Editor’s Note

August in the south is often referred to as the dog days of summer. I love the hot humid weather as it gives me a great excuse to relax with my cold beverage and enjoy my garden--from the cool air conditioned inside of my house. Except for my early morning and dusk strolls to marvel at nature’s beauty and check on my garden, this is the month to sit back and enjoy the fruits of labor from the past months.

Speaking of fruits, on August 23rd the Master Gardener Speaker Series is titled Incredible Edibles and will be given by Jim Davis and Brooke Moffis. If you have citrus, fig, peach or other fruit trees, this is the lecture for you. This is the time to plan that wonderful fall edible garden. They will also discuss veggies and herbs and how you can incorporate them into your landscape. This is my second year of a very poor tomato crop, so you can bet that I will be there!

For those of you who have never been, the Sumter County Master Gardeners hold lectures at the Savannah Center at 9:00 am and again at 1:00 pm at the SeaBreeze Recreation Center. These talks are on the 4th Tuesday of every month and cover a variety of subjects. They are always fun and informative. There is no charge, but because we can have large crowds, tickets are required and can be picked up two weeks in advance at the appropriate center where the talk is being held.

As for informative, in this month’s Gardener’s Journal Ed Rhinehart and Nancy King share a few of their favorite plants with us. Howie Johnson explains the art of deadheading and tells us which plants benefit from it. Joe Mahoney once again gives us excellent advice on how to get and keep our lawns so that they are the envy of the neighborhood.

We would also like to invite any of you with gardening or landscape questions to e-mail them to plantclinic@aol.com, along with a picture of the problem (bug or leaf) or, better yet, go in person to one of our Plant Clinics. Check out our “What’s Happening” calendar for the times and places.

We, Sumter County Master Gardeners, delight in sharing information and passing along the love of gardening, so enjoy this month’s Journal. Before it gets too hot, I am going to grab my water bottle and hat and head out to the garden. See you there.
Well, summer is here in Florida! For those of us who moved into the Sumter County area from the northern states, what a shared experience we are having with Florida weather. This is my third summer here. Up north we planted many plant varieties that just don’t seem to want to work during these summer months here in sunny and warm Florida. So I have decided it is time to experiment with new annuals.

One of the nearby growers recommended a plant to me that I wasn’t real familiar with called “Malampodium”. It is a small plant that has the appearance of a yellow daisy but only gets 12-18 inches tall and becomes drought tolerant as it develops. The malampodium does best in sun to partial shade. When I planted it, I never expected it to survive, as it was wilted and very small. But this plant has grown and flourished and looks exceptional. It has a mounding effect with flowers all over, from top to bottom. You will see this plant in some of the plantings around The Villages at the ends of the medians. So far, so good! Better than that, it looks terrific.

Now let’s talk about the “Angel Wing Begonia.” Over a year ago, I was asked to give this plant a try. I planted it in a large container to see what would happen. I placed the plant in an area with morning sun. It did well last summer, actually survived the winter (did have to move it inside the garage a couple of times), and it is still flourishing and beautiful. Am I surprised! This is a good choice for a container.

Here’s a new one! At least to me! It is called an “Ice Plant” and comes in a number of varieties. From what I have read, this plant is used as a ground cover with a spreading effect and does well in sandy soil and with rocks. It only grows 3-4 inches tall and comes in different flower forms. The one I have has nickel sized red flowers and bright shiny green leaves for that ice effect. I have it in a container and in the garden. It looks great!

Let’s sit back and relax and enjoy our plants. We have worked hard to get them to look this good. Besides, it is too hot to do much. It is early in the morning and I am heading out to water and continue experimenting. So much for relaxation!

Calibrachoa
Nancy King

This is Calibrachoa, commonly called “Million Bells”. It closely resembles a trailing petunia and comes in shades of violet, blue, pink, red, magenta, yellow, bronze and white. Some consider calibrachoa and petunia to be the same species; however, petunias have 14 chromosomes and calibrachoas have 18. While petunias have larger flowers, this plant makes up for its smaller blooms in sheer numbers of flowers.

Partial shade is tolerated, but for best results in our area, it should get full morning sun. Calibrachoa tolerates more heat than its cousin, the petunia, and it is hardy to 30°F. No deadheading is needed, as spent flowers drop off cleanly. If plants begin looking a bit ragged about midsummer, cut the plants back a bit and fertilize with water-soluble fertilizer. They will respond with new growth and vigor.

When planted in the ground, it becomes drought tolerant. Plants in containers are not as drought tolerant, so plan to water frequently. Keeping plants too wet can lead to root rot diseases. Allow the top of
the soil to dry before watering again. If plants wilt, even though the soil is still damp, they most likely have a root rot problem.

Calibrachoa is a heavy feeder, so an application of slow-release fertilizer at planting time will be beneficial. Plants respond well to periodic applications of water-soluble fertilizer in hanging baskets as well as other types of containers.

**Deadheading**

*Howie Johnson*

Hot weather has certainly arrived. It's time to tidy up the garden and that means deadheading flowers and removing tatty foliage; not terribly exciting, but worth the effort. For my wife and I, this means heading out around 7:30 PM after the sun begins setting and the temperature cools a bit.

Deadheading is the process of removing faded blossoms from plants, normally by pinching off spent blossoms with your fingernails or snipping them off with scissors. Many plants are stimulated to blossom longer and more profusely when their old flowers and seedpods are removed.

Deadheading can also be used to prevent plants from reseeding. Alternatively, if you do not deadhead your plants their health is in no way affected.

If you are going to go to the trouble, then it is better to deadhead fading blossoms rather than waiting until the blossom is completely dead and dried out. It's especially important in our current hot, dry weather when blossoms don't last long and fade to an ugly brown. The removal of spent flowers before they have a chance to set seed will often trick a plant into producing more flowers when it otherwise would not.

The botanical purpose of flowers is for the plant to reproduce. Once that job is done, there is no longer a reason to put energy into blooms and the plant's energy will be channeled to seed development. But if the blooms are removed, the plant must bloom again in order to produce the seeds.

Not every flower will re-bloom if deadheaded -- most annuals will, some perennials will not. Here is a list of many common flowers and how they will (or won't) benefit from deadheading.

Popular flower varieties that benefit from deadheading include:

- Coleus – pinch off flowers to encourage plant growth. Pinch tips off branches to encourage branching and full, dense growth.
- Coreopsis
- Daisy (all types)
- Gaillardia or Blanket Flower
- Marigold
- Pansy-deadheading prolongs plant (and blooming) life
- Petunia-allow to bloom and re-bloom naturally, then prune back long branches as the season progresses for renewed flowering
- Rose
- Salvia
- Snapdragon-trim the bloom stalk just below the bottom flower/seed pod. New branches and flowers will form here
- Viola-deadheading prolongs plant (and blooming) life
- Zinnia

Flowers that don't require deadheading, though removing spent flowers may improve the look of the plant

- Astilbe-leave dry flowers, as long as they look attractive
- Begonia
- Bougainvillea
- Dianthus
- Hibiscus
- Impatiens (all types)
- Jasmine
- Lantana
- Mandevilla
- Morning Glory
- Verbena
- Vinca
- Wisteria

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Turf Wars—Joe Mahoney

August weather patterns should be bringing a daily rain period to central Florida. Take some time to walk around your turf areas during the dry times. What do you see in your turf? Is the turf a consistent blanket of green or are there bare spots? Does the turf look discolored in some areas? Does the top of the turf have areas that look as if they are turning brown?

Take some photos of the same areas you took photos of in March. Photos are a great reference; compare them to each other. Can you see any differences in the areas that you photographed? Make sure you save the resource as a window to past trends in your landscape.

Yellowing areas in turf can usually be remedied with an application of Ironite. Ironite can come in a granular form or a liquid form. The granular can be applied with a spreader and may last longer in the turf areas than the liquid form. The liquid form tends to get faster results than the granular. Use the Ironite as a stand alone supplement in the place of fertilizer.

If you use Ironite at the beginning of August, you may use a 6-0-6 or a 10-0-10 fertilizer at the end of August or the beginning of September. Do not use a high nitrogen (first number) fertilizer at this time. Save it for Spring.

Check your turf for grubs. Take a good sharp knife and cut an area out about one foot in diameter. You will see the grubs if they are present. Usually, if one to two grubs are present it will indicate that there is not a problem that requires immediate attention. Do another check in a couple of weeks in a different area.

If you see four or more grubs within the area that you cut out, you may want to consider treating the turf with an insecticide. There are a number of products that are effective. The most common insecticides for grub control use Bifenthrin as the active ingredient. This is an insecticide that is used on turf, shrubs, and as a foundation barrier to keep insects from entering into structures.

It is always wise to alternate insecticides. If you apply Bifenthrin to your turf in June, use trichlorfon for your next treatment. Believe it or not, insects can adapt and build resistance if you use the same product over and over again. Once again, granular insecticides tend to have their ingredients slowly released over time while the liquid insecticides work rapidly.

All insecticides should only be used in the areas where the target insects are present. Random and unnecessary use of pesticides are creating hazards in our environment and draining monetary resources. Not only do you pay money to purchase pesticides, you also pay money in the form of taxes to clean up the negative impact the misapplication of pesticides can have on our environment.

For more information about turf care, visit the University of Florida Turfgrass science webpage at: http://turf.ufl.edu/.

Q & A

Q. We just moved here from Ohio and love the Queen Palms. We have heard conflicting opinions on how well they do here in central Florida. Can you clarify this for us?

A. Yes, we can definitely help you out here. Queen palms are a lovely palm, but they are not reliably cold hardy. Once the temperature dips below 30-28 degrees, they will suffer damage and prolonged periods of cold temperatures will kill them. If you have to have a Queen, make sure to plant it in an area protected from the winter winds, such as the south side of your home. It will also have a better chance of surviving the winter if it is healthy going into the colder months, another reason to maintain proper fertilization and water throughout the other seasons. Your best bet however, is to not plant a Queen and to substitute the hardier Florida State tree, the Sabel Palmetto.

For more information go to: gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/
## AUGUST CALENDAR OF EVENTS – Info: 352-793-2728

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUGUST</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every Mon.</td>
<td>9 am- 3 pm</td>
<td>*Plant Clinic</td>
<td>Sheriff’s Annex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Every Wed.</td>
<td>9 am- 3 pm</td>
<td>*Plant Clinic</td>
<td>Bushnell Ext.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Every Fri.</td>
<td>9 am- 12 pm</td>
<td>*Plant Clinic</td>
<td>Bushnell Ext.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. 1</td>
<td>12pm - 2 pm</td>
<td>Florida Gardens Q &amp; A Panel Discussion</td>
<td>Truman Rec.</td>
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<td>Thurs. 11</td>
<td>1 pm - 2 pm</td>
<td>Florida-Friendly Landscaping Class</td>
<td>Oxford Comm. Ctr.</td>
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<td>Composting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues. 16</td>
<td>9 am - 11 am</td>
<td>New Residents’ Workshop</td>
<td>Colony Cottage</td>
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<td>Tues. 23</td>
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<td>Twice on Tuesdays - Ticket Required</td>
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<td>Free tickets available, Tues, August 9, at Savannah or Sea Breeze 9 am to 4 pm, Tues. to Fri. until sold out.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>9 am - 10 am</td>
<td>Incredible Edibles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 pm - 2 pm</td>
<td>Incredible Edibles</td>
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*You can send questions to plantclinic@aol.com. Attach any pictures to your email.

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### ADDRESSES

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<tr>
<th>Bushnell Extension Office</th>
<th>Savannah Recreation Center</th>
<th>Truman Recreation Center</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7620 SR 471, Bushnell</td>
<td>1545 Buena Vista Blvd, The Villages</td>
<td>2705 Canal St., The Villages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colony Cottage Recreation Center</td>
<td>Sea Breeze Recreation Center</td>
<td>Webster Community Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>510 Colony Blvd, The Villages</td>
<td>2384 Buena Vista Blvd, The Villages</td>
<td>SE 1st Street, (off State Rd 471)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oxford Community Center</td>
<td>Sherriff’s Annex</td>
<td>Webster</td>
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<tr>
<td>4027 CR 106, Oxford</td>
<td>Cor Morse Blvd/Rt. 466, The Villages</td>
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Produced and Edited by Dani Camp, Edited by Nancy King, Roslyn Davidson and Brooke Moffis

SumterCoMGJournal@gmail.com