Editor’s Note:

I can find beauty in every month of the year. Each season holds its own attraction. But I have to say that I am an autumn person. I love everything about it. We’ve survived the hot humid summer and the morning and evening air holds a promise of dipping temperatures. Our once bright summer annuals and perennials are beginning to look tired and are ready to make room for the deep rich colors of fall. The maroons, oranges and dark or bright yellow mums mixed in with the hearty bounty of butternut squash, cool weather lettuces, and pumpkins bring family and friends together as few other things do. Our seasonal friends are returning and the cooler evenings are perfect for sitting in your outdoor garden space, catching up and enjoying conversation and your favorite beverage.

In this month’s edition of the Gardener’s Journal, Brooke Moffis, Sumter County Extension Agent, gives advice to those of you returning on how to get your garden ready for the months ahead. With just a little effort, your landscape will be entertainment ready! If you have a new home or want to redo your existing landscape, Howie Johnson is ready to help you along the way. Follow his continuing column and feel secure with your design ideas as he shares the rules of landscape design.

Whether or not you actually design your own garden or use a professional landscape design artist, your showcase needs to be maintained. As a landscape design artist myself, I often have clients that come in and ask for a maintenance free yard. Well folks, that just doesn’t exist. Florida’s growing season is pretty much 365 days a year. Our sandy/clay soil on top of the insect population requires a hands-on approach. We have literally hundreds of Landscape Maintenance Companies in central Florida and Lloyd Singleton tells us how to choose one that will work best for you. Joe Mahoney shares with us what to do this month to keep our lawns healthy and happy, and Ed Rhinehart talks fall flowers.

We love to get your feedback on how we are doing with the Gardener’s Journal, what you would like to see more or less of. Have a wonderful October and I’ll see you next month or in the garden. Enjoy your read.
Welcome back snowbirds! I know you are ready to enjoy the Florida sunshine after being away for a few months. Before you get too comfortable in your Florida groove, head out to your garden and landscape and give it the much-needed TLC that it deserves.

The first item on your garden’s recovery list should be to inspect your sprinkler system by running all your irrigation zones. Make sure that you do not have any clogged sprinkler heads. Go ahead and set your irrigation system to manual and begin watering on an as needed basis. We are getting into the time of year when plant growth really starts to slow down. As a result, your lawn and landscape simply won’t need as much water throughout the fall and winter months. Run your irrigation system only when turf leaf blades begin to fold, if there are footprints left after you walk across your lawn, or when your lawn displays a bluish green cast to its leaves.

The next item on your to do list should be to prune plants that have overstepped their bounds by growing too wild and crazy over the summer. Remember, these plants have been having a free-for-all since you’ve been gone, especially after those summer rains. Prune your unruly plants as soon as you can, because pruning encourages a flush of new growth and you want to give any new growth a chance to harden off before we get into the frost and freeze time of year. We can get our first freeze in Sumter County as early as November 15th! A light fall pruning will be just fine for overgrown perennials and most shrubs. When pruning, remove no more than a third of the plant at a given time. Pruning of deciduous trees and shrubs should be left until the winter, when they have lost their leaves. It’s also too late to prune any spring blooming plants, as you will prune off the blooms for next year.

If you fertilize your landscape on a regular basis, do this as soon as you get back! The best times of year for fertilizing most lawn and landscape plants are March, July, and September, so if you missed September, give your plants the nutrients they need now. A palm fertilizer works great for just about everything growing in a Florida landscape, even your lawn. Look for a palm fertilizer in slow release form and with the formulation of 8-2-12+4.

Finally, get out there and have fun by planting annuals such as million bells (Calibrachoa), ‘Supertunias’, pansies, kale, dianthus, and snapdragons. October is the best time to plant winter annuals. The warm soils allow the roots to reach out into their new home and get established before cooler temperatures arrive. Now that your garden is breathing a sigh of relief, you can too. Pull up a chair, relax, and enjoy your beautiful fall landscape.

Plant Shapes Landscape Design Learned the Hard Way
Part Two – Lines
Howie Johnson

Last month we began the discussion of the landscape design process noting it begins with you – by determining your needs and desires. We highlighted establishing a budget, determining how much time you want to spend working in your garden and choosing a design style (formal, native, tropical, Mediterranean, Japanese, or a mixture of styles). With these basic issues narrowed down, it’s time to move on to organizing plants and hardscape materials. This organization results in the visual qualities of line, form, color, texture and visual weight – the elements of design.

The same basic principles used in art, architecture, and interior design apply when designing a landscape. Visual qualities can elicit many different emotions and feelings, and the more positive those feelings, the more we tend to enjoy the space. One of the most common elements in a composition is line. We use lines to create all forms and patterns. Line in the landscape is created when two different materials meet on the ground plane (the edge of the patio meets an area of green grass), when we see the edge of an object contrasting with the background (outline of a tree against the blue sky), or with placement of items in a line (a row of shrubs). The properties of line determines how we respond to the landscape.

- Straight lines are structural and forceful; they create a formal character and are usually associated with symmetrical design leading the eye directly to a focal point. Straight lines encourage movement. We use straight lines for most hardscape edges, driveways, patios and trellises.
- Curved lines invite slower movement. They create an informal, natural and relaxed character. Curved lines add mystery to the space by creating hidden views.
Vertical lines move the eye up making the space feel larger.

Horizontal lines move the eye move the eye along the ground plane and make a space feel larger.

Lines develop harmony between the house and the landscape. Bed lines are created where the edge of the plant bed meets another surface material, such as grass, gravel, or concrete. Bed lines connect plant material to the house and the hardscape because the eye follows the line, moving the gaze through the landscape material.

Pay attention to the elements of line when driving through planned communities, such as The Villages. Many of the roads meander, thus creating a more relaxed feeling (at least I think that was the plan). Spanish Springs and Lake Sumter Landing squares are ringed with tall palms, making the spaces feel large. Most planting beds are sweeping, relaxing curves rather than straight, formal lines.

Next month we’ll look at form. Form gives us textures and colors.

Professional work from well-trained providers can prevent mistakes and save time and heartache in the long run. If you make your selection on price alone, you may get what you pay for, incurring huge costs down the road for environmentally unfriendly chemical correction, or even necessary landscape renovation.

In the landscape maintenance industry, we have dialogue about the differences between true professionals and the “mow, blow, and go” folks. It is traditionally a low paying industry, so the best teams are those that are truly cared for by their employer. Is the worker wearing personal protective equipment (PPE)? This would include safety glasses, work gloves, long pants, sturdy boots, hat, and more. An employer that provides this PPE and enforces its use is likely an employer who cares for the employees and creates loyalty.

Speaking of loyalty, do you see some of the same faces week after week? That is a good thing - a loyal, long term worker is more valuable because they know the nuances of your property and your expectations. If it’s a different face every week, you may be spending more of your time training them on the way you like things done. Are they familiar with your irrigation system, and help you monitor and change the settings seasonally? Overwatering is often responsible for insect pests and diseases, as well as pollution. Do they fertilize trees and shrubs correctly around the root zone of the plant, or flippantly throw it against the plant’s stem, causing a horticultural crash and burn? Do they exhibit knowledge of Integrated Pest Management, a single strategy to adequately and safely manage pests? Or is it the old, worn-out way of “spray it if it walks”? After all, aphids are good ladybug food.

A professional contractor will have licenses, certifications, and insurance. Ask about his or her credentials; a license is required to spray most pesticides, and by 2014 anyone applying fertilizer for pay will be required to complete a Best Management Practice training, certification, and license. Has your landscaper gone the extra mile to attend any local horticulture training or earn a Florida Certified Horticulture Professional designation? Are they a member of a professional association? Knowing the proper maintenance techniques is critical to reduce the risk of pest or disease problems. If you or your neighbor’s landscaper can’t offer you any of these credentials, suggest that they call the local county Extension office for help. In Sumter County, they can contact me – Lloyd Singleton at lsingleton@ufl.edu.

For other advice on Florida-Friendly Landscaping™, please visit www.floridayards.org.

- Picking a Landscape Pro...
Lloyd Singleton

How do you know if you’re getting a good value from your landscape maintenance contractor? It isn’t always just about cost, is it? Quality,

- Turf Wars 9
By Joe Mahoney

October is here and it is time to think about winterizing your turf areas. It is very near the end time to fertilize your lawn. If you are going to fertilize, pick a fertilizer with a low number for nitrogen. This would be the first of the three numbers shown for the ratio of nutrients. A good pick for a fertilizer would be a 6-6-6. On the label there should be a breakdown of the types of available nitrogen. Look for the fertilizers with the highest amount of INSOLUBLE NITROGEN. Insoluble nitrogen provides the longest period of time for nitrogen to be available.
Try to avoid using a weed and feed type of fertilizer. The herbicide used to kill the weeds in turf also stresses the grass. Many of these fertilizers contain a higher amount of nitrogen so that the turf can recover faster from the effects of the herbicide. Try to pull out the weeds instead. Use a localized application of herbicide on the larger areas of weeds.

Pick an herbicide that is safe to use on your type of turf. If you use a weed and grass killer, it will destroy both the weed and the turf, leaving a large brown area that could take 6 months or more to recover. The weeds, nutsedge, torpedo grass and Bahia grass will not be affected by typical herbicide applications. These types of weeds mimic grass and the only way they can be controlled is by pulling them.

Turf should be starting to go dormant at this time of year. You should be noticing that the turf is not growing very fast and mowing could be reduced to once every two or three weeks on those lawns that are going dormant at a faster rate. This is also a good time to consider having your lawn aerated. Aeration breaks up hard packed surface areas and allows the rhizome structure of turf to penetrate into bare spots. Aeration can also help nutrients to get to the root level more quickly.

If you have a lawn that is irregular with uneven pockets and hollows, you can fill in those areas with play or builders sand, which allows easier rhizome penetration without supporting as much weed growth as using topsoil. When you fill in the pockets, do not bury the grass. Apply it in stages so that it covers the rhizome without burying the grass blade. Do not fill in the areas with potting soil. The lightweight peat used in potting soil dries out quickly and is easily blown away by the wind or washed away by water runoff.

This is a good time of year to add micronutrients to your turf and landscape. Products that list a broad spectrum of micronutrients are better. Sometimes your turf areas will respond better to an application of micronutrients rather than a typical turf fertilizer. Remember, the grass is slowing down and does not need much nitrogen rich fertilizer.

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HOW DID YOUR GARDEN GROW?
BY Ed Rhinehart

Every few days I walk outside to see how my flower containers and gardens are performing. I think to myself that I wish I had done this, I wish I had done that and I think what is this, and, of course, what is that?

As gardeners new to the area, we need to take a few things into consideration. Let’s learn to keep track of what we have done.

Here are some simple garden tips. First, pictures are worth a thousand words. Keep a small album or computer folder of the pictures of your garden. Label with the season and year and maybe even a comment on how certain plants worked. Keep and sort the label tags from the flowers you purchased. Put them in a folder or envelope. Try a garden journal. It is really simple. Use a notebook and keep a record for every month or season. Add reminders for the future so you can refer to them.

Secondly, let’s plan. This can also be done very simply. If you live in a neighborhood, take a look around to see what has been successful. When you see something you like, take a picture or make a note to add to your journal. It seems to me that cities and communities are always planning for the future with their flowers, especially in the medians and the town centers. Today I was talking about how beautifully the purple and yellows of the coleus blend with the contrasting red vincas in a Villages median planting. How about the perennial peanut as a ground cover in the medians near Wildwood on 466A? Obviously someone did some planning. In this month’s Villages magazine Erik Knudsen has some great suggestions on fall flowers. He is planning ahead for fall color. Well, how does your garden look? I bet great!

The Foundation for The Gator Nation
An Equal Opportunity Institution
# OCTOBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS – Info: 352-793-2728

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<tr>
<th>OCTOBER</th>
<th>TIME</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>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. 3</td>
<td>12 pm - 2 pm</td>
<td>Florida Gardens Q &amp;A Panel Discussion</td>
<td>Truman Rec Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. 6</td>
<td>9 am - 12 pm</td>
<td>Demo Garden Teaching Day</td>
<td>Bushnell Ext.</td>
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<td>Thurs. 13</td>
<td>1 pm - 2 pm</td>
<td>Florida-Friendly Landscaping Class</td>
<td>Oxford Comm. Ctr.</td>
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<td>Thurs. 13</td>
<td>1 pm - 2 pm</td>
<td>Benefits of Mulch</td>
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<td>Tues. 18</td>
<td>9 am - 11 am</td>
<td>New Residents’ Workshop</td>
<td>Colony Cottage</td>
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<td>Tues. 25</td>
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<td>Twice on Tuesdays - Ticket Required</td>
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<td>Free tickets available, Tues, Oct. 11, at Savannah or Sea Breeze 9 am to 4 pm, Tues. to Fri. until sold out.</td>
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<td>9 am - 10 am</td>
<td>Year Round Color in the Landscape</td>
<td>Savannah</td>
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<td>1 pm - 2 pm</td>
<td>Year Round Color in the Landscape</td>
<td>Sea Breeze</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. 29</td>
<td>9 am – 1 pm</td>
<td>FALL PLANT SALE</td>
<td>Wildwood Growers’ Market</td>
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<td>Many varieties of plants propagated by the</td>
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<td>Master Gardeners will be available for purchase.</td>
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*You can send questions to plantclinic@aol.com. Attach any pictures to your email.

## ADDRESSES

- **Bushnell Extension Office**
  - 7620 SR 471, Bushnell
  - 352-793-2728
- **Savannah Recreation Center**
  - 1545 Buena Vista Blvd.
  - The Villages; 352-750-6084
- **Webster Community Hall**
  - SE 1st Street, (off State Rd 471)
- **Wildwood Growers’ Market**
  - Webber
- **Wildwood City Hall**
  - 100 N. Main St., Wildwood, Fl

- **Colony Cottage Recreation Center**
  - 510 Colony Blvd.
  - The Villages; 352-750-1935
- **Sea Breeze Recreation Center**
  - 2384 Buena Vista Blvd.
  - The Villages; 352-750-2488
- **Sherriff’s Annex**
  - Cor. Morse Blvd. & Rt. 466
  - The Villages; 352-689-4668
- **Truman Recreation Center**
  - 2705 Canal St.
  - The Villages; 352-751-8650
- **Oxford Community Center**
  - 4027 CR 106, Oxford
  - 4027 CR 106, Oxford

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