



## Conservation Notes

January 2020

### Upcoming area events:

**January 10** - Botany Walk. 8:00-10:00 at Brooker Creek Park.

**January 18** - Stargazing at Starkey. 7:00 pm at Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park

**January 25** - Identification of Florida Turtles. 10:30-12:00 at Brooker Creek Park.

### January Monthly Gardening from UF:

**Annuals/Bedding plants:** Plants that can be added to the garden during the coolest months include dianthus, pansy, petunia, viola, and snapdragon.

**Bulbs:** Crinum, agapanthus, and gloriosa lily bulbs can be planted now. Provide a layer of mulch to protect from cold temperatures.

**Deciduous fruit:** Plant deciduous fruit trees now to give their roots time to develop before the warm, dry spring months. Prune and fertilize existing trees

**Cold protection:** Be ready to cover tender plants to minimize damage and be sure covers extend all the way to the ground. Frost or freezes are likely this month and next.

**Irrigation:** Irrigate lawns and landscape plants minimally. This is their dormant season.

**Shrubs and trees:** Prune non-spring flowering shrubs and trees this month to improve form.

**Arbor Day:** Celebrate Florida Arbor Day (the third Friday of January) by planting a tree in your yard or community.

**Crape myrtle:** Remove seed pods, crossing branches, and small twiggy growth to improve the appearance and form of the plant, if desired. Hard pruning is not required.

**Pests:** Apply horticultural oil to citrus, shrubs, camellias, and deciduous fruit trees while plants are dormant to control scale.

### Florida Native Plant Spotlight: By Mary Ellen Gotto

Now that you have chosen the size of plants that will fit well in your landscape, color is the next important factor. Native plants come in many colors - white, red, yellow, pink, lavender, purple, blue and green. My favorite flower color is red and Frank's is yellow so those are the predominate colors in our yard. Unlike non-native planted gardens where you

can design areas with certain plant colors in various shapes, native plant gardens do not follow any specific design. You can plant native plants in groups of colors and designs but during the next few years the seeds will have been distributed by rabbits, birds, underground runners, and wind. After a few years, all the plants are spread throughout your landscape in a delightful kaleidoscope of color! Native plant shrubs and trees are the only plants that stay where they are planted!

Along with color, the flowering times are important. Some native plants bloom 12 months a year: beach sunflowers are yellow and tropical sage are red, pink or white. Others bloom seasonally. Blanket flowers bloom Spring to mid-late Summer, Coreopsis bloom Spring to early Summer, Cardinal flowers bloom Summer to Fall, and Wild Hoarhound and Elliot's Aster bloom late Fall. These two photos are of my two favorite native plants that bloom all year.



#### **Florida Friendly Landscape Suggestions from UF IFAS:**

- Use pesticides only on affected plants or lawn areas; no indiscriminate or routine pesticide use.
- Choose "least harmful" products when a pesticide application is justified.  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in197>
- Help reduce insect pesticide resistance by rotating chemical classes of pesticides.  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pi121>
- Fertilize as needed rather than routinely; follow local rules regarding fertilizer "black-out" periods.
- Use slow- or controlled-release fertilizers.
- Plant deciduous trees on southern exposures to allow winter sun to passively heat buildings.
- Plant shade trees on the east and west sides of buildings and around air conditioner compressors to passively cool buildings.