

June in the

June in the Tallahassee Garden

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Zinnias can be seeded throughout the summer for continual color in sunny spots.

During the hot summer months gardeners spend a lot of time worrying about their plants' water needs. Grouping plants in the landscape according to their water requirements as well as their sun or shade requirements will help with the watering chores. Some plants like to dry out between watering and other like constant moisture. New plants need to be watered every other day in the absence of rain. Established plants in the landscape are more deeply rooted and require less frequent watering. Low-volume micro-irrigation systems, with flexible tubing that can be snaked through your plantings and irrigation heads that can be placed where you need them, are great for watering landscape plants. If the system has adjustable heads, it can be easily adjusted to apply the water only where it's needed and turn it off where it's not needed.

Every type of plant will benefit from being kept well mulched. Maintain mulch at a depth of two inches and keep it one to two inches away from the stem or trunk. Outdoor container plants should not be left to stand in water-filled saucers. Either remove the saucers or empty after every watering and every rain.

Annuals and Perennials: Fertilize annuals monthly with 15-0-15 fertilizer. Pinch out the tips of chrysanthemums to encourage a bushier growth habit and more blooms. Root the cuttings to plant out in the fall. Sow zinnias, marigolds and cosmos in full sun. Plant bulbs or tubers of blackberry lily, clivia, gloriosa lily, achimenes, crinum lilies, iris and gladioli. Fertilize caladiums, amaryllis, crinum lilies, Easter lilies and other bulbs which have recently finished blooming but don't cut the foliage until it is completely dead. Remove dead flowers on perennials, cutting back to vigorous growth.

Fruit Trees: Keep figs well mulched and watered to prevent fruit drop. After harvest, lightly fertilize blueberries with an azalea-camellia fertilizer, keeping the fertilizer six inches away from the trunk. Fertilize blackberries and figs, and fertilize citrus if you did not do so in May. Prune out dead or declining citrus limbs back into healthy wood.

Shrubs and Trees: Keep hedges pruned as needed. Now is the time to plant palms. Palms which grow well in North Florida include Chinese fan-palm, dwarf palmetto, European fan-palm, needle palm, windmill palm, and saw palmetto. Fertilize crape myrtle this month. When using ultra-fine horticulture oil to control aphids, scale, mites and whiteflies, be sure to carefully follow label directions. The oil must dry on the leaves before the sun shines on them to avoid burning the foliage.

Lawn care: Inspect your lawn frequently so that problems can be identified and managed early. Spittlebugs and chinch bugs are common problems in midsummer. Remember that lawns maintained with appropriate

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irrigation, fertilization, and mowing practices are more resistant to pests than those which are not properly maintained. Centipede grass is susceptible to ring nematodes. If your centipede has been declining over the last few years and you suspect nematode damage contact your UF-IFAS Extension Office for assistance in submitting a soil sample for nematode analysis. The easiest way to remedy the ring nematode problem is by planting St. Augustinegrass plugs into the centipede. St. Augustine is not susceptible to ring nematodes. So that area of your lawn can gradually be converted to St. Augustinegrass.

Vegetables and Herbs: Plant sweet potatoes, pole beans, southern peas, butter beans, lima beans, peanuts, hot peppers, and pumpkins. Fertilize vegetables monthly or, if using slow release fertilizer, apply as often as directed. Cut back overgrown herbs. Most herbs will respond with vigorous new growth.

Roses: Fertilize roses monthly. If you are using fungicide on a regular basis try to alternate the type you use to avoid creating resistance. Be on the look out for aphids, thrips and spider mites and control promptly.

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