



Newsletter
June 2023



Dates and Events

Camden County Extension events—registration link for online events on Camden County UGA extension website.

Thurs., July 6 – noon -1pm. “Understanding Jellyfish”

Thurs. August 10 – noon-1pm. “Fall Gardening”

Nassau County Extension events – register a <https://bit.ly/NassauHorticulture> 85831 Miner Rd., Yulee

Weds. June 14, 10-11 am. “Gardening with Herbs”. Free online or \$10 in person.

Weds. July 12, 10-11 am. “Slugs, Bugs and other Thugs”. Online or in person.

Sat. June 10, 9am-noon. “New Homeowners Landscape Design”. \$25. Online or in person.

Announcements

Thanks to all who helped plant and prune at the Senior Care Center, and to everyone who helped prune the azaleas at Orange Hall. Lots of helping hands made lighter work. At Orange Hall we had 8 members of the public join us to prune. Also, thank you to all who provided flowers for National Garden Week.

Garden to-dos for June

Plant melampodium, pentas, portulaca, purslane, salvia, zinnia, lantana, buddleia, daylily, verbena, coneflower, plumbago, sun coleus. Plant bulbs like agapanthus, blackberry lily, clivia, achimenes, crinum, iris. Plant eggplant, okra, southern peas, and sweet potatoes.

Watch for pests like grasshoppers or slugs who chew holes in the plants, aphids, other pests. Laugh maniacally as you handpick and execute the giant grasshoppers. If ants are running wild on your trees or shrubs, they may be farming aphids. Malathion will take care of both the farmers and the livestock. Some things like gingers, clerodendrum, and caladiums have still not come back. Keep watching for the latecomers. Deadhead, deadhead, deadhead. Fertilize most plants monthly. Keep mulch at least 1-2 inches away from the crowns of plants. It should be 2 inches deep, no more.

The Garden Maven’s Advice to the “Floralorn”

Here is the condensed version of “How to Love Your Azaleas so they Love You Back”

If ever there was a plant with “joie de vivre” it would have to be azaleas. They come bursting into bloom each spring with such joy it is infectious. We are blessed to live in a climate which is almost perfect for azaleas. They are easy to grow and not fussy or high maintenance. So how do we take care of these easygoing plants so they give us their best bloom?

Plant in the right place. If you are planting an indica azalea (like Formosa), don’t put it under your window. It wants to be 5 or 6 feet tall, so you will be cutting it back forever. **Pay attention to the predicted size and plant in a location where you aren’t going to have to move it.** They can be moved (cut back severely when moving mature bushes) but will take a couple of seasons to recover. Azaleas like to be planted in partial shade (morning sun/afternoon shade is best).

Fertilize at the correct time. Of course, you can get by without fertilizing, but if you fertilize, they will thank you for it. Fertilize once in early spring when new growth starts. Don’t fertilize after July.

Prune at the right time. After blooming and before the middle of July.

Prune, don’t shear. No hedge trimmers. Shearing causes the inside of the bush to be a mass of interlocking twigs. After shearing (usually at the same place on the bush) for a few years you have a couple of inches of leaves surrounding a twiggy mess inside the bush. Eventually the bush dies. **A bird should be able to fly in and out of the bush.**

Don’t torture the bushes into geometrical shapes. Don’t flat top them. Bushes want to look naturally “**roundy moundy**”. If you have planted the bushes in the right place, you can prune just to shape them, not to keep at a certain size. Usually this involves cutting out the “cowlicks”, the longer bare stems with just a few leaves at the end. **Cut these branches down as far as possible. Often this is all the pruning you need to do.** Of course, cut out dead, diseased or damaged branches. And the fourth and fifth D’s – if the branch just looks dumb and detracts rather than adding.

Plant Hero of the Month: Passionflower is huge and blooming! Caladiums are finally coming back.