



GN AgCenter
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Cover Photo: 'Twilight' agapanthus
growing in the LaSalle Landing Pollinator
Garden in Kenner, Louisiana.

By Chris Dunaway

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Look at Me: Agapanthus



Agapanthus species used in horticulture. A = *A. inapertus* (photo by Wildflower Nursery), B = *A. campanulatus* (photo by Beth Chatto Nursery), C = *A. africanus* (photo by Amazon), D = *A. praecox* (photo by Miller Landscaping Supplies).

Agapanthus (*Agapanthus* spp.), commonly known as lily-of-the-Nile or African lily, is a durable and ornamental perennial well suited to landscapes across much of Louisiana. Valued for its bold, strap-like foliage and showy clusters of blue, purple, or white flowers, agapanthus performs reliably in southern gardens with minimal maintenance once established. Though commonly called a lily, *Agapanthus* is not a true lily. While they share similar flower shapes, *Agapanthus* belongs to the Amaryllidaceae family, whereas true lilies belong to the Liliaceae family.

Botanical Description

Agapanthus species are clump-forming herbaceous perennials, evergreen or semi-evergreen in mild winters. Plants arise from thick, fleshy rhizomes and produce arching, linear leaves typically 12–30 inches long. Flower stalks (scapes) emerge in late spring

through summer, rising above the foliage and terminating in large, rounded umbels composed of dozens of tubular, star-shaped flowers. In Louisiana, peak flowering typically occurs from May through July. Some modern cultivars may produce light repeat flowering later in summer if plants are healthy and moisture is adequate. Individual flowers may be blue, violet, lavender, purple, or white, often displaying darker midribs. Mature plants generally reach 18–36 inches in height, depending on species and cultivar.

Native Range

Agapanthus is native to southern Africa, primarily South Africa, where species occur in open grasslands, rocky slopes, and coastal regions. These environments contribute to the plant's tolerance of heat, periodic drought, and a range of soil types once established. There are currently seven recognized species of *Agapanthus*.

Species Commonly Used in Horticulture

Agapanthus africanus – An evergreen species commonly associated with traditional lily-of-the-Nile plantings. It features dark green, arching foliage and medium blue flowers on sturdy stems. It performs best in south Louisiana with protection from hard freezes.

Agapanthus praecox – A widely cultivated species complex that forms the genetic basis of many modern garden varieties. Plants are vigorous, evergreen to semi-evergreen, and free flowering, with bloom colors ranging from blue to white.

Agapanthus

inapertus – A deciduous species known for its nodding, trumpet-shaped flowers rather than open, star-like blooms. Flowers are typically deep blue to purple. It requires excellent drainage and is less common in general landscapes.

Agapanthus campanulatus – A deciduous species with soft foliage and upright, bell-shaped blue flowers. It is generally more cold tolerant than evergreen types and dies back completely in winter.

Hybrid *Agapanthus* – Most plants sold today are hybrids selected for improved cold tolerance, compact habit, or extended flowering. Evergreen, semi-evergreen, or deciduous behavior depends on parentage. *Agapanthus* species readily hybridize and the number of named varieties is

estimated at over 600.

Growing Conditions in Louisiana

Agapanthus performs best in full sun to light shade. In Louisiana landscapes, morning sun with limited

Commonly Available Varieties



Common commercially available varieties. A = Blue Storm (photo by Monrovia), B = Peter Pan (photo by To Go Garden), C = Snow Cloud (photo by Fairweather’s Plants), D = Storm Cloud (photo by Digging Dog Nursery), E = Tornado (photo by Hoyland Plant Centre).

afternoon shade is ideal, particularly in inland areas with high summer temperatures. Plants prefer well-drained soils but tolerate heavier clay soils if drainage is adequate. Once established, agapanthus exhibits moderate drought tolerance, though consistent moisture promotes improved flowering. Fertilize lightly in spring using a balanced, slow-release fertilizer. Excess fertility encourages foliage growth at the expense of blooms. Most cultivars are well suited to USDA Hardiness Zones 8–10, with excellent performance in Zones 9a–9b.

Pollinators and Ecological Value

Agapanthus flowers attract a variety of pollinators which utilize the abundant nectar produced within the clustered blooms. Commonly seen pollinators

include bees, butterflies, hover flies, hummingbirds, and moths. Although *Agapanthus* is not native to Louisiana, it can contribute seasonal nectar resources in ornamental landscapes when combined with native flowering perennials.

Landscape Uses

Agapanthus is widely used in mass plantings, perennial borders, foundation plantings, and large containers. The bold foliage provides year-round structure, while tall summer bloom stalks add vertical interest. Plants are well suited for walkways, patios, coastal landscapes, and mixed perennial beds. *Agapanthus* also performs well as a long-lasting cut flower.

Popular Varieties

Below is a description of just a few of the more than 600 varieties of *Agapanthus* available commercially.

‘Blue Storm’ – Cold-hardy selection with rich blue flowers; typically 24–30 inches tall and wide; reliable performer in Louisiana landscapes.

‘Peter Pan’ – Compact dwarf cultivar with clear blue flowers; matures at 12–18 inches tall and wide; ideal for edging and containers.

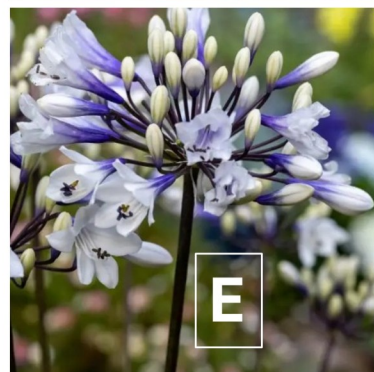
‘Snow Cloud’ – Vigorous white-flowering selection; reaches 24–36 inches tall and about 24 inches wide; effective for mass plantings.

‘Storm Cloud’ – Deep violet-blue flowers with darker striping; grows 24–30 inches tall and wide; performs well in heat and humidity.

‘Tornado’ – Strong-stemmed hybrid with dark blue flowers; typically 30–36 inches tall and 24–30 inches wide; suitable for focal plantings.

Ever® Series (Modern, Compact Hybrids). The Ever® series is a collection of compact, reblooming, and early-flowering *Agapanthus* hybrids bred in South Africa for superior garden performance. Known for long-lasting, repeating blooms from spring through summer, these semi-dwarf, evergreen plants are ideal for containers, borders, and mixed planting. These plants are often found within the Sunset Plant

Ever® Series of Agapanthus



Varieties in the Ever® *Agapanthus* series. **A** = Amethyst (photo by Southern Living Collection), **B** = Midnight (photo by Sunset Collection), **C** = Sapphire (photo by Sunset Collection), **D** = Skylight (photo by Wilson Brother's Nursery), **E** = Sparkle (photo by Fairweather's Plants), **F** = Star (photo by Southern Living Collection), **G** = Twilight (photo by Plant Addicts), **H** = White (photo by Fast Growing Trees).

Collection or Southern Living Plant Collection.

Ever® Amethyst – Rich purple-violet flowers; 18–24 inches tall and wide; strong color accent in perennial beds.

Ever® Midnight – Deep indigo-blue flowers; 20–24 inches tall and wide; dramatic contrast plant.

Ever® Sapphire – Clear blue flowers; 18–24 inches tall and wide; selected for durability and uniform habit.

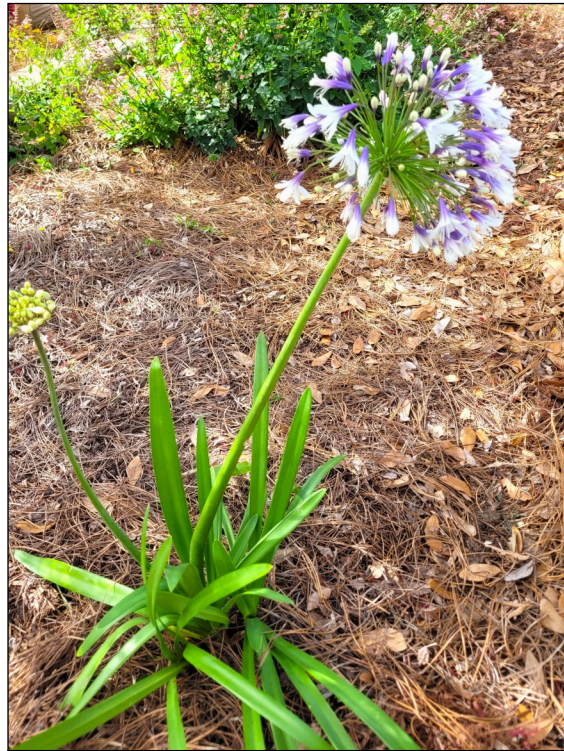
Ever® Skylight – Dark blue flowers; 24–30 inches tall and wide; versatile, repeat blooming perennial for containers, borders, and cut flowers.

Ever® Sparkle – White flowers with subtle blue striping; 18–24 inches tall and wide; brightens mixed plantings.

Ever® Star – Bicolor blue and white flowers; 16–18 inches tall and wide; blooms early & repeats through summer.

Ever® Twilight – Bicolor flowers with violet-blue margins and white centers; 18–24 inches tall and wide; strong border plant.

Ever® White – Clean white flowers; mature size 18–24 inches tall and wide; excellent for containers and mass plantings.



Agapanthus growing in the pollinator garden at LaSalle's Landing in Kenner

Cold Damage and Freeze Response in South Louisiana

Agapanthus generally performs well in south Louisiana, but freezing temperatures can affect plants differently depending on species and cultivar.

Evergreen and Semi-Evergreen Types – Foliage may burn or collapse below 25°F. Damage is cosmetic; plants resprout from the crown in spring. Delay pruning until late winter.

Deciduous Types – Naturally die back and are more cold tolerant. Minimal intervention is needed in most winters.

Freeze Protection Tips – Mulch crowns lightly, avoid late nitrogen fertilization, protect containers during hard freezes, and delay cleanup until danger of frost has passed.

Post-Freeze Recovery – New growth typically emerges with warm spring temperatures, even after severe foliage loss.

~ Dr. Joe W Willis

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Royal Horticultural Society. 2026. *Agapanthus*. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/agapanthus>

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May Vegetable Planting Guide

Crop	Recommended Variety
Amaranth	None Given
Cantaloupe	Ambrosia, Aphrodite, Athena, Primo, Vienna
Cucuzza	None Given
Cushaw	None Given
Eggplant	Dusky, Night Shadow, Epic, Santana, Calliope
Hot Peppers (transplant)	Grande, Tula, Mariachi, Mitla,
Lima Beans (bush or pole)	Dixie Butterpea, Jackson Wonder, Thorogreen Florida Speckled, King of Garden
Luffa Gourd	None Given
Malbar Spinace	None Given
Mirlitons	None Given
Okra	Annie Oakley, Cajun Delight, Clemson Spineless
Peanuts	None Given
Pumpkins	Atlantic Giant, Baby Bear, Prankster, Sorcerer
Southern Peas	Queen Anne, California #5, Quickpick, Colussus
Soybeans	None Given
Sweet Potato	Beauregard, Evangeline, Hernandez, Jewel
Watermelon	Seedless: Cooperstown, Gypsy, Matrix, Millennium Seeded: Mickey Lee, Sugar Baby, Amarillo
Yardlong Beans	None Given

What's Bugging You?

Giant Salvinia Can Be Managed Using Weevil Insects Bred by LSU AgCenter

This month's edition of What's Bugging You is an invasive weed that can be managed using an insect! South Louisiana has many invasive species, and it seems like a constant battle to keep them in check. Giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) is a floating fern, native to Brazil, that rapidly spreads to cover waterways in tropical and subtropical areas.

In 1998, giant salvinia was reported in the Toledo Bend reservoir, and has since spread across the southeastern United States, degrading habitat and inhibiting boat traffic. In the New Orleans area, this invasive weed made the news when it rapidly covered sections of Bayou St. John, which prompted

members of the neighborhood to go out and manually remove it using canoes and kayaks. Over 50 tons of the weed was removed from the bayou by hand. In and around waterways herbicide options are very limited and often several applications are required. Luckily, there's a statewide effort to utilize a biocontrol strategy to help keep giant salvinia in check- giant salvinia weevil insects.

There are two species of salvinia in Louisiana, and the weevils only feed on the giant. Common salvinia (*Salvinia minima*) is less aggressive but can still form dense mats in waterways. Identification of what

particular salvinia species you have on your property or local waterway is key in determining if weevil releases will be successful or not. Identification means taking a close look at the hairs on the leaves, called trichomes. The trichomes on giant salvinia are closed at the tips, looking like eggbeaters. Common salvinia trichomes are branched or forked at the tip. You can



Salvinia weevils (*Cyrtobagous salviniae*) feeding on giant salvinia.

use the camera on your phone to zoom in on these hairs to get a good look, and to snap some photos to send in to the LSU program to apply for the weevils to be released at the site. If you need help determining which salvinia you have, photos can be emailed or sent via text or a site visit can be scheduled for in-person ID, which I will then forward to the program coordinator.

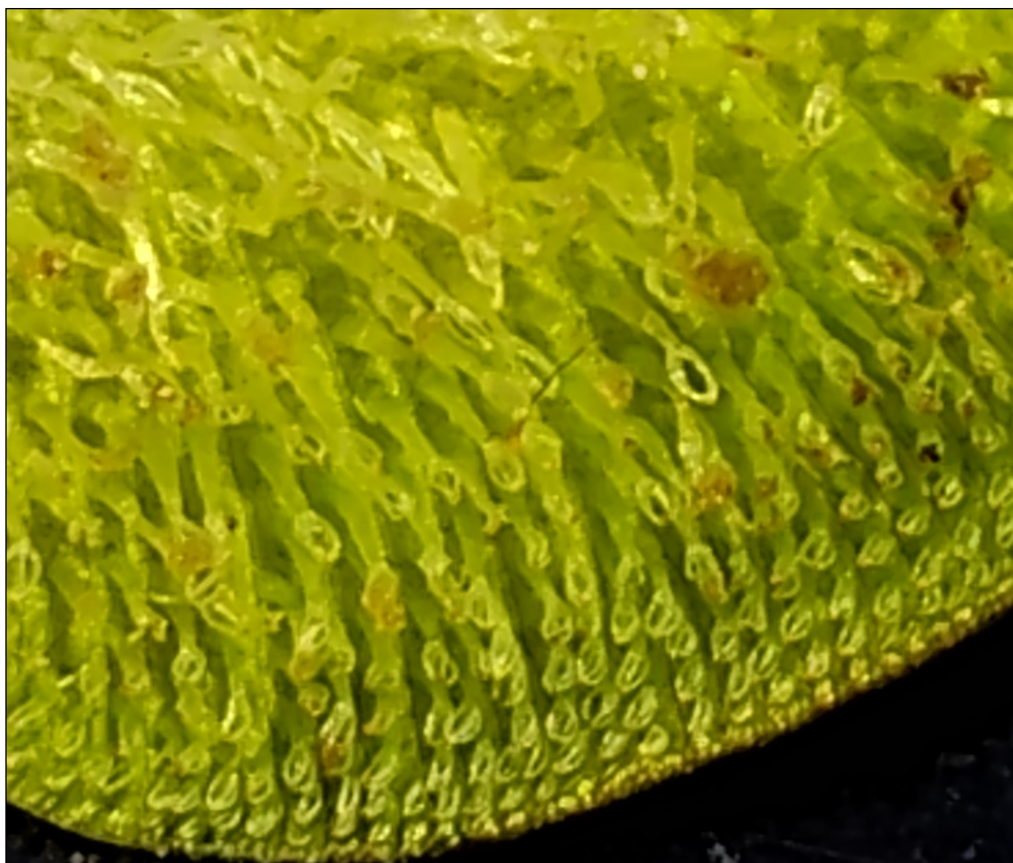
Salvinia weevils (*Cyrtobagous salviniae*) were first found on giant salvinia in its native Brazil. It has been bred and released in Louisiana since 2001. They only consume giant salvinia and pose no risk to native

vegetation or garden plants. The weevils are tiny, measuring just 2 mm, and are generally found feeding on the underside of the leaves. Adult weevils are shiny and black with small gold flecks and have a classic long weevil nose. Young adult weevils are a dark brown color and darken with age. The weevil larvae feed within the rhizome root system of the salvinia and are difficult to see, but they do the majority of the work in feeding on the salvinia and reducing its population. Larval feeding activity damages the root system, disrupting the plant's ability to uptake adequate nutrients from the water, causing the plant to decline and die.

The greater New Orleans area is an ideal geographical location for the release of the weevils, as we have relatively mild winters. Giant salvinia weevils are not especially cold tolerant, so establishing stable breeding populations works best in the more southern parishes of the state. If you have a pond, ditch, or waterway with salvinia in it and would like



Giant Salvinia in a local waterway. Photo by Anna Timmerman



The closed tip trichomes on the leaves of the giant salvinia. Photo by Anna Timmerman

to learn more about this free biocontrol program, please visit www.lsuagcenter.com for more information. If you'd like to be considered for a free giant salvinia weevil release in early May in our area, please email me at atimmerman@agcenter.lsu.edu or call/text (312) 846-0689 Monday-Friday, 8 AM to 4:30 PM to connect with an interest form. Photos of your salvinia will be needed for an accurate ID, we can schedule site visits if needed for residents of Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Orleans, and Jefferson parishes.

~Anna Timmerman



Weed of the Month: Lawn Burweed

(*Soliva sessilis* Ruiz and Pavon)

Few lawn weeds are as painful as lawn burweed. As a cool-season annual, lawn burweed germinates in the fall, grows during the cool winter months and produces seeds in the spring. The leaves of lawn burweed resemble curly leaf parsley: bright green and narrowly divided (Photo 1). It's low growth habit and small inconspicuous flowers can make it difficult to notice until you end up with a bur in the bottom of your foot. The spiny burs that annoy a bare-footed passerby are the seed pods (Beasley and Sanders, 2020). If you are noticing burs in your lawn this spring, control measures should be taken in the fall, winter and next spring to minimize their presence in coming year.

Management

As with any lawn weed, maintaining healthy turf is your first line of defense. Lawn burweed is adaptable to a wide range of soil conditions, but it is most often found in wet areas and where turfgrass is thin (Beasley and Sanders, 2020). Weeds are less likely to establish in a turf that is properly fertilized, watered, and mowed, and where compaction, thatch, insects, and diseases are well managed. For specific management recommendations for your turf, consult the LSU AgCenter publication "Louisiana Lawns Best Management Practices (BMPs)".

If you are noticing burs in your lawn this spring, make a plan for control starting in the fall. A pre-emergent herbicide containing simazine is effective on lawn burweed and safe to use on St. Augustine, centipedegrass, zoysiagrass, and bermudagrass as long as application instructions are followed. Simazine containing herbicides are less common in garden centers and nurseries, so you may need to

order an appropriate product online.

If you notice small lawn burweed plants in your lawn in the fall and winter, a post-emergent herbicide should be used. There are several post-emergent herbicides available for lawn burweed control including those containing the active ingredients atrazine or metsulfuron. These products are more common in the garden center than simazine



The parsley-like leaves of lawn burweed. Photo by Will Afton

products. For a full list of appropriate post-emergent herbicides, consult the LSU AgCenter publication, "Louisiana Home Lawn Series: Lawn Burweed". As with any herbicide, the key to effective weed control without harming the turf is ensuring that the specific product you are using is labeled for use on lawn burweed in your lawn and following application instructions.

If you prefer to forgo chemical control measures, maintaining a healthy lawn and regularly scouting in the fall, winter and spring to remove lawn burweed before it goes to seed will be critical.

~Alyssa Tarrant

Disease of the Month: Powdery Mildew

Powdery mildew is a common disease seen in Louisiana and other areas with long, humid growing seasons and I feel confident in saying that anyone who has been gardening for a couple of years has most likely seen this disease at some point in time. It

can infect many different herbaceous plants and even some woody perennial plants. You will encounter it in the vegetable garden, home orchard, and throughout the landscape. The climate in Louisiana provides an optimum environment for these types of pests to survive. In all situations, they lay a wait for a susceptible host and right environment conditions for infection.

There are several fungi organisms (pathogens) that can cause powdery mildew, and they are commonly referred to as the powdery mildew

fungi. They infect the upper leaf surfaces of their host plants. The white-colored hyphae, or branching filaments that make up fungal mycelium, contain specialized organs that produce spores. These specialized structures are called conidia and when they actively release asexual spores, it gives off the white powdery appearance that we all know and recognize. These fungi are also known as obligate parasites, meaning they need a host plant for survival, in contrast to facultative parasites that can survive without a host. Powdery mildew fungi extract

nutrients from epidermal cells of host plants colonized by their hyphae, but they don't kill the host. However, they cause unsightly appearances and if coupled with other environmental stresses can lead to plant decline.



Powdery Mildew on summer squash. Photo by Will Afton.

These organisms live in our environment and make up part of our ecosystem. They are also very host specific meaning that there are specific powdery mildew fungi that colonize specific plants. If more than one type of landscape plant shows symptoms of powdery mildew, expect different powdery mildew fungi to be causing the symptoms on those different plants. Another interesting characteristic is that powdery mildew fungi do not require free water on the leaf surface to germinate. They can germinate in environments with high relative humidity. Even with

little rainfall these pathogens can infect as long as there is a decent amount of humidity. That is why it's so common in Louisiana.

Management of this disease is like other fungal issues seen in the landscape. Scouting and observing garden plants is the first step in an integrated approach to combat powdery mildew. Get out and look at your plants to catch problems early. Manage irrigation system so that emitters apply water to the soil and not upwards or onto plant foliage. Adjust frequency and duration to exactly what the plants require. Basically, manage any excess water to keep the relative humidity as low as possible. For localized infections, simply removing the infected portions and throwing them out with the trash will suffice.

There are several fungicides that can help keep symptoms unnoticeable and slow the disease spread including



Powdery Mildew on Crapemyrtle. Photo by Will Afton



Powdery Mildew on Crapemyrtle. Photo by Mark Wilson

myclobutanil (Spectracide Immunox Multi-Purpose Fungicide, Monterey Fungi-Max), propiconazole (Ferti-lome Liquid Systemic Fungicide II, Bonide Infuse Systemic Disease Control), chlorothalonil (Ferti-lome Broad Spectrum Landscape & Garden Fungicide, Garden Tech Daconil Fungicide), and copper fungicide (various brands). When using a pesticide, it is imperative to read and follow label instructions and with fungicides in general, alternate active ingredients with each application to avoid issues with fungicide resistance.

~Will Afton

Gerbera Daisies for the Deep South

Gerbera daisy is a popular ornamental celebrated for its large, brightly colored blooms and long flowering season. In south Louisiana's warm, humid climate, careful variety selection and cultural management are essential for success. While gerberas are often treated as annuals, many modern varieties can perform as short-lived perennials in frost-free microclimates when provided excellent drainage and proactive pest and disease management.

Native Range and Background

Gerbera jamesonii is native to southern Africa, particularly South Africa and adjacent regions, where it grows in open grasslands with well-drained soils. Most cultivated gerberas are hybrids derived primarily from *Gerbera jamesonii* and *Gerbera viridifolia*, selected for expanded color range, flower size, compact growth, and improved garden performance.

Description

Gerbera daisies are herbaceous perennials forming basal rosettes of slightly hairy, lobed to lance-shaped leaves. Plants typically grow 8–18 inches tall and wide. Flowers are

borne singly on leafless stems rising above the foliage. Composite flower heads range from 3–6 inches in diameter. Colors include red, orange, yellow, bright pink, soft pink, peach, cream, white, and numerous bicolors. Blooming peaks in spring and fall, with sporadic flowering during mild winters.

Gerbera Varieties Adapted to the Deep South

The following series have shown improved tolerance to heat, humidity, and disease pressure in the Gulf South when grown with proper drainage and air circulation.

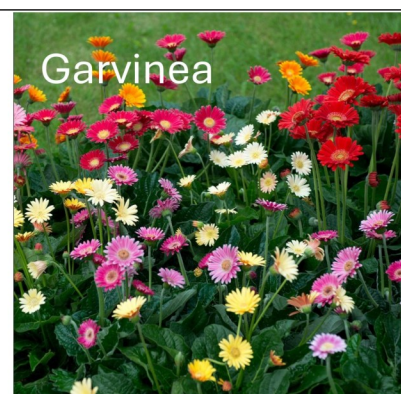
Revolution® Series

Compact plants with strong stems and improved heat tolerance; commonly used in landscapes and containers. Common colors: Red, Orange, Yellow, Lemon, Rose Pink, Deep Pink, Salmon, White, Cream, Bicolors.

Mega Revolution® Series

Similar growth habit to the Revolution® Series but with larger flower heads and thicker stems; good performance in warm climates.

Common colors: Scarlet, Orange, Yellow, Hot Pink, Light Pink, White, Cream, and Bicolor selections.



Jaguar® Series

Vigorous plants with uniform growth and excellent flower presentation bred for performance in warm regions.

Common colors: Red, Orange, Yellow, Gold, Pink, Light Pink, Salmon, White, Cream, and Bicolor forms.

Garvinea® Series

Bred specifically for outdoor landscapes, with improved tolerance to powdery mildew and heat.

Common colors: Dark Orange, Bright Orange, Yellow, Red, Pink, Light Pink, and Soft Pastels; flowers are slightly smaller but produced in greater numbers.

Growing Conditions and Maintenance

Gerbera daisies perform best in full sun to partial shade. In south Louisiana, morning sun with afternoon shade reduces heat stress. Excellent drainage is critical; raised beds or containers are strongly recommended. Soils should be loose, well-drained, and amended with organic matter, but never heavy or waterlogged.

Water deeply but infrequently, allowing the soil surface to dry slightly between irrigations. Avoid overhead watering to reduce leaf wetness and disease. Fertilize lightly but regularly using a balanced, controlled-release fertilizer or dilute liquid feed. Remove spent flowers at the base of the stem to encourage reblooming and reduce disease risk.

Common Pests and Management Options

Aphids

Organic options: Strong water sprays; insecticidal soap; neem oil.

Chemical options: Systemic insecticides containing imidacloprid or dinotefuran; foliar sprays with acetamiprid.

Thrips

Organic options: Spinosad; horticultural oil; reflective mulches in production settings.

Chemical options: Insecticides containing spinetoram, acetamiprid, or lambda-cyhalothrin.

Spider Mites

Organic options: Insecticidal soap; neem oil; predatory mites in protected settings.

Chemical options: Miticides containing bifenthrin or abamectin.

Common Diseases and Management Options

Powdery Mildew

Organic options: Sulfur; potassium bicarbonate; neem oil; proper spacing and air circulation.

Chemical options: Fungicides containing myclobutanil, propiconazole, or azoxystrobin.

Botrytis (Gray Mold)

Organic options: Sanitation; removal of infected flowers; improved air movement; biological fungicides containing *Bacillus* species.

Chemical options: Fungicides containing chlorothalonil, fenhexamid, or iprodione.

Crown and Root Rots (Phytophthora, Pythium)

Organic options: Strict drainage management; raised beds; avoidance of overwatering.

Chemical options: Preventive

drenches with fungicides containing mefenoxam, phosphonates, or etridiazole.

Always follow label directions and local Extension recommendations when using pesticides or fungicides.

With careful variety selection, excellent drainage, and integrated pest and disease management, gerbera daisies can provide vibrant seasonal color in deep south Louisiana landscapes. Newer, disease-tolerant series significantly improve success under humid conditions.

~ Dr. Joe W Willis

Selected References

Missouri Botanical Garden – Gerbera jamesonii Plant Profile [Gerbera jamesonii - Plant Finder](#)

Royal Horticultural Society. 2026. How to Grow Gerberas. [How to grow gerberas / RHS Growing Guide](#)

University of Florida IFAS Extension. 2026. Gerbera Daisy. [Gerbera Daisy – Gardening Solutions](#)



Gerbera daisies growing in a garden in Fairgrounds neighborhood in New Orleans. Photo by Chris Dunaway

King of Wishful Sprinkling

I need rain to fall at my feet,
Because it's dry to the bone,
And I'll be remiss, if it doesn't get misty,
But forecasts are never carved in stone,
If I listen to the talk of the town....
Then maybe I can fool myself
"I'll under water you," I know I will,
I just can't shake this inkling,
But I'll tell myself, rain is coming through
'Cause I'm the King of Wishful Sprinkling.

Late spring can bring all kinds of weather, and this is an important time to ensure the success of your newly installed landscape plants. Transplanted ornamentals are susceptible to stress shock, requiring routine attention as they take root in their new homes. The drought of 2023 exposed many poor irrigation practices, notably non-existent irrigation. Far too often, folks rely on mother nature to tend to their new plants; however, putting all your faith in the forecast may be futile.

Routine irrigation throughout the establishment process helps the plant acclimate to its new surroundings. Hand watering and/or irrigation systems can provide the necessary water for newly installed plants, but with the limited root mass limiting water access, consistent

attention is necessary to ensure success. In essence, (light) rainfall alone is seldom sufficient to support new plantings. Don't get caught hoping for rain, have a plan in place just in case precipitation doesn't provide what you need.

Mature plants in the landscape are more established than freshly installed specimens; however, watering during dry times may require a different approach. Newly installed plants have a shallower root system that may require more frequent, lighter applications of water to meet plant needs. Mature plants may benefit more from less frequent, deeper irrigation (i.e. a slow trickle attachment on a hose) allowing water to percolate further into the soil. A light sprinkling may hydrate the upper layers of the soil but fail to reach the necessary depths.

Overall, a combination of rainfall and irrigation is necessary to support new and existing plants. A licensed irrigation contractor can put in an irrigation system that can make this easier for you, but hand-watering or using "irrigation bags" around trees represent alternative, more immediate options for applying water. When it rains, it pours (sometimes); however, don't put all your hopes in the forecast and become the King of Wishful Sprinkling.

~Dr. Damon Abdi



Richard Drummie and Peter Cox from the 1980's band Go West.

Know Your Natives:

Louisiana Native Orchids

Louisiana is home to a remarkable diversity of native orchids, with more than 40 species occurring across the state. These orchids occupy habitats ranging from pine savannas and upland forests to wetlands, swamps, and coastal marshes. Many are small and inconspicuous, yet they play important ecological roles and are indicators of healthy natural systems. The Central Louisiana Orchid Society (CLOS) has long promoted the appreciation, conservation, and study of these native orchids, emphasizing that these beauties should be admired in place rather than collected.

Native Orchids in Louisiana

According to the Central Louisiana Orchid Society, nearly all of Louisiana's native orchids are terrestrial, growing in soil and relying heavily on specialized mycorrhizal fungi for survival. The lone exception is *Epidendrum magnoliae*, an epiphytic species that grows attached to trees. Native orchids bloom in every month of the year, although peak flowering occurs from spring through early summer. Habitat loss and illegal collecting remain the greatest threats to these plants, making conservation and public awareness essential.

The Central Louisiana Orchid Society and Conservation

Founded in 1980, the Central Louisiana Orchid Society works to educate the public about orchid biology, culture, and conservation. The society has been

actively involved in restoration efforts, most notably the long-running project to restore the Kentucky lady's slipper orchid (*Cypripedium kentuckiense*) in cooperation with Kisatchie National Forest. CLOS stresses that native orchids rarely survive transplantation and should never be removed from the wild.



Habenaria repens



Spiranthes cernua



Spiranthes odorata

Native Orchids Found in Greater Orleans Area

Several native orchid species occur in southeast Louisiana and have been documented in or near Orleans Parish, particularly in wetlands, bottomland forests, and disturbed urban-natural interfaces in the Greater New Orleans area.

Water Spider Orchid (*Habenaria repens*)

A distinctive aquatic or semi-aquatic orchid, water spider orchid grows in shallow water, canals, and ditches. Flowering stems usually reach 12 to 30 inches tall and may sprawl or float when growing in deeper water. Greenish-white flowers appear in summer.

Nodding Lady's Tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*)

A close relative of marsh lady's tresses, this orchid blooms in fall and early winter. It tolerates a range of moisture conditions and is occasionally found in

lawns, roadsides, and drainage areas. This adaptable species generally reaches 8 to 20 inches tall in flower

Marsh Lady's Tresses (*Spiranthes odorata*)

This fall-blooming orchid bears spirals of fragrant white flowers on upright stems. Plants typically grow 12 to 24 inches tall when in flower. It occurs in marsh edges, roadside ditches, and moist open ground throughout southeast Louisiana, including suburban and urban wetland areas.

Southern Twayblade (*Listera australis*)

A small and subtle woodland orchid, southern twayblade typically grows only 6 to 12 inches tall. It blooms in late winter to early spring with greenish flowers and occurs in moist forested sites, where it is often overlooked due to its small size.

Yellow Bog Orchid (*Platanthera integra*)

This striking but uncommon species produces bright yellow flowers in summer. Plants generally reach 18 to 36 inches in height when flowering. It is associated with wet savannas and boggy sites in southeast Louisiana and is only occasionally encountered near developed areas.

Green Fly Orchid (*Epidendrum magnoliae*)

This is Louisiana's only native epiphytic orchid. Plants form clumps of slender stems attached to tree trunks and limbs, especially live oaks and magnolias. Mature plants typically reach 6 to 24 inches tall, with flowering stems sometimes extending slightly longer. Small greenish flowers are produced in clusters in late spring and summer.

Soldier Orchid (*Zeuxine strateumatica*)

Often considered naturalized in Louisiana, soldier orchid is a low-growing species that typically reaches 4 to 8 inches tall in flower. It blooms in late winter to early spring and has become widespread in lawns, parks, and turfgrass areas across Greater New Orleans.

Bloom Season Quick List for the Greater New Orleans Area

Late Winter to Early Spring

- Southern twayblade (*Listera australis*)
- Soldier orchid (*Zeuxine strateumatica*)

Late Spring to Summer

- Green fly orchid (*Epidendrum magnoliae*)
- Water spider orchid (*Habenaria repens*)
- Yellow bog orchid (*Platanthera integra*)

Late Summer to Fall

- Marsh lady's tresses (*Spiranthes odorata*)

Fall to Early Winter

- Nodding lady's tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*)



Listera australis



Platanthera integra



Epidendrum magnoliae



Zeuxine strateumatica

Appreciating Native Orchids

Native orchids are best appreciated where they grow naturally. Photographing plants without disturbing surrounding soil or vegetation helps protect fragile root systems and unseen seedlings. For gardeners interested in orchids, the Central Louisiana Orchid Society recommends purchasing nursery-propagated plants rather than attempting to grow native species in home landscapes.

~ Dr. Joe W Willis

Selected References

Central Louisiana Orchid Society. 2026. Native Orchids of Louisiana. Native Orchids - Central Louisiana Orchid Society

The (Plant) Ride

Well I was green thumbin' back from Montgomery,
I had a load of plants on my back
When a master gardener pulled up beside me in an antique Cadillac,
She was stressed about being plant thrifty,
Half a trunk of plants to keep alive
She said, "It's a long drive back to Tangi, will they survive this ride?"

Well it was all that I could do to keep from crying, and sometimes it seemed so useless to remain silent. I had to inquire what plants she had. But she kept calling me darlin', darlin',
She never even called them out by name.

Well, we get back to her garden and she asked for a hand installing her new plants. Sure enough it was very late, but I obliged. And with the promise of a homecooked meal, I said I'll hang around as long as you will let me. I never minded standing in the rain; however, I needed to know what plants she had. But you don't have to call me darlin', darlin', you never even called the plants out by their name.

Of course this was frustrating. I spent all day saying "Yes sir" at work, and now I'm saying "Yes ma'am" at her home. But, as always, I was storing up my cuss words and keeping them under my tongue. I needed a little time off for bad behavior, it looks like I've been too good for too long.

Now she's asking me to install plants in her "small

yard"? Ma'am, this is no small yard. This is the country. And if that ain't country (I'll cut your grass). I was really getting fed up by this point. I was about to say, "Take this job and shovel it! I ain't working here no more!" ... but nevertheless, I persisted in making sure her plants were properly installed. Especially after such a long ride.



David Allen Coe knows how to garden.

Well (since I have to have some helpful tip in here, I guess) I made sure to encourage routine irrigation for the newly installed plants after such a long ride. Thoroughly watering after returning home, and following the transplanting into her yard, I kindly set up an irrigation system to ensure water would be supplied. My work was finally finished. She said, "Mr., many thanks". I said, just because I set up an irrigation system, you don't have to call me "Mr. Mister", the whole world knows I love plants.

Friends of mine know I like music puns, spanning many genres. But for the perfect country & western song, sometimes it doesn't have to be about mama... or trains.... or trucks... it can be about landscaping.

~Dr. Damon Abdi

In the Kitchen with Austin

Yellow Squash Casserole

This casserole makes a great side dish! It also pairs well with a green salad for a satisfying summertime meal.

Ingredients:

2 Tbs. olive oil, divided
4 c yellow squash, diced
½ c onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
2 eggs
¾ c milk

½ c cheddar cheese,
Salt and pepper, to taste
½ sleeve Ritz crackers, crushed
2 Tbs. butter, cubed
*Parsley, chopped for garnish



Yellow Squash Casserole

Directions:

Preheat your oven to 350°. Rub a little olive oil in your baking pan.

In a skillet, sauté squash, onion, and garlic in remaining olive oil for about 10 minutes or until tender. Season with salt & pepper.

Drain mixture in a colander resting over a large bowl. In another bowl, whisk eggs and milk. Add cheese and season with a bit more salt and pepper.

Discard drained liquid and fold squash mixture into egg mixture. Transfer to baking pan. Top with cracker crumbs and dot with cubed butter. Bake for about 25 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm with a sprinkling of chopped parsley for color.

Enjoy!



Farmers Markets in the GNO Area

Orleans Parish

Crescent City Farmer's Market- Mid-City

500 N. Norman C. Francis at the Bayou
Thursdays from 3-7PM
www.crescentcityfarmersmarket.org

Crescent City Farmer's Market- City Park

City Putt Parking Lot
Dreyfous Dr. @ Anseman Ave.
Sundays from 8AM-Noon
Info at www.crescentcityfarmersmarket.org

Crescent City Farmer's Market- Uptown

The Batture, 25 Walnut St.
Tuesdays from 8AM-Noon
www.crescentcityfarmersmarket.org

Vietnamese Farmer's Market

4861 Alcee Fortier Blvd., New Orleans East
Saturdays, 5:30AM-9:00AM

Marketplace at Armstrong Park

701 N. Rampart
Thursdays from 3-7PM
<https://www.facebook.com/MarketplaceArmstrongPark/>

New Orleans French Market

Lower Decatur Street
Daily, 9AM-6PM

Mid-City Arts and Farmer's Market

Comiskey Park, New Orleans
Market dates vary.
Check <http://midcityaf.org>

Laughing Buddha Farm

4516 Clearview Pkwy, Metairie, LA
Home Deliveries in New Orleans Available
Order online at:
<https://laughing-buddha-nursery.localline.ca/online-store>

Barcelo Gardens Farmer's Market- Upper 9th Ward

2301 Gallier Street at the garden, Saturdays from 10AM-1PM
3440 Piety Street Fresh Market open daily, 10AM-4PM.
Check here the link below for other times and locations.
<https://www.facebook.com/BarceloGardens/>

BOUNYFUL Farmer's Market-Algiers Point

530 Powder St, New Orleans, LA
First and Third Sundays of the month, from 10AM-1PM
See more times and events at the link below.
<https://www.facebook.com/bounyfulgreenmarket/>

Sankofa Fresh Stop Market

5029 St. Claude Ave., New Orleans, LA
Monday-Saturday, 9AM-5PM
<https://sankofanola.org/rfq/s/>

Sheaux Fresh Sustainable Foods

1434 N. Dorgenois St., New Orleans, LA
Monday-Tuesday 8am-2pm, Thursday-Friday 11am-5pm, Saturday 9am-1pm
<https://www.facebook.com/sheauxfresh/>

St. Tammany Parish

Mandeville Trailhead Community Market

Mandeville Trailhead
675 Lafitte St, Mandeville, LA 70448
Saturday: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (rain or shine)
<https://www.facebook.com/TheMandevilleTrailhead>
985.624.3147

Abita Springs Art and Farmers' Market

22049 Main St., Abita Springs, LA 70420
Saturdays: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM (rain or shine)
<https://www.townofabitasprings.com/farmers-market>
985.892.0711

Camellia City Farmer's Market

2055 2nd Street, Old Towne Slidell
Saturday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM (rain or shine)
<https://www.facebook.com/CamelliaCityMarket/>
985.640.7112

Folsom Village Market

13401 June St., Behind City Hall
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (weather permitting)
Every 2nd and 4th Saturday
985.507.6496 (daytime only)

St. Charles Parish

German Coast Farmer's Market-East Bank

St. Charles Parish East Regional Library
160 West Campus Drive, Destrehan, LA
Saturdays, from 8AM-Noon
<http://www.germancoastfarmersmarket.org/>

German Coast Farmer's Market-West Bank

Westbank Bridge Park-Luling
13825 River Road, Luling, LA
Wednesdays, from Noon-5PM
<http://www.germancoastfarmersmarket.org/>

Farmers Markets in the GNO Area

Jefferson Parish

Gretna Farmer's Market

Between 3rd & 4th St. along Huey P. Long
Every Saturday, except the Saturday of
Gretna Fest, 8:30AM-12:30PM
<https://www.gretnala.com/visitors/farmers-market/>

Nawlins Outdoor Market

1048 Scotsdale Dr., Harvey
Saturdays 9AM-5PM & Sundays 9AM-4PM
Fridays 11AM-3PM
<https://www.facebook.com/NawlinsMarket/>

Old Metairie Farmer's Market

Bayou Metairie Park, Between Metairie Lawn
Dr. and Labarre
1st Tuesday of the month, 2:30PM-6:30PM
Check for seasonal dates!
<https://www.oldmetairiegardenclub.com/tag/farmers-art-metairie-market/>

Terrytown Farmer's Market

1785 Carol Sue Ave, Terrytown, LA
Nov. 2 & Dec 7, 9AM-1PM

Jean Lafitte Town Market-Lafitte

920 Jean Lafitte Blvd.
Check website for dates and times
<https://www.facebook.com/JeanLafitteLa/>

Lafreniere Park Market-Metairie

3000 Downs Blvd.
Wednesdays, from 1-6PM
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064920097975>

Westwego Farmer's Market

484 Sala Ave., Westwego
2nd Tuesday of the month, 11AM-3PM
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100075979938725>

Laughing Buddha Farm

4516 Clearview
Store Pickups, preorder online at
<https://www.laughingbuddhanursery.com/>

Westwego Shrimp Lot

100 Westbank Expressway at Louisiana St.,
Westwego
Daily Mon-Thurs 8AM-6PM, Fri 8AM-7PM,
Sat 7AM-7PM, and Sun 7AM-6PM
<https://www.facebook.com/officialwestwegoshrimplot>

Harahan Farmer's Market

501 Oak Ave., Zeringue Park, Harahan
Sundays, 9AM-1PM
<https://www.facebook.com/HarahanMarket>

The Market at Kenner City Park

3Thursdays 1PM-6PM
800 Loyola Drive, Kenner, LA
2nd & 4th Saturdays 10AM-2PM
3800 Loyola Drive
<https://www.facebook.com/RivertownFarmersMarket>

Local Independent Garden Centers

Jefferson

Perino's Garden Center	3100 Veterans Memorial Blvd., Metairie, LA 70002	(504) 834-7888
Rose Garden Center	4005 Westbank Expressway, Marerro, LA 70072	(504) 341-5664
Banting's Nursery	3425 River Rd., Bridge City, LA 70094	(504) 436-4343
Jefferson Feed	4421 Jefferson Hwy., Jefferson, LA 70121	(504) 733-8572
Nine Mile Point Plant Nursery	2141 River Rd., Westwego, LA 70094	(504) 436-4915
Palm Garden Depot	351 Hickory Ave., Harahan, LA 70123	(504) 305-6170
Double M Feed Harahan	8400 Jefferson Hwy., Harahan, LA 70123	(504) 738-5007
Double M Feed Terrytown	543 Holmes Blvd., Terrytown, LA 70056	(504) 361-4405
Sunrise Trading Co. Inc.	42 3 rd St., Kenner, LA 70062	(504) 469-0077
Laughing Buddha Garden Center	4516 Clearview Pkwy., Metairie, LA 70006	(504) 887-4336
Creative Gardens & Landscape	2309 Manhattan Blvd., Harvey, LA 70058	(504) 367-9099
Plumeria Insanity Nursery	https://www.facebook.com/Plumeria-Insanity-Nursery-102123651930419	
Garden Specialties, Inc.	3601 Florida Ave., Kenner, LA 70065	(504) 468-2300
Clearview Plant and Garden	4511 Clearview Pkwy, Metairie, LA 70006	(504) 888-7700
Soil Vendors		
Schmelly's Dirt Farm	8301 Olive St., New Orleans, LA 70118	(504) 535-GROW
Laughing Buddha Garden Center	4516 Clearview Pkwy., Metairie, LA 70006	(504) 887-433
Reliable Soil	725 Reverand Richard Wilson Dr., Kenner, LA 70062	(504) 467-1078
Renaissance Gardens	9123 W. Judge Perez Dr., Chalmette, LA 70043	(504) 682-9911
Rock n' Soil NOLA	9119 Airline Hwy., New Orleans, LA 70118	(504) 488-0908
Grow Wiser Garden Supply	2109 Decatur St., New Orleans, LA 70116	(504) 644-4713

If you would like your licensed retail nursery listed, please email gnogardening@agcenter.lsu.edu

Local Independent Garden Centers

Orleans

Harold's Plants	1135 Press St., New Orleans, LA 70117	(504) 947-7554
We Bite Rare and Unusual Plants	1225 Mandeville St., New Orleans, LA 70117	(504) 380-4628
Hot Plants	1715 Feliciana St., New Orleans, LA 70117	www.hotplantsnursery.com
Pelican Greenhouse Sales	2 Celebration Dr., New Orleans, LA 70124	(504) 483-9437
Grow Wiser Garden Supply	2109 Decatur St., New Orleans, LA 70116	(504) 644-4713
Jefferson Feed Mid-City	309 N. Carrollton Ave., New Orleans, LA 70119	(504) 488-8118
Jefferson Feed Uptown	6047 Magazine St., New Orleans, LA 70118	(504) 218-4220
Ninth Ward Nursery	2641 Deslonde St., New Orleans, LA 70117	(504) 296-8398
Crazy Plant Bae	800 N. Claiborne Ave., New Orleans LA 70119	(504) 327-7008
Canopy Plant Company	6030 St. Claude, New Orleans, LA 70117	(504) 381-4033
Too Tall Nursery	2817 N. Roman, New Orleans, LA 70117	tootallfarm@gmail.com
Plantery NOLA	Pop Up Locations	www.planterynola.com
Canopy Plant Co.	Pop Up and Online Sales	www.canopyplantco.com
New Orleans Succulent Boutique	Online Sales	https://sites.google.com/view/nolasucculentshop/home
New Orleans Green LLC	Online Sales	www.neworleans-green.com

Plaquemines

Southern Gateway Garden Center	107 Timber Ridge St., Belle Chasse, LA 70037	(504) 393-9300
Belle Danse Orchids	14079 Belle Chasse Hwy., Belle Chasse, LA 70037	(504) 419-5416

St. Charles

Plant & Palm Tropical Outlet	10018 River Rd., St. Rose, LA 70087	(504) 468-7256
Martin's Nursery & Landscape	320 3 rd St., Luling, LA 70070	(985) 785-6165

St. Bernard

Plant Pricks	Pop Up Locations	https://plantpricks.com/
Nice Plants, Good Pots	6720 St. Claude Ave., Arabie, LA	Etsy.com/shop/NicePlantsGoodPots

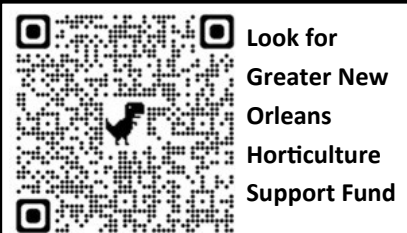
St. Tammany

The Boho Being	1184 Front St., Slidell, LA 70458	(985)707-1623
Banting's Nursery-Northshore	26300 Hwy 190, Lacombe, LA 70445	(985)882-5550

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Click here or go to: <https://bit.ly/3UQRS7H>

May Checklist/Garden Tips

Great warm-season bedding plants for sun include abelmoschus, ageratum, amaranthus, balsam, begonia, blue daze, celosia, cleome, coleus (sun-tolerant types), coreopsis, cosmos, Dahlberg daisy, dusty miller, gaillardia, gomphrena, lantana, marigold, melampodium, narrow-leaf zinnia, ornamental pepper, periwinkle, pentas, portulaca, purslane, rudbeckia, salvia, scaevola, sunflower, tithonia, torenia, verbena (perennial), zinnia.

During dry weather don't forget to keep your compost pile evenly moist. Dry organic matter will not decompose. Do, however, avoid keeping the pile saturated as this will create bad odors.

Powdery mildew on many ornamentals (crape myrtles, roses, euonymous) and vegetables (squash, cucumbers) continues to be a problem due to dry weather. Treat with chlorothalonil or other labeled fungicides.

Birds will peck holes in tomatoes just before you decide they are ripe enough to harvest. If birds are a problem, cover your plants with bird netting or harvest the fruit in the pink stage and ripen them inside. Bird netting also works well to protect fruit crops, such as blackberries, blueberries and figs, from bird damage, and is available from local nurseries or feed stores.

Grow cucumbers on trellises to save space, increase production and improve the quality of the cucumbers produced.

Constant watering rapidly leaches nutrient elements from the soils of container grown plants. To replace them it is best to use either soluble fertilizers or slow release fertilizers. Soluble fertilizers are easy to apply especially when you use a hose end applicator, but they must be applied every two weeks to maintain a constant supply of nutrients. Slow release fertilizers provide nutrients over several months from one application and so cut down on labor.

Cannas that have brown, deformed leaves with holes in them have been attacked by canna leaf-rollers, a caterpillar that is devastating to cannas in our area. Control is difficult and requires regular spraying all summer. If you decide to treat, use a systemic insecticide such as acephate and make weekly applications.

Plant basil plants now and enjoy a wonderful fresh seasoning for summer cooking. Many herbs already in your garden, such as thyme, sage, oregano, lavender, dill, cilantro and parsley, are at their most productive now and will play out as the weather gets hotter. Harvest freely and dry or freeze the extras.

Remove the developing seed pods from such plants as Louisiana irises and amaryllis when they finish blooming. This keeps the plants more attractive and prevents them from wasting effort on seeds that are not needed. It would be better for the plants to put that energy into growing leaves and roots.

Watch azaleas for azalea lace bug damage. Small white spots on the upper surface and small dark brown spots on the back of leaves indicates they are present. Spray with a broad spectrum insecticide getting under the leaves thoroughly.

Caterpillars will feed on the foliage and flowers of ornamentals and the foliage and fruit of vegetables. The tomato fruit worm eats holes in tomatoes. Sevin, spinosad and BT regularly applied will keep them in check.

Termite mating season is upon us and millions of sexually mature Formosan termite alates will be seen flying around light poles at night for the next several weeks. Although termites are active year round, the heightened activity makes it more easy to find the harborages in which they live. Check for the soil and debris that the termites use to hide themselves on local structures and trees. [Click here for more information on termites in trees.](#)

May is one of the busiest months in the flower garden. As cool season annuals become unattractive, the beds need to be cleaned out and replanted with warm season annuals. Don't forget that summer heat makes the care of flower bed uncomfortable to say the least.

Lawn Care Do's & Don't's

Do's:

1. This is the prime planting season for warm season grasses such as St. Augustine, centipede, bermuda and zoysia.
2. Soil preparation is important to successful lawn installation. Add compost, amendments and fertilizer to the soil. Till the soil to a depth of 6 inches and smooth to grade.
3. This month is the last chance to apply broad leaf weed killers before the weather gets too hot. Button weed is particularly troublesome around the state. This low, mat-forming weed has one inch pointed leaves and small, four petaled white flowers. Most people don't notice it until July, but it is beginning to grow now. LSU AgCenter trials show Ferti-lome Weed Free Zone to work best, especially when applied to young plants in early summer.
4. If you have not already done so, apply fertilizer now. The rate is 0.5-1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn area. You will need 3 pounds of a fertilizer with 33% nitrogen, 33-0-0, to have 1 pound of nitrogen.
5. Continue to scout for fungal damage and control with fungicides if necessary. The most prevalent is called Large Patch of Warm-Season Turfgrass.

[Click here to find information about large patch disease from the LSU AgCenter.](#)

6. Irrigate as necessary to moisten the soil to a depth of 4-6 inches.
7. Aerate the soil if necessary to alleviate compaction.
8. Dethatch the lawn if necessary.
9. Keep an eye open for insect pests and treat if necessary.
10. Spread topsoil over the lawn to add organic material and smooth out the lawn. Do not add more than 2 inches over actively growing grass.
11. Set your mower to the correct height for your turfgrass type. Bermudagrass = 1 inch, St. Augustine = 3 inches, Centipede = 1.5 inches, Zoysia = 1.5 inches.

Don't's

1. Do not cut more than 1/3 of the height at a single time.
2. Do not let winter weeds go to seed in the lawn. Use the bagging mower to collect clippings and dispose of them if seed heads are present.

Your Local Extension Office is Here to Help



Follow us on Facebook at **GNOGardening**

For more information visit **LSUAgCenter.com**

Have Questions? Contact the LSU AgCenter Extension Agent in your Parish.

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