



April 2017

Growing Tomatoes in South Louisiana

If you want to grow fresh, flavorful, vine-ripened tomatoes in your garden, you need to get them planted by the middle of April. Early planting ensures more production and higher-quality tomatoes.

When selecting, choose the types with the characteristics you want, including fruit size, shape and color, disease resistance and plant growth habit. Determinate or bush cultivars stay short; indeterminate or vine cultivars grow tall. Although it is fun to try new cultivars, the bulk of your tomato planting should include varieties that have been tested at LSU AgCenter research stations and are proven producers here.

Some of the indeterminates recommended by the LSU AgCenter are Big Beef, Better Boy, Champion, Monte Carlo, Terrific and Pink Girl. Recommended cherry types, such as Cherry Grande, Juliet (grape), Super Sweet 100 and Sweet Chelsea, generally mature early, are highly productive and set fruit well in the heat of summer.

Excellent determinate types recommended include Amelia, Bella Rosa, Carnival, Celebrity, Flamerica, Heatwave II (heat tolerant), Olympic, Mountain Delight, Mountain Spring, Solar Set (heat tolerant), Spitfire, Talladega and Tribeca. Heat-tolerant

varieties produce better in the heat of summer and may be planted as late as late April or early May. For canning, choose Royal Chico, Spectrum 882 or Roma.

Start off with high-quality transplants. The ideal transplant is a smallish plant, about as wide as it is tall, that is growing actively and has not begun to

bloom. The leaves should be deep green, and the stem should be stocky. The roots should be white, and some soil should still be visible between roots when you remove the plant from the pot.

Newly purchased transplants are often right out of the greenhouse and may not be ready for the harsher growing conditions of the real-



Bella Rosa Tomato

world garden. Harden off the transplants by placing them in a location that receives several hours of morning sun for a couple of days and gradually introduce them to more sun over a seven-day period. Also, allow the plants to wilt very slightly before watering.

Tomato plants need full sun – direct sun for eight or more hours – for best production and should be planted into fertile, well-drained soil that has high organic matter content. During bed preparation, dig in generous amounts of compost or aged manure and a light application of fertilizer. Don't overdo the fertilizer at first – you can always sidedress with more later on.

(Continued on the following page.)

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Plant tomatoes in raised beds or on raised rows in the garden. A common mistake is to plant the small transplants too close together. Tomatoes grow best when spaced at least 18 to 24 inches apart. Leggy plants may be planted on their sides with the top, leafy portion bent upward and the bare stem laid into a shallow trench and covered. Do not remove healthy, green leaves to bury the stem deeper because this may actually stunt the plant. Tomatoes can also be grown in 3 gallon containers or larger. Make sure there are sufficient holes in the bottom to provide good drainage.

At planting each tomato plant should receive about 1 cup of soluble fertilizer to get it off to a good start. Water regularly until the root system is well established, and don't forget to keep your plants mulched with 2 to 3 inches of leaves, pine straw or other materials.

Tomatoes are generally trained to grow upright by tying them to stakes. Strips of old nylon stockings or cloth are ideal for tying the plants. Vining cultivars are pruned primarily to make them more manageable to train on stakes, but it also encourages plants to produce larger, higher-quality



Juliet grape tomatoes

fruit. Prune your plants by pinching off the suckers (or side shoots) that grow where a leaf attaches to the main stem. This is called "desuckering."

Tomatoes may also be grown in cages. Vine types grow too tall for most commercial tomato cages, but they can be grown in a cage made by creating a cylinder out of 5 to 6 feet of concrete-reinforcement wire. When grown this way, vining tomatoes don't need to be desuckered.

Bush varieties may be grown on stakes or in a commercial tomato cage and are not desuckered when grown either way.

After the first tomatoes set have reached the size of a quarter, sidedress your plants with 1 tablespoon of all-purpose fertilizer or ammonium sulfate per plant to keep them growing vigorously. Repeat this every four weeks.

Tomatoes are prone to a variety of insect and disease problems. Diseases are best dealt with preventatively with a regular spray program using a broad-spectrum fungicide such as chlorothalonil or maneb. A copper-based fungicide is

an organic option. Begin spraying soon after the plants are in the ground and continue through the season.

~Dan Gill



Tomatoes can easily be grown in containers.

Click her to see the Tomato growing guide on the LSUAgCenter.com website.



Vegetable Gardening Tips

Growing Information for the Home Gardener Series



Tomatoes

April Vegetable Planting Guide

Crop	Recommended Variety	Planting Depth	Spacing Inches	Days Until Harvest * from transplant date
Snap Beans (bush or pole)	Bush-Blue Lake 274, Bronco, Derby, Lynx, Strike Pole-Blue Lake, Kentucky Blue, McCaslin	½ inch	2-3 (bush) 12 (pole)	48-55 (bush) 60-66 (pole)
Sweet Corn	Merit, Silver Queen, Honey 'n Pearl, Ambrosia	½ inch	10-12	69-92
Summer Squash	Gold Rush, Justice III, Multipik, Patriot II	⅝ inch	36	50-90
Hot Peppers (transplant)	Grande, Tula, Mariachi, Mitla,	-	--	140
Cantaloupe	Ambrosia, Aphrodite, Athena, Primo, Vienna	¼ inch	18-24	80-85
Southern Peas	Queen Anne, California #5, Quickpick, Colussus	½ inch	4-6	70-80
Tomato (transplant)	Better Boy, Big Beef, Cupid, Pink Girl, Juliet, Sweet Milton, Bella Rosa, Carolina Gold	-	--	100-115
Collards	Champion, Flash, Georgia, Top Bunch, Vates	⅝ inch	6-12	75
Cucumbers	Dasher II, Diva, Fanfare, General Lee, Indy, Olympian, Sweet Success, Sweet Slice	¼ inch	12-18	50-65
Cucuzza	None Given	½ inch	24	65
Lima Beans (bush or pole)	Dixie Butterpea, Jackson Wonder, Thorogreen Florida Speckled, King of Garden	½ inch	3-4 (bush) 12 (pole)	60-67 (bush) 77-90 (pole)
Bell Peppers (transplants)	Aristotle X3R, Jupiter, Lilac, Plato, Tequila	-	15-18	70-80
Kohlrabi	Early Purple Vienna, Early White, Vienna, Winner	⅝ inch	6	55-75
Okra	Annie Oakley, Cajun Delight, Clemson Spineless	½ inch	12	60
Pumpkins	Atlantic Giant, Baby Bear, Prankster, Sorcerer	½ inch	36-60	90-120
Radishes	Cherriette, Champion, White Icicle, April Cross	⅝ inch	1	22-28
Swiss Chard	None Given	¼ inch	6-8	45-55
Winter Squash	Honey Bear, Sweet Mama, Table Queen, Tivoli	½ inch	18-24	100
Eggplant	Dusky, Night Shadow, Epic, Santana, Calliope	⅝ inch	18-24	80-85

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Crop	Recommended Variety	Planting Depth	Spacing Inches	Days Until Harvest * from transplant date
Honeydew	Honey Max, Rocio, Summer Dew	½ inch	18	80
Luffa Gourd	None Given	½ inch	48	90
Cushaw	None Given	½ inch	24-36	110
Malbar Spinace	None Given	¼ inch	12-18	Ongoing
Mirlitons	None Given	Special	-	30 from flowering
Peanuts	None Given	1 inch	6	130
Sweet Potato	Beauregard, Evangeline, Hernandez, Jewel	Special	12	90-120
Watermelon	Seedless: Cooperstown, Gypsy, Matrix, Millennium Seeded: Mickey Lee, Sugar Baby, Amarillo	¼ inch	48	90-110
Yardlong Beans	None Given	1 inch	24-36	75

Warm Season Herbs

Basil	Lemon Balm	Lemon Grass
Perilla	Mints	Lemon Verbena
Sesame	Vetiver	Rosemary

Flowering Perennials

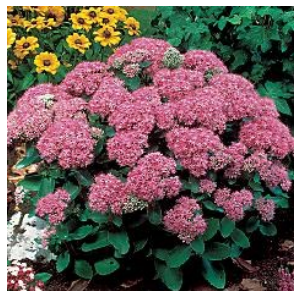
Perennial Salvia	Caladiums	Daylily	Shasta Daisies
Bee Balm	Coreopsis	Physostegia	Sokesia
Butterfly Weed	Four O'clocks	Mallow	Verbena
Chrysanthemums	Gaillardia	Rudbeckia	Yarrow
Coneflowers	Gerbera Daisies	Sedum	Violets



Perennial Salvia



Four O'clocks



Sedum



Shasta Daisy



Coneflower

New Book Explores Three Centuries of New Orleans Garden Design

Garden Legacy,” the latest title from The Historic New Orleans Collection, captures three centuries of garden design in New Orleans in one sumptuously produced work. For their eighth collaboration, noted preservationists Mary Louise Mossy Christovich and Roulhac Bunkley Toledano chronicle the changing tastes and styles of exterior domestic spaces in New Orleans, paying particular attention to the Crescent City’s legacy of French-American landscape design.

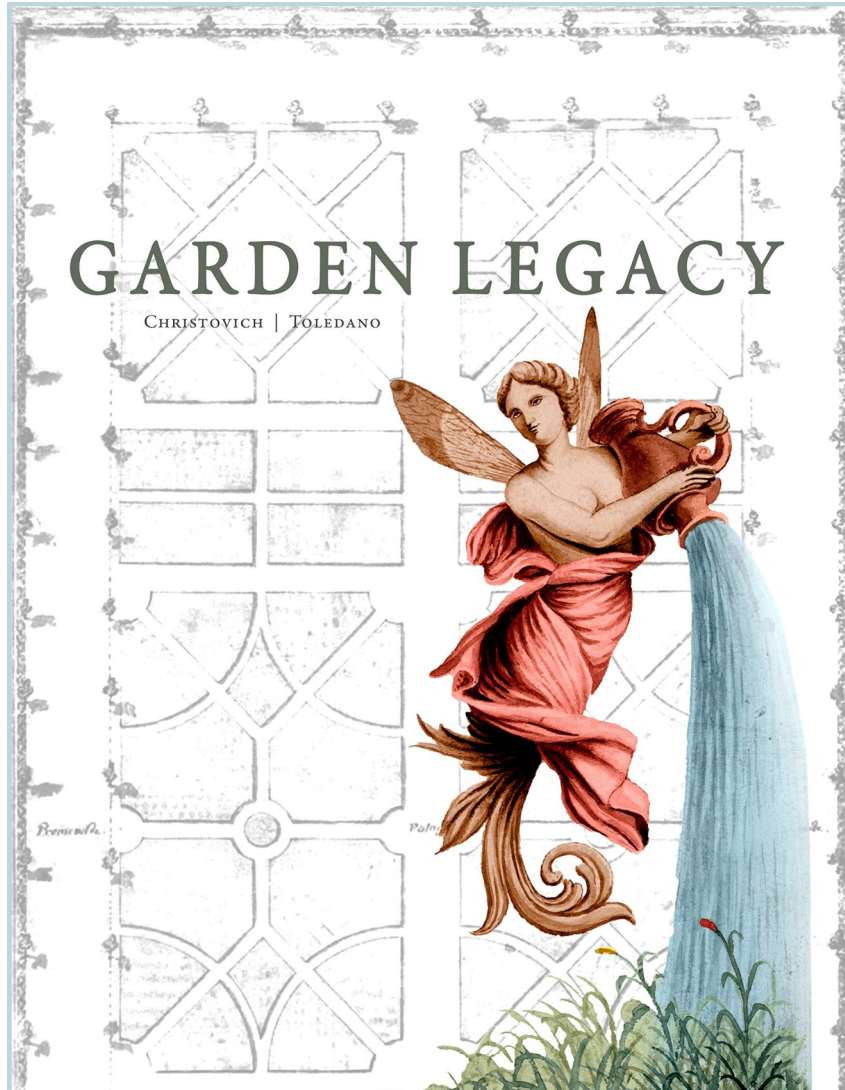
Their research draws from the stunning visuals and fascinating data found in the 19th-century plan book collection of the New Orleans Notarial Archive, as well as period maps and prints from THNOC and other North American and European institutions. It also includes information provided in memoirs of early Louisiana settlers and naturalists, to show how French settlers in New Orleans adopted garden prototypes from the era of Louis XIV using the more abundant plant life yet smaller-scale gardens of colonial Louisiana.

Preserved as official records of property sales, the 19th-century plan books provide readers with depictions of properties and their surrounding gardens, while also showing a proficiency and creativity that

elevated the city’s notarial drawings to the status of Illustration Art. “Garden Legacy” is the first comprehensive look at these drawings done by discrete artists with distinctive styles. Profiles of nearly 80 individual properties—from the French Quarter to the old Creole neighborhoods downriver, from back-of-town and Bayou St. John to the newer upriver faubourgs—reveal both continuities and compelling differences in cultural ambitions and garden aesthetics.

A foreword by S. Frederick Starr, a fellow preservationist and the owner of the city’s only surviving antebellum riverfront

plantation house, places the book and its authors within a vital line of New Orleans preservation efforts.



Both authors will be presenting their latest work at two local events this month. The events are free and the book, which retails for \$49.95, will be available for purchase at both programs.

- A book release party at The Historic New Orleans Collection, 533 Royal Street, on **Wednesday, April 12, from 6 to 8 p.m.**
- A book signing at Garden District Book Shop, 2727 Prytania St., on **Tuesday, April 18, at 6 p.m.**

Volunteer Spotlight



Anne G. Barnes - I spoke to Anne recently at a meeting of the New Orleans Horticulture Society where she gave a presentation of the use of salvia plants in the garden. The various salvia species are some of Anne's favorite plants not only because of their own beauty but especially how attractive they are to butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators.

Anne says that she learned to garden at a very young age from her mother and grandmother. She describes her grandmother as being able to get a popsicle stick to grow and her mother always had a flower garden. She took her gardening knowledge with her to New York where she grew a variety of herbs and ornamental plants in the windows of her 21st floor apartment overlooking the Long Island Sound. There was even an avocado tree.

In addition to gardening, Anne has also had a great interest in biology and wildlife. To combine her interests, Anne installed her first butterfly garden 30 over years ago. Hurricane Katrina destroyed nearly all of the plants in her New Orleans home. When she returned after the storm she was struck by the complete silence due to the lack of birds or insects and she was determined to bring them back. Since then she has turned her yard into a sanctuary for local wildlife. Due to her efforts Anne was one of the first people to be granted the [GreenBridges™](#) certification from the [Herb Society of America](#) for her use of native plants to create a habitat for pollinators.

Anne has a long history of volunteerism and has served numerous organizations over the past many years. Among the organizations include: the New Orleans Opera, the New Orleans Symphony, The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America, Spring Fiesta, Parent Teacher Association President, the Herb Society of America, and the Louisiana Master Gardeners. Anne says that she particularly enjoys the annual herb society plant sale where she can meet new people and get reacquainted with people that she only sees once a year. For her, Anne told me, "It's all about doing something good for a stranger when you don't have to."

Plant of the Month

Sweet Salvias - The common herb garden plant culinary sage (*Salvia officinalis*) has many beautiful cousins within the same family. Many *Salvias* are perennial, easy to grow in the New Orleans area, and attract a multitude of pollinators to a garden. The New Orleans Botanical Garden has three cold frame beds which are home to the *Salvia* collection of the Herb Society's New Orleans Unit.

Salvias come in a wide range of colors and growth habits, meaning that there are members of the family that would fit just about any garden space. Flowers come in shades of white, cream, red, orange, pink, violet, blue and even blue-black. The smallest members of the species can measure just a few inches tall, while larger members can measure over nine feet tall!



Amistad - *Salvia amistad*



Hot Lips - *Salvia microphylla*

Salvias grow well in our area and can bloom year round depending on the cultivar. Well drained soil is preferred and most tolerate a range of light conditions. They grow rapidly and can take some abuse and neglect, preferring to dry out between waterings, making them ideal for summer color. When plants get a little "rangy", a rough trim of 1/3 of the plant material makes them come back fresh and renewed. Salvias are easily propagated from cuttings, so if you see one you like, give it a try by rooting a 2-3 inch piece of stem.

Some easily grown cultivars available locally include "Amistad", "Hot Lips", "Texas Wedding", "Black and Blue" as well as many others. Pelican greenhouse's plant sales often offer some, as well as the Herb Society's plant sale on April 1st. Big box nurseries are beginning to carry *Salvia* in their inventories as well, so be sure to plant some in your garden soon!

Join us for the 38th Annual

New Orleans Spring Garden Show

*An Educational Experience for the
Home and Professional Gardener*

**Saturday, April 8, 2017 - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. &
Sunday, April 9, 2017 - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**New Orleans
Botanical Garden**
Victory Avenue, City Park

Admission: \$8.00 Adults / Children 5-12: \$4.00

Children under 5 & Friends of City Park enter free

Plant and Garden Products, Exhibits & Sales

Kids Discovery Area

Educational Programs

Music, Arts & Crafts

*For more information contact 504-736-6519 or
GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu*



Sponsored by:
LSU AgCenter in cooperation with the
Metro Area Horticulture Foundation
and the
New Orleans Botanical Garden





The HERB SOCIETY *of* AMERICA New Orleans Unit

Spring Plant Sale

Benefitting the New Orleans Botanical Gardens , Longvue Gardens Walled Herb Gardens, and educational programs of the Herb Society of America New Orleans Unit.

Saturday, April 1.

9am until 3pm

2202 General Pershing, New Orleans

Annuals * Perennials * Culinary

Ornamentals * Butterfly Plants * Natives



Greater New Orleans

Iris Society

Rainbow Festival

Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden

City Park, New Orleans

Sunday, April 9, 10 AM - 5 PM

Judges Training by MJ Urist (before opening)

“Arranging Irises Off The Cuff” by Dr. Jim DelPrince

MSU Coastal Research and Extension Center

NOMA Auditorium 1-2 PM

Irises in the garden and on display Music, Information



Sale Irises at 10AM until gone!

April Checklist/Garden Tips

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

If crape myrtle aphids have been a problem on your trees in the past, treat this month with Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub Insect Control with Merit. This is applied as a drench to the base of the trees and is absorbed by the roots. The insecticide travels through the tree's circulatory system up into the foliage making it toxic to the aphids. One treatment protects the tree all summer, preventing aphids and the unsightly black sooty mold they cause.

Spray crape myrtles with mancozeb, chlorothalonil or other labeled fungicides to control serious infections of powdery mildew. Powdery mildew appears as a white, powdery material on the leaves. Unlike many fungus diseases that are worse when weather is rainy, this disease is favored by humid, warm weather without rain. It also occurs on a variety of other landscape plants such as dogwood, euonymus, gerbera daisy, rose and hydrangea, to name a few.

Oak trees infested with buck moth caterpillars should be sprayed before the caterpillars begin to migrate down the trunk. Contact local tree care companies to get your trees sprayed.

Aphids are a real problem on roses and many other plants in spring. Control with insecticidal soap, oil spray, Malathion or Acephate.

As much as is practical, continue to deadhead or remove faded, dead flowers from cool season bedding plants such as pansy, snapdragon and dianthus to promote extended flowering.

Spray peach trees regularly with a commercial home orchard or fruit tree spray to prevent plum curculio insects from causing wormy fruit.

When buying pesticides, ask for a recommendation for the least toxic material that will do the job and buy the smallest container available. Large sized containers take years to use up and by then the pesticide has often lost its effectiveness.

Keep your Louisiana irises well watered now while they flower and through mid summer. Remove any developing seed pods after flowering is finished.

After planting bedding plants, water them in with a half-strength solution of your favorite water soluble fertilizer. This gets them off to a good start.

Early to mid April is the best time to fertilize your lawn. Fertilization is not a matter of life and death, and many lawns get along well enough to satisfy the owner without it. Lawns that have been damaged or are in low vigor certainly should be considered for fertilization. Choose a commercial lawn fertilizer that has some of the nitrogen in a slow-release form. Use a drop or centrifuge type spreader to evenly distribute the fertilizer at the recommended rate following the label directions carefully, and water the lawn thoroughly after the fertilizer is applied. If weeds are a problem you may use a fertilizer with a herbicide added, the so called Aweed and feeds, but it is especially critical that you read and follow label directions carefully. These products contain a toxic pesticide that may damage the lawn, trees growing in the lawn and other ornamental plants if applied improperly.

Do not delay planting many of the warm season vegetables beyond the middle part of this month. Tomatoes, snap beans, lima beans and bell peppers all set fruit poorly when temperatures are hot. Squashes and corn are both far more likely to have major insect and disease problems when planted later.

Cool season herbs and those that thrive during mild weather, such as parsley, dill, tarragon, thyme, sage, cilantro, borage, lavender, chamomile, chervil and arugula, are at their peak this month. They will begin to decline toward late May and finish in early June, so harvest them generously over the next six to eight weeks. Extra harvest can be dried or frozen for use during the summer.

Small birds called sapsuckers peck holes in neat rows. The holes just penetrate the bark and cause sap to bleed from them. Later, the sapsuckers return to feed on the sugary sap and any insects that may have been attracted to it. The damage is usually minor, and control is generally not necessary or practical.

April Checklist/Garden Tips

If you need to prune spring flowering shrubs such as spirea, viburnum, quince, azalea, camellia, jasmine and mock orange, you may do so as soon as they finish flowering. Remember to prune with a specific purpose in mind, and, unless you are trying to create a clipped formal hedge, try to preserve the natural shape of the shrub.

Be sure to mulch newly planted beds of shrubs or bedding plants with a two inch layer of leaves, pine straw, pine bark or other materials to control weeds, conserve moisture and keep the soil from packing down.

Watch for spider mite damage on many vegetables and ornamentals during dry weather. Very tiny, spider mites are not readily visible to the naked eye. Use a magnifying glass to inspect the plant and look for the tiny red or green eight legged mites. Infested plants get a dull, dusty, unhealthy look to the foliage which eventually turns brown. The spider mites are primarily under the leaves. Spray with a horticultural oil, insecticidal soap, Malathion or Kelthane.

It is very important to pull up and dispose of cool season annual weeds such as henbit, bedstraw and chickweed now. These weeds are currently setting thousands of seeds that will plague you next winter if not removed now

Save some of your own seed from your cool season annuals to plant again in your garden this fall. This time of year collect seeds from sweet peas, violas, nicotiana, poppies, calendulas and cosmos. Make sure the seed pods are mature before harvesting.

This is the prime planting season for warm season grasses such as St. Augustine, centipede, bermuda and zoysia. With the exception of common bermuda, solid sodding is the preferred method of establishing a lawn whenever possible

Tomatoes are staked to keep the plants from sprawling on the ground where the fruit would be more likely to rot. Wait for the first cluster of flowers to appear, and place the stake on the opposite side of the plant's stem. All of the flower clusters will grow from the same side of the stem, and this will keep developing fruit from getting caught between the stake and the stem.

Azaleas with leaves that have tiny light spots all over them have been attacked by azalea lacebugs. Treat with Malathion or Acephate as needed through the summer and fall. Any damage that has already occurred will not go away, but treatment will prevent any more damage.

Pay careful attention to thoroughly watering newly planted trees, shrubs, bedding plants, ground covers and lawns during dry spring weather. Continue watering about twice a week until there is significant rainfall.

After planting bedding plants, water them in with a half- strength solution of your favorite water soluble fertilizer. This gets them off to a good start.

Your Local Extension Office is Here to Help

E-mail us at: GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu



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For more information visit LSUAgCenter.com

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