

## October in the Tallahassee Garden



*Come see flowers such as these torenias at the Saturday, October 18 Horticulture Extravaganza at the Leon County Agriculture Center. Photo by David W. Marshall, UF-IFAS Leon County Extension.*

*Katherine LaRosa, the author, is a Master Gardener Volunteer with the University of Florida IFAS Extension in Leon County .*

September was very dry and October will likely be the same unless a tropical system pays us a visit. If we have periods of drought during the fall and winter you can easily lose new plants that aren't kept well watered. As leaves and pine needles fall gather them and use for mulch which will help keep the soil moist.

Shrubs and Trees: Fall is a great time to plant new trees and shrubs. Consider adding native tree species to your landscape. Shumard oak, southern magnolia, spruce pine, fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) and bald cypress all thrive in our area. For a list of other native trees for north Florida see the University of Florida/IFAS publication, "Native Trees for North Florida " by Alan W. Meerow and Jeffrey G. Norcini at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP007>

Annuals and Perennials: Perennials to plant now include rudbeckia, ruellia, obedient plant, phlox, yarrow, Philippine violet, firespike, lion's ear, cigar flower, Mexican bush sage, pineapple sage, *Salvia guaranitica*, and chrysanthemum. In late October or November sow California poppy, oriental poppy, larkspur, sweet alyssum, calendula, sweet peas and wildflowers. As the weather cools begin planting cool season bedding plants. Plant petunias, dianthus, pansies, snapdragons, and flowering kale and cabbage. Avoid planting pansies while the weather is still very warm. Be careful when fertilizing flowering kale and cabbage. Excess nitrogen will make them much more susceptible to cold damage.

Bulbs, Corms and Tubers: When selecting daffodils and narcissus choose those which perform well in our area. Recommended daffodils for repeat bloom are Fortune, Carlton , Ice Follies, February Gold, and Silver Chimes. Plant them in October or November. They require good drainage. It is best to purchase tulip and Dutch hyacinth bulbs by mid to late October. After purchasing refrigerate for six weeks at forty degrees and plant by mid December. If you want to save caladiums for next year dig up the bulbs (corms) as the foliage begins to fade and allow the foliage to dry (do not cut off). Store in a cool location and replant next April.

## October in the

**Vegetables and Herbs:** Cool season vegetables to plant now include beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, Chinese cabbage, collards, kohlrabi, mustard, bulbing onions, radishes, spinach, Swiss chard, turnips and strawberries. If you plant any of the cole crops like cabbage, collards and broccoli, watch for cabbage loopers or cabbage worms. These are those green worms that chew holes all over the leaves. Apply *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) to control them. Bt controls only caterpillars and is environmentally safe. Plant perennial herbs such as parsley, sage, thyme, and rosemary.

**Lawn care:** If you plan to over-seed your lawn with annual rye grass do so this month and keep the seed well watered until germination. However, you may want to avoid over-seeding your lawn if it is in declining or poor condition since this process can slow spring growth of the underlying lawn and create conditions favorable for disease.

**Container Plants:** Some container plants can over-winter outside while others will need some cold protection. Slow down on fertilizer to prepare the plants for the dormant season. Gradually move them to shadier locations if they will be moving inside for the winter.

**Horticulture Extravaganza:** On Saturday, October 18, from 10 to 4, Master Gardeners and the Tallahassee Garden Club will co-host a Horticulture Extravaganza, featuring garden tours, demonstrations, talks on plants, and much more. It will be at the Leon County Agriculture Center at 615 Paul Russell Road . The public is encouraged to participate. Visit the [HortExtrav information page](#) for more details.



*Magilla Perilla is another plant you'll see at the Horticulture Extravaganza on Saturday, October 18. Photo by David W. Marshall.*

**Return to [Monthly & Seasonal Articles](#).**