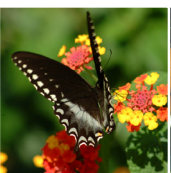


Horticulture Hints



Summer
2014

Landscape Gardening and Ornamentals

Crape Myrtle Part Of Southern Landscape; Try These Tips For Caring For Yours

Although native to the Far East, crape myrtles are almost indispensable in the Southern landscape.

Their vibrantly colored flowers in shades of pink, purple, red and white from May to September virtually define the summer season here. The relatively small size of crape myrtle trees and long, colorful blooming season make them useful in a variety of landscape situations.

A common problem is damage to the trunk caused by the careless use of mowers and string trimmers around the base of these thin-barked trees. To prevent this type of damage, do not allow grass to grow within a foot of the trunk. Keep the area mulched with about 4 inches of pine straw pulled back slightly from the trunk.

Once a crape myrtle tree gets older, it regularly sheds its outer layer of bark. There's no need for concern. Simply gather up the bark it sheds to keep things looking neat.

Remove suckers regularly – as soon as they appear. When pruning suckers, do not leave a stub, or several suckers will appear for every one you cut off.

To prevent suckers from growing back so quickly, treat the freshly cut spots with a product such as Monterey Sucker Stopper or Ferti-lome Sprout Inhibitor. (Some local nurseries may carry these, or you can order online.)

A few insects and diseases attack crape myrtles, but they generally don't cause significant damage. Common problems are crape myrtle aphids (which also cause black sooty

mold), powdery mildew and Cercospora leaf spot. Caterpillars are an occasional problem.

You can control aphids by spraying the tree with any commercially available insecticide labeled to control aphids, such as permethrin. Imidacloprid is a systemic insecticide applied as a drench to the roots and also will control aphids. It is better to apply a systemic insecticide early in the season, around April or May, but June is not too late.

Cercospora leaf spot is a fungal disease that occurs more in mid- to late summer, particularly when weather is rainy. Leaves develop dark spots, change color and drop from the tree. This disease is not life threatening and does not significantly affect the overall long-term health of the trees. It is not practical to spray, and there is no need to do so.

Common reasons for lack of blooms are young trees, trees getting too much shade, trees that are sickly or low in vigor and heavy insect or disease problems. Given time, good care and proper growing conditions, crape myrtle flowers are as certain as summer.

The amount of flowers young trees produce generally increases with time and age.



Caterpillars Common Summer Pests

Caterpillars of various types are common pests in flower beds, trees, shrubs and even lawns during the summer season.

Basically, caterpillars are baby moths or butterflies. Moths and butterflies pass through four distinct phases in their lives: egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa (cocoon or chrysalis) and adult (moth or butterfly).

If you wonder where the caterpillars on your plants came from, an adult moth or butterfly flew to the plant, laid the eggs and flew off. When moths or butterflies are in the egg, pupa and adult stages, they pose no direct threat to our plants. But the caterpillar stage is another matter.

The caterpillar phase basically is the stage when the insect eats large amounts of food to grow and develop. Caterpillars have chewing mouthparts. They bite into tissue and swallow it.

Caterpillars of various types feed on virtually every part of the plant. They bore into stems and trunks, they eat fruit and they can chew on flowers. But, by far, the caterpillars we most often have problems with are those that feed on the foliage.

Caterpillars that feed on foliage of trees and shrubs are not life threatening to the plants they infest. They could eat every leaf, and the tree or shrub would recover by sending out new growth. It would not be good for the tree or shrub, but it would not kill it. The visual effects on the beauty of the tree or shrub, however, may make control efforts worthwhile.

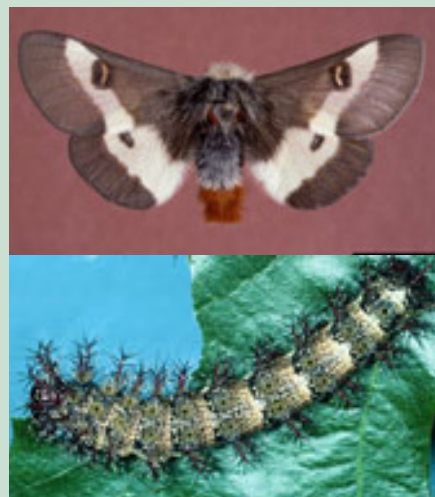
Eating the foliage of flowering perennials and bedding plants is more serious. Significant damage can occur that will weaken the plant greatly.

Where control is practical and desirable, there are things you can do. Insecticides containing Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) and spinosad are the least toxic insecticides available for caterpillar control.

Chemical controls include carbaryl and pyrethroids such as bifenthrin, cyfluthrin and permethrin.

Stinging caterpillars also are out during summer. The saddleback caterpillar, puss moth caterpillar and IO moth caterpillar all can be found on a variety of trees and shrubs through the summer. Children, in particular, should be shown what these caterpillars look like and cautioned about touching them. They can be controlled with the products already mentioned.

For additional pictures of these stinging caterpillars, the LSU AgCenter has an excellent publication you can see online (do an Internet search using "LSU AgCenter stinging caterpillars" and click on the link). Or contact your local LSU AgCenter Extension office for a printed copy.



Buck Moth
adult and larva



IO Moth
adult and larva

Bark Lice Harmless

Midsummer and into fall are the times of year when silvery webbing appears on the bark trees. These webs are caused by tiny insects called bark lice, which are common in Louisiana.

The small, soft bodied creatures are about 3 to 6 millimeters in length, live under the webbing and may or may not have wings. The proper name for these insects is psocids. The webbing they produce on the trunk and branches is to protect themselves from environmental conditions and predators.

The webbing looks alarming as it spreads on the tree from the ground to the upper branches. But

bark lice are in no way harmful to the trees.

The insects feed on organic debris lodged in the bark, such as molds, pollen, fragments of dead insects and similar materials. They will be active until fall. They usually go away about October, if not before, and once the bark lice begin to die, the webbing will break up and disappear. They will not injure your trees, and no control is necessary.

If you can't stand the appearance of the webbing, you can sweep it off with a broom or blast it off with water. Most people just leave them alone, however, and let them clean off the bark of the tree.



Beware Of Summer Heat

Working outside in especially hot weather places extra stress on the body. Take frequent breaks and try not to stay outside in the heat for extended periods.

Gardeners working outside may lose up to 2 quarts of water each hour. To prevent dehydration, drink cold water before, during and after working outside. It is best to bring a container of cold water out with you and to keep it with you. You are more likely to stay properly hydrated if you have water with you and don't have to stop what you are doing to go back into the house.

Work in your garden in the early morning or late afternoon when it is cooler and stay in shady areas as much as possible. Follow the shade in your landscape as the sun moves across the sky. Leave areas as they become sunny and move into areas as they become more shaded.

Since you'll tend to work in the cooler early morning and evening hours this time of year, you also don't want to forget to apply a mosquito repellent. West Nile virus is still a concern.

Wear a hat that shades your ears and the back of your neck in addition to your face. Wear loose, comfortable clothing and use sunscreen.



Tips For Selecting An Arborist

With the start of hurricane season, you should carefully evaluate your shade trees for problems. If work needs to be done, it's best to hire a licensed arborist.

Here are some things to consider when hiring an arborist:

- The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry website lists the licensed arborists in Louisiana by parish. Do an Internet search using "LDAF licensed arborists" and click on the link.
- Beware of door-knockers. This is especially common after storms, when nonprofessionals see a chance to earn some quick money.
- Never let yourself be rushed by bargains such as, "If you sign an agreement today, I can take 10 percent off the price."
- Ask to see the state arborist license. All practicing arborists must be licensed by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.
- Ask to see certificates of insurance, including proof of liability for personal and property damage and workman's compensation. Then phone the insurance company to make certain the policy is current.



- Ask for local references, and look at other jobs the company has done. Check with the Better Business Bureau.
- Have more than one arborist look at the job and give you estimates to ensure you get a fair price. This also allows you to get other opinions on what work needs to be done. But don't expect one arborist to lower his bid to match another arborist's estimate.
- A good arborist will never recommend or agree to "topping a tree" except under rare circumstances (such as to save the tree after severe physical damage to the crown).
- Unless you simply need a tree removed, choose a company that offers a wide range of services (such as pruning, fertilizing, cabling/bracing, pest control, etc.).
- Do not allow an arborist to use climbing spikes to climb a tree unless the tree is being removed.
- To make sure the work is performed to the standards you expect, a written contract is recommended. It should include the dates when the work will start and finish, exactly what work will be done, what cleanup work will be done, when that cleanup will be done and the total dollar amount you will be charged. If a tree is to be removed and the stump ground down, make sure the company agrees to remove all of the wood chips.
- It's recommended that you be present while the work is being done, even if you have to take off from work.

Planting Hummingbird Gardens

For many people, attracting hummingbirds is as easy as hanging a feeder.

But that is not always successful, because many hummingbirds are not accustomed to using feeders. It can be frustrating to put out a feeder and never see a hummingbird.

Numerous people have found that planting a garden full of hummingbird-attracting plants, in addition to maintaining feeders, is a more reliable method for successfully attracting hummingbirds. Be patient if you don't see them the first year. Remember, a hummingbird garden is an invitation to these delightful creatures, not a command performance. The longer you stick with it, the more likely these birds are to show up.

A well-chosen variety of flowering trees, shrubs, vines, annuals and perennials can produce an excellent supply of nectar over a long period and beautify your landscape at the same time. Insects living in the plants and nectar from flowers provide hummingbirds with a complete, balanced diet. Since they obtain nearly all the water they need from their foods, it is not necessary to provide them with drinking water.

Typical hummingbird flowers are red, have a tubular shape and have no strong scent, but there are several notable exceptions to this general rule. Many plants with red flowers do not contain very much nectar, and not all good nectar producers have red flowers. Roses, petunias, geraniums and zinnias have brilliant colors but little nectar.

Plants that produce an abundance of flowers over an extended period of time and those that require little care are good choices. When several color varieties of a plant are available, choose the brightest red.

Pesticides generally should not be used in a hummingbird garden. If absolutely needed, they should be used sparingly and only on nonflowering plants. Stick to pesticides low in toxicity, such as horticultural oils, insecticidal soaps and Bt. (These should not be used if the planting also is for butterflies, however!) Never use systemic insecticides or rotenone on plants where hummingbirds may feed.



Recommended Plants for Hummingbird Gardens

Trees: Crybaby tree (*Erythrina crista-galli*), Japanese plum or loquat (*Eriobotrya japonica*), mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*) and citrus.

Shrubs: Turk's cap (*Malvaviscus arboreus*), pagoda plant (*Clerodendrum speciosissimum*), Mexican cigar plant (*Cuphea ignea* and *C. micropetala*), shrimp plant (*Justicia brandegeana*), firespike (*Odontonema strictum*), hibiscus (*Hibiscus* spp. and hybrids), lantana (*Lantana camara*), bird of paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*), azalea (*Rhododendron* spp. and hybrids), pentas (*Pentas lanceolata*) and red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*).

Vines: Coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), cape honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*), cypress vine (*Quamoclit pinnata*), bleeding heart vine (*Clerodendrum thomsoniae*) and trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*).

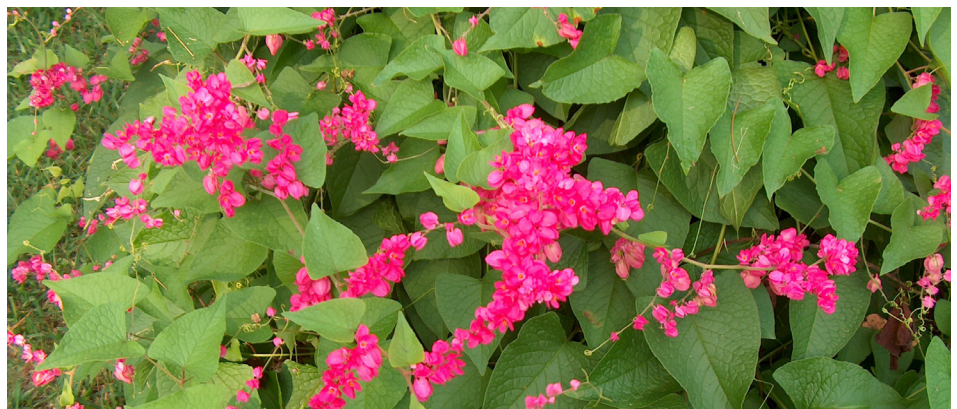
Annuals and perennials: Salvia (*Salvia splendens*, *S. coccinea*, *S. greggii*, *S. leucantha* and many others), pineapple sage (*Salvia rutilans*), iris (*Iris* spp. and hybrids), red hot poker (*Kniphofia uvaria*), impatiens (*Impatiens walleriana*), coral plant (*Russelia equisetiformis*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), gilia or standing cypress (*Ipomopsis rubra*) and bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*, *M. didyma*).

Summer-Blooming Vines

Vines can add much to a landscape, and there are many beautiful blooming vines we can use. Consider these vines for colorful flowers.

Perennial vines: Rose of Montana (*Antigonon leptopus*, also called Rosa de Montana and Coral Vine); coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*); evergreen wisteria (*Millettia reticulata*); akebia (*Akebia quinata*); Mandevilla (*Mandevilla*, Alice DuPont and other varieties – not winter hardy); and blue passion vine (*Pasiflora caerulea*).

Annual vines: Hyacinth bean (*Dolichos lablab*); cypress vine (*Ipomoea quamoclit*); cardinal vine (*Ipomoea multifida*); moon flower vine (*Ipomoea alba*); and Morning Glory (*Ipomoea purpurea*).



Rose of Montana

Everblooming Roses Get Another Pruning In Late Summer

Repeat flowering roses (also called everblooming roses or remontant roses) make up the overwhelming majority of the roses we grow, and they generally need to be pruned twice a year in Louisiana.

The first pruning, done in late January or early February, prepares rose bushes for the late spring to early summer blooming. The second pruning is done in late August to early September. This pruning ensures shapely bushes with lots of flowers during the late summer to fall blooming season.

Pruning helps control the size of rose bushes and stimulates fresh, vigorous growth that improves flowering. It also provides the opportunity to remove any dead canes. When it comes to pruning roses, how you do it really depends on the type of rose you have.

Prune Properly for Best Results

Use sharp bypass-type hand pruners when pruning roses. They make clean cuts and minimize damage to the stems. Should you need to cut canes larger than 1/2 inch in diameter, you should use loppers.

When pruning, be sure to wear a sturdy pair of leather gloves and long sleeves, because no matter how careful you are, thorny roses can painfully puncture or scratch your hands and arms.

Here are some basic tips for late summer pruning of hybrid tea and grandiflora roses. First, entirely remove all diseased or dead canes by cutting them back to their point of origin. Weak, spindly canes (the diameter of a pencil or less) also should be removed the same way. A good rose bush should have four to eight strong, healthy canes the diameter of your finger or larger after these first steps. Then cut back the remaining canes to about 30

to 36 inches from ground level. Make the cuts about 1/4 inch above a dormant bud or newly sprouted side shoot that faces away from the center of the bush.

Other repeat blooming roses, such as China, tea, noisette, Bourbon, polyantha, floribunda, shrub, landscape and miniature roses, also may be pruned now. These roses are usually only cut back by about one-third their height and then shaped, under most circumstances. Generally, this is best done using hand pruners to selectively cut individual branches and canes. In the case of a mass planting or hedge, however, they can even be sheared with hedge shears to shape them and encourage full, bushy growth. (This works well for Knock Out roses.)

If some of your bushes are considerably overgrown, you can cut them back more. Long, especially vigorous shoots that have grown well beyond the rest of the bush and make it look out of balance may be cut back more than the rest of the bush.

Once-blooming roses, which include some old garden types and many climbing and rambler roses (Cherokee, swamp, Lady Banks, Veilchenblau, Dorothy Perkins and Blaze are some examples.), should not be pruned now. If once-blooming roses are pruned back hard now they will produce fewer flowers next year. When extensive pruning of once-blooming roses is necessary, it is best done in early to midsummer after they have finished flowering.

It is far easier for you and healthier for your rose bushes if you regularly prune them twice each year. It is more difficult to properly prune a rose bush that has been allowed to grow way beyond the desired size, and it is more stressful for the bush.

Dan Gill, Consumer Horticulture



Garden Fest

LSU AgCenter Botanic Garden
at Burden

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Saturday, June 21 • 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Adults: \$10 • Children/Youth (4-20): \$5
Children 3 and younger: FREE

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EST. 2004

Schedule of Events

7:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m.

Sample Delicious Omelets

7:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Taste New Louisiana Food Products

8 a.m.-11 a.m.

Outstanding Tomato Contest

9 a.m.-10 a.m.

Fresh Bloody Mary Samples

10 a.m.-11 a.m.

Sample Fresh, Local Gourmet Dishes

10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Singer-Songwriter Showcase
LSU AgCenter Dairy Store Ice Cream

11 a.m.-Noon

Garden Fest Cocktail Contest

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Checklist For Summer

- When irrigating, water the soil deeply and thoroughly. Try to irrigate less often, but irrigate well each time. Light, overhead sprinkling is not the best way to water.
- Continue to plant warm-season bedding plants such as Mexican heather, ornamental peppers, ornamental sweet potatoes, Serena angelonia* and other angelonias, Little Ruby alternanthera* and other alternantheras, coleus, impatiens, periwinkle, cosmos, BabyWing begonia* and other begonias, Butterfly pentas* and other pentas, globe amaranth, ageratum, salvia 'Victoria' and other salvias, marigold, portulaca, blue daze, perennial verbenas, purslane, dusty miller, rudbeckia, narrow-leaf zinnia, Profusion zinnia, Zahara zinnia, Kauai torenia* and other torenias, caladium, balsam, gerbera daisy, Mesa gaillardia*, celosia, Bandana lantana* and other lantanas, scaevola, melampodium, butterfly weed, shrimp plant, Senorita Rosalita cleome*, four o'clock, perilla, Luna hardy hibiscus*, sunflower and cigar flower. (*Louisiana Super Plants selections. For more information on the LSU AgCenter's Louisiana Super Plants program, go to www.lsuagcenter.com/superplants.)
- Dig and store gladiolus corms in a well-ventilated, freeze-proof place for planting next spring.
- Plant sunflowers in late summer for fall flower arrangements. Flower colors include yellow, orange, red, bronze, white and combinations of these. It usually requires about 60-80 days from sowing seed until first flower color.
- Prune azaleas no later than mid-July. This applies to most spring-flowering shrubs as well as hydrangeas and gardenias.
- Container plants should not be placed directly on wooden decks. The moisture trapped underneath can damage the wood. Boost pots off the surface an inch or two with pieces of brick or pot supports, which are available at local nurseries and garden shops.
- In early summer, gardenias may have whiteflies and the associated black sooty mold. For optimum plant performance, control the insects with summer horticultural oil spray.
- Camellias and azaleas need care to set a good crop of flower buds for next year. Healthy, vigorous plants will set buds, but weak plants may not. If plants lack vigor, fertilize, provide moisture during stressful periods and control pests.
- Louisiana irises are semidormant in the late summer. Prune off seedpods and yellow or brown foliage to keep the plants more attractive. You may transplant or divide Louisiana irises beginning in August.
- Cut faded flowers from flowering annuals and perennials to encourage new growth and flowers. Old blooms and seed heads left on the plants can retard continued flower production.
- Finish any pruning you may need to do to shrubs in the landscape, particularly those that bloom in winter or spring. Pruning later (after June) may interfere with flowering.
- Small yellow aphids on your butterfly weed or milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) will not damage the plants or affect the feeding of adult and larval monarch butterflies. Do not attempt to control them since that may adversely affect the caterpillars.
- Summer rains will encourage the growth of weeds along with the ornamentals in your garden beds. Do not let weeds get out of hand before dealing with the situation.
- Keep caladiums well watered during hot, dry weather to keep the foliage in good shape through the summer. You may apply a fertilizer now to encourage vigorous growth. Break off any flowers that form and old, faded leaves.
- Unless it is absolutely necessary, avoid placing saucers underneath container plants outside. Saucers full of water keep the soil in the pots too wet, an unhealthy condition for most plants. In addition, saucers full of water provide breeding sites for mosquitoes.

Vegetables to Plant

June — The summer crop of tomatoes (heat-set cultivars) are planted in mid-June and again in late July to encourage production through the first killing frost. Planting heat-set tomatoes is very important since these cultivars will yield under high day and night temperatures. If managed correctly, heat-set tomatoes will produce fruit through October (if planted in June) and through December (late-July plantings). Examples of heat-set tomatoes include Florida 91, Solar Set, Sun Master and Sun Leaper, along with several others. Heat-set tomatoes can be planted again in late July for fall tomato production.

Collard greens, cucumbers, watermelons, cantaloupes, okra, southern peas, pumpkins and summer squash all can be seeded directly into the garden during June.

Start transplants of eggplants, peppers and sweet potato slips in June, as well.

July — Transplant your fall crop of heat-set tomatoes. Bell pepper transplants also may be planted now.

Okra, southern peas, cucumbers, squash, cantaloupes, pumpkins and watermelons all can be seeded in July. Mid-July is the optimum time to plant pumpkins for Halloween harvest!

Late July is an excellent time to start thinking about your fall garden. Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, Chinese cabbage, cabbage and collard greens should be seeded into trays for later plantings. Keeps these plants outside; a greenhouse environment may burn them up this time of year.

August — Plant bush snap beans and bush lima beans in the garden. Also plant seed trays of broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, Chinese cabbage, cabbage, collard greens, cucumbers, squash, southern peas, mustard greens and shallot sets.

In mid-August, transplant your broccoli and Brussels sprouts into the garden. In north Louisiana, start your lettuce seeds and plant beet and Irish potato seeds in the garden. In late August, south Louisiana gardeners can plant their lettuce, beet and Irish potato seeds into the garden.

Summer Vegetables

Welcome to summer! Temperatures are on the rise, and so is plant growth.

If you kept up with the suggestions in earlier Horticulture Hints newsletters, you've read about all the wonderful vegetable crops to plant in your garden this spring and hopefully even planted quite a few.

Increasing temperatures mean increasing growth. Watering is critical now as your vegetables begin to bloom and produce. Try to water at the base of the plant. Avoiding overhead irrigation helps keep diseases at bay. If you do irrigate with overhead sprinklers or oscillating sprinkler fans, however, try to do so early in the morning so the sun can quickly dry foliage.

You'll also notice that insect pressure is increasing. Set thresholds you are willing to tolerate. Once those have been met, determine how you will get rid of pests.

The first step in insect control is properly identifying the pest. If you aren't sure what is causing the damage on your plants, bring the insect or the damage the insect is causing to your local LSU AgCenter office for advice. Blindly applying pesticides can hurt beneficial insects and potentially not even kill the target organism.

For a list of insecticides, both organic and conventional, that are labeled for use on vegetable crops, visit the LSU AgCenter's website to view the home insect management guide: www.lsuagcenter.com/en/communications/publications/management_guides/Louisiana+Insect+Pest+Management+Guide_seriespage-33.htm

See the tips below for maintaining your spring crops and planting new crops this summer.

Crop Highlights

Broccoli and cauliflower. Both can be directly seeded beginning in mid-July through September or transplanted from early August through early September. It takes four to six weeks to produce transplants from seed. In general, broccoli and cauliflower will require 5 to 6 pounds (2 cups or 1 pint = 1 pound) of a complete fertilizer such as 8-24-24 or 13-13-13 per 100 feet of row. These crops, especially cauliflower, require fast, continuous growth for proper head development. Keep them well watered and fertilized. Side-dress plants with 1 pound (2 cups) of calcium nitrate per 100 feet of row three weeks after transplanting and again two weeks after that. Varieties that will produce in about 60 days from transplanting reduce the chance of cold-weather damage. Recommended varieties are: Broccoli – Gypsy, Diplomat and Packman; Cauliflower – Majestic, Candid Charm, Cumberland, Snow Crown and Freedom.

Snap beans. Late August and early September are the best times to plant snap beans. Normally, 50 to 55 days are required from planting until harvest. Don't let beans suffer from drought. Good varieties are Provider, Roma II, Bronco, Royal Burgundy and Strike. For a yellow wax bean, choose Golden Rod Wax. Bush beans usually will produce more successfully than pole beans during the fall because of their earlier maturity.

Lima beans. This crop is harder to produce than snap beans during the fall. Plant early enough to produce before frost and late enough so they're not blooming while temperatures are too high for fruit set. For example, planting from early August through about mid-August is ideal. Plant bush beans for fall production – Henderson, Fordhook 242, Thorogreen, Jackson Wonder or Dixie Butterpea.



Irish potatoes.

Plant small whole potatoes saved from the spring crop from about mid-August to early September. Good soil moisture is essential. The seed potatoes may not sprout readily after planting because of a physiological rest period of about 90

days they have to go through after harvesting during the spring. After this rest period is satisfied, the tubers should sprout. Fall yields are lower than spring yields. Use the smaller potatoes (that you harvested) for seed pieces.



Cabbage. Plant seed beginning in mid-July through September. You also may transplant beginning in early August through mid-October. Fertilize the same as broccoli and cauliflower. Space cabbage, cauliflower and Chinese cabbage about 12 to 14 inches apart and broccoli 6 to 12 inches apart. Double drill (two drills of plants spaced 10-12 inches apart on a single row) will help maximize yield. Try Rio Verde for late plantings. Recommended early maturity varieties include Platinum Dynasty and Stonehead (and All America Selection). Maturing a little later are Rio Verde, Emblem, Blue Dynasty, Royal Vantage, Silver Dynasty, Vantage Point and Savoy King (AAS).

Squash and cucumbers. These two crops can be planted in June, July and August. Summer plantings will be ready to harvest after about six weeks. Fall yields usually are lower than spring ones. A fall crop of yellow summer squash, zucchini and cucumbers can be grown by planting seed during August. Squash vine borers may be a more severe problem during fall than spring, so be prepared to control them with an insecticide. Viruses



are a problem during the fall. The best cucumber to plant is Dasher II or Olympian.

Pumpkins. Pumpkins for Halloween should be planted during early to mid-July. Apply 3-5 pounds of a complete fertilizer (13-13-13) for each 100 feet of row before planting. Plant five to six seed in hills about 4 to 5 feet apart on rows 6 to 8 feet apart. Thin to one or two plants per hill. Apply a side-dressing of 2 pounds (2 pints) of calcium nitrate per 100 feet of row when vines begin to run. Keep soil moist for best production. Autumn Gold, Orange Smoothie, Cinderella, Silver Moon and Gold Rush are excellent varieties to grow for Halloween. A recommended variety of giant pumpkin is Atlantic Giant, but remember Louisiana is not the best area to grow pumpkins, so don't fret if you do not reach award-winning sizes. Watch for worms and spray routinely once they appear!

Greens. Begin planting greens – mustards, turnips and collards – during August. Keep the soil moist to ensure a good stand. Try Florida Broadleaf, Green Wave and Tendergreen mustard greens. Just Right, Purple Top Shogoin, White Lade and Tokyo Cross are great turnips.

Shallots. Dry sets of shallots can be planted from August to April. About 50 to 60 days after planting, tops will be ready to harvest.

Fall bell peppers. If plants from the spring are still in good condition they can be nursed (sprayed or dusted and watered) throughout summer. They will set fruit again as the temperatures become more favorable. If seeds of bell peppers haven't been planted by early June, buy transplants.

Fall tomatoes. Transplant fall tomatoes during July. Be prepared to spray with insecticides and fungicides. Insect and disease pressure usually is worse during the fall than the spring.

The heat-set varieties that have produced well in trials are Sun Leaper, Florida 91, Sun Master, Solar Fire, Sun Chaser, Phoenix, Solar Set and Heat Wave II. These varieties have the ability to set some fruit during times of high temperatures, allowing the fruit to mature before cool weather. Row covers, which protect the plants from the first frost, have prolonged the harvest period and enhanced fruit maturity. Also worth trying during fall is BHN 216. Since fall tomatoes are a crop you can't really be sure of, it's interesting to try several early varieties. Certain varieties may produce better in some parts of the state than others because of the variations in climate and soils. Start early, and get a strong bush.



Lettuce. Head lettuce can be grown in Louisiana during late August. A common mistake is planting the seed too deeply. Many lettuce cultivars require light for germination, so scatter the seed on the row and lightly rake it into the soil. Plant leaf lettuce during September. Keep the soil moist until the seeds have germinated and are well established. Head types are tougher to grow. Recommended varieties of head lettuce are Ithaca and Maverick. For leaf lettuce, try Red Salad Bowl, Grand Rapids, New Red Fire, Tango, Red Sails, Salad Bowl, Simpson or Elite. The recommended romaine lettuce varieties are Parris Island, Green Towers, Cimarron Red, and Flashy Trout Back. For butterhead or bibb lettuce, try Buttercrunch, Esmerelda or Oak Leaf.

*Kathryn Fontenot
Home/School/Community Garden Specialist*

Turfgrasses and Lawns

Tips for Summer Care of Turfgrass

Summer is the prime growing season for lawns in Louisiana.

If you did not fertilize your lawn during the spring, you still have time to fertilize and get your lawn in good shape prior to fall. Keep up a good fertility program through early to late August. Apply all granular materials on a dry lawn and water soon after application.

St. Augustine grass and zoysia both respond well to fertilizer applications. Fertilize zoysia twice per growing season – in April and again around June/July. St. Augustine may be fertilized three times during the growing season – April, June and mid-August.

Bermuda grass is an even bigger fertilizer user and can be fertilized from three to eight times during the growing season, especially if you like to mow grass. Carpet grass and centipede grass are not big fertilizer users. Usually, two applications will take care of centipedes (April and July), and one application will be sufficient for carpet grass (April).

Centipede grass should receive its second and final fertilizer application in July. For centipede, apply only 1/2 pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet as a complete turf fertilizer. For example, apply 3 pounds of 17-0-17 per 1,000 square feet or 5 pounds of 10-0-10 per 1,000 square feet. St. Augustine grass would need twice that rate.

Fertilize St. Augustine grass, Bermuda grass and zoysia in June and again in early to mid-August with at least 1 pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. For example, apply 7 pounds of 13-13-13 per 1,000 square feet or 5 pounds of 19-19-19 per 1,000 square feet.

Make sure lawns are getting adequate amounts of moisture during the summer months, but don't overwater. Water deeply only once or twice per week – or as needed, based on the amount of rainfall. Centipede grass is the least tolerant lawn to drought, so take care to provide adequate amounts of moisture for this grass, especially during dry periods.

Watch for chinch bugs in St. Augustine and Bermuda grass lawns and treat with an LSU AgCenter recommended insecticide. Chinch bug problems show up as yellowish brown areas of the lawn during hot and dry weather. These insects extract plant juices from turfgrass stems and crowns while pumping toxic salivary fluids into the plant. The fluids disrupt the plant's vascular system.

Check for chinch bugs in the lawn by saturating suspected areas with a gallon of water mixed with a few squirts of lemon dishwashing soap. This soapy solution irritates chinch bugs and brings them up near the grass surface so you can see them and determine if the bugs are causing the lawn damage.

Additional insect problems that appear during the summer include army worms and tropical sod webworms. These moth larvae or "worms" can cause severe lawn damage very quickly and will need to be killed with insecticides to prevent further damage. Be mindful of these pests as you walk through your lawns. Investigate damaged areas and treat accordingly.

Weed management is difficult in St. Augustine grass and centipede grass lawns because herbicides can cause severe lawn injury when temperatures exceed 90 degrees. Limit applications to careful spot treatments to reduce lawn injury.

Pull up small populations of Virginia buttonweed or carefully spot treat with herbicides like Ferti-lome Weed Free Zone or Ortho Weed B Gon. It is a good idea to begin spot treatments as early as April. Once temperatures exceed 90 degrees, herbicides such as Weed Free Zone and Weed B Gon are too damaging to St. Augustine grass and centipede grass. Consider using professional herbicide products like metsulfuron or Celsius during the summer for buttonweed. These herbicides are easier on St. Augustine and centipede during warm weather than typical consumer herbicides.

Ron Strahan
Weed Scientist/Turfgrass Specialist



Growing Pineapples for Fun

Pineapples are grown throughout tropical and warm subtropical areas of the world. Unlike many fruit plants, pineapples are very well adapted to container culture, and the fresh pineapples in the local supermarket have everything you need to get started.

Pineapples are related to other familiar plants such as bromeliads and Spanish moss. Pineapples apparently have been cultivated by indigenous people of the tropical Americas and the Caribbean Region for thousands of years.

Climate and Soils

Pineapples grow best under uniform year-round warm temperatures. Pineapple plants do not tolerate freezing temperatures below 28 degrees Fahrenheit, and temperatures below 60 degrees or above 90 degrees may slow plant growth. Optimum temperatures for pineapple growth range between 68 and 86.

Chilling injury caused by low, near-freezing temperatures or light frosts may result in the upper leaf surfaces developing a red/white flecked, scorched appearance and pulp rotting of the fruit. While plants might survive 28 degrees, significant leaf damage would severely weaken the plant. Because of this cold sensitivity, pineapples are not recommended for outdoor planting.

Pineapples are herbaceous perennials with long sword-like leaves arranged in a spiral around a central stem and a terminal inflorescence. Leaves may or may not bear marginal spines, depending upon variety and cultural practices. Adult plants may be 3 to 6 feet high and wide.

Soil and Site Selection

In general, pineapple plants should be planted in full sun for best growth and fruit production. Pineapple plants absolutely require soils or planting media with good internal drainage. Given the small size of the plant, its sensitivity to frost and its preference for well-drained, acidic soils, pineapples can be grown in 4- or 5-gallon planters or containers, and the plants can be moved indoors next to a sunny window during the colder winter months. Any good potting medium should be adequate for pineapple culture, as should any container having drainage holes at the bottom.

Varieties

The fruit of pineapples is seedless and is derived from the fusion of many individual flowers into one fruit. The fruit consists of the fused ovaries, bases of sepals and bracts and cortex of the central core.

When fruit are mature (ready to pick), the individual fruitlets flatten and the peel color begins to change from green to yellow progressively from the base to the top of the fruit. Fruit may weigh up to 5 pounds or more. Ripe fruit have a yellow peel and pleasant aroma. The pulp is yellow to golden yellow, sweet and juicy.

Smooth Cayenne is a major variety that is found fresh in supermarkets. Its lack of spines on the leaves is advantageous for a container plant that must be moved indoors



during cold weather. There are other varieties of fresh market pineapple that are a little hardier or that have much better eating quality.

Propagation

The easiest way to propagate your own plant is to pick out a fresh pineapple at the grocery store. Look for one with firm, green leaves that have not turned yellow or brown. The skin on the fruit should be golden brown and firm to the touch.

Smell the pineapple to see if it's ripe. It should emit a sweet, heady smell indicating that you've chosen it at just the right time to start a new pineapple plant. Make sure the pineapple isn't underripe since it needs to be ripe to produce another pineapple. Check to make sure the pineapple isn't too ripe by tugging a little at the leaves. If they come right off, the pineapple is too ripe to plant.

Twist the leaves off the top of the pineapple. Grasp the body of the pineapple with one hand and use the other to grab the leaves at the base and twist them off. This method ensures the base of the leaves will stay intact. It will be attached to a minimum amount of fruit, which you don't need for the plant to grow.

If you have too much trouble twisting off the top, you can slice off the top of the pineapple. Slice off the excess fruit and make sure the base, the very tip of the area where the leaves join together, stays intact. New roots will be sprouting from this, and without it the plant won't grow.

Next, strip off some of the lower leaves to expose the stem. This helps the stem sprout roots once it is planted. Strip until a few inches of the stem are exposed. Cut away any remaining fruit without damaging the stem. Turn it upside down and let it dry for a week. The scars where you made a cut and removed the leaves will harden, which is necessary before you take the next step.

In the next step, you will soak the crown of the plant. Fill a large glass with water. The mouth of the glass should be large enough to fit the pineapple crown inside but

small enough so you can prop it up to keep it from getting completely submerged.

Stick a few toothpicks into the pineapple crown. Place them across from each other near the top of the stem. Push them in just far enough so they'll stay in place. These toothpicks are used to suspend the pineapple crown in the glass of water. Put the crown in the water. The toothpicks should rest on the rim of the glass. The stem should be submerged in the water, and the leaves should stick out the top.

Place the glass in a sunny window and wait for roots to sprout. It should take several days or up to a few weeks for white roots to poke out and begin to grow.

Keep the plant away from extreme temperatures. Don't let it get too hot or too cold. Change out the water every few days to prevent the growth of mold.

Planting the Pineapple Crown

Prepare a pot of soil for the crown. Fill a 6-inch or larger pot with potting mix or well-drained garden soil.

Plant the crown when the roots are a few inches long. Wait until they've gotten long enough to take root in soil. If you plant the crown too early, it won't do well. Press the soil firmly around the base of the crown without getting any soil on the leaves.

Keep the plant moist and warm. It needs a sunny, warm and humid environment where the night temperatures won't drop below 60 F. If conditions are dry, mist the plant regularly. If you take it indoors during the winter season, keep it in a sunny window. It's important for the plant to get a lot of sun year-round.

Planting and Care

Give the plant food and water. Water the soil lightly once a week. Fertilize the plant with half-strength fertilizer twice a month during the summer.

It can take several years, but eventually a red cone should appear from the center of the leaves, followed by blue flowers and eventually a fruit. It takes about six months for the fruit

to fully develop. The pineapple will grow from the flower, above ground, in the center of the plant.

Pineapple can be "forced" to flower so it will produce fruit sooner than it would under natural conditions. If the plant is large and vigorous, the fruit produced will be about as large as if it had flowered normally. Otherwise, fruit size and quality will be reduced by forcing. It is best to force the plant to flower during the winter months when the days are cooler and shorter since this is when a pineapple is accustomed to making fruit.

The first technique for forcing flowering is to lay the plant and pot on its side between waterings. This interferes with hormones in the plant, causing the production of another hormone, ethylene, which induces flowering.

Because pieces of apple fruit generate ethylene gas, they also can be used to induce flowering of pineapple. Placing pieces of an apple on the rosette and adjacent leaf axils and covering the plant with a paper bag is a second method of inducing flowering. You also can place the plant in a bag with two ripe and bruised apples for two weeks. Move the plant

to a shady location during this time and then move it back to its sunny spot.

Potential Problems

Growing pineapples in containers subjects them to about the same problems that afflict other container-grown plants. For example, too little light results in poor growth, poor color, legginess and a failure to flower without repeated forcing. Overwatering also is typical, causing root damage that results in poor growth, yellowing and dying of leaves, and poor to no fruiting.

Typical houseplant insect pests may be encountered – the most serious being mealybug.

Pineapple plants may be attacked by various mealybugs, scales and root-feeding grubs of several beetle species. Pineapple root rots may be caused by various *Phytophthora* and *Pythium* species that attack and destroy the root system. Primary control is to use disease-free planting material and avoid long periods of excessive soil moisture.

*David G. Himelrick, Ph.D.
Fruit Crops Specialist*

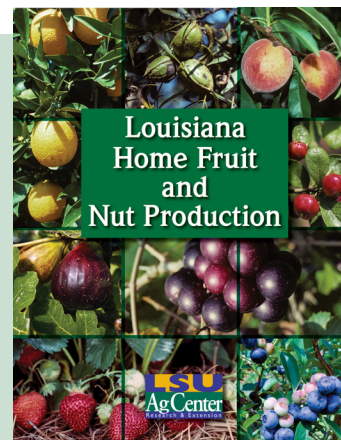
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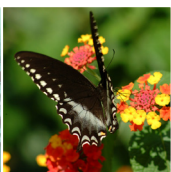
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