

August in the Tallahassee Garden
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*Photo to be credited to David W. Marshall, UF-IFAS Leon County Extension:
Now is the time to plant flowering plants, such as Plectranthus 'Mona Lavender', that will stand up to the heat and humidity of the north Florida summer.*

High heat and humidity can really stress people and plants too. Nearly every gardening chore is better done in the early morning hours while plants are still full of moisture from the night before and haven't yet started to wilt. Apply pesticides and fungicides in the early morning to avoid burning the foliage. Irrigate early to avoid loss to evaporation.

Flowers cut early in the morning will last longer. Take cuttings for rooting early in the day. The exception is mowing. Mow in the late afternoon or early evening after the grass has dried.

Shrubs and Trees: Heavy rains, high winds and hurricanes can turn a weak or damaged tree into a big liability. Look around your property and call an arborist to advise you if you find trees which may be in trouble. Exposed tree roots can stress and weaken trees. This is especially true if the roots are damaged by mowing or other activities under the tree. Cover exposed roots with mulch. Start out with a one or two inch layer and add more over time as the mulch breaks down. If aphids are a problem on gardenias or crape myrtles control with insecticidal soap.

Flowers: Make new planting of flowering plants such as lantana, coleus, melampodium, torenia, angelonia, pentas, salvia, globe amaranth, *Plectranthus 'Mona Lavender'*, or *Zinnia augustifolia*. Tired looking annuals can be cut back at least half-way to the ground, especially impatiens and begonias. Also cut back perennials such as salvias. Divide daylilies, amaryllis and crinum if they need it. Purchase spring-flowering bulbs from garden centers or from catalogs as soon as they become available and store according to recommendations until planting time.

Lawn care: After all the rain we've had in June and July your St. Augustine lawn may need a second application of fertilizer. Use a high-potassium fertilizer such as 15-0-15. If you have an established centipede lawn, it probably needs only one fertilization a year, in April. Keep an eye out for spittlebugs in centipede

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lawns. Look for the typical yellow or red-striped leaf blades which then turn brown. If you have high populations you will need to apply an insecticide for control. Be sure to use an insecticide such as Orthene or Bayer Advanced Garden Power Force Multi-Insect Killer that has directions for use on lawns. Follow the directions carefully.

Vegetables and Herbs: Begin preparing for fall planting. During the first half of August prepare the garden. Remove old plant material, pull back the mulch, add compost, chopped leaves or other organic material and dig it into the soil. Destroy diseased or infested plant material. Early in the month plant green beans, summer squash and cucumbers; transplant tomato, pepper and eggplant seedlings. In late August plant broccoli, collards, and turnips. Wait until a little later in September to plant cabbage, mustard, and leeks.

Ask a Master Gardener: Master Gardener Volunteers answer gardening questions week-days from 9-4:30 at the University of Florida/IFAS Leon County Extension Office, (850) 487-3004. For easy-to-access gardening information for our area, visit the UF-IFAS Extension website for Leon County at <http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Q: How can I keep my annuals, such as cosmos, from re-seeding so profusely?

A: Jeff Norcini, Professor of Environmental Horticulture, University of Florida/IFAS, recommends using large nugget pine bark mulch to discourage re-seeding.

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