



## Pumpkin Planting Time!

Pumpkins for Halloween are best planted in late June and early July. They require 90 to 110 days from planting to harvest. Most pumpkin varieties produce strong, running vines that require plenty of garden space. Some varieties are described as having short vines and are adapted to limited space.

Pumpkins crosspollinate with summer squash, acorn squash, spaghetti squash, and small ornamental gourds if they are growing nearby. This is of no concern unless you plan to save seed for another year. All of this crossing results in some strange looking volunteer squash-pumpkins in the garden or compost pile the next year.

Pumpkin seeds saved from harvested pumpkins make a nice snack food when roasted. Some pumpkin varieties have seeds with no hulls. Never eat seeds that were purchased for planting because of insecticides and fungicides used as seed treatments.

Problems in growing pumpkins are cucumber beetles, squash bugs, pickleworms, squash vine borers, and powdery and downy mildews.



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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Events	2
Garden Calendar	3
Are weeds killing my lawn?	4
Lawn Irrigation	5
Mealybugs in the Home and Home Landscape	6
Quick Bites Program	7

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## Events for July 2019

### Hancock County Events

- 9 Sustainable Landscapes**— 2:00 p.m. Bay St. Louis Public Library. Building and maintaining a sustainable landscape can help reduce energy costs and improve water quality while producing a beautiful home environment. Choosing native plants for the home landscape, as well as green walls and roofs, will be discussed. The use of rain gardens and the creation of low maintenance landscapes will also be covered during the program.
- 16 Cut Flowers for the Mississippi Gardener**— 2:00 p.m. Pass Christian Public Library. This program will include information on how to grow and harvest cut flowers for gardeners in Coastal Mississippi, as well as what flowers perform well and how to manage common insect and disease problems.

### Harrison County Events

- 10 Hancock/Harrison Forestry and Wildlife Association monthly meeting**— 11:00 a.m. until Noon. Sherry's Country Kitchen located at 20180 Highway 53 in Gulfport, MS. All Hancock/Harrison CFWA members are welcome to attend.
- 11 Private Applicator Training**— 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. Harrison County Extension Office, 2315 17th Street, Gulfport, MS. This training is for those who own or lease property for agricultural purposes. \$20 per individual. Instructed by Tim Ray. No preregistration necessary.

### Lamar County Events

- 9 Lamar County Sewing Club Meeting**— 9:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Lamar County Extension Office.
- 10 Pine Belt Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting**— 10:00 a.m. at the Lamar County Extension Office.
- 11 Forrest/Lamar County Forestry Association Meeting**— 7:00 a.m. at Lake Serene Grocery in Hattiesburg, MS.

### Pearl River County Events

- 2 Pearl River-Stone County Forestry Association Meeting**— 12:00 noon. The Sawmill Restaurant, 2205 Highway 49, Wiggins, MS.
- 12 Pearl River County Master Gardener Meeting**— 12:30 p.m. Crosby Arboretum in Picayune, MS. Kay Cline will be speaking to the group about Daylilies 101.
- 15 Summer Food Safety**— 11:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. The Senior Center of South Pearl River County. Presenter: Dawn Vosbein, Pearl River County Extension Agent. No RSVP required.
- 17 Children's Program: Learning about Venomous Mississippi Snakes**— 9:30 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. Crosby Arboretum in Picayune, MS. Children will learn about Mississippi's venomous snakes in this instructional program with Pearl River County Extension Agent Dr. Eddie Smith. Lifelike snake replicas will be used in this program. Great activity for homeschool students! Children must be accompanied by an adult. Members' children \$1; non-members' children \$3; no charge for adults. Call: 601-799-2311.
- 17 Gardening to Attract Birds**— 11:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. Crosby Arboretum in Picayune, MS. Learn about what types of birds are found here in the coastal Mississippi area, the plants that are useful to them, and how you can encourage them in your home garden with Pearl River County Extension Agent Dr. Eddie Smith. Members \$2; non-members \$5. Reservations requested. Please call 601-799-2311 to pre-register.

### Stone County Events

- 2 Pearl River-Stone County Forestry Association Meeting**— 12:00 noon. The Sawmill Restaurant, 2205 Highway 49, Wiggins, MS.

# Garden Calendar: July

## Planting

- Plant Pumpkin seeds for a Halloween harvest.
- Use Portulaca or Marigolds to fill in bare spots of flower bed.
- Root cuttings of Azalea, Boxwood, Camellia, Gardenia, Holly, and Poinsettia in coarse sand. Cuttings should be 4-6 inches from new growth with lower leaves removed.
- Plant now for color in the fall: Marigold, Zinnia, Celosia, and Joseph's Coat.
- Daylilies may still be planted.
- Start cuttings for house plants: Ivy, Wandering Jew, Philodendron, and Begonia.
- Plant fall vegetables: Cabbage, Parsley, and Collards.



## Fertilizing

- Do not fertilize Camellias after July 1.
- Fertilize Chrysanthemums around July 15.
- Fertilize all of the garden as you did in March.
- Fertilize lawns with well balanced fertilizer.



## Pruning

- Remove faded flowers from Crape Myrtle to encourage a second blooming.
- Pinch back Mums before July 15. Cut back broken or withered fern fronds.
- All Vegetables must be picked regularly to ensure continued bearing.
- When cutting Boxwood into a hedge, make sure the base is wider than the top to allow sunlight to reach base of plants.
- Remove dead limbs from trees and shrubs.
- Roses should be pruned to encourage fall blooms.
- Remove flowers from Basil and cut Mint to encourage new shoots.



## Mulch

- Check mulch on Azaleas and Camellias. Mulch should be at least 2 inches thick.
- Zinnias and Mums must be kept mulched to reduce necessary cultivation and conserve moisture.

## Miscellaneous

- Water Azaleas well because they are setting flower buds now for next year.
- Cut grass at 2.5 - 3 inches during hot weather.
- Water the whole garden deeply once a week.



## Home Accent

- Never leave house plants in a closed home over a vacation. Either water and place under a shady tree or have a friendly neighbor come in and water them for you.

## In Bloom

- Caladium, Cleome, Crape Myrtle, Four-o'clocks, Hibiscus, Impatiens, Liriope, Marigold, Mallow, Moonflower, Oleander, Periwinkle, Plumbago, Portulaca, Salvia, Ageratum, Zinnia, Balsam, Butterfly Weed, Canna, Cosmos, Dahlia, Daylily, Funkia, Gladiolus, Lily, Lycoris, Lythrum, Petunia, Phlox, Rudbeckia, Scabiosa, Shasta Daisy, Snapdragon, Snow-on-the-Mountain, Tuberose, Verbena, Veronica, Althea, Buddleia, and Montbretia.





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### Are weeds killing my lawn?

The answer to the question above is NO! Although I must admit I've gotten that question many times, one must understand that weed growth is a result of a bigger problem, not a cause of decline. Likewise, killing the weeds will not cause the grass to grow. Weeds and turf are in competition, and the strong will survive. You must discover if the turf needs nutrients, water, protection from pests, better drained soil, sunlight, or whatever it lacks to grow a successful lawn. A soil test will provide information on nutrients, and you can get a soil test kit from your local Extension office.

Each time I answer a client question concerning their lawn, I ask how much shade is present. Shade is the problem we face most often so if you question the amount of shade go outside and look up. When we start our lawn, we put out sapling oaks, maples, and pines, and we plant centipede, St. Augustine, or bermudagrass. The lawn does well for several years, but then we notice the grass is thinning out and weeds are invading. Or you may already have one or two mature Live or Water oaks. Two things to keep in mind here: 1.) Sapling trees will grow into mature trees which produce more shade as they grow; and 2.) Although St. Augustine is considered a shade-tolerant grass, it still needs 2-3 hours of direct sunlight. If this is your problem, thinning the tree canopy to allow more sunlight is a great option.

The second major reason turf does not thrive is soil compaction. As we walk on, drive our vehicles across, mow with our riding lawn mowers, have our children play games on our lawn, or even home construction, the large pores in the soil are destroyed. This slows the rate at which water and air move through the soil and acts as a barrier to root growth. You can solve this problem through aeration. You can check your lawn for compaction by inserting a knife or screwdriver blade 6 inches into the soil. If you feel significant resistance, you probably have a compacted layer. Aerators can be rented at local box stores or rental businesses, but you may have to call around for availability.

Lawns thin out for several other reasons. Drought stress thins out the desirable species, and disease pressure causes the lawn to thin. Insects will kill the turf. After the turfgrass is gone, weeds move in. The presence of a great number of weeds is a sign the turfgrass is not thriving. Your local Extension office can help; but, before you can make the lawn succeed, you need to find the cause.



**Lespedeza taking over an unhealthy centipede lawn**



**Lawn thinning out by shade created from this mature Sawtooth oak**



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## Lawn Irrigation

As we move into the heat of the summer, we start to notice the effects of moisture stress more readily and frequently between rain events. One question I receive from homeowners typically is they want to know how much and how long to leave the sprinklers on. Honestly there are too many variables to give one cookie-cutter answer to this question. You will need to do some experimenting to determine what is needed for your lawn. It is recommended that your lawn gets one inch of water per week through irrigation or natural rainfall.



**Drought stressed grass**

A way to tell how much your sprinklers are putting out is to use the tuna can technique. A tuna can is typically one inch deep and is an accurate and reliable way to measure the amount of water put out by your automatic in-ground irrigation system or your sprinkler attached to a hose that you move around yourself. You will want to place empty tuna cans at various spots around your yard within the range of your sprinkler(s). Turn on the sprinkler system and allow it to run for roughly 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, measure the amount of water collected in each can. If the cans collected an inch of water, then you know you need to water for 30 minutes. If the cans collected more or less than this amount, then calculate approximately how long you need to adjust the time up or down to apply the correct amount of water to your landscape so that it receives the recommended one inch of water in each watering session. If there is run-off before water application amount reaches the one inch mark, more waterings per week may be needed. This is especially true on clay soils or sloped terrain. Sandy soils may require more frequent and heavier amounts but let the turf tell you when its time to water. Don't always rely on the automatic sprinkler system you see running even during a rain event.



**Tuna cans used to measure sprinkler water output**

You may be able to only apply  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch per watering, so you would need to do this twice per week. On such lawns, core aeration would be highly recommended to help increase the rate at which the soil absorbs water. The best time to irrigate is early in the day, preferably before sunrise. This helps minimize evaporation loss and limits the time the lawn is wet, which reduces the potential for disease. Remember that deep watering promotes deeper root growth and produces healthy, durable turf with a deep root system that is better able to resist the effects of drought by accessing deeper water sources. Deep and infrequent application are the keys to a successful irrigation strategy.



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## Mealybugs in the Home and Home Landscape

Mealybugs are common insect pests found both in the landscape and on houseplants. Closely related to scale insects, mealybugs differ in that they may remain mobile throughout their lifecycle. They can easily be confused for scale as they feed in a similar way, using piercing-sucking mouthparts to feed on plant sap. They get their name from the cottony wax secretion that covers their body. When females lay eggs they cover them with that waxy material as well, leading to the appearance of white fluff covering stems of the plant.

Mealybugs are small insects, generally only 1 to 4 mm in length. They have oval shaped bodies, though the wax covering of some may make them appear wedge shaped or spined. Adult male mealybugs look like small flies but are seldom seen. Males feed only as immatures and live for only a few days after emerging as adults. Female mealybugs may lay as many as six hundred eggs and go through more than one generation in a year leading to rapid population growth. Outdoors, generations of mealybugs are synchronized, so immatures, which are much easier to control, are all present at the same time. Mealybugs can be much more difficult to control indoors as their generations may overlap leading to all growth stages being present at the same time. Some mealybug species may have as many as eight generations per year indoors.

Feeding by mealybugs may cause plants to be less vigorous. High populations may lead to leaf drop, dieback, and in very severe cases death of the plant. In addition to damage caused directly by their feeding, mealybugs may also transmit plant viruses. Similarly to aphids and whiteflies, mealybugs produce honeydew which can cover the plant in a sticky film and promote the growth of sooty mold on the plant. Sooty mold does not directly damage the plant, but covers areas needed for photosynthesis which may both reduce the health of the plant, as well as damage its appearance.

One of the best tools to manage mealybug infestations is to be certain not to introduce them to your home or home landscape. Be sure to closely inspect plants when they are purchased. The cottony wax produced by mealybugs is very distinctive and infested plants should not be purchased or should be very thoroughly treated prior to introducing the plant to the home landscape. Often it is easier to discard houseplants infested with mealybugs than to use insecticidal controls. Sprays of products containing acetamiprid (Ortho Fruit, Flower, and Vegetable Insect Killer) can provide effective control. Soil applied systemic treatment with the insecticide Dinotefuran (Greenlight Tree and Shrub Insect Control) will act slower but provide longer lasting control.

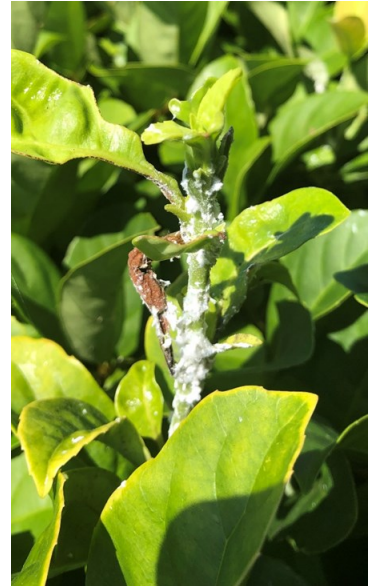


Photo: Lance Osbourne, IFAS





# Quick Bites

## July 2019

Quick Bites programs are offered through the Mississippi State University Extension Service and provide information in a wide variety of topics through interactive video. The programs are held during lunch (12-1 pm) on **Thursdays**. Sessions will be held in Bost 409 for those who are on campus. Contact your county office to participate via interactive video.

July 11

### **Basic Sewing 101**

**Martha Cannon, Master Seamstress  
Calhoun County MHV**

Come one, come all, novice, young, or seasoned! Martha will share sewing basics including sewing on a button, replacing a hem, minor repairs, as well as basic items needed for sewing.



July 25

### **Unparalleled Design**

**Lynette McDougald, Instructor  
Plant & Soil Sciences**

Parallel Systems Design is a very specific and stylized featuring either vertical or horizontal placements. This is the perfect design style to feature some of our very favorite summer blossoms.

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