We’re cool Again!
With Halloween behind us, we now look forward to Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the start of the New Year! Cooler temperatures are upon us, which brings some instances of fall color in our landscapes, leaf drop from deciduous trees, and as winter settles in, a not so green lawn. In this issue, we hope that you enjoy reading and learning about seasonal color in the landscape, garnishing your home with cool-season container plants, recycling leaf litter via composting, adding a natural green cover to your lawn during the winter months and more.

Seasonal Color in the Landscape
 Cooler weather comes to the panhandle, finally! This is one of our most beautiful seasons, and the color in the landscape adds to that atmosphere. Color comes from both foliage and flowers.

Several types of hickory are native to our area. Their foliage turns a bright gold in the fall. If you wish to plant a hickory in your landscape, make sure you locate it where it will have plenty of room to grow, as the hickory becomes a large tree. Also, be aware that the nuts will be falling in autumn, so take that into consideration also.

Photo Credits: David W. Marshall

If you would like a smaller tree that has good fall color, consider the Chinese pistache. Its fall color is typically golden-orange. For more information on landscape trees for north Florida, visit http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/EH/EH14000.pdf

Photo Credits: David W. Marshall
One of the most noticed trees in the fall landscape is the Bradford pear. Fall foliage color can be anything from orange to red. Bradford pear has the natural tendency to form narrow branch angles which almost always result in some limbs that split off as the tree grows larger and the trunks push against each other. So I wouldn't recommend parking your car under it. Bradford pear also is susceptible to fireblight disease. Even considering those faults, it is still a popular tree because of the fall color and the white flowers in spring which can form if we have a cold winter.

You can add some flower color to your winter landscape if you use the right plants. We grew 'Citrona' erysimum in the demonstration gardens at the UF-IFAS Leon County Extension Center last winter, and I was very impressed with both the orange form and the yellow form. See if you can find it at your local garden center. It is a great background planting for pansies and violas as it grows to about a foot tall. It bloomed fall to well on into the spring. A super plant!

Of course, pansies and violas are some of our best flowers for cool-season color. They will flower right on through winter. Use some Citrona erysimum as a background and you will have a stunning color display.

When thinking of plants that will add winter color, don’t forget plants with berries. There are a number of types of hollies that are good landscape plants. Pyracantha can be spectacular in the fall, too. Just remember its common name of firethorn, though, and don’t plant it where you will have to do a lot of pruning or otherwise need to have a lot of contact with its sharp thorns.
Container Gardens Can Thrive in Cool Seasons

Colorful, cool-season containers near the front door or entryway to your home serve as welcoming beacons to friends and visitors coming our way this fall and during the holiday season.

If you think container gardening is just for the spring and summer, it's time to adjust that thought pattern. Cool-season container gardening is just as much fun as warm-season, and certainly as beautiful with the array of plants available at local garden centers.

The first order of business is to choose a container large enough to hold several plants and equipped with that mandatory drainage hole in the bottom. If you are using the lightweight containers that look like terra-cotta or stone, you may have to drill your own holes. While you are at it, add four or five holes that are about three-fourths of an inch in diameter.

Don’t forget to use colorful bowls as well. Bowls are easy to tuck indoors should the winter really turn nasty for a few days.

Choose a good lightweight, fluffy potting mix that already has controlled-released granular fertilizer mixed in. The method I use for incorporating plating materials into my containers is by using a “thriller, spiller and filler”: you need a “thriller” for the center plant, a plant that is going to catch everyone’s attention as they walk by, a “spiller” to cascade over the edge and a “filler” for any empty spots.

If the container is large enough, choose a thrilling evergreen like a juniper or upright rosemary as the center plant. If the container is smaller, your thriller will be smaller. Use Swiss chard, Redbor kale or Red Giant mustard as the center plant, then build around it. You also can use taller flowers as the center plants, such as snapdragons and their relatives linaria, nemesia and diascia, as well as stock and erysimum.

The first options for flowers to fill around the rim or to spill over the edges are pansies and violas. Here, you can pick your favorite color and design around them. For pockets of greenery, use ivy, dwarf sweet flags and even sages.

So you can see we have options not only for color and beauty but for enticing fragrance and culinary use as well.

Even though the temperatures will be much cooler, we must pay attention to plants’ water needs. You certainly will not have to water every day like you did in the summer, but supplemental irrigation will be needed.

Don’t forget to fertilize. This is a good season to mix up the water-soluble fertilizer and feed every couple of weeks.

The winter landscape becomes wonderful with the dark silhouettes of trees towering above evergreens, such as hollies, ligustrums, wax myrtles, azaleas and camellias. A container or two of color will be a great finishing touch around any home.

Composting Adds Much-Needed Nutrients to Gardens

Fall is the time of year many of us spend countless hours raking leaves and pine straw, piling them up, watching kids jump into the piles (then re-raking!), and bagging them up for disposal. However, what you may not have considered is that all of those materials are ideal fertilizer for your lawn and garden.

Composting is an excellent way to recycle yard waste, and now that leaves are dropping, you’ve got plenty of material...
to recycle. Vegetable gardens and landscapes alike can benefit from a generous dose of compost now and then. A free source of much-needed nutrients in our often nutrient-poor sandy soil, organic-rich compost also loosens tight, compacted soils and helps them hold nutrients and water.

So what is compost? Basically, compost is what's left of organic matter after microbes have thoroughly decomposed it. Among the compostable organic materials available to most homeowners are leaves, grass clippings, twigs, chopped brush, straw, sawdust, vegetable plants, culled vegetables from the garden, fruit and vegetable peelings and coffee grounds (including the paper filter) from the kitchen. Alternate using brown (leaves, straw) and green materials (grass clippings, vegetables) in your compost bin to provide the needed amounts of carbon and nitrogen. Don't add table scraps with meats or oils to your compost pile—meats especially will attract animals. Contrary to popular opinion, compost piles don't typically smell—but if you do have an odor come from decomposing vegetables, turning the compost pile and adding dirt, grass clippings or leaves will eliminate any smell.

The organisms that do the actual composting are bacteria and fungi are microscopic, although you will also find worms and arthropods in a good compost bin. A number of companies sell “composting microbes,” but you don’t need them. Fortunately, plenty of these microbes are around already. To get started, just mix a few scoops of garden soil or compost from a previous batch into the compost pile will provide all the microbes you need to start the process. The microbes just need water, oxygen and nutrients to grow and multiply.

Rainfall will provide most of the needed moisture, but during dry periods you may need to hand water the pile on occasion. For best results, keep the pile moist but not soggy; if you pick up a handful it should have the consistency of Play-Doh, and not crumble away nor drip water when squeezed. If the pile seems to be decomposing too slowly, raise the nitrogen level by adding a few more green materials or a handful of granular fertilizer. And the more you turn the pile, the faster it will decompose. Finished compost is rich, dark, organic material that has been broken down so completely that you typically won’t recognize any of its original components.

There are many ways to contain your composting materials, from a simple pile to a solar-heated, rotating bin and everything in between. For more information on composting and compost bin options, please see this University of Florida Extension article: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/HE026](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/HE026).

**Soil Testing Can Save You Money**

Most vegetable gardeners that enter my office in Walton County, FL say, “Why take soil samples”. It is a good idea to take a soil sample prior to the planting of crops so that one
can determine whether the adequate amount of nutrients and lime are available in the soil for plant growth.

It is best to take soil samples late in the fall or early winter of each year. This will allow enough time for supplemental lime, if needed, to react with the soil in time for spring planting. The soil test results will also indicate the recommended amounts of nutrient fertilizer to be added to the soil if they are found to be in the low level range.

It is important to determine by soil testing the levels of lime and fertilizer needed to support good plant growth. Keep in mind that this test only tells you the amount of nutrients to add to the soil, if any, and does not specify when and how often it should be applied. Your local county extension office can help you to determine recommended crop nutrient levels. Your county extension agent can also help you to interpret the soil test results.

Soil testing will save you money and is probably the most important step that one should take prior to preparing your soils for crop production. Test your soil. If this step is left-out of your soil preparation stage, then it will be impracticable to determine the proper amounts of nutrients to add to the soil to support healthy plant growth.

Remember now is the time to do your soil testing for the spring, contact your County Extension office for more information.

An unwanted Wintertime Guest

Homeowners have their favorite plants and with the approach of potential freezing weather, some of these may need protection. Houseplants or tender foliage plants that brighten the summer months outdoors will need to be moved to a heated greenhouse or indoor room to survive some of the area’s cold temperatures. During this transition make sure you check the plants carefully for pests which can hitch a ride indoors. One of the common pests that can move with plants and thrive indoors is the mealybug.

The adult female and male mealybugs look very different. Adult males which are rarely seen by most people, look like gnats and live only long enough to fertilize females. Adult females and nymphs look very similar with somewhat flattened bodies, no wings, and soft bodies covered with powdery white filaments. They can move on the plants to infest new areas throughout their lives.

Mealybugs are transferred to new plants in several different ways. The newly hatched young may crawl to other plants.
that are touching leaves and they may also be blown in the wind to surrounding plants. Other stages often get transferred when an infested plant is placed in close proximity to other plants. Because mealybugs are sometimes difficult to see, infestations are often unwittingly passed along through plant gifts or cuttings.

Since the insects are feeding on plant sap, plants will exhibit discoloration of leaves, wilted and deformed leaves, and dieback with heavy infestations. In the home or greenhouse, mealybugs are often found feeding on the undersides of leaves, in leaf axils and on stems but in general mealybugs can infest all plant parts including feeder roots, plant crowns, flowers, and fruits.

The best technique to prevent a wintertime mealybug infestation is to thoroughly inspect plants before they are moved to the greenhouse or home. You may also want to give plant plenty of room to decrease the movement of insects in case you miss some of the mealybugs. If you do find mealybugs, you can prune out a small infestation. For a small problem on one or two plants, you can dip a cotton swab in rubbing alcohol (1/2 water and ½ alcohol mixture) and gently dab this on the mealybugs in difficult spot like leaf axils. Of course, do not spray your plant with the alcohol. For a heavy mealybug problem, you may have to rely on a contact or systemic insecticide to manage the problems. Repeated applications of insecticides may be necessary as the label permits. If you choose an insecticide, always follow directions on application techniques and amounts. For more information on mealybugs visit the University of Florida publication Houseplant Arthropod Insect Management at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg004.

Green grass in winter?
Many of our warm-season turfgrass lawns will go dormant with the first frost. A practice called overseeding is often used to provide green cover through the winter months.

In overseeding, a temporary cool-season grass species is seeded over the permanent warm-season lawn. Grasses used for overseeding die out in the spring when the warm-season grasses come out of dormancy.

There are pros and cons to overseeding. One reason to overseed is to provide some type of groundcover for a new home site where it is too late in the fall to establish a permanent lawn. The temporary lawn would prevent erosion problems, prevent tracking mud into the home, etc. Another reason may be that you have had your permanent lawn damaged in some way and it will be vulnerable to additional winter injury if not overseeded. Another may be that you will be having some special event such as an outdoor wedding or family reunion that simply requires that the lawn be perfect at that time. And lastly, although somewhat a questionable good reason is that you simply must have a green lawn all year.

The disadvantages are that an overseeded lawn requires that cultural practices of mowing, fertilizing, watering, and pest management be continued throughout the winter. And some experts say that overseeding may delay next spring’s green-up of the permanent lawn and may actually weaken it.

If you decide to overseed, annual ryegrass is usually considered the best choice for overseeding. The seeds germinate rapidly, they’re fairly inexpensive and grow fast. If seeded properly, annual ryegrass can provide a dense, beautiful winter lawn for those that wish to have a winter lawn.

Establishing a winter ryegrass lawn isn’t complicated but proper timing is important. In general, October 15 through late November is the best time to plant the seed.

Start by mowing the permanent lawn and raking up all debris. Next, spread about ten pounds of ryegrass seeds...
per 1,000 sqft. To get the most uniform stand, divide the seeds into two applications. Broadcast half the seeds in one direction over the lawn and broadcast the rest at a right angle to your original path. After spreading the seeds, it’s best to rake the lawn lightly so the seeds make contact with the soil.

Theresa Friday
Horticulture Agent
Santa Rosa County Extension
tlfriday@ufl.edu

Upcoming Events
Santa Rosa

November 5: Gardening 101: It’s a Jungle Out There.
Are you being strangled by the “jungle” in your yard or landscape? If so, you don’t want to miss this invasive plant seminar and tree giveaway to be held at the UF/IFAS Santa Rosa County Extension Office on Saturday, November 5, from 9 to 11 a.m. The workshop will cover common invasive plants and trees found in area landscapes and educate participants regarding control options. The seminar will also encourage the use of non-invasive native trees and plants and provide participants with free native trees to replace invasive ones in their landscapes.

Following the workshop, UF/IFAS Santa Rosa Master Gardeners will coordinate the free native tree giveaway. Linda Dye, Master Gardener event coordinator, expressed appreciation to International Paper and the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council for providing funding for the program and give-away. She stated that “Their assistance was vital in allowing us to provide another educational opportunity which emphasizes the importance of Florida-Friendly landscaping practices.” Workshop participants may choose from among magnolia, river birch, sweet gum, black gum, holly or live oak trees. Limit of two trees per household.

This workshop is free and open to the public. The UF/IFAS Santa Rosa County Extension Office is located at 6263 Dogwood Drive, Milton. Pre-registration is required. Please register online at http://treegiveaway.eventbrite.com or call 623-3868.

Escambia

November 21, 1st of 8 classes Monday Evenings
6pm - 8pm Beginning Beekeeping Interactive Video Classes (Flyer & Registration)
Cost: $50 DUE 11/16
Escambia County Extension Windstorm building via Polycom. Contact Libbie Johnson 475-5230 or libbiej@ufl.edu. Other locations as follow:

Bay County Extension, Contact: Marjorie Moore or Scott Jackson, (850) 784-6105, Email: mreem@ufl.edu

Calhoun County Extension, Contact: Judy Ludlow, (850) 674-8323, Email: judy.ludlow@ufl.edu

Franklin Co. Extension, Contact: Bill Mahan, (850) 653-9337, Email: bman@ufl.edu

Gadsden County Extension, Contact: Henry G. Grant or Lester Muralles, (850) 875-7255, Email: gjg@ufl.edu or lesterm@ufl.edu

Gulf County Extension, Contact: Roy Carter, (850) 639-3200, Email: rlcarter@ufl.edu

Holmes County Extension, Contact: Shep Eubanks, (850) 547-1108, Email: bigbuck@ufl.edu

Jackson County Extension, Contact: Rob Trawick, (850) 482-9620, Email: rob.trawick@ufl.edu

Jefferson County Extension, Contact: Jed Dillard, (850) 342-0187, Email: dillardjed@ufl.edu

Leon County Extension, Contact: Will Sheftall, (850) 606-5202, E-mail: shetall@ufl.edu

Liberty County Extension, Contact: Monica Brinkley, (850) 643-2229, Email: Brinkley@ufl.edu

Okaloosa County Extension, Contact: Larry Williams, (850) 689-5850, Email: Iwilliams@co.okaloosa.fl.us

Santa Rosa County Extension, Contact: John Atkins or Mike Donahoe, (850) 675-6654, E-mail: srcextag@ufl.edu or MikeD@santarosa.fl.gov

Wakulla County Extension, Contact: Les Harrison, (850) 926-3931, Email: harrisog@ufl.edu

Walton County Extension, Contact: Mike Goodchild, (850) 892-8172, Email: mjgo@ufl.edu

Washington County Extension, Contact: Andy Andreasen or Matthew Orwat, (850) 638-6180, Email: amajr@ufl.edu or mjorwat@ufl.edu
## Northwest District Extension Offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City, State, Zip</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bay County</td>
<td>647 Jenks Avenue, Suite A</td>
<td>Panama City, FL 32401</td>
<td>(850) 784-6105</td>
<td>bay.ifas.ufl.edu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holmes County</td>
<td>201 N Oklahoma Street</td>
<td>Bonifay, FL 32425</td>
<td>(850) 547-1108</td>
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<tr>
<td>Okaloosa County</td>
<td>5479 Old Bethel Road</td>
<td>Crestview, FL 32535</td>
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<td>okaloosa.ifas.ufl.edu</td>
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<td>Calhoun County</td>
<td>20816 Central Avenue East, Suite 1</td>
<td>Blountstown, FL 32424</td>
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<td>Jackson County</td>
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<td>Marianna, FL 32448</td>
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<td>Wakulla County</td>
<td>84 Cedar Avenue</td>
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<td>Escambia County</td>
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<td>(850) 475-5230</td>
<td>escambia.ifas.ufl.edu</td>
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<td>Jefferson County</td>
<td>275 North Mulberry Street</td>
<td>Monticello, FL 32344</td>
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<td>jefferson.ifas.ufl.edu</td>
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<td>Walton County</td>
<td>732 N 9 Street Ste B</td>
<td>DeFuniak Springs, FL 32333</td>
<td>(850) 892-8172</td>
<td>walton.ifas.ufl.edu</td>
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<td>Franklin County</td>
<td>66 Fourth Street</td>
<td>Apalachicola, FL 32320</td>
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<td>franklin.ifas.ufl.edu</td>
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<td>Leon County</td>
<td>615 Paul Russell Road</td>
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<td>gulf.ifas.ufl.edu</td>
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<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
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