



SEASIDE The Gardener

VOL. 1 NO. 4 DECEMBER 2022 BY JENIFER MARX

Happy Holidays

—WHAT TO PLANT NOW—

ANNUAL FLOWERS

ANNUALS/BEDDING plants: To add color to the winter garden, plant masses of petunia, pansy, and snapdragon. Hardy annuals that will provide color include alyssum, calendula, cleome, dianthus, pansy, petunia, phlox, salvia, snapdragon and verbena. Remove faded blooms to extend flowering. [See Annuals](#)

BULBS: Amaryllis is a popular plant for the holiday season. After they bloom, plant them in the garden where they should bloom and multiply. [See Bulbs for Florida](#)

VEGETABLES: Cool-season veggies include celery, cauliflower, lettuce, cabbage, and carrot. The planting season for greens, both

hardy (kale, chard etc.) and delicate (microgreens, arugula, leaf lettuces) is from August through February.

[See Vegetable Gardening in Florida](#)

What Christmas Looked Like the Day You Were Born



FIVE HERBS FOR FALL

With the holiday season upon us, many cooks will be pulling

out the recipe cards (or cooking apps) for festive dishes. Luckily, it's also an ideal time to plant culinary herbs to enhance your meals. We have five autumn favorites you can plant now, including *the classic quartet*: parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme.

PARSLEY, a cool season herb, should be planted in late fall or early winter. Buy transplants or start your own from seed. The seeds are slow to germinate, so plants lots of them.

ROSEMARY, indispensable in Mediterranean cooking, is an attractive, drought-tolerant perennial that works well in containers and landscape beds. This Florida-Friendly plant will thrive year-round, although it may need to be protected from freezing in

colder areas of the state. Rosemary prefers dry conditions and needs well-drained soil and at least six hours of sun.

THYME is another sun-loving Mediterranean culinary and medicinal herb. A French favorite, there are about 350 species of thyme. An aromatic perennial in growing zones 2-9, it should be considered an annual here because of our high humidity and perennially warmer weather. Start from seed or for best results but transplants or propagate by cuttings. Thyme likes sunlight and relatively dry soil. Dried thyme retains its flavor quite well when stored in an air-tight container.

ARUGULA, also of Mediterranean origin, grown from seed tastes much better than quick-to-spoil supermarket arugula. Grow this spicy, peppery herb from seed to harvest within six weeks. Arugula is easiest to grow in Zone 10a during fall and winter. Plant seeds year-round in semi-shade with protection from extreme heat or cold. Arugula's "bite" intensifies as the plant matures due to an increase in sulfur compounds. It's not just for salads. Added to sandwiches, omelets, pizzas and grain bowls, arugula adds zip to delicious pestos for enhancing everything from pasta to seafood, poultry, and meat.

—WHAT TO DO—

SOIL TESTING—Before doing anything, test your soil so you can make informed decisions about planting. Submit sample with form marked for Test B and a check for \$10. Contact Sally Scamera for interpretation of test results. (321) 633-1702.

See: [IFAS Soil Testing Information Soil Test Form](#)

[MANAGE FLORIDA SNOW IN YOUR LAWN.](#)



Cooking Light's

Arugula Mint Pesto



Ingredients

- 5 cups loosely packed arugula
- 1/2 cup fresh mint
- 1/4 cup toasted almonds
- 1/2 oz grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (~2 Tbsp)

- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/3 cup EV olive oil
- 2 Tbsp warm water

Method

Pulse arugula, fresh mint, toasted almonds, grated cheese, garlic cloves, lemon zest, fresh lemon juice, and kosher salt in a food processor until finely chopped. With the processor running, slowly drizzle in extra-virgin olive oil. Add warm water and process until blended.

Serve immediately or store in the refrigerator covered with a thin layer of olive oil for up to three days, or in the freezer for up to three months.

Note: I like to add a glug of rich extra virgin olive oil when processing the pesto. Variations: Swap walnuts, pine nuts, or hazel nuts for the almonds. Substitute mint with basil or parsley.

Recipe

Store in airtight container in refrigerator for up to one week. Pesto freezes well. Freeze in ice cube trays, and then store frozen pesto cubes in plastic freezer bags in freezer for up to six months. Pesto may also be frozen in small jars or plastic containers for up to 9-12 months, like these cute little jars from [Weck's](#). Great hostess gifts!





PLANT GROUND COVER — It's time to replant hard-to-mow and shady areas with Florida Friendly [ground covers](#).

MULCH — Landscape plants do best with a good cover of organic mulch. This year's hurricanes— Ian and Nicole—provided those of us with oak trees with abundant fallen leaves, which make excellent mulch. Oak leaves are acidic, making them particularly suited to our alkaline sandy soil. If you don't have oak

trees, perhaps a non-gardening neighbor will let you have some.

Continue fertilizing hardy annuals and container grown plants monthly with an organic fertilizer. Discontinue fertilizing other outdoor plants except vegetables. Spray foliage of edible plants with a solution of liquid seaweed every few weeks.

DEADHEAD & INSPECT — Pick off dead blooms and seeds to encourage new flowers and monitor plants often for insects and disease. Delay any major pruning until after winter except for deciduous trees and shrubs, which can be pruned after they drop all their leaves. Renew mulch to conserve water and control weeds.

LANDSCAPE AND GARDEN PESTS — Continue monitoring and treat as needed. While cooler weather generally means fewer pests, some populations actually increase at this time of year.

[See Garden Pest Insects](#)
[Landscape Pest Management](#)

Winterize tender plants with liquid seaweed solution (e.g., Maxicrop or Neptune's Harvest). Use as a foliar spray on both sides of the leaves to strengthen cell walls. Made from kelp harvested from shallow coastal waters, liquid seaweed emulsion contains over 70 beneficial plants. About once a week, spray a fine mist of liquid seaweed solution on vegetable plants, citrus and avocado trees. Spray other fruit trees, shrubs, and vines about every two weeks.

HOUSEPLANTS — Inspect regularly for pests on indoor plants. Keep in mind that plant-specific temperature, light, and humidity are key to ensuring that indoor plants thrive.

[HOUSEPLANTS](#)

—HOLIDAY PLANTS—

BUYING THE BEST POINSETTIAS — Look for plants with a full cluster of cyathia (the true flowers) located in the center of the bracts, which are actually modified leaves and can be a



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variety of colors. The flowers should be tightly budded. The cyathia holds the pollen for the plant and as soon as it opens and sheds pollen, the leaves will start to fall off; typically, the colored ones first. Check the base of the bract. New flowers are green and red-tipped. Mature cyathia are yellow. Poinsettia bracts maintain their color much longer if you select one that is in the beginning stages of flowering.

POINSETTIAS

Tip: Poinsettias are vibrant additions to holiday arrangements. Stems last a week or more if cut on the diagonal and singed in a candle flame before being placed in a container.



HOLIDAY CACTUS, the gift that keeps on giving — Thanksgiving cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*) and Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*) are popular, fall- and winter-flowering houseplants native to Brazil, and are available in a wide variety of colors. They grow as epiphytes among tree branches in shady rain forests, and their pendulous stems make them a great choice for hanging baskets.

When kept away from lights at night, Thanksgiving cacti normally flower near Thanksgiving about a month before Christmas cacti bloom. Another member of the group sold as holiday cacti is the Easter

cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*), which flowers primarily in the spring and sporadically throughout the year with pink or red flowers. Because of its bloom time, the Thanksgiving cactus is most predominately encountered for sale during the winter holiday season. Flowering can last up to seven to eight weeks if the plants are kept at 68° F.

HOLIDAY TREES — Planted in the landscape after the holidays, living Christmas trees can be enjoyed for many years. Living trees suited for Florida, include red cedar, Arizona cypress, Leyland cypress, Torulosa juniper, sand pine, and, in South Florida, Norfolk Island pine.

See GARDENING SOLUTIONS

DECORATE YOUR HOLIDAY TABLE WITH TROPICAL GARDEN CUTTINGS. Create a natural table runner using banana leaf, areca palm fronds, monstera, magnolia or other large foliage. Create a vibrant tablescape with citrus fruit, pineapples, avocados, nuts in the shell and colorful plants like variegated schefflera with their clusters of orange berries, Queen Emma crinums and hibiscus.



Fill glass containers with

whole or sliced oranges, lemons and limes

- Use real green coconuts as vases
- Display solitary tropical leaves in glass cylindrical vases
- Submerge leaves in water with rocks & floating candles

RED FLORIDA BERRIES FOR HOLIDAY DECORATING

“LET IT BEE” — Appreciating Florida Weeds



FROGFRUIT (*Phyla nodiflora*), is an under appreciated Florida native that makes an attractive flowering ground cover for small areas. Also known as creeping Charlie and (confusingly) turkey tanglefoot frog fruit it is evergreen, low growing (five inches max) and beloved by bees, butterflies and skippers. Its diminutive flowers are a valuable nectar source for many butterflies including phaon crescent, common buckeye, white peacock, gray hairstreak, and tropical checkered skipper butterflies. It is also a larval host for common buckeye, phaon crescent and white peacock butterflies.



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Look for it in native nurseries or along roadsides or ditches. Frogfruit spreads vigorously and can be easily grown from cuttings or by division. With moderately high wind and salt tolerance, it is a good choice for our sandy island soil.

Online Resources

[The Florida-Friendly Landscaping Guide to Plant Selection and Landscape Design](#)

[Plant Real Florida](#): A treasure trove of information on native Florida plants and where to find them.

When you're fabulous, you must have [fabulous](#) tools.



Lavender Blue [French Tablecloths](#)

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Colonial Williamsburg

For the history buff gardener, Colonial Williamsburg has the coolest historic replica of a ["bottle bird house"](#) found at an historic property in Richmond in the 1700s. Attach it to your house under an eave or protected area and little birds will thank you.



[CouleurNature.com](#) offers 100% cotton French linens that are non-coated completely washable.

Gifts for the Gardener



For the [bee lover](#) in your life. This source is endless.

For a different kind of garden, how about one you can listen to—[RADIO GARDEN](#). Pick anyplace in the world and tune in.



GIFT THE OUTDOORS

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Easy Instructions for Inoculating Your Yard

The easiest way to inoculate your established plants is to purchase a liquid inoculant that contains a variety of beneficial bacteria, saprophytic fungi, and mycorrhizae (*i.e.*, Bushdoctor Kangaroots, Bushdoctor Microbe Brew, etc.), mix it in water (follow the label directions), and water the trees/plants with it. The microbes will also help all the plants in your yard, including the lawn which can be inoculated using a hose-end sprayer. One or both products are sold in six locations throughout the county (see below).

The liquid inoculant can be applied a second time a month later, but do not worry that the label says to apply it every two weeks because that is for hydroponic growers. In the landscape, the microbes will continue to reproduce and move throughout the entire yard, if synthetic fertilizers and pesticides are not used.

You can just purchase one bottle and inoculate as many trees/plants as possible. You do not need to worry about watering the entire root system or every square inch of your yard because the soil microbes will move out, as they increase in population, along the roots and find the roots of other nearby plants.

Other recommendations would be to apply Azomite (#4 in [Recommendations](#) for growing fruit trees and other edible plants) to re-mineralize the soil. Azomite will help to produce healthier plants and more nutritious food.

You can also begin spraying the foliage of fruit trees and vegetable plants every week with both liquid seaweed (#5) and aspirin (#7). Liquid seaweed will also help to produce healthier plants and more nutritious food. Aspirin will give the plant Systemic Acquired Resistance (SAR) which is comparable to our immune system, giving plants more protection against diseases and insect pests.

Liquid seaweed and aspirin will benefit all plants, so if any ornamental plants are experiencing insect and/or disease problems, spray them weekly also.

If you do these four things, your lawn, plants, and especially trees will do much better!

Places that sell liquid inoculant:

1) the Ace Hardware store on Garden Street in Titusville; 2) Brevard Farm and Ranch in Cocoa on Clearlake Rd; 3) Rockledge Gardens; 4) Ace Hardware in Cocoa Beach; 5) Sun Harbor Nursery on Eau Gallie Blvd just west of A1A; and 6) High Tech Garden Supply on SR 192 (between Lowe's and Home Depot on the south side of SR 192).

Azomite may be available at Ace Hardware in Cocoa at 1330 N. Cocoa Blvd. (321) 636-0411 or Amber Acres Feed & Seed at 1629 King Street (SR 520) | (321) 632-3333 or online.

Digging Deeper: What do Plants Do at Night?

This is a selection from Kids Gardening, a great resource for kids that explains what plants do at night. To read the entire article in its original form, please go [here](#).

We know that plants perform *photosynthesis*—a process of using sunlight to make carbs (food) to live (also called gas exchange). Since the photosynthetic process only happens during the day, what do plants do at night? Do they simply rest, waiting for the sunrise? The answer is a resounding “no!” In fact, the range and importance of plants’ nocturnal activities might come as a surprise.

First, plants “breathe.” When we breathe, we take in oxygen and release it as carbon dioxide. Plants do the same thing, but when plants do it, it’s called respiring, not breathing. Through respiration, they gain energy and store it in “cells.” Plants take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen.

Every living organism uses the process of *respiration* to stay alive, just as you breathe to stay alive. Fortunately, plants release more oxygen than they consume, so plants and trees give us oxygen to breathe. (That’s why the [Amazon forest](#) is called the *lungs of the earth*.)

Second, plants grow. Plants *respire* around the clock, and they grow around the clock, too. During respiration, they burn stored energy to fuel metabolism which makes them grow. Metabolism is the process of converting energy into fuel for the plant, or your own body, to use to stay healthy.

Plants grow in the direction of sunlight. If you see a lop-sided potted plant, turn it around and it will grow in the other direction. The growth that occurs at night is unaffected by daylight so the growth is *vertical*. Sometimes they grow

even more at night because they aren’t focusing on photosynthesis.

Third, they drink a little bit. The photosynthetic process requires water—and plants don’t photosynthesize in the dark. A plant normally uses less than 2% of the water they take in on photosynthesis. Most of that water is released into the atmosphere during ***transpiration***, which is where the water inside a leaf evaporates through the stomata (leaf pores). In other words, the leaf loses water. When the stomata is open, the stomata allows the intake of carbon dioxide and the release of oxygen, or *respires*. Plant tissue is made up of about 95% water; without a continuous supply of water, the plant dehydrates...just like humans.

How does water get in the leaf cells anyway?

When water evaporates through the stomata, it cools the leaf surface and prevents overheating. It also creates a pull that draws water from the roots to the foliage. The water from the roots and soil contains dissolved minerals required by each of the cells. When the cells are filled with water, it is *turgid*—firm and upright with leaves spread. Without that, the cells lose their firmness and the plant wilts.

Plants transpire — lose water — day and night, but because they transpire at a much lower rate at night, they lose less water at night and drink less.

Some plants flower at night. All flowers use their flowers to lure pollinators with visual cues and scents. Day-blooming flowers lure pollinators that are active during the day, such as bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Night bloomers have evolved to bloom when their pollinators are active — *e.g.*, moths and bats as well as some flies and beetles.

Night-blooming flowers tend to be white or pale in color and many have strong scents—adaptations to advertise their locations in low-light conditions. Night-blooming cereus, a plant native to Central and South America, is

pollinated by bats and moths. The pale, waxy flowers of yuccas release their sweet fragrance at night to attract female yucca moths as part of their interdependent plant-pollinator relationship. Evening primrose, Madonna lily, and night-blooming jasmine also rely on moths for pollination, while bats are important pollinators for agave plants as well as saguaro and organ pipe cacti.



cereus.jpg Night Blooming Cereus

Photoperiodism. The term photoperiodism describes physiological changes that occur in an organism in response to day length; that is, the amounts of light or darkness in a 24-hour period. Daylight is maximized at the summer solstice; nights are the longest at the winter solstice. Many types of plant growth are affected by the ratio of light to darkness, which enables plants to adapt to seasonal changes.

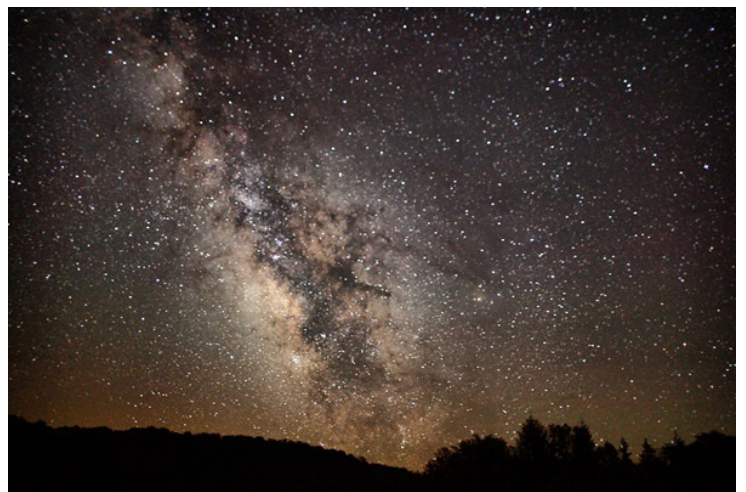
For instance, plants flower in response to how much sun they get in a day. That's why some plants bloom in early to mid-summer when days are long, and some produce flowers in fall as the days grow shorter. Plant survival is dependent on adapting to light and dark. When there is less

light, plants go dormant to prepare for winter. Above-ground growth slows, leaves drop and they conserve sugar in their cells like squirrels hide nuts for winter survival. This preparation is critical to preventing plant tissue damage and death due to freezing.

What is light pollution and how does it effect plants?

If you live in a city or urban area, you see very little of the night sky. If you go to a rural area or out west where there is less light, your view will be very, very different. Plants are affected by the artificial light cast by streetlights, floodlights, and signage. For example, trees growing under streetlights may not be triggered into dormancy—they may continue to grow rather than prepare for winter. This can result in freeze damage. Flower-blooming plants might open when their pollinators aren't around. No pollination. No flowering plants.

The [International Dark-Sky Association](#) is a great resource to learn ways our world and even you can be “dark sky friendly.”



milky way.jpg The Milky Way You Can't See

Author, **JENIFER MARX**
Florida Master Gardener | Garden Club by the Sea

Editor, **LISA PACKARD**

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UF RESOURCES FOR GARDENERS

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

<https://fpl.ifas.ufl.edu/>

FruitScapes

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/entity/topic/fruitscapes>

Gardening Solutions:

<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/>