

June in the Tallahassee Garden

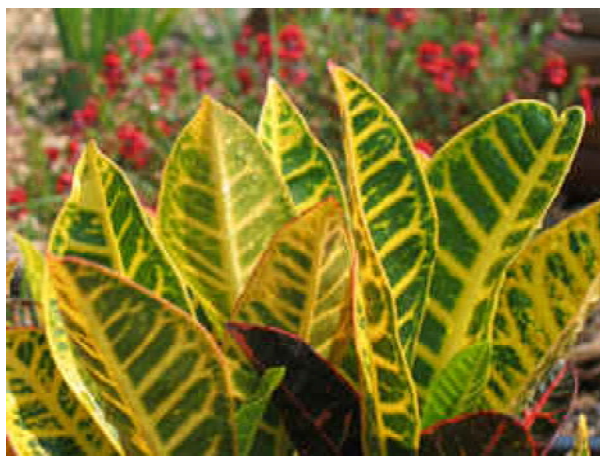


Photo by David W. Marshall: Use crotons for colorful foliage in sunny areas. *Cuphea llavea* 'Flamenco Tango' (in the background) provides striking red and purple flowers that stand up to the summer heat well.

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June 1, 2006

June first, as we all know, marks the beginning of hurricane season. It's also the beginning of a long stretch of hot, muggy

weather. With these factors in mind, make a careful survey of your landscape. Prepare for the possibility of tropical storms by removing dead limbs or trees that might threaten your structures during periods of high winds. Store unneeded loose items that might become projectiles. Also prepare for the certainty of an increase in the mosquito population. Empty and get rid of all sources of standing water where mosquitoes might breed. Change the water in bird baths every few days.

Trees and Shrubs: Feed young trees and shrubs very lightly with an application of a complete fertilizer, such as 15-0-15 or 16-4-8 . It's a good time to plant palms. They establish roots well in hot, muggy weather. For summer color plant hydrangeas, planting where they will receive morning sun and afternoon shade. Most hydrangeas flower on old wood. Prune them as soon as they finish flowering so that the buds can form for next year. Propagate azaleas, loropetalum, viburnum and other woody shrubs by rooting tip cuttings. For details on how to do this see an article written by Daniel Mullins, Extension Horticulture Agent for the University of Florida IFAS Extension in Santa Rosa County , which can be found at http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/plant_rooting_method.htm.

Lawn Care: Don't fertilize your lawn unless you just planted it from plugs and you're trying to get the plugs to spread. Mow your lawn at least weekly. Set the lawn mower on a high setting. Mowing too low is a major stressor for your lawn. Sharpen the mower blade at least monthly. If your lawn is yellowish, iron can be applied to green it up without stimulating excessive new growth. Use ferrous sulfate at a rate of two ounces in three to five gallons of water per one thousand square feet of lawn.

Flowers: Plant heat and humidity tolerant annuals and perennials. For areas that receive afternoon shade, use coleus, impatiens, caladiums, jacobinia, shrimp plant, brugmansia (Angel's trumpet), and Summer Wave torenia. For areas of full sun, plant *Cuphea llavea* 'Flamenco Tango', pentas, melampodium, Magilla Perilla, croton, Tropicana canna, bush allamanda, tangerine bulbine, 'Anne Marie' lantana, portulaca, salvia, vinca,

June in the

gaillardia, firebush, and zinnia. Fertilize amaryllis, crinum lilies, Easter lilies and other bulbs which have recently finished blooming but don't cut the foliage until it is completely dead. Plant bulbs, tubers, or plants of blackberry lily, clivia, gloriosa lily, achimenes, crinums, iris and gladiolus. Pinch back fall bloomers like Mexican bush sage to encourage compactness and more flowers.

Vegetables and Herbs: Plant sweet potatoes, okra, pole beans, southern peas, butter beans, lima beans, peanuts, hot peppers, and pumpkins. Propagate tomatoes to be planted in late July or August by rooting tip cuttings. Fertilize vegetables monthly or, if using slow release fertilizer, apply as often as directed. Harvest vegetables often to encourage continued production. Cut back overgrown herbs to stimulate vigorous new growth.

Fruit: Fertilize established figs and keep them well mulched and watered. Lightly fertilize blueberries after harvest with an azalea-camellia fertilizer, scattering the fertilizer well under the entire branch spread of the plants. Prune out old unproductive blueberry canes. Fertilize blackberries and after harvest remove the canes which fruited this year. Prune the new canes to encourage side branching.

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