

FLORAL CITY GARDEN CLUB
HORTICULTURE HINTS
AUGUST 2017

Rainfall amounts for the past two months have exceeded the rainfall for the previous seven months so the grass is green, lake levels are coming up, and weeds fill in where I removed them a week or so ago. My passion vine was so well watered I had to cut it way back to keep it off the roof of the house! Cherry tomatoes have kept on producing despite the summer temperatures, green peppers have been reliable too. The potted bird of paradise blossomed for the first time recently. A couple of hard rains with heavy wind turned a lot of the crepe myrtle blossoms into confetti. If you have started cuttings, they probably don't need supplemental water right now.

The down side of the high humidity and rain is that it provides ideal conditions for fungal growth on leaves, and root rot for plants in pots with poor drainage. Be sure to check your containerized plants a couple times a week. If they are wet or waterlogged, tip them on their side to let the water run out and consider re-potting in a container that can drain better. Saucers can be a problem in the summer, holding too much water in the bottom of a pot. Grass can get too much water too causing brown spot infestations. You can't change the soil under the grass to get better drainage, so treat the grass with fungicide.

Be sure to cut the grass regularly; the lawn may need to be cut even more often than once a week. If it got too tall, try one very high cut and a few days later lower the mower to your "normal" level. In addition to getting brown spot, lawns can be susceptible to insect problems like chinch bugs in St. Augustine grass or mole crickets in Bahia grass. Be sure you are treating the right problem with the right product.

Lots of rain may mean that your flowers and veggies need to be fed. For example, roses are very hungry plants. Well drained containers may have had the nutrients washed out of their soil too. Liquid fertilizer is NOT the best for summer; use slow release granular types suited for your plants. Fruit trees need a summer feeding too.

You can trim overgrown hedges this month or next, but keep the clippers away from winter- and spring-blossoming plants, because they have already put on the growth that will flower next year. Some crepe myrtles can be trimmed after the first blossoming to have them send out a second flush of blooms. Coleus will put out flowers in the summer; pinch them off to keep the plants bushy.

We have our programs set for the coming year. There will be an activity associated with each meeting, most coordinate with the theme for the month. Lots of member participation is planned for meetings too. We will let you know what to bring at least a month ahead.

SEPTEMBER – New President, Donna Thomas, will outline our goals and activities for the year.

OCTOBER – V.P.s Mary Lou and Susie will talk about plans to improve the plant sale.

NOVEMBER – Citrus County's Florida Friendly Landscaping Coordinator Steve Davis will talk about safely controlling garden pests.

DECEMBER – Christmas Party, with an ornament exchange.

JANUARY - Gail Taylor, President of the Citrus County chapter of the Native Plant Society will talk about native plants for home gardens and their effort to plant wildflowers on roadsides. She will also have information about their plant sale.

FEBRUARY – Valentine's Day tea, Donna will lead a plant arrangement workshop.

MARCH – Master Gardener Paul Duchesneau will talk about growing cactus and succulents.

APRIL – The Chronicle's Gardener Gal, Leslie Derrenbacker, will talk about flowering trees.

MAY – Annual luncheon