The Right Plant for the Right Place
By Jim Davis, FYN Agent

Before you go out and buy plants for your landscape this year, make sure you follow one important concept. This concept is Right Plant, Right Place. This is matching the plants to your site’s conditions. Proper planning and plant selection will help you save money, energy, water and help avoid future problems. Matching the plant to the site’s condition includes several factors, going beyond whether the plant requires full sun or shade. First, determine the pH of your landscape. Certain plants require different alkalinity requirements. For example, azaleas and hibiscus prefer acidic soil. This is soil with a pH of 6.0 – 6.9. Alkaline soils have a pH of 7.1 and higher. Avoid planting acid loving plants near the foundation of your house. Concrete and other materials that make up the foundation contain limestone that can leach into the soil raising the pH. Acidic plants growing in soils that are too alkaline will show signs of nutrient deficiency. A simple pH test can be done at your local county extension office. The first thing to consider before planting is whether the site is a wet or dry site. Drought tolerant plants such as bougainvillea and plum-bago do not thrive in areas with high moisture. Drought tolerant plants planted in a wet site can be vulnerable to root diseases, as well as other pests. In addition, plants suited for wet sites will perform poorly in high and dry areas that drain quickly. Know what type of soil is in your landscape. Soils can range from sandy to clay. Sandy soils will drain faster, but will have a lower water holding capacity. Clayey soils will have more water holding capacity, but will have very poor drainage.

After you have determined site analysis, plant placement should be considered next. First, avoid planting plants in front of sprinkler heads. Cont.
Keeping Your Plants Healthy and Beautiful - Cleanliness in the Garden

We all know that plants are much like people in the sense that we both need nutrients, water, and regular check ups. I’m not suggesting bringing your plant to your doctor’s office for a yearly physical but plants are just as susceptible to bacterial, viral, and fungal problems. Most of the time, we unknowingly are the culprits. It is suggested that after using garden tools that they are sanitized and that you are sanitized as well. A ten or twenty percent solution of bleach water will act as a good cleaner for both your tools and the soles of your shoes. However, bleach can become very corrosive and there are products on the market which would accomplish the same goals. Make sure that you wash your hands; an alcohol sanitizer is recommended for this.

For most of us our plants are irreplaceable and therefore we should treat them that way. If you know that a plant is suffering due to fungus, bacteria, or a virus, move it away from your other plants as soon as possible. You may want to quarantine any plants that were near the infected plant. Just like the flu in humans, it doesn’t take much for a plant to get sick.

For more information on keeping your plants happy and healthy please read “Professional Disease Management Guide for Ornamental Plants,” written by S. D. Bledsoe, P. F. Harmon, and R. J. McGovern. This document is copyrighted by the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) for the people of the State of Florida.

Take Care of Your Tools and they Will Take Care of You

Quite often it is much more convenient to drive to the local garden or hardware store to buy a new garden tool than it is to maintain them. A well crafted tool is meant to last many years as opposed to a few seasons. Here we will give you some ideas on how to maintain your treasured tools.

Most people would not cut their grass knowingly with a dull blade. Our grass would look like green hair with split ends. Always make sure that any cutting tools are sharpened on a regular basis. After each use make sure that you clean the tools you may have used. After you have rinsed your tools thoroughly, you may choose to use an oil specifically for tools, wipe down all metallic parts of the tool to prevent rust. Wipe off an excess oil to keep the tool from gumming up.

Inspect any tools like shovels and rakes and sand down the wooden handles as needed. To avoid mold or mildew from forming on the newly sanded areas; touch up that area with a water sealing paint. Make sure that any of the hardware holding the tool head to the wooden handle is still intact. Please make sure that all hardware is in good condition and is safe.

Take that quiet weekend afternoon and start preparing your tools for a bountiful season. Please make sure that you follow all directions that may come with your tools or cleaning materials. Have a great growing season!

For more information on tools and their care please check out “Selecting the Correct Garden Tool for the Job!” by Sherry Rindels, Department of Horticulture, Iowa State University.
Most of us have different personality types, such as Type A and Type B personality. Could there be a Type G personality? Yes, a Type G personality; G for gardeners. Originally doctors came up with the Type A and Type B personalities to see which patients were more prone to heart attacks or heart disease.

I’m going to assume that there is no scientific basis for the personality type of a gardener (Type G). That made me really think about who we really are. Master Gardeners attend the training to become a Master Gardener which might indicate that we are knowledge driven. It could also mean that those of us that are not Florida natives wanted to learn how to grow things in this climate. There are also those people who like to get out into the public and conduct classes on various topics or attend plant clinics to help our county’s residents determine what problems they may be having. These Master Gardeners (MG) like to educate the public, interact with them, and help them when they have a horticulture problem.

The Youth Garden is a big hit for many Master Gardeners. Some volunteers go to the Youth Center in the mornings while the kids are still in school. Tuesday and Thursday afternoon you can bet that many of the cars parked at the Youth Center are volunteers. They help the kids grow flowers, herbs, and vegetables. There are those that explain the life cycles of butterflies and other garden creatures. A few volunteers take their creativity out of the garden and into the classroom where they teach the kids to make their own paper, a tradition that once seemed lost. All of these Master Gardeners are probably caregivers or were in that type of work but they all have open hearts and open minds when working with the children.

There are also the Master Gardeners that have given so much of themselves as volunteers that they often neglect their own home gardens. They are the folks who continuously give of themselves and ask for nothing in return. Some of these Master Gardeners could be stretched out too thin with other volunteering commitments. They probably have too much on their plates and need to spend more time in their garden. Then there are the Master Gardeners who are give so much of themselves volunteering; we shall call them the tired Master Gardeners or their really good friends may call them the relaxed or overstretched Master Gardeners. Yes, I do tend to fall into this type more than I would like and more than my garden likes.

Maybe someday they will recognize the Type G personality in the scientific world. Until then we are all people that love to help others, learn, learn, and learn some more, and share our knowledge. If you would like more information about testing your personality type you can find information at the following websites. **St. Louis Psychologists and Counseling Information and Referral at:**
http://www.psychtreatment.com/personality_type_and_disease.htm

Please note that this was written for entertainment purposes only.

**Thank you to all of the volunteers and the hard work which you do!**
We have seen the green recycle signs and large blue community containers for several years now as recycling has become imminent. I remember as a child bringing my soda bottles to the local grocery store for a five or ten cent return. The few dollars that I walked out with at the time beat out my allowance. I remember thinking it was the generation from the ‘60s that started recycling. I was way off.

The act of recycling was not one that man came up with on his own. Mother Nature beat him to it as for millions of years, plant material would fall onto the ground, and would become composting. As the dinosaurs, plant life, sea life died millions of years ago, the changing of the Earth during that time buried them and began a slow process of breaking down the waste into rocks, fossils, and often oil. The Romans were the first civilization to develop laws around waste by starting the first dump in 500 B.C. The Japanese were the first to document the re-use of waste paper by re-pulping waste paper to later sell; that was in the year 1031.

Probably one of the most overlooked periods was a real killer when Europe dumped waste on Asia’s unpaved areas, which caused one of the largest epidemics, The Black Plague of 1348. Recycling in America began in 1776 when America declared its freedom from England; many materials were reused just to get by. In the early 1900s the first aluminum recycling centers were created in Chicago and Cleveland. Around this time several cities tried to increase recycling by making it profitable to sift through your trash before it went to the curb.

It seemed that in the 1980s and early 1990s Americans lost interest in recycling, because it was now an added charge on the garbage bill. Glass had to be separated by color, plastics by the number on the container, the wrong color bottle could ruin an entire batch of recycled glass. People still hate to see that extra charge on the bill, but they are coming around to the idea of recycle and reuse.

Today, like in the early 1900s, is proving that recycling does pay off. Everyone has had a yard sale and made some change off of somebody’s treasure. Here are some ways to recycle around your home that can put some money in your pocket or keep some trash out of landfills: printer cartridges and cellular phones, both money makers. Various sized boxes that once held take-out can be used as biodegradable planters for shrubs or small trees. Paper milk cartons can be rinsed and cut down to size for perfect starter pots or can be used as birdfeeders.

Old newspaper when torn into strips and layered somewhat thickly in a glass and dampened can make great seed starters. Broken flower pots can either be used as toad homes, decoration in the garden, or as saucers for newer pots. We definitely know composting our green trash, leaves, small branches, and older mulch is a great way to get free nutrient rich soil each year. I haven’t tried this yet, but if you could get five wooden pallets from a business that is ready to throw them away, grab them. Now you have the bottom and four sides to a well ventilated compost box. Just get a partner, hammer and nails, a piece of plywood and some old door hinges to put your box together with a lid that can be opened and shut easily. Don’t throw away your old linens because you will want them when it is time to cover your plants from a possible frost.

I use empty and cleaned plastic boxes of cat litter to hold a wide variety of bird seed and to separate and mix different soils, and to organize my yard tools. I challenge everyone to think of something else that they can recycle on a regular basis. Please email your ideas so we can share them with others.

Now that we are experiencing winter’s temperatures it is time to put on your gardening jacket and gloves and get to work. There are many different things you can do in your garden on the mild days and on the colder days there are things which can be done inside. First things first, get your soil tested. This will tell you if you need to add any supplements to your soil. Decide where you want to work and what you would like your outcome to be.

It is always important to make a sketch of what you would like to do with your space and what you would like planted there. Keep in mind when you are drawing up your plans, the needs of your plants. Remember to think about “the right place for the right plant.” Make sure that the plants you choose will need the same amenities and same or similar upkeep as the others. When you are planning out your garden, you will want to consider the spacing of plants, size and height, light, and always consider how large your plants will become. If you are planting annuals you will have the ease and ability to change out your garden with the seasons.

Start your seeds off in small pots. Peat pots can be very valuable to your plants, because when it is time to put them in the ground you will not have to disturb the roots. You can just plant the peat-potted plant right into the ground. Some cool weather plants which are suggested are pansies, snapdragons, and dianthus. Warmer season plants include marigolds which come in many different varieties and colors, verbena, and salvia. You could substitute native tropical sage for the salvia and also find native varieties of verbena. Make sure that you are planting in coordinates with the plant hardiness zones.

Remove all plant debris from your area. Now is the time to pull any weeds and also look for any types of fungus, rot, and various insects which could still be lingering in that area. Work the soil and add organic matter including manure into the soil. This will enrich your soils for beautiful blooms all season. Plants that will need cold weather for their colorful blooms, like delphiniums, hollyhock, and foxglove should be planted as large plants to ensure the spectacular blooms. Don’t forget to water your new garden. Remember that new plants need to be watered in for them to establish themselves. Watering is recommended in the morning and the use of soaker hoses or drip irrigations systems will save money and time in the long run.

When you are creating your flower beds keep in mind that there may still be a cold snap. Create your beds so that they may be covered by using old sheets or you may use hay around your plants. When the weather seems like it is warming up for the season, reuse the hay in your compost pile. Enjoy yourself and take pride in your gardening.

The above information and more can be found in:

Month-by-Month, What to do each month to have a Beautiful Garden all Year: Gardening in Florida, by Tom MacCubbin.
Continued from Page 1:

This can interfere with the irrigation coverage. This can also lead to disease and insect damage that can be harmful to your plant. Also avoid planting drought tolerant plants alongside turf. Turf grasses have different watering needs than drought tolerant plants such as crape myrtle and pindo palms. Arrange plants in your landscape based on their same watering needs. Consider separating irrigation zones. Irrigate your turf separately from your woody ornamentals and other flowering plants. This will greatly reduce any unnecessary water use in areas that do not need watering. Protect our water supply! Other considerations include underground utilities and septic tanks. Avoid planting trees or shrubs near your septic system. Roots can cause considerable damage over time. Know where your underground utilities are located. Accidentally digging where there are underground telephone or electrical lines can cause a great amount of damage, as well as can be life threatening.

Information derived from The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Handbook

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<th>American Beautyberry — Callicarpa Americana</th>
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The American Beautyberry is one of Florida’s most unique native shrubs. A member of the mint family, Beautyberry is a fast growing shrub that reaches a mature height of 4-8 feet and width 3-6 feet. The hardiness zones for Beautyberry is zones 8 –11. It is drought tolerant and can be used in mass plantings or as a focal point in a landscape. Beautyberry prefers a rich slightly-acidic soils. Plants planted in the full sun will produce more flowers and fruit. The Beautyberry produces flowers from late spring to summer and produces a very attractive purplish fruit in fall and winter. The purple fruit becomes very showy during this time because Beautyberry is deciduous, losing all of its leaves. The purple fruit is also a favorite among birds, especially mockingbirds. There is also a white-fruited form called *Callicarpa americana* ‘lactea’. Beautyberry can be pruned in late fall to early spring to retain a more compact shrub. Removing old wood during these times will produce more flowers and fruit the following year because flowers are borne on new growth. The leaves of Beautyberry are very aromatic and were used by Native-Americans as tea for sweat bath rituals. American Beautyberry is considered a short lived shrub lasting less than 10 years. However, propagation by either seeds or softwood cuttings is relatively easy and can be achieved for a continuing presence in the landscape.

Jim Davis Extension Agent I, Florida Yards and Neighborhoods UF/IFAS Sumter County Extension

References: *Callicarpa americana* EDIS publication FPS-90 “Florida’s Best Native Landscape Plants” Gil Nelson
It’s a Jungle Out There Take Control!

Master Gardener Pruning Seminar

By Brooke Burn

On February 10th the Sumter County Master Gardeners hosted their first pruning seminar at the Sumter County Fairgrounds located in Bushnell. The seminar was repeated the following week on February 16th at the Oxford Community Building. The event began with a general pruning session, which covered the proper use of tools, protecting the tree during pruning, and improving the structure of trees and shrubs. Following the general lecture, attendees were able to listen to four out of seven breakout sessions. These talks covered crape myrtle, flowering shrubs, shrubs, shade trees, citrus, deciduous fruit trees, and last, but not least, roses. Cumulative packets were distributed so that each participant could bring home information on all session topics.

Lucky attendees who received winning raffle tickets left with door prizes of annuals, pruning tools, and other gardening supplies to make use of knowledge learned during the seminar. The Sumter County Master Gardeners enjoyed teaching homeowners how to control their unruly landscape plants. If you missed the pruning seminar and would like more information on pruning your landscape trees and shrubs, please contact the UF/IFAS Sumter County Extension Office at (352) 793-2728.

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Do You Know the Right Pruning Tool for the Job? (Match the Tool to Its Correct Use)

By Brooke Burn

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<tr>
<th>TOOLS</th>
<th>USE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Loppers</td>
<td>A. only used for dead twigs and branches</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Bypass Pruners</td>
<td>B. for trimming herbaceous plants, flowers, and fruit (scissor like)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Anvil Pruners</td>
<td>C. used for cutting any size branch</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Clippers</td>
<td>D. uses leverage to help cut 1/2” to 2” branches</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Pruning Saw</td>
<td>E. for live tree and shrub branches up to 3/4”</td>
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