

Dates and Events (events are free unless noted)

Tues., Dec. 12, 7pm -- Wild Nite – “Right Whales”, Katie Jackson, Florida Wildlife Commission, Peck Center, 516 S. 10th St., Fernandina.

Not many extension events in December, but enough holiday events to keep you in the Christmas spirit all month!

Sat., Dec. 2 – 12-8 pm – Christmas in the Park, Gilman Park. Fun for the kids!

Every Friday in December -- Brunch and mansion tours, RJ Reynolds Mansion State Park, Sapelo Island. \$15 ferry, \$35 brunch/tour. Call 912-485-2299 for information and reservations. Be at ferry (8 miles past Darien) at 8 am.

Sat. Dec. 9 – St. Marys Christmas Tour of homes, **5:30pm-9pm**. Advance \$15, day of, \$20. Call 912-882-4000 for more information or get tickets at Welcome Center across from 1st Presbyterian.

Tues. Dec. 12 – Live Nativity at Orange Hall, every half hour from **6:15-7:45pm**.

Announcements

Tues., Dec. 5 – 9am – Meet at the old Kmart (Publix shopping center) to carpool to Jekyll Island greenhouse. Cash or check only. We will go for lunch afterwards at Tortuga Jack’s. (Lunch is optional, but match up with your carpool!) We will leave promptly at 9:15 am.

Our Garden Club Christmas lunch is Tuesday, December 12 at the Jekyll Island Club. If you have signed up, meet at the old K mart at **10:15** to carpool (at the end of the Publix shopping center). We will leave promptly at 10:30. Lunch begins at 11:30. You can bring any fig leaf items to donate with you.

Garden to-dos for December

Late December is the time to transplant plants if the weather has turned cold. Keep them well watered for the next few months. If it is still warm, wait till they go dormant before moving them. Annuals for winter are carnations, digitalis, pansies, petunias, dianthus, and snapdragons. Plant vegetables such as broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, green peas, onions, and radishes. Water plants during dry spells, especially if it is cold and windy. Purchase frost blankets or round up the old sheets and be prepared to mulch and cover tender plants for winter protection. After the holidays, plant poinsettias outside, but protect from freezing.

The Garden Maven’s Advice to the “Floralorn”

Dear Garden Maven,

My live oak has lots of vines climbing all over it. Will this hurt the tree and what can I do about it?

I talk to the trees, but they haven’t answered back yet

Dear Talk,

In general, it is not a good idea to let vines climb your trees. They can cover bark problems and encourage insects. When they climb, they can take over the foliage and block the light from the tree’s own leaves. Eventually the tree can die. The weight of the vines can weaken the branches and make wind damage more likely. Weakened branches are more susceptible to pests and diseases. Ivy is bad for trees. The little rootlets get under the bark and may damage it if you pull it down. Wisteria is the worst because it will circle and choke the tree besides taking over with its large leaves. Vines that grow straight up are not as bad, but still not good. If you like the look of vines, you can let some that grow straight up (even ivy) grow up a little ways. Cut back at least once a year, maybe twice to keep them from smothering the tree’s leaves.

To kill vines, cut them off at the base. Either keep cutting them back until they surrender and die or paint the vine stub after cutting with straight roundup. You may need to do this more than once. Or cut the vine at about a foot off the ground, let the top die, then pull down from the tree. Be careful not to cut into the bark. If it looks like you are going to do a lot of damage to the bark by pulling it down, cut at the base and try again in a couple of months. Where is Tarzan when you need him?

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month: My Queens Tears is starting to bloom for the holidays on my porch.