



Newsletter
May 2023



Dates and Events (events are free unless noted)

Wild Nite – 7 pm Tuesday, May 9. *Right Whale Update.* 516 S. 10th St., Fernandina.

Weds. May 10, 10-11 am. *Florida Friendly Flowers.* Nassau County Extension, 85831 Miner Rd., Yulee. Free in person (\$5 for plant) or zoom. Register for zoom on website.

Sat. May 13, 9-noon. *Master Gardener Plant Sale.* 85831 Miner Rd., Yulee

Coastal Wildscapes events: Register on their website:

Weds. May 24. 10am-11:30 am. *Wildlife Care and Protection in your Backyard.* \$10 non member.

Sat. June 3, 8:30 am – 12:30 pm. *Cathead Creek Paddle.* “Moderately Strenuous”! \$70 non member includes kayak rental.

Camden County extension events: Virtual lunch and learn, register on their website

Thurs. May 4, 12-1pm. *Basic Rose Culture.*

Thurs. June 1, 12-1pm. *What makes a Weed?*

Garden to-dos for May

If your plants are growing too slowly and have yellow leaves, feed them. If they have too much growth and a lack of flowers, skip a feeding. Fertilize palms. Plant heat loving plants like celosia, coleus, impatiens, kalanchoe, marigolds, salvia, pentas, verbena, zinnias, coreopsis, crossandra, exacum, gaillardia, gazania, hollyhocks, nicotiana, eggplant, okra, Southern peas, herbs. You have missed the boat for tomatoes (unless you buy a big one), wait till August to plant them. Stake flowers as needed, keep them deadheaded and trimmed. Watch for pests. Keep watching for late emerging plants like gingers and caladiums. Be ruthless with things that have taken over (like ferns, assorted wandering jews, spiderwort, chenille plant, cosmos). If you haven't cut back your plumbago or roses yet, it is time to do it. Prune azaleas until the middle of July.

The Garden Maven's Advice to the "Floralorn"

Dear Garden Maven,

I am thinking of getting rock mulch for my yard. What are the pros and cons?

I wanna Rock and Roll

Dear Rock,

Pros for rocks: Rock costs less, since it doesn't need to be replaced as often as organic mulch. It is good for areas with poor drainage. It stays put and is fire proof and wind resistant. It does a pretty good job of keeping weeds out, especially if a weed barrier is installed underneath it. It is good for cactus gardens, since it helps replicate desert conditions. It is okay to use for established trees and shrubs with deep roots.

Cons: It has absolutely no benefit for the plants. It raises the soil temperature, since the rocks absorb heat. This can be a problem in the summer or for plants with shallow roots, like vegetables, annual flowers, and fruit trees. Rocks can make the soil alkaline and they provide nooks for weeds to grow in. They need to be washed a couple of times a year to prevent soil from collecting. Also if there is a weed barrier and weeds get through it between the rocks and the weed barrier it will be a nightmare to pull them out. Biggest reason not to install rock mulch – if you don't like it and want to get rid of it, prepare for a long tedious removal!

Organic mulch improves your soil as it breaks down, keeps the soil temperature moderated, and slows evaporation of water. If you have live oak trees or pine trees, it is free. To my mind, it is a much better alternative than rock.

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month: Gotta love that Jasmine, the whole town smells like it. And the Ligustrum in bloom always smells like spring to me.