potatoes, coleus, impatiens, periwinkle, begonia, salvia, caladium, and dwarf lantana.

Taller-growing plants, over 2 feet, which can be used are: butterfly weed, shrimp plant, cleome, pentas, hardy hibiscus and Mexican sunflower.

COMMON ALLERGY TRIGGERS IN LOUISIANA

Compiled by: Vivian Adair Neely, Louisiana Master Gardener™

Our Golden Rod , *Solidago altissima*, so prevalent in late summer and early fall, is often blamed for allergic reactions in our area. However, blooming at the same time as our showy indigenous Golden Rod is this other wild plant, the annual Ragweed, or *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*. An inconspicuous plant, it is the true cause of the allergies contributed to Golden Rod.

In addition to the common ragweed there is *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, or Giant Ragweed. Unlike the common ragweed it is very showy because can reach up to 15 feet in height and have a stalk thicker than a boom handle. Akin to the common ragweed, this giant has no other appreciable qualities. Together with the common ragweed, these two plants contribute to most of the “hay fever” experienced.

Golden Rod, on the other hand, presents only fields of beautiful color, and can even spiff up a larger garden site.

For more information, click on [Louisiana Allergen Index](#) | [National Map](#).

Common Name: Annual ragweed

Scientific Name: *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*



Photo Courtesy of Alan W. Meerow Ph.D.



Photo Courtesy of Alan W. Meerow Ph.D.



Giant Ragweed, to 15'



Photo Courtesy of Dr. John Meade,
Prof. Emeritus, Rutgers Cooperative Extension

Habitat:	Disturbed areas
Range:	Throughout United States and Canada; except Alaska, Yukon, Keewatin, Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands
Season:	Summer, fall
Type:	Annual herb
	Stems erect, hairy
Leaves:	Lower leaves opposite, upper leaves alternate, simple, 2-5" long, broadly oval or lance-shaped; deeply dissected and so appearing feather-like
Flowers:	Tiny heads of inconspicuous flowers grouped on spike-like stems, male and female flowers in separate heads on the same plant
Flowering Season:	Summer, fall
Fruits:	Small, ovoid, dry, beaked, fused to a single seed
Allergenic Components:	Pollen, foliage
Allergenic Properties:	Respiratory and dermatological
Comments:	The pollen of ragweed is a major contributor to hay fever allergies. Contact with the plant has also caused dermatitis and photo-allergic dermatitis.

“Forest decay, harvests perish, flowers vanish, but grass is immortal.”
John J. Ingalls, Speech in the United States Senate (1874)

LET'S GET CORNY

*by: Donna Montgomery, MS, Nutrition Specialist, Retired, LSU AgCenter,
Louisiana Master Gardener™*



From steamer to skillet, cornbread to chowder, fresh corn has sustained American cultures for centuries and still brings smiles when it's placed on the table.

Because of its high protein and carbohydrate content, corn has been an important nutritional resource for thousands of years. Corn can be traced back to Mexican or Central American cultures as early as 3400 B.C., and has become a staple among Native American civilizations throughout the Western Hemisphere. Today, corn has less starch and is sweeter. The sweetness accounts for its popularity. We consume about 25 pounds of corn per person annually, most of which is frozen or canned. A good thing about corn is that frozen and canned corn has about the same nutritional value as fresh corn. So, the many Americans who are not able to get fresh corn can still enjoy frozen or canned with nearly the same nutritional value as fresh corn.

Buy locally grown corn from a farmers' market or right off the truck when you can. That way you know it was just picked. As soon as corn is picked, the natural sugar in corn begins its gradual conversion to starch, which reduces the corn's natural sweetness. Corn is best cooked the day it is picked. You can store corn in the husks in the refrigerator for up to a day. Longer storage will affect quality, but not safety.

Selection

Sweet corn is a gift of summer. A fresh husk is the number one thing to look for in selecting corn. Fully ripe sweet corn has bright green, moist husks. The silk should be stiff, dark and moist. You should be able to feel individual kernels by pressing gently against the husk. Remember to buy only what you can use in a day or two.

Storage

If the corn is not cooked shortly after it is purchased, then it should be stored in refrigerator. Refrigeration helps the corn retain its sugar and vitamin C content. If you buy unhusked corn, keep it in its husk until you are ready to cook it. This will help the corn retain its moisture content. To fully enjoy the great taste of sweet corn, cook it as soon as possible. The sooner the better is a good general rule.

Cooking

Sweet summer corn requires minimal cooking. You can bring water to a boil, put the corn in, bring water back to a boil and corn is done in a few minutes. Serve it on the cob, or cut kernels off the cob to use in salads, soups, salsas or other dishes. I also like to cook corn on the cob in the microwave. I find the flavor is better than boiled corn. Here are a few recipes for you to try.

Quick and Easy Corn on Cob from the Microwave

Pull down husks while leaving them attached at ends of corn. Remove corn silk. Rinse. Pull husks back up to cover corn tightly. Microwave the ear for 3 minutes on high power. Pierce a kernel with fork to determine doneness. Re-secure husks and turn ear over if more cooking time is required. Cooking multiple ears of corn at the same time will require a longer cooking time. For husked corn, wrap ears in paper towel or microwave wrap and microwave until done. If cooking frozen corn on cob, check package for suggested cooking time.

Grilled Corn on Cob

Fresh corn with silks and husks (1 ear per person)
1 fresh lemon or lime, cut into wedges
Salt and pepper to taste (optional)

Leaving on husks and silks, soak corn for 30 minutes in enough water to cover. Remove corn from water and pull the husks away from the top of the cobs to drain any excess water. Remove corn silk. Pull husks back up to cover corn. Arrange corn on grill over hot coals and close lid of grill. Cook 25–30 minutes, turning frequently, until corn is tender. If husks are too hot to handle, let them cool before removing them. Squeeze fresh lemon juice over corn. Sprinkle with salt, pepper or chili powder.

Maque Choux (Smothered Corn)

This is a dish I like to prepare in quantity and freeze to have throughout the year. Shucking, cleaning and cutting corn from cob can be labor intensive when handling a large quantity. It is an act of love to prepare and serve this dish. It is sure to please everyone at your table. In some areas of Louisiana, people add crawfish tails or shrimp to maque choux. What a treat!

15 ears corn
1/2 cup butter
2 cups chopped onion
1 cup chopped bell pepper
2 large ripe tomatoes, cut up
1 1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon sugar
Black pepper, to taste

Shuck corn. Wash to remove silk. Using a vegetable brush is helpful with this task. With a sharp knife, cut kernels off cob and then scrape cob with the back of knife to remove the pulp and milk of corn.

Melt butter in pot. Add corn, onion, bell pepper, tomatoes and seasonings. Cook on medium high until it starts to bubble. Reduce heat to low and cook 45 minutes to 1 hour, stirring often to prevent sticking. **Serves 6.**

Corn Chowder

Try doubling this recipe and freezing half for later.

8 ears of corn
1/2 cup butter
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 tablespoons flour
3 cups chicken broth
2 medium red skin potatoes (about 3/4 pound), cut into 1/4-inch pieces
1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme
2 cups milk
1 cup half and half (*may use fat-free half and half or evaporated milk to cut calories*)
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

NOTE: One pound of crawfish tails, crabmeat or shrimp can be added to this recipe.

Shuck corn. Wash to remove silk. Using a vegetable brush is helpful with this task. Cut kernels from 4 ears of corn (*about 3 cups of kernels*); set aside. Working over a bowl, grate remaining 4 ears of corn on the large holes of a box grater. Scrape pulp from cobs (*about 3/4 cup*) using the dull side of a knife; set aside.

Melt butter in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add onion to drippings and cook for about 4 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until golden brown. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add flour and stir constantly for 2 minutes.

Whisk in chicken broth. Add potatoes, thyme, milk and grated corn and pulp. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for about 10 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Using a potato masher, press down on the potatoes 4 to 5 times. Add whole corn kernels and half and half. Cook 5 minutes or until corn is tender but still crunchy. Stir in salt and pepper. Ladle chowder into bowls. Top each serving with a little Cheddar cheese.

Corn Casserole

This is a great corn recipe using canned corn.

2 (16 1/2-ounce) cans yellow cream-style corn
2 cups (8-ounces) shredded Cheddar cheese
1 (4-ounce) can chopped green chilies, drained
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1 cup milk
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup yellow cornmeal
1/2 teaspoons garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Combine first 6 ingredients in a large bowl. Combine remaining ingredients; stir into corn mixture. Pour into a lightly greased 11- x 7- x 1 1/2-inch baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees F for 50 minutes or until a knife inserted in center comes out clean. **Serves 8.**

Enjoy!

* * * * *



The best time to harvest sweet corn is in early morning while the temperature is low. To determine when sweet corn is ready to harvest, first check the silks to see if they have begun to dry and turn brown. Then feel the ear. It should feel firm and full.

Peel back a shuck enough to puncture a few kernels on the ears with your thumbnail. When sweet corn is at its highest quality, the juice from the kernels will be milky white and runny. It's not ready when the juice is clear and watery. And sweet corn is over-mature and starchy when the juice inside the kernels is thick and dough-like.

Corn usually matures 18-24 days after the tassels appear or 15-20 days after the first silks appear. Watch the corn closely because the quality changes fast. Refrigerate or cook the ears immediately after harvesting.

For more information, the LSU AgCenter has an excellent brochure entitled "Sweet Corn in the Home Garden." Contact your local LSU AgCenter office or view it online at www.lsuagcenter.com

"Gardening is the slowest of the performing arts." - *Anonymous*

"Plans should be made on the ground to fit the place, and not the place made to suit some plan out of a book." - *William Robinson, THE GARDEN BEAUTIFUL (1907)*



LADYBUGS— Ladybugs have a large appetite; they can eat up to 40 aphids per hour. Other insects on the menu include mealy bugs, spider mites, scale, thrips and whiteflies. To attract ladybugs to your garden, some suggestions to plant are merigolds, butterfly weed, yarrow, roses, sunflowers, cosmos, dill, anise, fennel, alyssum, daisies and coreopsis (to name a few).

THOUGHTS FROM THE GARDEN



- ▶ Prune gardenias and hydrangeas by mid-July.
- ▶ Dig and divide Louisiana irises, Easter lilies and calla lilies in August.
- ▶ Deadhead faded flowers from blooming annuals and perennials.
- ▶ Trim plants in hanging baskets to stimulate new growth; consider rooting some of the cuttings.
- ▶ Apply a second round of fertilizer to lawns in July (optional).
- ▶ Spray roses with a fungicide before disease organisms attack, especially blackspot; repeat at 7- to 10-day intervals.
- ▶ Water regularly when weather is dry; two or three times a week for newly planted bedding plants; daily for container gardens.
- ▶ Apply sufficient mulch to conserve moisture and prevent weeds.
- ▶ Prune azaleas, if necessary, no later than mid-July.

“Gardeners have three weapons to use against summer droughts: mulches, watering pots, and prayers.” ~ *Tyler Whittle, Some Ancient Gentlemen* (1965)

“There is nothing like pruning a grapevine for training oneself to think like a plant.” ~ *Hugh Johnson, The Garden Magazine* (April, 1997)

FOLLOW THESE HINTS FOR SUCCESSFUL BUTTERFLY GARDENING

News Release Distributed 05/21/10

by: *LSU AgCenter Horticulturists [Dan Gill](#) and [Allen Owings](#)*

After a beautiful spring in Louisiana, butterfly gardening season is now upon us. As we near summer, we have more bedding plants and herbaceous perennials in bloom, and these naturally attract butterflies.

As interest increases in home gardening and landscape hobbies, people are more aware of natural habitats and environmental concerns. And with the need for more insect pollinators, gardeners are increasing their efforts to attract butterflies to their landscapes.

Many of the things we may already do in our home landscapes attract butterflies, but gardeners can provide a few things in a landscape to be successful.

Food, water, shelter and a place to reproduce are important. Shallow water sources, such as bird baths filled with moist pebbles or moist sand, are useful. Butterflies don't like standing water.

Butterflies love old vegetable and fruit debris. Because butterflies are cold blooded, you also need to provide sun-basking areas – such as stones or boards – for adult butterflies. Nectar and larva plants for butterflies can include annual bedding plants, herbaceous perennials, native trees, native shrubs, vines and even plants like our popular evergreen azaleas.

Examples of bedding plants for butterfly gardening include vinca, impatiens, petunias, sunflowers, zinnias and salvia. Good herbaceous perennials are pentas, rudbeckia, butterfly bushes, coreopsis, daylily, verbena, lantana, cassia, gaillardia, milkweed and cuphea.

Butterfly gardens also can include trees and shrubs. All species of citrus are great if you like an evergreen tree

in your butterfly garden. Oaks, ash, pawpaw, mayhaws, parsley hawthorn, elms and hackberries are good native deciduous trees. Evergreen shrubs for butterfly gardening include ligustrum and azaleas. Some plants attract several different butterflies while other plants only attract one specific type.

Common butterfly families found in Louisiana include milkweeds (monarchs), longwings (gulf fritillary), brushfoots (buckeye, viceroy and American painted lady), hackberry/goatweed (tawny emperor), skippers (dusty wings and skippers), swallowtails (tiger, zebra and eastern black), sulphurs/whites (sulphurs and Southern dog face), hairstreaks (gray and red banded), snouts/beaks (snouts) and satyrs (Carolina satyrs).

When you add nectar plants and larval plants to your landscape, you'll be amazed how many butterflies you can attract. Many butterfly gardening plants also will attract hummingbirds.

Visit LaHouse in Baton Rouge to see sustainable landscape practices in action. The home and landscape resource center is near the intersection of Burbank Drive and Nicholson Drive (Louisiana Highway 30) in Baton Rouge, across the street from the LSU baseball stadium. For more information, go to www.louisianahouse.org and www.lsuagcenter.com/lyn





FORCING MY HIBISCUS TO BLOOM!! GARDEN TIPS

by: Peggy B. Scott, Louisiana Master Gardener™

I've had one of the most beautiful hibiscus plants for over a decade. However, the first five years or so, it never bloomed! No matter how much care I gave this plant, it just would not reward me. Finally, I did a little research and quickly learned that hibiscus plants can be finicky and there are many reasons for their failure to flower.

My hibiscus needed two things. First, I relocated it to a full sun area. These plants do not prosper in a shady area. Next, I fertilized it weekly for six weeks with a balanced soluble fertilizer.. Unlike other hibiscus plants, my beauty demanded more fertilizer. After this course of fertilizer it blooms profusely for the rest of the warm season, but without it my plant will not put out even one bud.

In addition, I learned that hibiscus plants like to be a little root constrained. It appears that a hibiscus can get too comfortable with lots of space and proceeds to generate dark green foliage, instead of flowers.

So, if you are having trouble getting your hibiscus to bloom, visit the LSU Agricultural Service's website at www.lsuagcenter.com and read Publication #2662, "Tropical Hibiscus" by Allen Owings to learn more about growing these lovely tropical plants.

* * * * *

"What is one to say about June, the time of perfect young summer, the fulfillment of the promise of the earlier months, and with as yet no sign to remind one that its fresh young beauty will ever fade." ~ *Gertrude Jekyll*

DID YOUR PLANTS SURVIVE THE COLD OF THIS WINTER? IF SO, DID THEY SHOW AN EXCEPTIONAL HEAVY BLOOM?

The unusual weather we had this past winter in Louisiana took most of us by surprise. After we waited with unabated curiosity (and some concern) about how it had affected our garden plants, we were both dismayed and delighted. Dismay came with the losses the many “chilling hours” brought. Delight came with the heaviest blooming we have seen on some of our plants.

The reason for the heavy blooms in the spring came from the many hours of colder weather we have had- perhaps, ever. Some of our garden specimens need the cold to bring out their most blooms. Loropetalum bloomed profusely, because they had not bloomed during the winter. Trillium bloomed later, more profusely, and for a more extended time.

The cold itself did not cause the exceptional blooms; the number of chilling hours did.

* * * * *

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cubic Yard} &= \text{Length (in feet)} \\ &\times \text{Width (in feet)} \\ &\times \text{Depth (in inches) / 12 / 27} \end{aligned}$$

A 20 foot long by 4 foot wide garden border equals 80 square feet. If you would like to make the bed 8 inches deep, you will need 2 cubic yards of soil. If you would like it to be 12 inches deep, you'll need 3 cubic yards.



MASTER GARDENER MAIL BAG.

How beneficial are dragonflies?

Adult dragonflies consume mosquitoes, gnats and other flying insects. Their primary requirement is a source of still, non-chlorinated water.

Why do I see more ants after a rain?

The ants bring the brood to the surface to dry out and warm to an ideal temperature. After a rain, it is also a perfect time for new queens to dig in the softened soil to begin a new colony. This is the best time to treat the mounds as most of the colony is close to the surface.

Why do the ants sometimes move to a new location after mound treatment?

Improper application or poor timing may result in the treatment not reaching the entire colony. The remaining colony will move away from the poisoned area.

POINTS TO PONDER



When using pesticides (for plants or insects), fertilizer or other additives for the garden, never neglect to read the labels then always be sure to follow the labels. Not doing that can really cause a problem!!

When planning for fall planting keep in mind that installing many plants of a type or species can be an invitation for pest infestation because of the inviting 'hunting grounds.' Vary plants, even for a hedge, if you plant mass plantings. And allow spaces in between plants.

A well-maintained and open mulch between plants is a good way to show off prized specimens. It is easier to keep weeded and doesn't invite so many pests.

At the risk of being redundant, pay attention now to the amount of sun and shade available where you plan to plant. Plan to amend the soil as needed before fall planting.

Herbs and vegetables can be planted among the annual and perennial ornamentals. Onions for instance give a spiky form, some kale is wide spreading and showy. Ornamental edible mustard greens also do well and when in bloom have quite a different appearance. Form matters.

When plants of varying heights are to be installed there are things to consider. Will the taller plants cast shade on the smaller plants? This could be preferable or not. Will larger plants block the view of the shorter ones? Keep the placing of a bed and plants to be used, along with the sun and shade, in mind when making those decisions. In a larger garden where one can roam, placing a false fence to present a backdrop for taller plants might be done. Perhaps an old ladder or old wheel barrow would suffice.

In this climate plants need good aeration. Keeping space below plants by judicious pruning, keeping plants away from buildings, not planting too close together, help with aeration.

GARDEN GIFTS

Grace of a garden flows; calms and offers to all
serenity.

Secrets in a garden told to the tree or bloom, there
are safe.

Time in a garden nourishes, like a prayer,
the soul.

Children in a garden show glee seeing plants
come to life.

Small life in a garden: Toads, bugs, lizards, dragonflies
entertain.

Vivian A. Neely, Louisiana Master Gardener™

START FALL GARDEN IN AUGUST, SAYS HORTICULTURIST

Early August marks the beginning of Louisiana's fall gardening season. The adage that timing is everything applies to fall gardening in Louisiana, says LSU AgCenter horticulturist Dr. Tom Koske.

Many crops need to be planted at this time, and the fall window of planting is often critical, the horticulture expert says. There's something to do in each part of the month. July and early August, for example, are the times to transplant tomatoes and bell peppers. They're also good times to plant seeds for broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts. Chinese cabbage, collards, mustard, turnips, squash, cucumbers, pumpkins, lima beans and southern peas.

Planting okra at this time, however, is another story, Koske cautions. It might be productive only in southern parishes where the season is longer.

In mid- to late August, plants seeds for beets, collards, mustard, turnips, snap beans, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower. Late in the month, plant bulbs for green shallots and Irish potatoes. Also, in late August and early September, transplant broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage.

Mid – to late summer production ushers in special problems. The high heat often makes droughts critical. Try to keep soil moisture uniform. Mulches will help. Insects are a worse problem. This late in the season, we often find several generations of insect pests, each one larger than the previous. "That's a good reason not to try fall corn," the horticulturist says.

Fall gardeners must be more observant and prepared to battle insect pests. The good news is that fall is generally dry, and diseases could be less of a problem unless they are insect spread.

Other fall crops will need to be planted during the second part of the fall gardening season, which begins in September-early October. Seeding for these include carrots, endive, lettuce, onion, parsley, English peas, bulbing shallots and radish. Plant garlic in October.

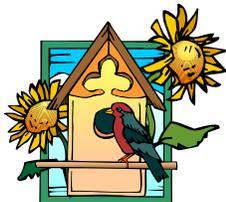
For additional information about preparing for fall gardens, contact an extension agent in your parish LSU AgCenter office. In addition, look for Gardening and Get it Growing links in the Feature section of the LSU AgCenter web site: www.lsuagcenter.com.

Source: Tom Koske (225) 578-2222 or tkoske@agcenter.lsu.edu



" Gardener's life
Is full of sweets and sour;
He gets the sunshine
When he needs the showers."
~ *Reginald Arkell*, GREEN FINGERS (1935)

SUMMER 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 on Monday afternoon from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. and 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.

Hilltop Arboretum

11855 Highland Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70810
225-767-6916
email: hilltop@lsu.edu
www.hilltop.lsu.edu



DON'T FORGET TROPICALS!

"If you still intend to add tropical plants to your landscape, do it now so they will have time to get established before fall. Tropicals love the heat and are not stressed out by it like so many other plants. Feel free to plant tropical hibiscus, cannas, gingers, elephant ears and other tropicals in the landscape now." – Daniel J. Gill, www.agcenter.lsu.edu; Ginger photo - *Curcuma cordata*. - Jeff S. Kuehny, www.agcenter.lsu.edu