



LANDSCAPE NEWS
BY LINDA B. LANDRUM
JULY-AUGUST 2005



SO LONG!

After 30 years of serving the horticultural industry in Volusia County, I will be transferring to a University of Florida position in North Florida as of July 11, 2005. I have greatly enjoyed working with and getting to know many of the industry folks here and will look back fondly on my time spent in this county!

Until a new agent is hired later this year, please contact Dana Venrick if you have any commercial horticultural questions. Other gardening questions can be answered by the Master Gardeners or Linda Evans who will be directing the Master Gardener program temporarily. This will be the last newsletter for awhile but do check out our Extension website frequently for upcoming programs.

http://volusia.org/extension_service



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**Warm summer sun,
shine kindly here;
Warm southern wind,
blow softly here;
Green sod above,
lie light, lie light;
Good night dear heart,
good night, good night.**
-Mark Twain

UNFRIENDLY HOMESTEADER

By Raymond Zerba

Plants that cause skin irritation accounted for nearly 2 million cases of job related injury in one particular year, making it the greatest single cause for workmen's compensation claims for that year. They should be regarded seriously as a hazard in the landscape/nursery, and among them poison ivy is arguably the most hazardous in our area of the state.

What it looks like:

Three leaves make up a poison ivy leaflet, which can be 2 to 4 inches long. The better the soil, and more shade, the bigger the leaf. Leaves are usually glossy green in



appearance. While this is a vine, it can cover the ground like a "carpet". Small clusters of yellow-green flowers form in midsummer and by fall we start to see small off-white berries which are eaten by up to 55 species of birds thus explaining its wide dispersal throughout north-east Florida.

Toxicity & Sensitivity

Sap found in all portions of this plant contains an oily fluid that causes itching and watery blisters. Individuals vary in their sensitivity to this plant and may become less sensitive as they grow older. Some people become more sensitive with repeated exposure, and some people never seem to be affected by this plant at all.

Symptoms usually develop within 2 to 3 hours after exposure, but they may be delayed for up to 48 hours. Reactions in others, who have not even been in direct contact with poison ivy, can happen by just handling contaminated tools, clothing, or even petting the fur of a cat or dog that has passed through a patch of this "Unfriendly Homesteader." Smoke from burning vines carries toxic vapors that sensitive people can also react to badly. Stay away from it!

Treatment

Rather than get into this, where I don't feel comfortable because I am not familiar with the most up-to-date treatments available, I would direct you to seek the advice of your doctor if you suffer from

the toxins of this plant. There are new lotions on the market for treating poison ivy rashes as well as topical prophylactic creams that are said to prevent you from getting it in the first place. It is suggested that if you encounter poison ivy, by washing the surface with generous amounts of cold water shortly afterwards you can prevent the rash. Not that hot water increases the penetration of the toxic into your skin.

NEW CEU REQUIREMENTS

Thanks to Dr. Norm Neisheim UF/IFAS (retired)

Beginning January 1, 2005, pesticide applicators licensed under Chapter 487 F.S. who renew their licenses with CEUs are required to have 4 Core CEUs in addition to the number of CEUs required for their category. For example: an applicator with an O&T license will need 12 O&T CEUs plus 4 Core CEUs to renew his/her license, while an applicator with O&T, right-of way and natural areas licenses will need 12 O&T, 8 right-of way, 16 natural areas and 4 Core CEUs to renew. **Private applicators, the 4 Core CEUs will be part of the 8 total CEUs required, so the CEU requirements are not increasing for private applicators. Private applicators must now make sure they have 4 Core CEUs plus 4 private applicator agriculture CEUs to renew.** Contrary to information circulating, FDACS did not change the numbers of CEUs required for some commercial public applicator categories. The CEU numbers required for those categories remain the same as they have for several years.

PUBLICATIONS

"FL Native Aquatic Plants for Ornamental Water Gardeners" –

Worden & Sutton ENH 988 Feb. 2005

"Trees & Storms: What We Learned" – Gilman
Jan 2005

"New Red Crape Myrtles Add Sizzle to Your Summer" – Knox NFREC News May 2005

"Warm Climate Production Guidelines for Japanese Hydrangeas" – Shoelhorn & Richardson
ENH 910 Feb. 2005

"A Threat to the Cycads" – Mannion Winter 2005



POINTS TO PONDER

Thanks to Marisa Shoemaker
Green Profit Magazine
April/May 2004 www.greenprofit.com



Homeowners are opening the floodgates, as it were, to water gardening. At an exponential rate, those who relegated their weekends to perennial borders and container gardens are attempting a new medium. In fact, according to a recent Taunton Press survey, adding a water feature ranked first as the improvement homeowners most wanted to make. Only “adding a deck” received an equal response.

With this in mind, we enlisted the help of the pond gurus at Aquascape Designs, Batavia, Illinois, to debunk the myths that are lurking beneath the surface.

MYTH - Small water features are less work.

As water features get larger, they become easier to maintain. Aquarium hobbyists know it's easier to achieve a healthy, stable tank with more water, not less. Small water features rarely have the flow or capacity necessary for long-term stability; they'll soon need lots of maintenance. However, properly designed ponds are able to achieve ecological balance. As they grow, they also become more stable with each passing year as plants, bacteria colonies and other vital life become established.

MYTH – Algae should be kept out of the pond.

Green algae, in proper proportion, is beneficial plant life. Fish eat it, and it's part of the ecology of any living, healthy pond. Too much algae is caused by too much sunlight, which is why a well-designed natural pond includes shade sources from landscaping and aquatic plants.

MYTH – Maintaining a water garden will be difficult.

Ecologically balanced water gardens let Mother Nature do the work. Make sure the water garden your customers install works with nature, not against it. Stock ecosystem pond kits that include

mechanical and biological filtration, and lots of aquatic plants, fish, active bacteria and rocks. Reassure customers that there's no need for water testing or chemicals, nor will they have clogged filter screens or standing water.

MYTH – To keep fish, water gardens need to be deep.

Fish, including koi, hibernate in ponds just 2 ft. deep through winters as cold as those in Zone 4. A small circulating agitator pump and heater are all you need to keep a “breathing hole” in the ice to oxygenate the water for the fish.

MYTH – Predators will eat all the fish.

Predators are out there, but your customers can protect their fish. In shallow waters, herons see koi as a prize; however, your customers can fight back with motion-activated water spraying systems which will deter herons with a jet of water. Muskrats generally prefer to hunt in large bodies of water. A pond that's at least 8 ft. wide will deprive raccoons from entering the water, as well, as they prefer to hunt from the banks.

MYTH – Water gardens are breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes breed in still, standing water. However, a well-designed water garden has water flow. In addition, they support fish, frogs, and other wildlife that are predators of mosquitoes.

MYTH – Water gardening involves a great deal of time and hard work.

An ecologically balanced pond needs only a scoop of powder or liquid bacteria every month or so, the skimmer basket cleaned weekly, and an annual clean-out in cold climates. In gardening terms, this equates to about as much work as maintaining an established perennial border, without the weeding and watering. Aquatic plants water themselves, after all.

MYTH – Water gardens are expensive.

Well...perhaps this one isn't a myth, but a misconception. It's an investment, sure, but it's not a money pit. A water garden kit will cost your customers from \$700 to \$900, adding in approximately \$600 for large or live elements that don't come in the box (rocks, pebbles, fish, plants and so on). Professional installations start at about \$4,000, and running a high-efficiency pump may add \$30 or \$40 to a monthly electric bill. However, water gardens are landscaping investments that pay for themselves in increased home equity.

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Cooperative Extension Service
Volusia County Extension
3100 E. New York Avenue
DeLand, FL 32724

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DATES TO REMEMBER



- Aug. 24, 31** **Successful Vegetable Gardening** – Barberville, Call for details. Registration fee.
Sept. 7, 14
- Aug. 31** **Review for Chap. 487 RU Ornamental/Turf/ or P.A. Agriculture Exam**
Sanford Call 407-665-5551

If you would like more information on upcoming programs or want to receive publications please call, fax, or e-mail me. All Extension Service programs and information are free and open to the public regardless of race, color, sex, disability, religion, or national origin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Linda B. Laudman'.

Extension Agent IV - Horticulture