GNO Gardening

LSU AgCenter
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GNO Gardening Magazine

March 2019

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Cover Photo: Ring of Fire Sunflowers by Chris Dunaway

Sunflowers

Sunflowers are one of the easiest flowers to grow in our area and they love the summer sun and heat. They are so easy to grow, that many folks with birdfeeders have grown them for years unintentionally.

Sunflower *Helianthus annuus* is a North American wildflower member of the Asteraceae family with a native range throughout the United States lower 48. Common sunflower is a widely branching, stout annual, up to 8 ft. tall, with hairy leaves and stems. The terminal flower heads are large and showy with a central maroon disk surrounded by many bright yellow rays. In Asteraceae, what appears to be a single flower is actually a cluster of much smaller flowers. The overall appearance of the cluster, as a single flower, functions in attracting pollinators in the same way as the structure of an individual flower in some other plant families. The center is made up of disc flowers and the outer corona is made up of ray flowers. The colorful ray flowers are sterile. The individual flowers mature from the outer ring inward. Sunflower flowers are also great examples of the Golden Ratio and Fibonacci Sequence. Look them up.

The sunflower was first domesticated by American Indians as a single-headed plant with black, white, red or black/white striped seeds. Evidence suggests it was a common crop in present-day Arizona and New Mexico around 3000 B.C. Sunflower seeds were eaten whole or ground into flour for breads, mush or mixing with vegetables. They also squeezed the oil from the seed to use in cooking or as a skin and hair oil. They even extracted a purple dye from the plant for cloth, body painting and other decorations.

The sunflower plant was taken to Europe by Spanish explorers around 1500 where it was grown mainly as an ornamental plant. In 1716 there was an English patent granted for the process of squeezing oil from sunflower seed. The popularity of sunflower is mostly credited to Peter the Great. Literature mentions that by 1769 sunflower was being cultivated for oil and reached a commercial stage by 1830. The Russian Orthodox Church forbid the consumption of most oil foods during Lent but sunflower was not on the prohibited list. Therefore, its popularity grew quickly.

By the early 1800's Russian farmers were cultivating over 2 million acres of sunflower. Russian scientists had identified two types of sunflower: an oil-type for oil production and a large-headed type for direct seed consumption. Thanks to sunflower breeding work in Russia at Krasnodar, new varieties with higher yields and increased oil content were developed. V.S. Pustovoit was a Russian scientist credited with much of the work that improved sunflower production.

Russian immigrants brought these new varieties of sunflower back to the U.S. and by 1880 'Mammoth Russian' sunflower was being offered in American seed company catalogues. The first commercial use of sunflower was for poultry silage. In 1926, the first processing of U.S. sunflower seed into oil occurred in Missouri. Commercial production of sunflower grew quickly. Sunflower breeding and hybridization in the 70's increased yield and oil quality as well as disease resistance. The reports on cholesterol and human health increased the demand for sunflower oil as a healthy alternative to animal fats. Today the U.S. is a major producer and exporter of sunflower oil.

Sunflower seeds are rich in vitamins, proteins, and

March Vegetable Planting Guide

Crop	Recommended Variety	Planting Depth	Spacing Inches	Days Until Harvest * from transplant date
Cantaloupe	Ambrosia, Aphrodite, Athena, Primo, Vienna	¼ inch	18-24	80-85
Collards	Champion, Flash, Georgia, Top Bunch, Vates	⅛ inch	6-12	75
Cucumbers	Dasher II, Diva, Fanfare, General Lee, Indy, Olympian, Sweet Success, Sweet Slice	¼ inch	12-18	50-65
Cucuzzi	None Given	½ inch	24	65
Eggplant	Dusky, Night Shadow, Epic, Santana, Calliope	⅛ inch	18-24	80-85
Kohlrabi	Early Purple Vienna, Early White, Vienna, Winner	⅛ inch	6	55-75
Lima Beans (bush or pole)	Dixie Butterpea, Jackson Wonder, Thorogreen Florida Speckled, King of Garden	½ inch	3-4 (bush) 12 (pole)	60-67 (bush) 77-90 (pole)
Okra	Annie Oakley, Cajun Delight, Clemson Spineless	½ inch	12	60
Peppers, Bell (transplants)	Aristotle X3R, Jupiter, Lilac, Plato, Tequila	-	15-18	70-80
Peppers, Hot (transplant)	Grande, Tula, Mariachi, Mitla,	-	--	140
Pumpkins	Atlantic Giant, Baby Bear, Prankster, Sorcerer	½ inch	36-60	90-120
Radishes	Cherriette, Champion, White Icicle, April Cross	⅛ inch	1	22-28
Snap Beans (bush or pole)	Bush-Blue Lake 274, Bronco, Derby, Lynx, Strike Pole-Blue Lake, Kentucky Blue, McCaslin	½ inch	2-3 (bush) 12 (pole)	48-55 (bush) 60-66 (pole)
Southern Peas	Queen Anne, California #5, Quickpick, Colussus	½ inch	4-6	70-80
Summer Squash	Gold Rush, Justice III, Multipik, Patriot II	⅛ inch	36	50-90
Sweet Corn	Merit, Silver Queen, Honey 'n Pearl, Ambrosia	½ inch	10-12	69-92
Swiss Chard	None Given	¼ inch	6-8	45-55
Tomato (transplant)	Better Boy, Big Beef, Cupid, Pink Girl, Juliet, Sweet Milton, Bella Rosa, Carolina Gold	-	--	100-115
Winter Squash	Honey Bear, Sweet Mama, Table Queen, Tivoli	½ inch	18-24	100

Sunflowers

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minerals, as well as linoleic acid which helps the body metabolize fats properly. They contain about 24 to 27 percent protein, only slightly less than an equal weight of ground beef. Furthermore, sunflower seeds contain about twice the iron and potassium and about 4 times the phosphorus of beef. Raw sunflower seeds also contain vitamins B and E, and a little vitamin A.

These plants also have a unique characteristic of being able to clear toxic elements from the soil, also known as phytoremediation. Sunflowers planted in contaminated areas take up arsenic and lead from the soil and sequester it in their plant tissue. The plants are then removed and incinerated. Sunflowers are also used to reclaim boggy or marshy areas because of their ability to take up large amounts of water.

Sunflowers are pollinator superheroes, for several reasons. Many are tall and brightly colored making visibility easy from a distance. Many produce abundant sources of both pollen (not the pollenless, of course) and nectar. Their broad, flat faces make it easy for bees, butterflies and other large-winged insects to land on them, and their lush foliage provides an excellent food source for painted lady butterfly caterpillars. If the seed heads are allowed to mature they also become an excellent food source for finches, chickadees, nuthatches, grosbeaks and others.

A Honey Bee Collects Pollen from a Sunflower

Ornamental sunflowers are grown for their sheer beauty as well and there are over 100 varieties to choose from. They come in yellow, gold, orange, red, white, chocolate, peach, green and bicolored. Most are single-flower types but double-flower types are also available. There are also height choices from dwarf varieties that get only 6 inches tall with 5 inch flowers to giant varieties that get over 12 feet tall with flowers well over a foot wide. The Guinness Book of World Records lists a sunflower that grew to 25' 5 ½" and the largest flower head was 32 ¼" across. Some sunflower varieties have a single stalk and produce one flower per plant. These varieties have long stems if used as cut flowers. There are also many branching varieties of sunflower that produce multiple flowers per plant and these will have shorter stems if used as cut flowers. Sunflowers are also available as pollen producing varieties or pollenless varieties. The pollenless (male sterile) varieties still have functioning ovaries and will produce seed if pollinated with pollen from a regular sunflower. Pollenless varieties are popular as cut flowers because they don't drop pollen on the furniture and their vase life is longer. But how do they effect pollinator insects? Bees need pollen, as a protein source, and nectar. They will still visit pollenless sunflowers for the nectar but need to go elsewhere to get their protein. Butterflies and hover flies, who feed mostly on nectar, still visit pollenless sunflowers.

Growing Sunflowers

Light: Sunflowers, as the name implies, grow and flower best in full sun.

Soil: They also grow best in highly organic well-drained soils. However, they tolerate a wide range of soil conditions from sandy to heavy clay. Remember, they are used to reclaim marshy areas but are also drought tolerant.

Spacing: Spacing of sunflowers is highly dependent on the variety, its size and its branching habit. Check the seed label for the spacing for your particular

Sunflowers

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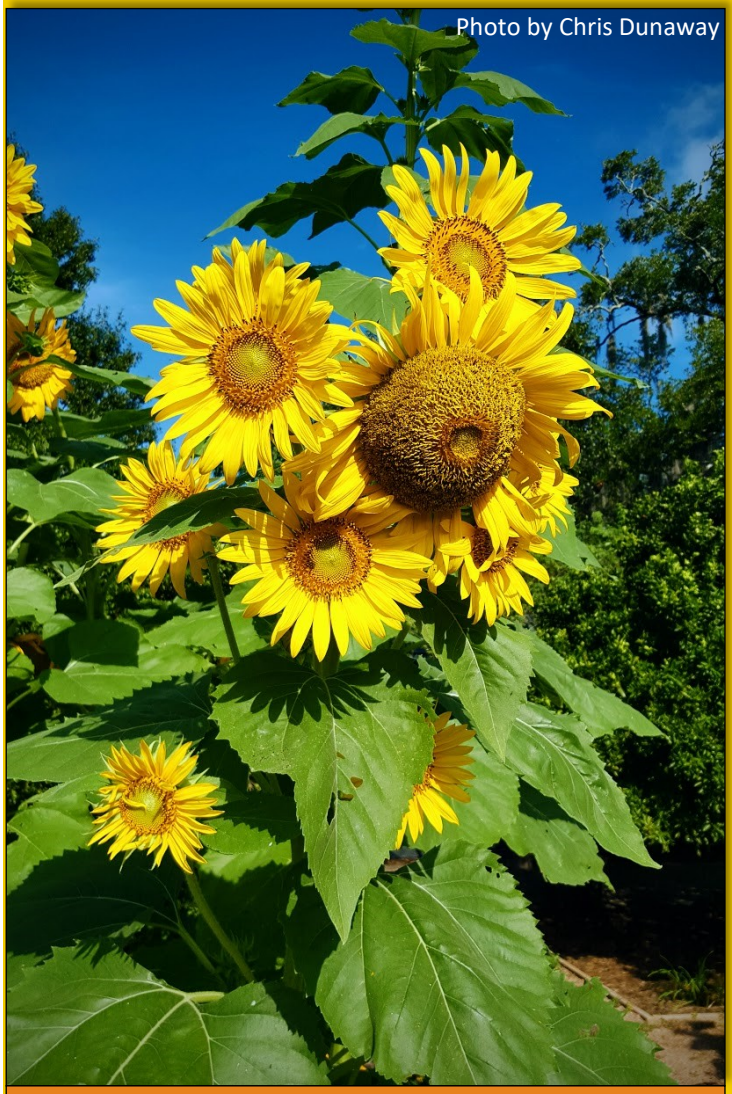
variety. If you grow varieties that produce one flower per plant, succession planting will keep the flowers coming throughout the growing season.

Planting: Sunflowers can be planted from March through September in our area. Most sunflowers do best if direct-seeded into the garden. They have an extensive root system with a taproot whose development can be stunted if started in seed trays or pots. Direct seed in well-prepared soil after frost danger has passed. Seed thicker than the desired finished spacing and thin later as the seedlings emerge.



Treasure Mountain Hybrid Sunflower

Habit: Sunflowers grow quickly and take from 60-90 days to produce flowers depending on the variety. When the flowers are young and still maturing they do follow the sun but as they mature they become stationary. Most medium to tall sunflowers benefit from staking. Flower heads get heavy (especially when wet) and the plants can be easily broken by wind.

Fertilization: Sunflowers will usually do quite well without addition of fertilizer but incorporating a balanced fertilizer like 8-8-8 prior to planting and side-dressing when flower buds start to form will lead to more uniformity and increased production.

Mulching: Sunflowers will benefit from a 2”-4” layer of mulch to keep down weed competitors and reduce soil moisture fluctuations.

Insects and Diseases: Sunflowers are relatively carefree once past the seedling stage. Sunflower beetles, cutworms, sunflower borers, sunflower moths, grasshoppers and various caterpillars sometimes show up but seldom cause enough damage to warrant control measures.

Verticillium wilt (*Verticillium dahlia*) may be a problem but many of the hybrid varieties are resistant.

Leaf infections (Septoria leaf spot, powdery mildew, downy mildew, Alternaria leaf blight) are favored by poor air circulation and leaf moisture. Space plants to allow for good air circulation and avoid overhead watering to reduce the chances of leaf disease incidence. Remove and discard any infected leaves.

Some Interesting Sunflower Varieties

Following are a few varieties to entice you or just check out some of the popular seed catalogs or sites like Johnny’s Seeds, Burpee, Park Seed, Territorial Seed, or Seeds ‘n Such. Virtually every seed company sells sunflowers.

Chocolate: Tall, branching variety with long stems. Flowers measure 4-6" across and are a rich brown on the tops of the petals and a lovely, striped yellow on the undersides. Great in bouquets and garden borders. Stem length is 10-24". Bears pollen; good for bee forage.

Firecracker: Dwarf, branching plants loaded with red and gold flowers. Compact plants produce a mass of bright, 4-6", bicolored flowers that are great in containers. 16-36" long stems.

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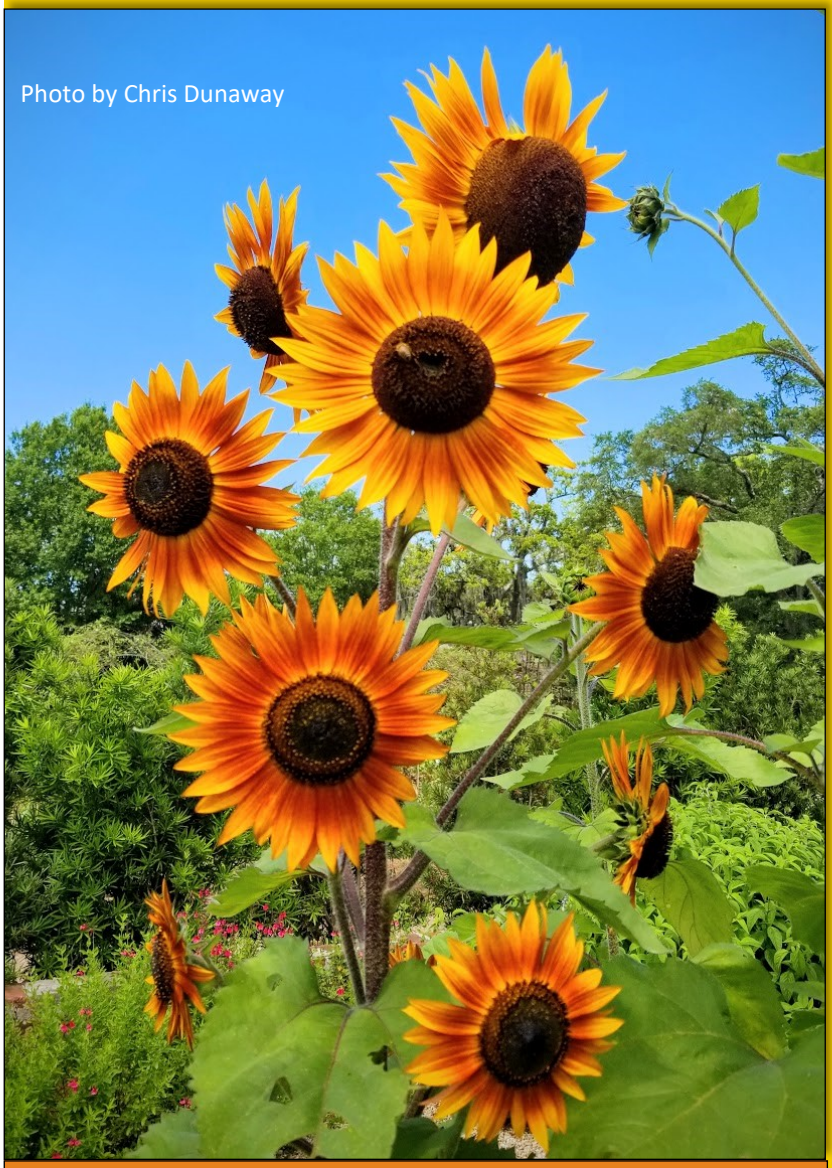
Lemonade: Robust plants with fully-double, bright lemon-yellow blooms. Branching plants have 18-24" long stems and produce blooms 5-7" across. Compared to Starburst Lemon Aura, its blooms are larger and brighter in color. The plants are also more vigorous, taller, and later to flower.

Teddy Bear: Versatile sunflower for field or container. The final height depends on the size of the container. Expect 8-12" plants from seeds directly sown in a 4" pot; 35-42" in the garden; 14-25" long stems. This branching variety will host 3-5" sunny, shaggy blooms.

Kong: Fast-growing giant. Very stunning giant sunflowers, with sturdy stems and lush leaves. It forms a massive wall of foliage topped off with extra-large, perfectly round 10" golden flowers. Rapid growth from seed to maturity by mid-summer.



Ring of Fire sunflower.

Fire Catcher: Fiery, bicolor, 5" diameter sunflower with yellow and deep orange-red blooms are perfect for cut flower arrangements.

Chianti: Wine-red velvet petals are flecked with gold. Flowers are 3-4" across on 4-5 ft. plants. Multiple branched and purple-stemmed, it's dramatic in the garden. Pollenless.

Strawberry Blonde: Rose-pink sunflower - a combination of subtle lemon and rose-pink flowers surrounding a dark disc, forming 5-6" blooms. The plants are well branched for cutting and pollen free. Strawberry Blonde grows to 6 ft. tall.

Elf: Bright gold sunflower with blooms 4" across on plants only 16" tall.

Little Becka: This compact charmer, just 3' tall, dazzles with a profusion of 6" flowers with luminous yellow halos, punch-red petals and golden picotees.

Valentine: Lemon-yellow blooms on sturdy stems with 3-4" blooms. Stem length is 25-45". Day neutral. Bears pollen; good for bee forage. Branching. Ht. 55-60".

Ring of Fire: Unique bicolor flower pattern sets this beauty ablaze with autumn colors. Blooms average 5-6" across, but with tight spacing will be slightly smaller. Stem length is 16-34". Day-length neutral. Minimal pollen. Branching. Ht. 40-50". Edible Flowers: Flower buds can be fried and the petals used as a garnish in salads and desserts; the flavor is bittersweet.

Moulin Rouge: Exquisite, deep burgundy petals surround an ebony center. A pollenless, branching variety with 3–6" blooms. Side stems are thinner, yet stronger than most other branching varieties, averaging 30". Ht. 60–80".

Italian White: The 4-inch blooms have white petals, a chocolate-brown center, and a thin primrose ring separating the two. Grows 5'-7' tall.

~Dr. Joe Willis

Kirk-Ballard Named LSU AgCenter State Consumer Horticulturist

The LSU AgCenter has named Heather Kirk-Ballard as state consumer horticulturist. She started this position in February.

Besides doing a heavy amount of extension work with the general public, she is also on the faculty of School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences and performs research in the school.

Dr. Heather Kirk-Ballard

Kirk-Ballard comes to the AgCenter with solid work experience and a thorough horticulture research background.

Most recently, she worked for GE and Ecolab, monitoring and maintaining water quality for various industrial sites. Before that, she was a high school science teacher and worked in local plant nurseries over the years.

Kirk-Ballard will play the lead role in promoting the AgCenter Get It Growing program. Get It Growing provides horticultural outreach to the public through videos, news articles and other media.

“I’m excited about getting people interested in growing plants,” Kirk-Ballard said. “Plants are beneficial to our health and add value to our lives, work, environment and homes.”

Kirk-Ballard has a doctorate in renewable natural resources from LSU and master’s and bachelor's degrees in plant and soil systems.

While doing her graduate studies, Kirk-Ballard worked at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden, Her work included field and container studies on the effects of planting depth and mulch application for trees, shrubs and ground covers.

She also worked for nine years as a researcher with the Pennington Biomedical Research Center, studying, among other things, the effectiveness of plant extracts in improving symptoms associated with diabetes, such as muscle atrophy, and improving insulin signaling.

For years, people in her neighborhood have asked Kirk-Ballard for advice in growing their plants, she said.

“It’s fun that they come to me for advice,” Kirk-Ballard said. “I’ve always loved helping my neighbors and friends identify plants and garden pests and helping them select plants or solve gardening problems.”

Now that Kirk-Ballard is the state consumer horticulturist, her informative advice will find an even wider audience.

~Randy LaBauve

Farmers Markets in the Greater New Orleans Area

Jefferson Parish	Where	When
Fat City Farmer's Market	3215 Edenborn, Metairie	Every 2nd and 4th Sunday, 9AM-1PM
Gretna Farmer's Market	739 Third Street, Gretna	Every Saturday, except the Saturday of Gretna Fest, 8:30AM-12:30PM
Kenner Rivertown Farmer's Market	2115 Rev. Richard Wilson Drive, Kenner	Every Saturday, October-July, 9AM-1PM
Nawlins Outdoor Market	1048 Scotsdale Dr., Harvey	Every Saturday & Sunday, 9AM-5PM
Old Metairie Farmer's Market	Bayou Metairie Park, Between Metairie Lawn Dr. and Labarre	3rd Tuesday of the month, 3:30PM-7:30PM
Westwego Shrimp Lot	100 Westbank Expressway, Westwego	Daily Mon-Sat 8AM-8PM, Sun 8AM-6PM
Crescent City Farmer's Market-Bucktown	325 Metairie-Hammond, Highway at Bucktown Harbor	Fridays, 3PM-7PM
Crescent City Farmer's Market-Rivertown New Orleans	Williams Boulevard at the River	Saturdays, 9AM-1PM
Crescent City Farmer's Market-Ochsner West Campus	2614 Jefferson Highway, Ochsner Rehab Facility	Wednesdays, 3PM-7PM
Orleans Parish	When	Where
Crescent City Farmer's Market-Uptown	200 Broadway Street at the River	Tuesdays, 9AM-1PM
Crescent City Farmer's Market-Bywater	Chartres and Piety, at Rusty Rainbow Bridge	Wednesdays, 3PM-7PM
Crescent City Farmer's Market-Mid-City	3700 Orleans Avenue	Thursdays, 3PM-7PM
Crescent City Farmer's Market-Downtown	750 Carondelet St at Julia	Saturdays, 8am-12PM
Sankofa Market	5029 St. Claude St.	Monday-Thursday, 9:30AM-4:00PM
ReFresh Farmer's Market	300 North Broad St.	Mondays, 4:00PM-7:00PM
Vietnamese Farmer's Market	14401 Alcee Fortier Blvd.	Saturdays, 5:30AM-8:30AM
Marketplace at Armstrong Park	901 N. Rampart	Thursdays, 3PM-7PM
Mid-City Arts and Farmer's Market	Comiskey Park,	Market dates vary, check http://midcityaf.org
Treme Farmer's Market	814 N. Claiborne	Market dates vary, check https://gloriastremegarden.com/treme-farmers-market/
St. Bernard Parish	When	Where
St. Bernard Seafood and Farmer's Market	409 Aycock St., Arabi	2nd Saturdays, 10AM-2PM

Louisiana Iris Season About to Begin

A rainbow of color is about to appear in the swamps and gardens of Louisiana just as the Carnival season fades away. Louisiana irises (*Iris brevicaulis, Iris fulva, Iris giganticaerulea, Iris hexagona and Iris nelsonii*) grow wild in Louisiana and parts of the Gulf Coast. Many gardeners have a patch or two of these spring beauties in their garden and eagerly await their blooms in March and April.

Irises growing in The Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden maintained by the Greater New Orleans Iris Society. Photo thanks to the GNOIS.

Louisiana irises can be easily grown in ordinary garden beds or as a focal point in wet, low lying areas of the garden. In the wild, they prefer boggy or swampy conditions, but do just fine with slightly drier accommodations. A neat trick for our area is to plant iris rhizomes into a shallow, buried container that will hold water underground. Shallow tubs, cut off pots or buckets, and concrete mixing containers work well. Dig a hole slightly larger than the container. Bury it so that the top of the container is just below the soil level. Plant your iris rhizomes into the soil held by the container. This microclimate will keep moist longer and provide a nice habitat for the irises to thrive. Louisiana irises enjoy at least six hours of direct sunlight to bloom optimally, but will do fine in shadier conditions with a decrease in blooms.

Irises do go dormant in the summer months and can be trimmed back once the foliage turns yellow. Cut any seed heads that may form off as well, these rarely are viable and waste energy for the plant. Louisiana irises look great mixed into perennial beds or surrounded by annuals while they are in dormancy. Fall and late summer are great times to transplant irises. Plant rhizomes so that they are at or just below the soil surface. Burying them too deeply can result in poor growth or rotten rhizomes. Fertilize Louisiana irises in October and again in February to encourage robust plants that bloom well. A slow release all purpose fertilizer is perfect and supplies all they need for the season. Mulch your Louisiana Irises to control weeds and keep the soil moist at all times. Sunlight can also scald the rhizomes in the summertime. A few inches of pine straw can prevent this problem.

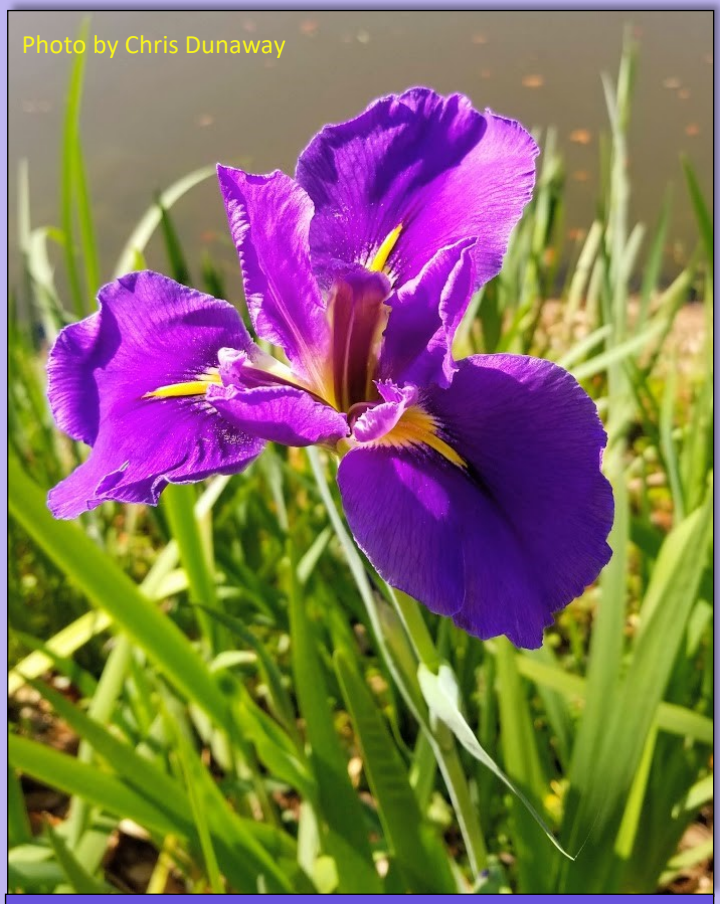
There are several upcoming opportunities to purchase Louisiana Irises in our area, including the following sales:

Pelican Greenhouse Plant Sale in City Park: Saturday March 16th, 8 AM-Noon. Please visit http://neworleanscitypark.com/events/pelican-greenhouse-plant-sales for more information. There will be a wide variety of plants, including Louisiana irises, lots of native plants, and over 100 rose varieties available at this sale. Come early for the best selection.

The Greater New Orleans Iris Society (GNOIS) Potted Plant Sale at the Besthoff Sculpture Garden in City Park: Sunday, March 31st, 10 AM – 1 PM. Please visit http://www.louisianairisgnois.com/ for more information. This event is free and visitors will have the chance to see irises blooming in the garden as well as ask iris experts questions about their new purchases.

Louisiana Iris Season About to Begin

If you would like to see irises in all of their glory this spring, the Greater New Orleans Iris Society (GNOIS) will be working in conjunction with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the Society for Louisiana Irises, and other partners at many local events. Here are some of the opportunities to celebrate these spring beauties in our state. Please visit http://www.louisianairisgnois.com/ for additional information.



Iris brevicaulis

Saturday, March 9th, 9 AM–3 PM: Iris booth at the Madisonville Garden Show. This is the Madisonville Garden Club's annual garden show on the banks of the Tchefuncta River. The GNOIS will have a booth with many irises on display at this event. Irises will be available at this sale.

Saturday, March 30th, 9 AM–2 PM: Louisiana Iris Celebration at the Northlake Nature Center. Stroll the boardwalk and see Louisiana Irises blooming in their native habitat. GNOIS members will be on hand to answer questions at this family friendly event.

Sunday, March 31st, 10 AM–1 PM: Louisiana Rainbow Iris Festival at the Besthoff Sculpture Garden. This festival is free and open to the public. Stroll the gardens and see many Louisiana iris cultivars in bloom.

April 4-7, 2019: Society for Louisiana Irises (SLI) Convention in Lafayette, LA. Membership to the Society is only $17/year. Attendees will tour many gardens featuring Louisiana irises as well as attend seminars on growing these plants.

Saturday, April 6th, 9 AM– NOON: Iris Blooming at the Boy Scout Rd. Trail in the Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. There will be US Fish & Wildlife as well as GNOIS experts on hand at this event to educate the public about Louisiana irises. Walk the trails and see them blooming in their swampy home. This is a family friendly event and leashed dogs are welcome to come along for the hike.

Sunday, April 7th, 10 AM–2 PM: Fleur de Lis Festival at the Joyce Management Area. This event brings together US Fish & Wildlife, GNOIS, and Louisiana Master Naturalist experts to a fun filled day of iris viewing in the Manchac Swamp. The boardwalk is located just south of Ponchatoula on HWY 51. Information tables will be set up in the parking lot.

Tuesday, April 9th, 4–7 PM: Louisiana Iris Day at Longue Vue House and Gardens. This annual event honors Louisiana irises in the beautiful gardens of Longue Vue. Live music and refreshments will be a part of this lively event. Reproductions of paintings done by conservationist and artist Caroline Dormon will be available in the flower arranging room of the house. This event is free and open to the public.

There are plenty of chances to celebrate Louisiana irises this season, be sure to add some to your garden to enjoy for years to come! For answers to your gardening questions as well as to sign up for the GNO Gardening Newsletter, please email gnogardening@agcenter.lsu.edu. The AgCenter's website has a lot of new information on a variety of gardening topics, available at www.lsuagcenter.com.

~Anna Timmerman

What's Bugging You? Buckmoth Caterpillar

It is almost that time of year – time to duck for cover when strolling neath the live oak shade lest we get bombarded by a fiery assault of stinging buck moth caterpillars.

Buckmoth Caterpillar on Oak Tree.

The buck moth (*Hemileuca maia*) is a common insect found in oak forests, stretching in the United States from the southeast to the northeast and as far west as Texas and Kansas. The larvae typically emerge in a single generation in the spring, usually March for us depending on the weather. Young larvae are gregarious, becoming more solitary as they mature. Larvae are dull black with a reddish-brown head and are covered by multiple rows of branched, breakable spines that are hollow and attached to venom glands. Mature larvae become more variable in color, some being almost white, and reach lengths up to 2.5". The poison can cause symptoms ranging from itching and burning sensations to nausea. The larvae feed on various oaks including water oak, (*Quercus nigra*) and our majestic live oak (*Quercus virginiana*). Mature larvae enter the soil to pupate in mid-April to May. Larvae pupate under 1-2" of soil during late May to early June and enter a summer diapause. Adult moths emerge during mid-December in the South to mate and lay eggs. Eggs are typically laid in spiral clusters on oak twigs where they overwinter until new host growth begins in the spring. In cities such as Baton Rouge or New Orleans, where use of live oaks as street trees is extensive, the caterpillars can become a significant nuisance for humans.

Adults: The buck moth adult's wingspan is about two to three inches. The front and hind wings are black with narrow bands of white that extend from the front edge to the rear edge of the wing. The male's abdomen is black with a red tip, while the female's abdomen does not have a red tip. Males are smaller than females.

Caterpillars: Buck moth caterpillars are about 2 ½ inches long when fully grown, and have a reddish-colored head. The rest of the caterpillar's body has a pattern of dense, white dots and orange-light reddish colored spines.

Management: Management for buck moths is rarely necessary, because of the limited defoliation caused by caterpillar feeding and the new growth of host trees that quickly replaces lost foliage. Insecticides are rarely recommended, because most homeowners would be unable to reach the tops of large oak trees where the caterpillars feed and the effects of insecticide application on non-target insects outweigh

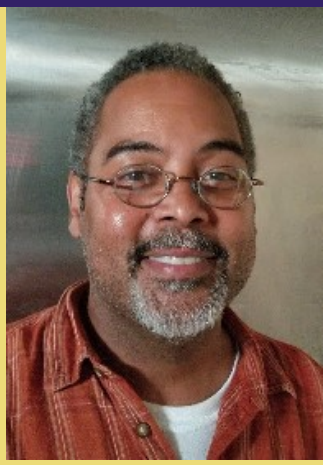
Adult Female Buckmoth Laying Eggs. Photo by Nick Richter.

benefits from reduced caterpillar abundance. Insecticide application may do more harm than good in killing other caterpillars that are endangered or that become important pollinators as adults. However, if insecticide application appears to be warranted, biological larvicides, such as *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* (Btk), generally are safer and have fewer non-target effects than organophosphates, carbamates, or pyrethroids that are labeled for use. Biological larvicide products are most effective during early larval stages.

~Dr. Joe Willis

In the Kitchen with Austin

Swiss Chard & Mushroom Quiche



Winter provides us with a bounty of root vegetables and leafy greens. This recipe can be made with any green you have in abundance. Spinach, kale, and even collards work well here. So before winter turns into spring, take advantage of all it has to offer!

Ingredients:

1 unbaked 9 – inch refrigerated pie crust
6 Tbs. butter
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 small onion, chopped
4 cups Swiss chard, roughly chopped
1 cup mushrooms, chopped
3 oz. shredded Italian cheese blend
8oz. shredded cheddar cheese
3 eggs
1 cup milk
Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400°. Prick pie crust and prebake in oven for 5–8 minutes until lightly browned. Remove pie crust from oven and turn temperature down to 375.

In a heavy bottomed pot, melt butter over medium heat. Sauté garlic and onion in butter until clear. Add the mushrooms, and sauté until lightly browned. Add the Swiss Chard, and sauté until wilted. Season with salt & pepper. Let mixture cool slightly before adding cheeses (reserve about ½ cup of the cheddar). Spoon mixture into prebaked pie crust.

In a bowl, whisk together eggs and milk. Pour over Swiss Chard mixture, allowing egg mixture to thoroughly combine with Swiss Chard mixture.

Bake in preheated oven for 15 minutes. Sprinkle remaining cheddar cheese, and bake 35-40 minutes, until center is set. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

~Bon Manger!

Coming Events

2019 Spring Garden Show

Saturday, April 6, 9am to 5pm

Sunday, April 7, 10am to 4pm

Now accepting vendor registrations.

To register for a sales or educational booth at the show send us an e-mail to

GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Click here

Coming Events

Date	Event	Cost	Link
Friday, March 8th and Saturday, March 9th 9 AM-5 PM	Plant Nursery Clearance Sale @All You Need 3700 Toledano St. New Orleans	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/559342617877159/
Friday March 8th 3-5 PM	Edible Gardening @ All You Need 3700 Toledano St. New Orleans	$20	https://www.facebook.com/events/1152831221549987/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Saturday, March 9th and Sunday March 10th 9 AM-5 PM	Edible Plant Class @ Allen Acres Bed and Breakfast 5070 Highway 399, Pitkin, LA	$200	https://www.facebook.com/events/2062207760531721/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Saturday, March 9th 9-10 AM	Worm Composting @ Louisiana Nursery 12290 Mansfield Rd. Keithville, LA	$5	https://www.facebook.com/events/322289071947396/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Saturday, March 9th 9 AM-3 PM	Madisonville Garden Show 403 St. Francis St. Madisonville, LA	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/600028487105866/
Saturday, March 9th 10:30-11:30 AM	Total Lawn Care for the Deep South with Chris Dunaway @ New Orleans Botanical Garden 5 Victory Ave., New Orleans LA	$12	https://www.facebook.com/events/801987743499132/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Sunday March 10th NOON– 5 PM	Hot Plants Hot Season Nursery Opening @ 1715 Feliciana St. New Orleans, LA	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/2232916976950013/
Wednesday, March 13th 6-7:30 PM	A Camellia Legacy @ Gallier Historic House 1132 Royal St., New Orleans, LA	$10	https://www.facebook.com/events/651913275226653/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Saturday March 15th and Sunday March 16th 9 AM-4 PM	Northshore Garden and Plant Sale 2019 Covington Fairgrounds, North Florida Street, Covington, LA	$5	https://www.facebook.com/events/140488946887030/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Saturday, March 15th 3-4:30 PM	Composting Basics @ All you Need and Laughing Buddha Nursery 4516 Clearview Pkwy., Metairie, LA	$20	https://www.facebook.com/events/523578971468767/
Saturday March 16th 9-10 AM	Louisiana Vegetable Growing Seminar @ Louisiana Nursery 12290 Mansfield Rd. Keithville, LA	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/2022432957802215/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Saturday, March 16th NOON– 1:30 PM	Creating Edible Ecosystems @ The Green Project, with All You Need 2831 Marais, New Orleans	$20	https://www.facebook.com/events/532342390611950/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Wednesday, March 20th 9:30 AM and 1:00 PM	Spring Gardening Seminar @ Longue Vue House and Gardens 7 Bamboo Rd., New Orleans	$75	https://www.facebook.com/events/399113117314752/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit

Coming Events

Date	Event	Cost	Link
Saturday, March 23rd 8 AM-2 PM	22nd Annual EBRMG Spring Plant Sale @ LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens 4560 Essen Ln., Baton Rouge, LA	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/235627520391216/
Wednesday, March 20th 6-7 PM	Dendrology with John Benton @ Delgado Community College City Park Campus	$15	https://www.facebook.com/events/2239854826334641/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Saturday, March 23rd 9-10 AM	For the Love of Herbs @ Louisiana Nursery 12290 Mansfield Rd. Keithville, LA	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/1994384660680719/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Friday, March 29th 8 AM-1 PM	Profitable Farm Systems with Daniel Salatin @ Local Cooling Farms 57355 Sam Mizell Rd., Bogalusa, LA	$55	https://www.facebook.com/events/404725743432356/
Friday March 29th and Saturday March 30th 11 AM-4 PM	Let's Talk Trash! Compost Conference Hosted By Compost NOW! @ New Orleans Loyola Library 219 Loyola Ave., New Orleans	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/2102125673360354/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Friday, March 29th NOON—2 PM	A Walk in the Woods with David Baker @ A Studio in the Woods 13401 Patterson Rd, New Orleans	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/322068231851320/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Friday, March 29th 5:30-7 PM	Beekeeping Basics @ All You Need 3700 Toledano St. New Orleans	$20	https://www.facebook.com/events/506766263181668/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Saturday March 30th 9 AM—2 PM	Louisiana Iris Bloom Celebration @ Northlake Nature Center 23135 Highway 190, Mandeville, LA	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/2168094596575010/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Saturday, March 30th 9-10 AM	Butterfly and Hummingbird Gardening Seminar @ Louisiana Nursery 12290 Mansfield Rd. Keithville, LA	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/404827413419910/ *Master Gardener Continuing Ed Credit
Saturday, March 30th 10-11:30 AM	Raising Urban Chickens @ All You Need 3700 Toledano St., New Orleans	$20	https://www.facebook.com/events/1985060395123799/
Sunday, March 31st 10 AM-NOON	GNOIS Louisiana Iris Potted Plant Sale @ NOMA's Besthoff Sculpture Garden 1 Collins C Diboll Circle, City Park, New Orleans	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/278213876375315/

March Garden Checklist

⇒ It should be safe to plant tender bedding plants now such as marigolds, zinnias, blue daze, pentas, celosia, salvia, portulaca, purslane, melampodium and others in South Louisiana. Wait until the weather is warmer in April to plant tender bedding plants in North Louisiana.

⇒ Continue to plant roses purchased in containers. Bare root roses available at various places, like hardware stores, garden departments of chain stores and supermarkets, should have been planted last month. If you see the bare root bushes have begun to sprout, they are not your best choice for a quality plant.

⇒ Begin planting warm season vegetables as soon as the weather allows. The great advantage of early planting is increased production during the milder early summer period and often fewer pest problems. For a free copy of the Vegetable Planting Guide, contact your parish LSU AgCenter Extension office or click on the following link: https://www.lsuagcenter.com/~/media/system/d/e/3/e/de3e7516e68dfee4a21a84b38caa4df8/pub1980%20vegetable%20planting%20guide%20rev%2001%2017pdf.pdf

⇒ Plant summer flowering bulbs into the garden beginning in late March. Don't be alarmed if they don't take off and grow rapidly right away. Most of these bulbs are tropical and will wait until April or even early May to make vigorous growth. Wait until April to plant caladiums.

⇒ Remove faded flowers and developing seed pods from spring flowering bulbs that are to be kept for bloom next year. Do not remove any of the green foliage, and fertilize them if you did not do so last month. Those spring flowering bulbs being grown as annuals can be pulled up and discarded anytime after flowering. Chop them up and put them in your compost pile.

⇒ Established perennials should be fertilized this month. This is most efficiently and economically done by using a granular fertilizer with about a 3:1:2 ratio (such as 15-5-10) scattered evenly through the bed following package directions. After the fertilizer is applied, water the bed by hand to wash any fertilizer granules off the foliage and down to the soil.

⇒ As the weather warms up, lawn grasses will begin to grow and you will need to start mowing more frequently. Now is a good time to sharpen your mower blades.

⇒ Check your oak trees regularly (use binoculars) for masses of young, black buckmoth caterpillars, and consider having your tree sprayed if you see large numbers. You will likely need to have your tree sprayed if you saw large numbers of these stinging caterpillars last year.

⇒ Warmer temperatures and active growth make watering increasingly important if regular rainfall does not occur. New plantings need the most attention. They are vulnerable to drying out until the plants have a chance to grow a strong root system into the surrounding soil. Thoroughly water new plantings once or twice a week as needed, especially those in full sun.

⇒ For blue flowered hydrangeas add aluminum sulfate to the soil around your bushes now. For pink flowers, apply lime. Flower buds are already present so do not prune at this time.

⇒ Thrips are a common problem on roses in spring and early summer. Thrips are tiny insects that infest the flowers buds, and are always worse on the spring and early summer flowers. Symptoms include buds that do not open properly, and when the flowers do open the petals have brown, scorched edges. Thrips do not damage the bush, but it is heartbreaking to see the flowers ruined. Spray once or twice a week with Acephate or Mavrik for control during the early summer blooming season.

⇒ Fertilize roses in early March, and begin spraying regularly for disease and insect problems. For convenience, use a material that combines an insecticide and a fungicide in the same product. Follow label directions carefully.

⇒ Make notes on your spring flowering bulbs over the next few weeks while they are blooming. Record when they bloom, how well they performed and other relevant information. This will help you plan for what you want to plant this coming fall.

⇒ Powdery mildew, a fungus disease that attacks a wide variety of plants, can begin to show up this month. The disease appears as a white, powdery spot or area on foliage or flower buds. This disease can damage the foliage and cause flower buds to abort. Control with chlorothalonil or other labeled fungicides.

⇒ Finish up planting trees and shrubs into the landscape by the end of this month.

⇒ Treat tulips as annuals and remove the whole plant when they finish flowering since they will not rebloom again next year. Chop up the foliage and bulbs and add them to your compost pile.

Lawn Care Do's & Don't's

Do:

1. Get your lawn mower ready for action. Sharpen or replace the blade, check the air filter and clean out larger debris and replace if necessary. Check the oil level and change if necessary.
2. Make the first application of the recommended rate of nitrogen fertilizer for your turf variety on or shortly after March 15. See the fertilizer recommendations on page 5 of the Louisiana Lawns Best Management Practices Guide. Do not apply phosphorous or potassium fertilizer unless recommended by a soil test.
3. Take a soil test.
4. If you have a history of problems with crabgrass or goosegrass, apply a pre-emergent herbicide now. Click here to see more information on Crabgrass from the LSU AgCenter.
5. Apply selective herbicides and sedge killers to kill off weeds growing in the lawn. You may also scout the lawn and remove weeds by hand. Make a game out of it with kids and grandkids.
6. Continue to scout for fungal damage and control with fungicides if necessary. The most prevalent is called Large Patch of Warm-Season Turfgrass. Click here to find information about large patch disease from the LSU AgCenter.
7. Apply sulfur or lime to adjust the pH if necessary according to soil lab recommendations.
8. Recent heavy rain may have revealed low areas and poor drainage in your lawn. Begin planning and implementing remediation methods. Consider installing a rain garden. Dedicating a small portion of your property to water management can improve the health of your lawn.
9. Kill off vegetation and prepare the soil for sod installation

Do Not:

1. Do not lay down fill over the lawn grass.
2. Do not lay sod or spread warm-season turfgrass seed.
3. Do not dethatch
4. Do not aerate the lawn.

Your Local Extension Office is Here to Help

E-mail us at: GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu

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For more information visit LSUAgCenter.com

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