

Titusville Garden Club Horticulture Report

September 6, 2023

March 12, 2023 to November 5, 2023

Watering schedule



Only Twice A Week

No Watering Between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Spring & Summer Schedule

- Odd-Numbered Residential Addresses: Wednesday & Saturday Only
- Even-Numbered Residential Addresses: Thursday & Sunday Only
- All Commercial and Non-Residential Addresses: Tuesday & Friday Only

Keep your lawn healthy - only water when needed

You Can Grow In September

Planting dates here are based on the University of Florida IFAS Extension, and you can find more information on that here: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>

Vegetables: Celery, cabbage, lettuce, and collards are all great cool-season vegetable options.

Bedding Plants: Like north Florida, gardeners should plant ageratum, celosia, zinnia, and wax begonia to refresh the summer beds.

Bulbs: The different varieties of Elephant's Ear are the perfect bulbs to add color, texture, and pattern to the garden.

Herbs: Mint, basil, and rosemary are ideal herbs to plant that can tolerate the heat in early fall

Clean Your Garden Beds

To prepare your vegetable garden for the fall season, the first thing you'll want to do is to clean your garden beds. If you let your garden grow a bit during the summer because of the heat, or because of summer vacation and family trips, you may find an abundance of weeds that need to be pulled. Any previous plants that you've grown that have gone through their lifecycle may need to be removed. And any fallen fruit will also need to be discarded.

Pull the Weeds

It's important to get rid of any weeds that you may find in your garden. Not only are they unattractive and make it look like you're not keeping up with your garden (even though you spent an hour last week cleaning everything!), but they also deplete your soil and plants with important nutrients. Because weeds grow quickly they can overtake what you're trying to grow. They can absorb water faster and grow tall enough to block your plants from getting sunlight. This is especially significant when your plants are still small.

Remove Spent Plants

To prepare your vegetable garden for the fall season, you may also need to remove a few spent plants. If you have a few peppers plants that are no longer producing as much as they once did, or you have some tomato plants that have long since died in June, it's time to remove those spent plants. By doing this you'll make your garden look more attractive, and you'll also create space to plant your new plants. If your plants are no longer producing food for you, then they should be removed so that they don't compete for any nutrition that your new plants are fighting for. This will also give your soil a chance to rest before you plant something new.

Discard Any Fallen Fruit

You may not have noticed it before, but you may have some fallen, half-eaten fruit in your garden. This could have been hiding under your spent plants or among the weeds, but it's time for it to go. If you find any, it's important that you discard it. While you can leave fallen leaves to decompose in your beds, you'll want to remove fruit because it can rot, create disease in your garden, and attract larger pests to your garden. And believe me, if you find insects a pain, wait until you have small rodents. The cleaner your garden is, the fewer problems you'll run into.

Replenish Your Soil

Once you've tidied up your garden you can start assessing your soil. You'll want to make sure you have high-quality soil to prepare your vegetable garden for the fall season. When you grow plants, they absorb the nutrients and minerals that are in your soil. Over time, this depletes your soil. You can add those nutrients back to your soil and make it an ideal growing environment by adding compost, checking your pH levels, and adding additional amendments as you see fit.

Add Compost

Before a growing season, you should add two inches of compost to your garden bed and mix it in. You can purchase it or make your own compost. Composting is one of the best ways to feed your garden and keep your garden soil healthy. By making your own you can use basic kitchen scraps that you'd throw away otherwise. If you're interested to see if making your own compost is right for you, check out [Composting for a Backyard Garden](#).

If you opt to purchase a bag of compost to prepare your vegetable garden for the fall, I recommend Black Kow. It's a 50lb bag you can purchase from Lowe's. Here is a link for you to see what it looks like, but I do NOT recommend buying this on Amazon: [Black Kow](#). You can get it at Lowe's for around \$5. I use two of these bags for each of my 4'x8' raised garden beds.

Check Your Soil pH Levels

Depending on where you're at in your gardening journey, you may want to check your soil pH levels. While pH levels are important, if you're adding compost and not planting the same vegetable in the same spot year after year you should be ok. But if your curiosity gets the best of you, or you've noticed a trend with your plants not being successful, you may want to try testing your soil pH levels. A soil meter can give you an idea of how acidic or alkaline your soil is. Different plants like different levels. To learn more about testing your soil pH levels and to see a list of optimal pH levels for different vegetables, check out [Testing Your Soil pH Levels](#).

Add Additional Amendments

Once you know your soil pH levels you can add additional amendments to your soil. While composting should help quite a bit, you can add other supplements. I garden organically, so I avoid fertilizers with harmful and toxic chemicals. Some [Additional amendments](#) you can use to prepare your vegetable garden for the fall include used coffee grounds, worm castings, blood meal, and bone meal.

- **[Coffee Grounds](#)**: While any used coffee grounds will do, these do happen to be my favorite. Cappuccino drinker here. 😊 Used coffee grounds are a good organic amendment to add nutrients and improve drainage. And earthworms love them! Most coffee shops will even give you their used grounds if you ask.
- **[Worm Castings](#)**: Speaking of earthworms, worm castings are a fantastic amendment to add to your garden. This is one of the richest fertilizers

you can do. A little goes a long way – we’re talking tablespoons here. It’s rich in minerals for your plants.

- **[Bone Meal](#)**: This can add calcium and phosphorus to your soil to help with root growth, flower growth, and to prevent blossom-end rot. It can also raise your soil pH level over time. To learn more, check out this [Bone Meal Post](#).
- **[Blood Meal](#)**: This adds nitrogen back into your soil to help your plants become more green and lush. It comes in a black granular form that you add to your soil. Blood meal can also make your soil more acidic, which lowers the pH level of your soil. To learn more, check out this [Blood Meal Post](#).

Plan Your Garden Bed Layout

Now that you’ve cleaned your garden beds and you’ve gotten your soil quality up to par, the final step to focus on to prepare your vegetable garden for the fall season is planning your garden bed layout. What are you going to fill your beautiful garden beds with?

Central Florida

Bedding Plants: Like north Florida, gardeners should plant ageratum, celosia, zinnia, and wax begonia to refresh the summer beds.

Bulbs: The different varieties of Elephant’s Ear are the perfect bulbs to add color, texture, and pattern to the garden.

Herbs: Mint, basil, and rosemary are ideal herbs to plant that can tolerate the heat in early fall.

Vegetables: September is the time to start planting for fall—celery, cabbage, lettuce, and collards are all great cool-season vegetable options.

September Master Gardeners at Titusville Library

Master Gardeners will answer all your questions about plants, pests, insects, and diseases, with hand-outs available to take home. Just moved to Florida and want to learn more about gardening in the Southeast. Have questions about the best tips and tricks to grow the perfect fruits and veggies? Want to meet like-minded gardening enthusiasts? Bring your gardening, plant problems, and bug questions to the Master Gardeners' monthly stop at the library! Stop by on Wednesday, September 6th from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM in the lobby.

For more information, please stop by or call the Reference Desk. The Titusville Library is located at 2121 South Hopkins Avenue, Titusville FL 32780. Our phone number is (321) 264-5026.

Happy Gardening! 😊