



GNO Gardening Magazine

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Cover photo:

A golden wonder tree *Senna splendida* growing in the New Orleans Botanical Gardens

Photo by Chris Dunaway.

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# Look at Me Golden Wonder Cassia (*Senna splendida*)

**F**our years ago while driving in Metairie, LA caught site of a brilliant burst of golden color half way down the intersecting street that I had just passed. It was so stunning that I made the block to get a better look. It turned out to be an enormous Golden Wonder Cassia (*Senna splendida* syn. *Cassia splendida*) growing behind a lovely white picket fence in front of someone's home. The sublime scene definitely screamed, "Look at me!" This semi-evergreen, small, multiple trunk tree/shrub can grow 12 feet tall and equally as wide. The cassia on the cover has been trained to have a single trunk. From late September until the first freeze in the winter, golden wonder tree lives up to it's name by creating a eye popping display of bright golden yellow flowers. These plants are typically hardy in the New Orleans area but can die back north of the lake during winter freezes. To help protect them, add about 1 foot of mulch around the base of the tree. Prune away dead material in the early spring and the plant will come



Photo by Chris Dunaway

A large golden wonder tree (*Senna splendida*).

back from the roots. Occasional pruning can also help control the size and shape. Cassia trees need full sun to flower and produce the most colorful blossoms.

They prefer neutral pH with well drained soils. Once

established cassia trees need very little inputs; needing irrigation only during periods of drought. Golden wonder trees also do well planted in large pots. They also attract many species of bees and are host plants to the cloudless sulphur butterfly and other butterfly species. Cassias are typically available at nurseries at this time of year and can also be grow from seeds or stem cuttings.



Photo by Chris Dunaway

A closer look at the flowers and bipinnate leaves of a golden wonder tree (*Senna splendida*).

~Chris Dunaway

# December Vegetable Planting Guide

Crop	Recommended Variety
Beets	Detroit Dark Red, Kestrel, Red Ace Fl, Ruby Queen
Brussels Sprouts	Jade Cross E, Long Island Improved
Cabbage	Blue Vantage, Platinum Dynasty, Stonehead, Cheers, Blue Dynasty, Emblem, Rio Verde
Carrots	Danvers 128, Purple Haze, Thumbelina, Apache, Enterprise, Maverick, Sugar Snax 54
Celery	None Given
Chinese Cabbage	None Given
Collards	Champions, Flash, Georgia Southern, Top Bunch, Vates
Garlic	<b>Creole:</b> Early, Louisiana, White Mexican; <b>Italian:</b> Early Red, Lorz; <b>Large:</b> Elephant (Tahitian)
Kale	None Given
Kohlrabi	Early Purple Vienna, Early White, Vienna, Winner
Leeks	Alora
Lettuce	Esmeralda, New Red Fire Fl, Nevada, Tall Guzman Elite
Mustard Greens	Florida Broadleaf, Greenwave, Red Giant, Southern Giant Curled, Savannah, Tendergreen
Onions	<b>Red:</b> Red Creole, Southern Belle; <b>White:</b> Candy, Savannah Sweet; <b>Vidalia:</b> Candy Ann, Caramelo, Century, Georgia Boy, Mata Hari
Radishes	Cherriette, Champion, White Icicle, April Cross
Shallots	Matador, Prism
Spinach	Bloomsdale Long Standing, Melody, Tyee, Unipak 151
Swiss Chard	None Given
Turnips	Alamo, All Top, Purple, Top White Globe, Seven Top, Southern Green, Top Star, Tokyo Cross

# What's Bugging You?

## Multicolored Asian Lady Beetle *Harmonia axyridis*

**T**oo much of a good thing can often be bad. Such might be the case for the non-native Multicolored Asian Lady Beetle (*Harmonia axyridis*), also known as the harlequin beetle or Asian lady beetle. It was first introduced to North America (for biological control of aphids) in California in 1916, and again in California in 1964 and 1965. It was also introduced in Washington state from 1978–1982, and in Nova Scotia, Connecticut, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Washington D.C., Delaware, Maine, Mississippi, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina from 1978–1981. Despite the numerous intentional releases, the species did not become established until 1988 in Louisiana. Thereafter, it spread rapidly throughout most of United States, reaching Canada in 1994. During much of the year the Asian lady beetle would be considered a beneficial insect due to its voracious appetite for soft-bodied arthropods such as aphids, thrips, mites, scale and Lepidopteran eggs. They will also turn cannibalistic during lean times and devour each other and other lady beetle species. However, as cold weather begins to move in, *Harmonia axyridis* can become a real nuisance. Like many of our native lady beetle species, *Harmonia axyridis* adults aggregate in high numbers to overwinter. However, unlike our native species, Asian lady beetles are attracted to light colored

dwelling and other manmade objects which it uses as overwintering sites. Adult Asian lady beetles enter dwellings they are attracted to through cracks, crevices and other small openings around windows, doors and roofs. This flight to cover is triggered by



Figure 1. Thousands of *harmonia axyridis* congregating for the winter.

cold weather and scarcity of food. These overwintering adults congregate in walls, ceilings, attics, crawl spaces, etc. in numbers that can reach 15,000 – 20,000 in one location (Figure 1). Sometimes you can hear them crawling around inside the building. This sheer number of insects inside your house could be a real nuisance but the Asian lady beetle has another common habit that makes it particularly annoying. When disturbed, *Harmonia axyridis* produces a yellow viscous, foul-smelling defensive compound from joints in their legs that may stain whatever it contacts like walls, draperies

# What's Bugging You?

## Multicolored Asian Lady Beetle *Harmonia axyridis*

and furniture. This is not unusual for lady beetles but that of the Asian lady beetle is particularly offensive.

This disturbance can be a result of homeowners sweeping them off walls or trying to vacuum them up to get rid of them. These alkaloids are so powerful that one crushed beetle in a vat of grape juice can ruin a large batch of wine imparting to it off-flavors. And if all that wasn't enough, they also bite.

It is called the multicolored Asian lady beetle because of the diverse color forms that exist in the adult beetles (Figure 2). The most consistent color feature is a black "M" on the white pronotum (a prominent plate-like structure that covers all or part of the thorax of some insects) though this same pattern does exist on other lady beetles such as the two-spotted lady beetle (*Adalia bipunctata*). *Harmonia axyridis* is larger than most native lady beetles being 5.5-8.5 mm

(0.25-0.33") and the adult forms always have reddish-brown legs and a brown underbelly. They go through

all the normal maturation stages (Figure 3) and have five or more generations per year. Adults usually live 30-90 days but can live as long as 3 years.

Keeping this beneficial insect from becoming a winter nuisance takes some diligence. They are mostly attracted to bright colors on southern facing surfaces. They will enter any opening they can locate to find protection during lean cold weather. Therefore, the most effective preventative is to seal any outside cracks, crevices or other openings around doors, windows and roofs. If they are a recurring nuisance, you may want to consider repainting with a darker color. Like Mark Twain said, "Too much of a good thing is



Figure 2. Some of the diverse color patterns of *Harmonia axyridis*.



Figure 3: The four stages of development. Mating adults, eggs, emerging larvae, 4 larval instars, pupa, emerged adult with empty pupal case.

bad," (the rest of that quote is, "but too much good whiskey is barely enough").

~Dr. Joe Willis

# Super Plant Spotlight-‘Henry’s Garnet’ Virginia Willow (Sweetspire) *Itea virginica*

**F**all is for planting, especially when it comes to trees, shrubs, and woody plant material.

November through January is prime time to add some new plants to your landscape while giving them ample time to set good roots, adapt to local conditions, and enjoy a dormant period ahead of the warm growing season. Recently while walking my dogs in the neighborhood, I passed by a real eye-catching, blazing red shrub full of fall color, which as we know in south Louisiana is in short supply! Virginia Willow, often called Sweetspire (*Itea virginica*) is native to Louisiana and much of the southeast, growing well in Zones 9-5. It does well in full sun to partial shade and can thrive in moist soil conditions as well as drier garden sites. A location with morning sun and afternoon shade would be ideal. If you have a low, wet spot in your landscape, Sweetspire may be a good addition.

‘Henry’s Garnet’ is a cultivar of the truly wild Sweetspire and has been selected as an LSU Super Plant for its ability to grow well in a wide variety of soil conditions, including in rain gardens and green infrastructure projects. It has few if any pest or disease problems of note. Plants are generally deciduous in much of the state, but here in the New Orleans area they may remain somewhat evergreen or retain colorful

red leaves well into the month of December.

In addition to outstanding fall color, ‘Henry’s Garnet’ Virginia Willow has a wonderful display of delicate,



A flowering ‘Henry’s Garnet’ Virginia Willow *Itea virginica*

white blooms during the summer months. Blooms are arranged in 4-5-inch-long pendulous clusters, and they have a slight fragrance. Flowering takes place over the course of one month to two months and attracts a variety of pollinators to take advantage of pollen and nectar offerings. The glossy, dark green leaves provide a nice contrast to the abundant flower clusters.

Sweetspire will grow to be three to eight feet tall, so plan to give it some room. It responds well to pruning during the dormant months to



Fall red leaves of a ‘Henry’s Garnet’ Virginia Willow *Itea virginica*

control the size and shape of this shrub, however, keep in mind that this also removes the next season’s buds. Another option is to prune any undesirable growth in the spring after the flowers wrap up for the year. Grown as a hedge, Sweetspire can provide a dramatic backdrop for other landscape perennials or annual beds of color. If you are looking for a great, easy-to-care-for shrub with seasonal eye appeal, look no further-

‘Henry’s Garnet’ Virginia Willow is a good bet and available at many independent garden centers and native plant sales statewide.

~Anna Timmerman

# Louisiana Lawns Part II

## Weeds, Disease, and Insect Pests, Oh My.

I was not sure what subject to cover next until I drove into City Park last week and saw that the grass in the median in front of the New Orleans Museum of Art was suffering from large patch

disease. In addition to disease, the lawn was also chock-a-block full of lingering summer weeds and newly sprouting cool season weeds. The only thing I did not see at this time in late November were insect pests and then the fire ants started stinging my ankles. So it seems that here in Southeast Louisiana, the battle against lawn disease, weed infestation and insect pests is a year-round campaign. I am including them all in the same article

because many of the same rules apply to each effort. Many of the techniques, equipment and necessary precautions are the same. Typically the only difference is the product that you are applying. In fact, you can by some products that contain components to fight more than one issue in a single application. In this article I will discuss importance of proper diagnosis, the use of proper cultural practices and direct you to resources that will help to diagnose and remedy your situation. Remember, there are many actions that are necessary to achieve a healthy lawn and applying pesticides is only a small part.

As I said in part one of this series, proper identification of the problem is essential. You must

know what weed, disease or pest that you are dealing with! Numerous times I have had homeowners tell me that they applied an insecticide to combat disease and vice versa. While it may seem obvious that a

fungicide should not be used to kill an insect, there is still more to know. It is important to know exactly what pest, disease or weed that you have. For example, you would not use the same insecticide to kill sod webworms that you would use to kill chinch bugs.

### Weeds

Let's start with lawn weeds. As we know, the term weed is arbitrarily applied to any plant that we do not like growing



Photo by Chris Dunaway

This lawn in Destrehan, LA has suffered heavy damage. But what is was the cause? Proper identification of the cause is critical for remediation.

[Follow this link to find out what caused this: https://youtu.be/N3ZGcpwz85g](https://youtu.be/N3ZGcpwz85g)

where it is. This could apply to any living plant. That means that every other plant in existence other than the desired turfgrass could be a potential weed in a lawn. That is a lot of plants. It is therefore no wonder that weed encroachment is the biggest threat to a pristine lawn. And it explains why so many lawns are actually just collections of various “weed” plants with very little actual grass left. The [Louisiana Lawns Best Management Practices](#) (LLBMP) publication from the LSU AgCenter has a very informative chapter on weeds beginning on page 25. [Follow this link to see the LLBMP publication: https://www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/communications/publications/publications\\_catalog/lawn%20and%20weeds.pdf](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/communications/publications/publications_catalog/lawn%20and%20weeds.pdf)

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[20garden/bmp/louisiana-lawns-best-management-practices-bmps](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn_garden/commercial_horticulture/turfgrass/turfgrass-weeds/all-weeds). In the chapter the authors do a good job at describing the different classifications of weed plants and the various herbicides that are available to combat them. The publication further enforces the need for inclusion of proper cultural practices with the following paragraph:

The best weed control is a well-managed turf. Dense healthy lawns are less susceptible to infestations because they are able to out-

and Ronald Strahan. The series is comprised of individual publications on some of the most prominent weeds found in our Louisiana Lawns. Each one consists of a detailed description of the plant, necessary cultural practices to resist infestation and finally a list of herbicide control options. [Follow this link to find a list of weeds included in the series: https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn\\_garden/commercial\\_horticulture/turfgrass/turfgrass-weeds/all-weeds](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn_garden/commercial_horticulture/turfgrass/turfgrass-weeds/all-weeds).

## LOUISIANA HOME LAWN SERIES

A guide to maintaining a healthy Louisiana lawn



The LSU AgCenter's [Louisiana Home Lawn Series](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn_garden/commercial_horticulture/turfgrass) consists of numerous individual publication on our most troublesome lawn care issues. [Follow this link to find the LSU AgCenter Turfgrass homepage to find the complete series: https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn\\_garden/commercial\\_horticulture/turfgrass](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn_garden/commercial_horticulture/turfgrass)

compete most weeds for space; however, weak lawns with bare spots thinned by disease, insects and improper cultural practices are prone to weed invasion. Cultural practices such as timely fertilization, mowing at the correct height and frequency and integrated pest management programs promote healthy lawns and significantly reduce the potential for weed establishment. Relatively few weeds can compete with properly managed lawns. Chronic weed problems in lawns may indicate unfavorable soil conditions. Procedures that correct soil problems can reduce weed infestations by making growing conditions more favorable for the turfgrass.

Beginning on page 29 of the LLBMP publication there are two tables listing some of the common lawn weeds along with recommended products, application timing and other pertinent information. More information can be found in the newly revised [Louisiana Home Lawn Series](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn_garden/commercial_horticulture/turfgrass) created by LSU AgCenter specialists including Drs. Jeffrey Beasley

### Insect Pests

Fortunately there are not nearly as many insect pests to be concerned about. You will need to remain vigilant and be ready to take action as insects can cause a lot of damage in a short amount of time if left unchecked. As with weeds, the LLBMP publication has a very informative chapter on lawn insect pests beginning on page 15. Here again the authors reinforce the use of cultural practices in pest management with the following paragraph:

Pesticides are just one tool in the management of lawns. Weeds, insects and fungal diseases are the main pests of turfgrass. Pesticide control of these pests is often possible, but, in many instances, the use of chemicals on the home lawn may be unnecessary and the best materials restricted and cost prohibitive. If you have a properly adapted turfgrass and follow proper irrigation, fertilization, thatch control and mowing procedures, you should have a competitive and resistant lawn. Such a turf is capable of

# Louisiana Lawns Part II

## Weeds, Disease, and Insect Pests, Oh My.

withstanding much pest pressure and recovering from damage that occurs without much pesticide use.

Just like with lawn weeds, the specialists at the LSU AgCenter have revised the publications on each of the common lawn pest in the Louisiana Home Lawn Series. [Follow this link to find the pest publications in the series: https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn\\_garden/commercial\\_horticulture/turfgrass/turfgrass-insects](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn_garden/commercial_horticulture/turfgrass/turfgrass-insects).

Each publication follows the same format as the weed guides and includes a description of the pest followed by cultural recommendations and finally pesticide control options.

### Lawn Disease

Finally let us turn our attention to what inspired this

article in the first place, lawn disease. Like the other topics, the LLBMP publication does have an excellent chapter on lawn disease beginning on page 20. And just like the other topics the chapter includes a statement emphasizing the importance of cultural practices in disease control. This is my favorite one since the authors did not hold any punches in pointing out the role of the caretaker in the success or failure of a lawn. You can see for yourself in the following paragraph:

Turfgrass diseases, like any pest problem, should be managed with all the tools (genetic, cultural and chemical) available for the grower. Good cultural practices for growing lawn grasses will go a long way in either preventing, or at least

reducing, disease development and damage.

Turfgrass damage should be diagnosed as soon as possible. Damage is often blamed on diseases or insects when climate, environmental conditions or poor growing practices are the real causes. Tree competition, cutting height, cutting frequency, thatch layers, herbicide damage and soil compaction sometimes help diseases to develop.

And just like the weeds and pests, the specialists at

the LSU AgCenter have created individual publications on the different lawn diseases that you are likely to encounter in Louisiana. [Follow this link to see the lawn disease section of the Louisiana Home Lawn Series: https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn\\_garden/commercial\\_horticulture/turfgrass/turfgrass-diseases](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/topics/lawn_garden/commercial_horticulture/turfgrass/turfgrass-diseases).

The final source of information on pesticide use will always be found on the product label. Insecticide

labels are required by law to have specific information to protect the user, the environment and give clear direction for the product use. Anyone who applies pesticides is also required by law to follow the label use and directions. It can be difficult to read the labels on the bottles so I will go to the manufacturers website to find a printable copy. The product manufacturers are also likely to have other information, including videos, on the proper use of the product.

Please continue to read the subsequent articles in this series on lawn care to learn more about the necessary cultural practices required to have your lawn looking like a royal bowling green.

~Chris Dunaway



Photo of Bowlers playing on the Kelvingrove Bowling Green at the University of Glasgow, c 1910.

# Soil Drainage

I'm sure every gardener has asked this question of themselves or been asked this question by an Extension Agent – "How good is your drainage?" And in descriptions of growing almost any plant, there will be some reference to drainage: well-drained soil, soil with good drainage, requires good drainage, etc. This is a question that we all think we can answer with some confidence. We might think, I have good drainage because:

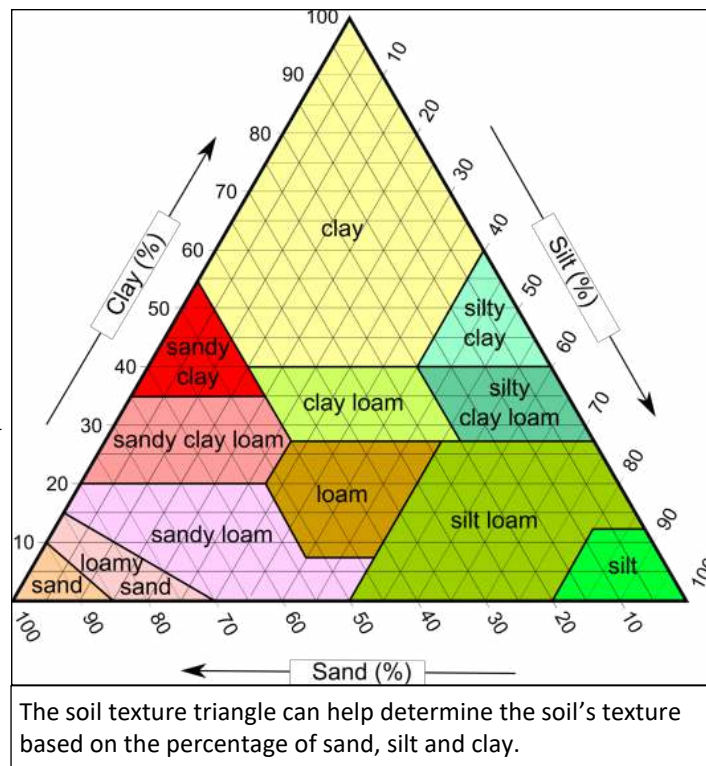
- When it rains, the water doesn't stand in this area.
- When I water this area, the water goes into the ground pretty quickly.
- The soil in this area has a lot of sand so it must have excellent drainage.
- Most all the plants I plant here do fine so it must be well-drained.

The truth is most people are just guessing when it comes to knowing about the drainage of their garden or areas where they want to plant. Additionally, good drainage in one area does not mean that you have good drainage in all areas of your landscape. How can we know about the quality of drainage in an area where we might want to grow an orange tree or put a vegetable garden?

As gardeners, when we discuss drainage, we are talking about how quickly excess water vacates the plant root zone opening up soil pore space for gas exchange (oxygen, carbon dioxide, nitrogen). Soil drainage and soil water-holding capacity are two very different soil parameters though many soil characteristics effect both. For instance, soil that is 75% sand has large pore spaces and drains very rapidly; however, that same soil would have a very low water-holding capacity. Conversely, soil that is 25% clay has very small pore spaces and drains very

slowly; however, it has a very high water-holding capacity. Between those two extremes, soil that has a high organic matter content (>5%) may have good soil structure because the organic matter leads to aggregate formation. This creates larger pore spaces that enhances soil drainage. In the same soil, the organic matter and soil aggregates with micropores act like little sponges giving the soil enhanced water-holding capacity.

What are some soil characteristics that contribute to a soil's drainage? Soil texture is the basic makeup of soil based on the percent composition of sand, silt and clay. Generally, the higher the sand content the more rapidly a soil drains. Conversely, the higher the clay content the slower it drains. Sandy loam, which is the gold standard for most plants, generally consists of



less than 7% clay, less than 50% silt and between 40 and 50% sand.

Another important soil characteristic that affects soil drainage is soil structure. Soil structure is basically the arrangement of soil particles in various aggregates differing in shape, size, stability, and degree of adhesion to one another. Soil aggregates range in size from less than 0.01 inches to larger than 0.4 inches. The size of the aggregates and resulting pore space between them has a great influence on soil drainage. A soil's organic matter content contributes directly to soil aggregate formation. If you increase a soil's organic matter content, soil aggregate formation and size increases and so does a soil's drainage. Incidentally, increasing soil organic matter content also increases its water holding capacity and its cation exchange capacity (ability to retain nutrients).

An area's water table level also influences a soil's

# Soil Drainage

drainage capacity. Areas with a high to very high water table tend to have poorer drainage than areas with a low water table. The water table in an area is more or less fixed and there's not much you as a gardener can do to raise or lower your water table. However, you can overcome poor drainage due to a high water table by making changes to your garden elevation.

Elevation is another factor to consider when determining your soil drainage. Even if you have beautiful sandy loam soil, if your garden is located against a building wall at the lowest point on your property you may have very poor drainage. All the surface runoff water from the surrounding areas with higher elevation runs down into your garden and the building wall acts like a dam. Your garden with beautiful sand loam soil now sits saturated for extended periods of time because the water has nowhere else to go.

This example brings up another factor that affects the drainage in our gardens – barriers. Barriers to water movement don't really affect a soil's drainage capacity but they do greatly effect a garden's drainage capacity regardless of soil type. What are some of these barriers? In the example above, the building wall was a barrier to water movement. Some other possible barriers to water movement would be garden walls, plastic bed liners, rock layers and soil compaction layers.

You can see, there are a lot of things that can affect your soil and garden drainage and all must be taken into consideration when laying out your planting scheme or determining why your plants aren't looking very healthy. Fortunately, there is a simple test you can do yourself on any area of your garden that will give you a very good idea of how well your soil drains. For best results, you don't want to perform this test immediately after a storm passes through that dumped 2 inches of rain on you. Neither would you want to do the test when the garden is extremely dry from lack of rain.

**Step 4:** Measure the water level in the hole on an hourly basis until the hole is empty. To measure the water level, place a straight edge across the hole and measure and record the distance from the straight edge to the water surface. Use a bamboo stake, a spare 1"x2" slat, a yard stick or similar item as a straight edge.



**Step 1:** Dig a hole at least 12" wide and 12" deep with straight sides in the area you want to test.



**Step 2:** Fill the hole with water and let it completely drain. The easiest way is to fill the hole with water and let it sit overnight. This step saturates the soil and improves the accuracy of the drainage test.



**Step 3:** Refill the hole with water.



# Soil Drainage

## Interpretation:

If the water drains at a rate of 4" or more per hour, then drainage is too fast. Incorporating organic matter will increase aggregation and reduce pore size.

If the water drains at a rate of 2" to 3" per hour, then drainage is excellent.

If the water drains at a rate of 1" to 2" per hour, then drainage is good. Some plants will do well but plants that require excellent or well-drained soil could suffer.

If the water drains at a rate of less than 1" per hour, then drainage is poor. Drainage needs improvement or choose plants that are tolerant of wet soil.

This simple test is a great way to check drainage in all areas of your garden and landscape. Once you know how well your soil drains, you'll know what kind of plants you should grow in the different areas and whether there are areas that need improvement. It may also give you a clue as to why your gardenias or roses keep dying in that area. There are various things you can do to improve drainage and your local extension agent should be able to give you advice. Next time someone asks you "How good is the drainage in your garden?", you can give them an answer based on measurements and not conjecture.

~Dr. Joe Willis



A photo from the New Orleans Botanical Garden from April 1, 2016, the day before the New Orleans Spring Garden Show. Fortunately the park has good drainage and the water was gone by the next morning.

# Weed of the Month – Horseherb/Straggler Daisy (*Calyptocarpus vialis*)

Depending on your point of view, Straggler Daisy or Horseherb (*Calyptocarpus vialis* synonym *Synedrella vialis*) is an invasive pest or a welcome, shade-tolerant groundcover that tolerates moderate foot traffic. If you have a lawn anywhere within its range, you probably already have it. Thriving in sun or shade, its tiny, yellow aster flowers add a minute touch of color to shady areas and attract small butterflies like sulfurs and skippers.

Straggler daisy is a semi-evergreen perennial with opposite, simple, serrated leaves covered with short stiff hairs (strigose) (Figure 1). It usually grows less than 6" high but can spread to large areas – 6' or more (Figure 2). The small yellow flower heads ( $\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter) have 10-20 disc florets and 3-8 ray florets (Figure 1). Flowers appear from March through November in most places most years but will bloom year-round



Photo by Dr. Joe Willis

Figure 1: *Calyptocarpus vialis* flowers and leaves. Note the small stiff hairs on the leaf surface. Flower has 8 ray florets and multiple disc florets.



Photo by Dr. Joe Willis

Figure 2: Spreading mound of health *Calyptocarpus vialis* growing in semi-shade.

states. Go figure. Two different divisions of the USDA can't agree whether it is native or non-native so choose which you prefer.

If you consider it a lawn weed, use of a broadleaf herbicide such as 2,4-D + dicamba + mecoprop usually gives good control as does a pre-emergent herbicide such as isoxaben. In garden areas and landscapes, judicious use of glyphosate is also effective. However, if you're always trying to get lawn to grow under the shade of the old oak tree, why not let horseherb have its way – no mowing required.

~Dr. Joe Willis and Dr. Ronald Strahan

during mild winters. Severe summer heat will also send it into dormancy. It is drought-tolerant, low-maintenance and nearly indestructible. It propagates by spreading stolons or tiny seed (< 0.25" long and < 0.10 " wide). The seed (Figure 3) have 2-3 short needles which aid in its dispersal.

ARS-GRIN (USDA Agriculture Research Service – Germplasm Resources Information Network) considers it a native in AL, FL, LA, MS and TX. Whereas USDA Plants considers it an invasive non-native that has been introduced to more than a dozen



Photo by Dr. Joe Willis

Figure 3: Close-up of *Calyptocarpus vialis* seeds. Note the 2-3 spines at one end.

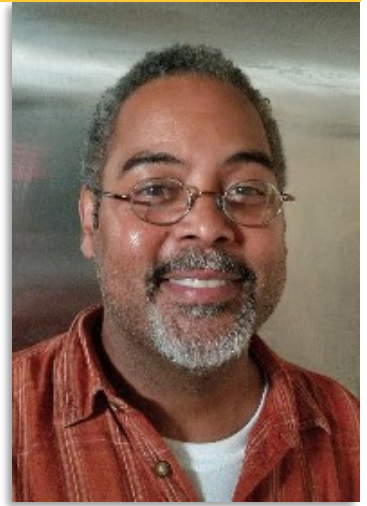
# In the Kitchen with Austin

## Brussels Sprout Slaw

Just when you thought you couldn't add another thing to your holiday table, here I come with this amazingly simple and delicious recipe. Seriously, nothing could be easier to prepare and the flavor is off the charts.

### Ingredients:

2 lbs. of fresh Brussels sprouts, washed, trimmed, and sliced thinly	½ cup sugar
½ cup dried cranberries	½ cup distilled white vinegar
½ cup toasted pecans	½ cup vegetable oil



### Directions:

Place sliced brussel sprouts in a large bowl, seasoning lightly with salt and pepper. Set aside.



In a medium sauce pan, add sugar, vinegar, and vegetable oil. Stir to dissolve the sugar. Over medium heat, bring mixture to a boil uncovered for 10-15 minutes.

When the bubbling slows and before the color turns amber, pour the hot dressing over your brussel sprouts. Toss to coat evenly and refrigerate covered for at least three hours. Add cranberries and pecans right before serving.

*Bon Manger!*

## Coming Events

### Pelican Greenhouse Plant Sales

Visit the Pelican Greenhouse for a large selection of plants for sale. Many of plants are propagated from cuttings, seeds, and divisions from plants already growing in the Botanical Garden

Happening **every weekend**. Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 8am to NOON

**Location:** Pelican Greenhouse (not inside the Botanical Garden): 2 Celebration Drive.

Visit [NewOrleansCityPark.com](http://NewOrleansCityPark.com) for Park map



# Local Independent Garden Centers

Orleans	Address	Contact
Urban Roots	2375 Tchoupitoulas St., New Orleans	(504) 522-4949
The Plant Gallery	9401 Airline Hwy., New Orleans	(504) 488-8887
Harold's Plants	1135 Press St., New Orleans	(504) 947-7554
We Bite Rare and Unusual Plants	1225 Mandeville St., New Orleans	(504) 380-4628
Hot Plants	1715 Feliciana St., New Orleans	www.hotplantsnursery.com
Delta Floral Native Plants	2710 Touro St., New Orleans (Weekends)	(504) 224-8682
Pelican Greenhouse Sales	2 Celebration Dr., New Orleans	(504) 483-9437
Grow Wiser Garden Supply	2109 Decatur St., New Orleans	(504) 644-4713
Jefferson Feed Mid-City	309 N. Carrollton Ave., New Orleans	(504) 488-8118
Jefferson Feed Uptown	6047 Magazine St., New Orleans	(504) 218-4220
Jefferson		
Perino's Garden Center	3100 Veterans Memorial Blvd., Metairie	(504) 834-7888
Rose Garden Center	4005 Westbank Expressway, Marrero	(504) 341-5664
Rose Garden Center	5420 Lapalco Blvd., Marrero	(504) 347-8777
Banting's Nursery	3425 River Rd., Bridge City	(504) 436-4343
Jefferson Feed	4421 Jefferson Hwy., Jefferson	(504) 733-8572
Nine Mile Point Plant Nursery	2141 River Rd., Westwego	(504) 436-4915
Palm Garden Depot	351 Hickory Ave., Harahan	(504) 305-6170
Double M Feed Harahan	8400 Jefferson Hwy., Harahan	(504) 738-5007
Double M Feed Metairie	3212 W. Esplanade Ave., Metairie	(504) 835-9800
Double M Feed Terrytown	543 Holmes Blvd., Terrytown	(504) 361-4405
Sunrise Trading Co. Inc.	42 3rd St., Kenner	(504) 469-0077
Laughing Buddha Garden Center	4516 Clearview Pkwy., Metairie	(504) 887-4336
Creative Gardens & Landscape	2309 Manhattan Blvd., Harvey	(504) 367-9099
Plaquemines		
Southern Gateway Garden Center	107 Timber Ridge St., Belle Chasse	(504) 393-9300
St. Charles		
Plant & Palm Tropical Outlet	10018 River Rd., St. Rose	(504) 468-7256
Martin's Nursery & Landscape	320 3rd St., Luling	(985) 785-6165
St. Bernard		
Renaissance Gardens	9123 W. Judge Perez Dr., Chalmette	(504) 682-9911
Soil Vendors		
Schmelly's Dirt Farm (Compost Only)	<a href="https://www.schmellys.com/compost-sales/">https://www.schmellys.com/compost-sales/</a>	
Laughing Buddha Garden Center	4516 Clearview Pkwy., Metairie	(504) 887-4336
Reliable Soil	725 Reverand Richard Wilson Dr., Kenner	(504) 467-1078
Renaissance Gardens	9123 W. Judge Perez Dr., Chalmette	(504) 682-9911
Rock n' Soil NOLA	9119 Airline Hwy., New Orleans	(504) 488-0908

We recommend that you call before visiting to enquire about operating hours or special instructions.

# December Checklist/Garden Tips

Don't forget to add nature's generous bounty of leaves provided this time of year to your compost piles, or use them to mulch shrub and flower beds. You should have a 3-4 inch mulch layer over your garden soil. Mulch insulates the soil, keeps the soil moisture consistent, helps prevent plant disease and neatens everything up. Shred larger leaves with your lawn mower before adding them to the compost pile or using them as mulch. Stock pile pine straw and cypress leaves in plastic bags to use to cover low growing plants for freeze protection. Use the wand of your vacuum cleaner to remove the air from the bags to compress the material to save space. See a demonstration at the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/1030624690304124/videos/3299251646811530/>

You can also make your own home-made baler to make your own bales of pine straw and cypress leaves for future use. See my demonstration video at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fb8v9SXUAFg&t=7s>

Winterize your garden tools before you put them away. Clean and sharpen tools, apply a thin layer of protective oil to the blades, and coat wooden handles with sealer, tung oil or varnish to protect the wood and keep it in good shape. Drain the gas from lawn mowers and other gas powered equipment (see the owner's manual for recommendations).

Poinsettias are a great addition to interior holiday displays, place them near a window to give them a longer "shelf-life". Wait to water them until the soil feels dry to the touch.

If you bought tulip or hyacinth bulbs last month, plant them at the end of December. If you want to have hyacinths blooming indoors, plant them halfway into a shallow bowl with pebbles or marbles in the bottom. Add just enough water so that the bottom of the bulbs stay wet, adding water when it stops making contact. Place them someplace sunny. It takes four to six weeks for them to bloom, bringing a welcome jolt of spring into the house.

If we get a hard freeze, wait a few days to evaluate the damage. Many cole crops will bounce back, as will some landscape plants. Things usually look worse the next morning after a frost than they actually are. Waiting gives the plants a chance to recover, and you can see the extent of the true damage. Prune cannas, philodendrons, clerodendrons, and gingers back to the ground that got burned. They will be back in the spring.

Many garden chemicals are water based and can be destroyed by freezing. The loss of chemicals can be expensive and spilled chemicals can create dangerous conditions. Keep chemicals in a location that doesn't freeze, and if there are children in the house, they should be stored in a locked location.

Cut back any lingering tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) to encourage Monarch butterflies to migrate south. Cut the plants back to the ground if possible, they will be back in the spring just in time for the return of the butterflies.

Consider creating holiday arrangements and centerpieces using plant material from your yard and gardens. Many of our most common landscape plants make excellent seasonal greenery, including magnolias, nandina, hollies, juniper, cypress, and camellias. Cut some greenery and spend some time creating arrangements for your table or mantelpiece. This can be a fun holiday activity to share with family members. The fragrance of evergreens also adds to the seasonal ambiance!

If you have any of the holiday cacti, including Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter cacti, be sure to put it on display. Once the blooms finish, place it in a sunny window to recover and prepare for next year's flowering. Allow the soil to dry out between all waterings. Prolonged soil moisture can rot the roots. Fertilize lightly with a little water-soluble fertilizer once a month to keep it happy.

Plant cool season bedding plants now, and be sure to keep them deadheaded so that they bloom well into the spring months. Great things to plant now include snapdragons, foxgloves, dianthus, pansies, petunias, violas, columbine, delphinium, and cyclamen.

# Lawn Care Do's & Don't's

## Do's:

1. You may apply selective herbicides to eliminate broad leaf weeds in the lawn.
2. Cool damp weather is ideal for the appearance of Large Patch Disease in your lawn.  
[Click here to find information about large patch disease from the LSU AgCenter.](#)
3. Mulch fall leaves and let them decompose in place if possible or collect them with a bagging mower and add them to your compost pile or use them as mulch in your gardens.
4. Take a soil test. Test kits are available in our offices in the Botanical Gardens, the Yenni Building, and New Orleans City Hall as well as local garden centers. Follow this link to see Dr. Joe demonstrate how to take a soil sample: <https://www.facebook.com/1030624690304124/videos/1452161988150390/>

## Don't's

1. Do not spread fill over the lawn until it is actively growing again in the spring.
2. Do not apply fertilizer to the lawn again until April of next year.
3. Do not apply phosphorous winterizer to the lawn without taking a soil sample first. We have ample amounts of phosphorous in our soil already.
4. Do not attempt to install a new lawn until spring.
5. Do not cut more than 1/3 of the height of lawn grass at a single time.
6. Do not aerate the lawn.
7. Do not dethatch the lawn.



Soil test kits can be picked up at our parish offices and at local garden centers.

## Your Local Extension Office is Here to Help

E-mail us at: [GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:GNOGardening@agcenter.lsu.edu)



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For more information visit [LSUAgCenter.com](http://LSUAgCenter.com)

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