



July 2018



A monarch butterfly deformed by Ophryocystis elektroscirrha (OE) infection cannot properly emerge from its chrysalis. Photo from the Xerces Society.

What is "O. E."?

By Linda Auld, "BugLady"

Be In The Know

By: Dr. Joe Willis

Plan and Plant Now for Fall Tomatoes

By: Anna Timmerman

Aphid Mummies

By: Dr. Joe Willis

Garden Hack - Lining Porous Pots

By: Chris Dunaway

July Planting Guide

Master Gardener Project Update

Upcoming Events

July Garden Checklist

What is "OE"?

The Monarch butterfly is our national insect and it is in trouble. Habitat destruction, neonicotinoid chemicals and weed killers, mixed with a heap helping of parasites, and diseases spell a disastrous recipe for certain doom. It is a wonder that any could live amidst this array of daunting challenges. And yet, these tiny, fragile creatures have persevered and continue to amaze us with their beauty and their unique ability to migrate over two thousand miles from as far as Canada all the way to the forests of Mexico to overwinter.

For years, the national conservation group [Monarch Watch](#) has sponsored the Monarch Tagging Program which studies the monarch butterflies' migration habits. Interesting graphs and other findings can be viewed on their website including migration routes and the locations of overwintering sites. Their



An adult monarch butterfly nectaring from a lantana flower.



Monarch caterpillars feeding on Scarlet tropical milkweed in a New Orleans garden.

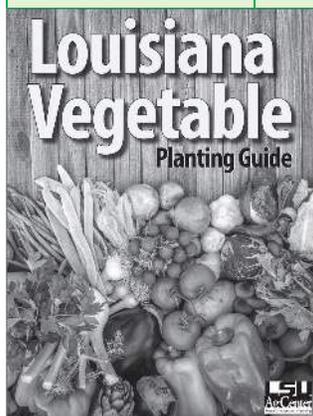
sister website, [Journey North](#), allows citizen scientists to post their Monarch sightings online to share with other interested folks who like to follow their annual flights. I personally can report that my records of raising monarchs go as far back as 1983 when I was participating in the Monarch tagging program started by Dr. Fred Urquhart in Toronto, Canada. It was Dr. Urquhart's tagging program that helped discover the Mexican overwintering grounds back in 1975.

In the Spring of 2014 NBC's bleak report that overwintering Monarch populations had reached an all-time low shocked and alarmed the nation. Was this caused by global warming? Was it the new array of neonicotinoid pesticides that caused colony collapse in honey bees? Or was it the destruction of habitat due to cutting of the special Mexican forests? In response to the crisis, butterfly specialists, citizens and naturalists from all over the world were spurred into action offering their ideas and theories to help figure out why this was happening and trying to find solutions to the situation. For many of us, the answer was to plant more of the butterfly's food source for

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July Vegetable Planting Guide

Crop	Recommended Variety	Planting Depth	Spacing Inches	Days Until Harvest * from transplant date
Cantaloupe	Ambrosia, Aphrodite, Passport, Primo, Verona	¼ inch	18-24	80-85
Collards	Champion, Flash, Georgia, Top Bunch, Yates	⅝ inch	6-12	75
Chinese Cabbage (Seeds for transplant)	None Given	¼ inch	12	60-80*
Cucumbers	Slicers = Dasher II, Diva, Fanfare HG, Indy Pickler = Calypso	¼ inch	12-18	50-65
Luffa Gourd	None Given	½ inch	48	90
Okra	Annie Oakley, Cajun Delight, Clemson Spineless	½ inch	12	60
Peppers, Bell (Seeds for transplant)	Aristotle XR3, King Arthur, Paladin, Carmen	⅝ inch	--	140-150
Pumpkins	Atlantic Giant, Baby Bear, Prankster, Sorcerer	½ inch	36-60	90-120
Shallots	Matador, Prisma	1 inch	4-8	50
Rutabaga				
Southern Peas	Queen Anne, California #5, Quickpick, Colussus	½ inch	4-6	70-80
Squash	Zucchini = Declaration II, Justice III, Payroll Straight Neck = Multipik, Patriot II, Liberator III Crook Neck = Destiny III, Gentry, Medallion	⅝ inch	36	50-90
Tomatoes (Seeds for transplant)	Bella Rosa, Florida 91, Phoenix, Solar Fire, Sunmaster, Heatwave II	⅝ inch	--	100-115
Watermelon	Seedless: Cooperstown, Gypsy, Matrix, Millennium Seeded: Mickey Lee, Sugar Baby, Amarillo	¼ inch	48	90-110



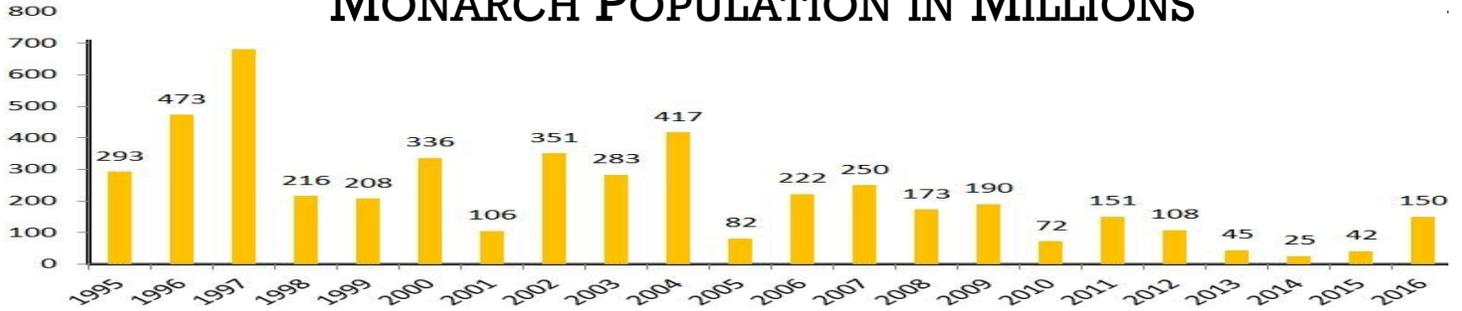
For more recommended varieties and supplier information click here to visit the [Recommended Varieties Database](#) on the LSUAgCenter website.

<http://apps.lsuagcenter.com/diseaseresistance/>

What is "OE"?

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MONARCH POPULATION IN MILLIONS



the developing caterpillars and adults. There is a long history of gardeners in the New Orleans area growing food plants for monarch butterflies and even raising them in captivity and releasing them into the wild as adults. My mentor, Frances Welden, has been raising monarch butterflies since the 1950's.

Monarch caterpillars are very picky eaters. They will only eat leaves of the milkweed plant. For decades the only variety of milkweed available at local garden centers was Tropical Milkweed, *Asclepias curassavica*, also called Mexican Milkweed, Scarlet Milkweed, or Silky Gold. This species of milkweed has naturalized itself in our state and has become the monarch caterpillars' mainstay diet over our Louisiana native milkweed varieties because of its ease of propagation and quick growth. Plus, monarch caterpillars love to consume it! However, by supplying a near year round food source and rearing monarch butterflies in captivity, we have disturbed their natural migration routine. We have also caused these butterflies to concentrate in smaller areas where they feed generationally on the same plants.



Christen Steele examines the sample under a microscope in her laboratory at Tulane University.



Live monarch butterflies are tested for OE by collecting a sample from the abdomen.

successfully from their pupal stage, either because they become stuck or they are too weak to fully expand their wings. Those with mild OE infections can appear normal but live shorter lives and cannot fly as well as healthy monarchs. Infected adult monarchs may carry hundreds of thousands of dormant microscopic OE spores on the outside of their bodies. These spores are deposited on eggs at the time of laying or

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OE spores visible under microscope.

What is "OE"?

(Continued)

scattered on milkweed leaves by infected adults as they nectar and lay eggs. The larvae consume the spores where the parasites replicate in the gut of the developing butterfly.

The severity of this issue was emphasized to me in a conversation I had with Christen Steele, a Tulane researcher working locally on the OE issue. Christen told me that, in the fall of 2017, she monitored 40 gardens in the Uptown-Carrollton-Garden District of New Orleans. Christen gave me a tour of her Tulane laboratory and showed me how to test a monarch butterfly for OE infection. Carefully holding the butterfly, Christen took a small sample of scales from the abdomen. She then examined the sample under a microscope looking for the OE spores. At high magnification, the spores are shaped like footballs. Her data showed that 97.37% our monarch population carried OE spores. This is a huge increase in the ratio of infected butterflies compared to migrating butterflies which research has show to have a less than 8% infection rate.

The thought that we had been causing harm instead of helping the butterflies has come as an appalling shock to say the least. There is still much research to be done to determine the cause, extent, and potential solutions to the problem. Acting as citizen scientists we can help to facilitate these efforts and implement those changes that have already been recommended. Due to the extreme difficulty in keeping sterile conditions, I have ceased raising monarch butterflies in captivity. I have also

begun trial plantings of various native milkweed varieties. Three years ago, I planted nine different varieties of Louisiana native milkweed to see how they



Butterfly Weed-*Asclepias tuberosa*



Swamp Milkweed-*Asclepias incarnata*



Aquatic Milkweed-*Asclepias perennis*

would do in our area. I discovered that each one requires different site specific growing conditions. For instance, the "Butterflyweed", *Asclepias tuberosa*, prefers a sunny spot with very good drainage. By trial and error, I have found that pine bark and sand is its perfect mixture. Aquatic milkweed, *Asclepias perennis*, as well as the Swamp milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*, on the other hand, prefer wet roots. I have seen the Aquatic actually growing in standing water during field trips to the Bonnet Carre Spillway and in the Honey Island Swamp. I also witnessed it survive this past winter's frigid temperatures when the tropical milkweed froze to the ground.

As gardeners there are several recommendations to reduce the impact of OE on the Monarch butterflies that visit.

1. Plant more native varieties of milkweed in your garden.
2. If you do grow tropical milkweed, cut it down to the ground in June and October to correspond with the natural monarch migration. This will discourage the butterflies from lingering and to reduce the number of OE spores that can remain on the plants.
3. Do not raise monarch butterflies in captivity unless you follow all requirements to maintain a sterile environment.

Raise other butterfly species that do not have these parasites and issues. There are about 135 species of butterflies in Louisiana that

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What is "OE"?

(Continued)

are equally as amazing and exciting to watch as they go through their metamorphosis.

5. Participate in the monarch butterfly monitoring process to help prove or disprove the link between OE and the tropical milkweed.
6. Talk to your friends, relatives and neighbors who raise monarchs to inform them of this issue.

In closing, I ask each of you to accept the gardening challenge to grow Louisiana native milkweeds which will not only strengthen your yard's eco-system by providing a fuel stop of nectar for a variety of insects but will also help provide the proper diet monarch butterflies need to survive. If the tropical milkweed is the cause of this OE issue, we have the power to change the situation. You will not see tropical milkweed growing out in the wild when you are hiking our local forest trails. Tropical milkweed exists in our gardens where we planted it. If we will join together, we can make a difference to

Help Bring Back the Monarchs!

~Linda Auld
BugLady



The four signs of serious O. E. infection are:

- 1) When the caterpillar begins its "J" formation to pupate, only the head turns green and it does not completely form a chrysalis.
- 2) The chrysalis has black spots, is all black and/or does not hatch.
- 3) A hatching butterfly is stuck inside the pupal casing, cannot emerge properly and/or its wings are deformed.
- 4) A newly hatched butterfly does not have enough strength to hang onto its pupal casing and then falls to the ground in a mangled mess.

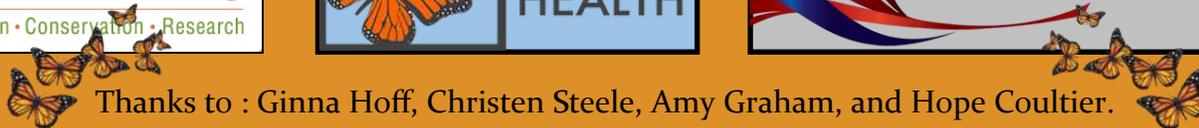


I sell the Aquatic milkweed at my retail store -- Barber Laboratories located at 6444 Jefferson Highway in Harahan. (504-739-5715 - call me with any questions) You can ask your local garden center to order the native milkweed plants for you. Plants are also available through [Monarch Watch Milkweed Market](#) online.

For more information on OE and monarch butterflies click on the following links:

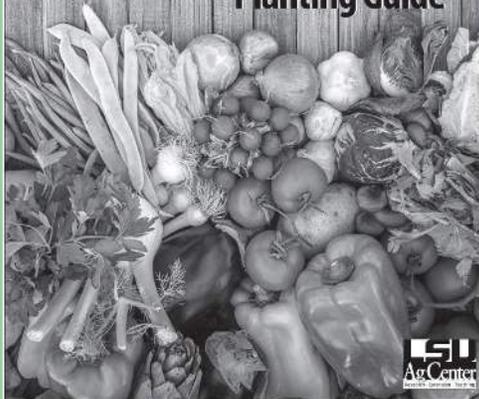


Thanks to : Ginna Hoff, Christen Steele, Amy Graham, and Hope Coultier.



Be In The Know

Louisiana Vegetable Planting Guide



It's time to be planning and planting the fall vegetable garden and the place to turn for information is the LSU AgCenter (www.lsuagcenter.com). There are several publications that are available for download or purchase that will go a long way in helping to put you on the road to success. The first is the *Louisiana Vegetable Planting Guide* which was updated November 2016 and available for free download. This guide will tell you when to plant, what to plant (seeds or transplants), how deep to plant, spacing, fertilizer recommendations, as well as how long before you can expect to start harvesting for 36 of the most popular vegetables. There is also a list of recommended varieties (based on LSU trials). One hint on recommended varieties. These varieties that have been grown by researchers in Louisiana and have proven to be reliable. However, with over 15,000 known varieties of tomato alone, not every variety has been trialed. While I'm sure Dr. Fontenot would love to test them all, as yet she has a few thousand varieties to go. I mention that to say, if you know something grows in our area or if you see a variety that you find interesting, get some and plant them along with some of the recommended varieties. You may find a new variety you really like that is also reliably productive. If it doesn't work out, you will still have plants of the recommended varieties to fall back on.



LSU AgCenter Louisiana Home Vegetable Gardening



THE LOUISIANA URBAN GARDENER



A Beginner's Guide to Growing Vegetables and Herbs



KATHRYN K. FONTENOT

Kiki's book is available at local book stores and on-line retailers.

If you want to delve a little deeper into information on vegetable gardening in Louisiana, try the publication *Louisiana Home Vegetable Gardening* which was updated December 2016. This publication is available to order online for \$20.00 and it would be a worthwhile investment. It has a very detailed introductory section that talks about climate, garden sites, raised beds and containers, soils and fertility, mulching, irrigation and row covers. Next is a section where each vegetable is listed with detailed information about growing and harvesting. Everything from artichokes to watermelon and the most common problems you may encounter with each. Following that is a detailed section on "Weeds, Insects, Pests and Disease", another on "Growing Herbs", then "Tools and Equipment" and finally a copy of the *Louisiana Vegetable Planting Guide*. All of this for only \$20.00, that's a great deal!

There are also free publications available to download on each individual crop, vegetable gardening newsletters, and publications in the "*Home Garden Series*". And if you are fairly new to vegetable gardening, check out Dr. Kiki Fontenot's new book, *The Louisiana Urban Gardener – A Beginner's Guide to Growing Vegetables and Herbs*. Even if you are a seasoned veteran it is a good read.

Home Garden Series



~Dr. Joe Willis

Plan and Plant Now for Fall Tomatoes

The tomato plants that I have remaining in my garden look rough, and that is putting things politely. I planted them right after Mardi Gras, received a bounty of Super Sweet 100's, Creoles, and Golden Rave tomatoes. Now, in the beginning of July and the beginning of the heat of the true New Orleans summer, I have few fruits on them, and those that are there are riddled with stink bug and leaf-footed bug damage. The leaves of the plants themselves are dead on the bottom from early blight, and curled on the top from brutal, unrelenting full sun. It is now too hot to set fruit as pollen becomes unviable when daytime temperatures are above 85-90 degrees Fahrenheit and evening temperatures don't fall below 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Humidity also plays a role, when it is really humid out, pollen granules may become sticky and not fall onto the female parts of the flower.

***My tomato plants are old and tired.
It's time to say goodbye.***

The flip side of this is that July is an excellent time to start dreaming of the fall tomato crop, a true blessing that many home gardeners forget about. Seeding tomatoes now for fall planting is a luxury that few people in other locations enjoy.

Start seeds in trays, either indoors or in a shaded area where they will not dry out daily. Use a sterile soilless potting mix containing no compost to ensure that your new transplants will be disease free. Also, be sure that any trays or pots that you are using are clean and sterilized. Soak used pots in a solution of 1 part bleach, 9 parts water for 10 mins. This helps to prevent issues like damping off. These trays or pots will be your new tomato plants home for six weeks.

Choose varieties that are quick maturing and heat tolerant. You will likely need to order seed since several of the LSU recommended varieties are not available at local garden centers so some extra leg work may be needed to obtain select seeds. In some

cases, these varieties have been replaced with new ones. The LSU AgCenter recommends several varieties for fall specifically, including the following:

Florida 91 - 65-70 days to maturity. Determinate. Large, red slicing tomato. Crack resistant. Heat tolerant. Disease resistant.

Sunmaster - 72 days to maturity. Determinate. 8 oz firm fruit. Likes hot days and nights. Heat Tolerante. Disease resistant.

Bella Rosa - 75 days to maturity. Determinate. Produces round, firm, bright red tomatoes that are highly flavorful with a good balance of acid and sugar. Excellent choice for home gardens and market growers. Heat tolerant. Disease resistant. Nematode resistant.

Heatwave II - 75 days to maturity. Determinate. Medium, red slicer. Crack resistant. Heat tolerant. Disease resistant.

Phoenix - 70-75 days to maturity. Determinate. Medium, dense clusters of fruit. Crack resistant. Heat resistant. Disease resistant.

Solar Fire - 75 days to maturity. Determinate. Medium sized red slicer. Crack resistant. Heat resistant. Disease resistant.

Tomatoes germinate best at room temperatures of 70-75 degrees Fahrenheit. Once they have germinated,

they grow best in temperatures of 65-70 degrees. A typical home may be a good place to start them, especially near a bright window or underneath grow lights. They will also germinate outdoors in the heat and humidity, but be sure they are in

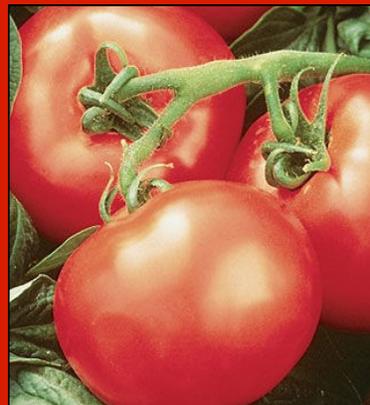
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Florida 91



Solar Fire



Heatwave II

Plan and Plant Now for Fall Tomatoes (Continued)

a location that is out of direct sunlight and not in a greenhouse (which will cook them!). A covered bench area with good light is a great idea. Covered locations keep heavy summer rains from washing the seeds out of the trays. If you are growing indoors or out, be sure that the seedlings don't dry out or drown. A good, even moisture is needed to get them off to a good start. Water trays from the bottom using a capillary mat system or a shallow water-holding tray. Avoid getting the tomato leaves wet. This can invite fungal pathogens. Watering from below is good insurance against this. Turn trays to get straight plants if they begin growing towards a light source. Periodically run your hands gently over them, brushing the tops to help to grow sturdy, stocky transplants. If they begin to grow too leggy, increase the light in the area in which they are growing or move them to a sunnier location (careful to not fry them or dry them out!).

In six weeks, they should be ready to plant. Remove the bottom leaves and plant tomatoes deeply, they will grow lateral roots from the buried stems. Water from below, making sure that they have adequate water in the heat of summer. The beds that you are growing in should be well-draining, in full sun, and fertile. Add some 8-8-8 or compost following the recommendations of your most recent soil test. As tomatoes begin to grow and flower, side dress them weekly with a little 8-8-8 or compost. Tomatoes are very heavy feeders and need sufficient nutrition to grow properly. For more information, please check out the [LSU AgCenter's Tomato Guide](#)



Plant seeds 1/4 inch deep in soilless starting mix. Don't forget to label.

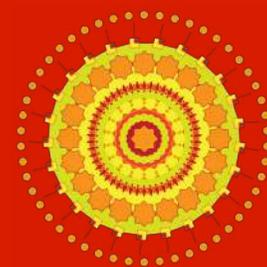
for more specifics. Spraying copper fungicide every 10 days can also help to prevent fungal issues as temperatures cool and fall rains return. Mulch around your plants to help keep soil moisture even and to prevent pathogens from splashing upwards from the soil in the rain. Removing the bottom leaves to a height of 8 inches will also help to prevent soil to plant contact and prevent disease. Keep an eye out for late season leaf-footed bugs, stinkbugs, and tomato hornworms, in addition to other pests. They will be out there and hungry, looking for a last meal before finishing their life cycle ahead of cooler weather.

Since the varieties mentioned above are quick to mature and bear fruits, you should be enjoying tomatoes from September through the first killing frost. Several winters ago I picked the last of my tomatoes on Christmas Day and bragged about it to my father (an avid gardener) in Michigan. Fried green tomatoes taste great no matter what time of year it is. Give some of these quick-maturing, heat tolerant varieties a chance and plant them anytime now through the end of July. We are blessed by two tomato growing seasons, take advantage of it!

~Anna Timmerman

Vegetable Gardening Tips

For more information about growing tomatoes and other crops, click on the link to find [Vegetable Gardening Tips](#) on the LSUAgCenter.com website.



Aphid Mummies

Aphids are major insect pests on multiple ornamental and vegetable plants. With their piercing-sucking mouthparts, these little plant vampires suck the juices from your plants, cause deformation, and can even transmit viruses. There are a number of different aphid species that are common in our area but they all usually just get grouped as “aphids” or “plant lice”. In most cases, unless they are controlled to some degree, they will severely reduce plant vigor and production. They are also the major reason for sooty mold on plants. As they feed they excrete a sweet liquid honeydew that saprophytic fungi love.

However, you may not always want to grab the bottle of insecticide when you encounter aphids. We get frequent calls and emails asking us what can be done to control these insects. Many will include pictures and some look like this one. While this okra definitely has aphids, what may not be immediately recognized is that these aphids are being parasitized by tiny braconid wasps from the Hymenoptera family. The brownish puff-ball like aphids are actually aphids that have served as food and housing for the wasp babies who then emerge and go in search of more aphids to kill.

There are naturally occurring parasitoid wasps and they are commercially available as well. As a matter of trivia, there are at least 17,000



Sooty mold growing on honeydew secreted by feeding aphids or scale is often the first indication of infestation.



This aphid infestation was discovered feeding on okra growing in a cold frame bed.



A female wasp injects one egg into the body of an aphid. One female can deposit an egg in up to 300 aphids in its 2-3 weeks as an adult.

recognized species of braconids and estimated thousands more undescribed. These wasps are strict insect parasitoids and will not harm your plants. They not only parasitize aphids but many other insects and caterpillars as well.

Parasitoids lay their eggs inside or outside of the body of another insect (host). The parasitoids in the subfamily Aphidiinae are small wasps (0.08 - 0.12 inches) that lay their eggs only in aphids. Some species attack a limited number of aphid species and sometimes only a single species. Most are dark-colored and very inconspicuous – hardly noticeable to the average observer. The sure sign of their presence is the existence of mummies.

The wasp egg is laid inside the aphid. In about 2 days, the egg hatches and the larva starts consuming the aphid tissues. The larva goes through several instars while consuming all the living host's internal tissues causing death of the aphid. The larva makes a small hole in the aphid's shell and attaches the aphid's body to the leaf. The larva pupates inside of the dead aphid resulting in a “mummy”. After pupation, the tiny adult wasp will make a hole in the mummy backside to exit and become a free-living adult. The life cycle can range from nine to 23 days

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Aphid Mummies

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depending on temperature, humidity, and other environmental factors. Adults live from seven to 15 days.



Tan balls in a sea of green aphids have been parasitized. The wasp larvae will develop inside of the aphid body.

With aphid parasitoid wasps, like all bio-control measures, you will never get 100% control. However, you can get from 45 to 80 % control depending on plant, wasp and aphid species involved. But combine that with the presence of lady beetles, green lacewings, hover flies and



The newly formed adult wasp cuts a hole and emerges from the backside of the aphid host.

predatory midges who are regular inhabitants and visitors of a healthy IPM-managed garden and you may not need to grab that insecticide after all.

~Dr. Joe Willis

Aphid pests hide in plain site clinging to and feeding from the stem of this daisy flower.



NEW ORLEANS CITY PARK
**BOTANICAL
GARDEN**

2018 PLANT SALES

Plants For Rainwater Management

Botanical Garden Tent
January 20
1 pm - 4 pm

PLANT SALES

Pelican Greenhouse
9 am - Noon
March 10 - Rose Sale
May 12
June 9
July 14
August 11
September 8

The Pelican Greenhouse is located just off Henry Thomas (Golf) Drive south of the I-610 underpass. Bring a wagon and arrive early.

GARDEN SHOWS

Spring Garden Show
Botanical Garden
April 7 - 9 am to 5 pm
April 8 - 10 am - 4 pm

Fall Garden Festival
Botanical Garden
October 6 - 10 am to 5 pm
October 7 - 10 am to 4 pm

For additional information call 504-483-9464, e-mail plants@nocp.org or visit our website at neworleanscitypark.com





CAUTION

MASTER GARDENERS AT WORK

New Orleans Botanical Gardens - Cold Frames

The cold frames in the Botanical Gardens in New Orleans City Park were constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930's. They were originally designed to overwinter tender plants, extend the growing season, start seeds, and harden off plants. Once, they were covered with wooden frames holding glass panels. The glass frames are long gone but the beds are fantastic for trying out various ornamental plants or demonstrating home vegetable production. Taking care of a portion of the cold frame beds is actually a part of the agreement between the LSU AgCenter and the Botanical Gardens that provide the area agents an office and allows us to use the grounds and Garden Study Center to host programs and meetings. The Master Gardeners that help maintain the beds are vital to our success. Over the past few years, they have grown over a dozen varieties of copper plants and showcased "Plants With Potential" as well as growing a plethora of vegetables from artichokes to zucchini.



Many hands make light work as Master Gardener volunteers help garden staff prepare vegetable beds.



Laurie and Usha after a good harvest.

Volunteers working in the gardens get a hands-on learning experience. They get first hand knowledge of every phase of gardening. Working with the local extension agents, they create the planting schedule, conduct soil samples, bed preparation (including adding fertilizer and elements to adjust soil pH as needed), seed ordering and starting, planting, and harvesting. In between planting and harvesting, they get PLENTY of experience in pest and disease control as well as knowledge of when to "chuck-it". But it is not just about their personal edification. In the past year about 50,000 visitors took a stroll through the Botanical Gardens. Every one of them had the opportunity to see what we had growing and to learn how to incorporate that information into their own garden. Some of our northern visitors, on the other hand,



Judy delivers some of the harvest to Okra Abbey



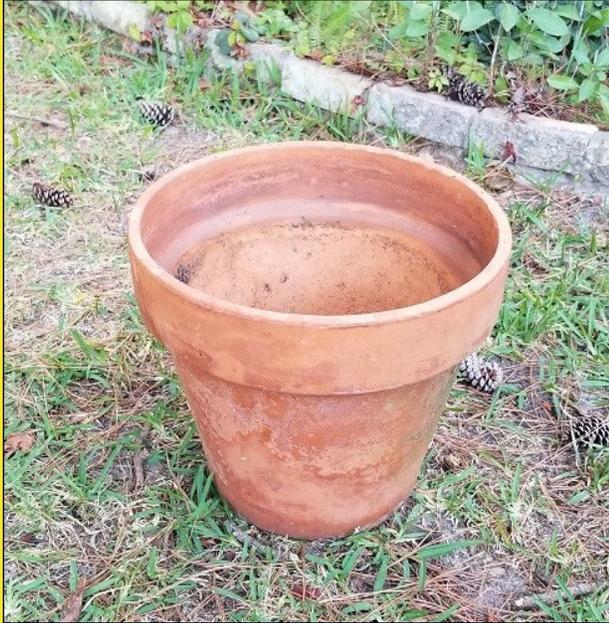
Mrs. Frances showing off her "Cheddar" cauliflower.

were left to their hearts out when they see our tomatoes in April while their gardens are still buried in snow...

~Chris Dunaway

Lining Porous Pots

I love the look and utility of terra cotta and concrete pots except that their porous nature can cause the soil to dry out much more quickly than pots made from a non-porous material. To prevent plants from drying out, you may line the pots with a plastic bag to help retain the moisture in the soil.



#1. Start with an empty unglazed terra cotta or concrete planter.



#2. Insert a standard garbage can liner.



#3. Place the plant in the pot and fill with soil as normal.



#4. Cut away any excess material around the top.



#5. Be sure to cut out the liner from the drain holes. It is easiest to do this after the plant is installed.

~Chris Dunaway

Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Cost	Link
July 5, 6 PM	Fruit Trees Workshop @ Sangoma House	Unknown	https://www.facebook.com/events/1212321778903551/
July 7, 9 AM	Greater New Orleans Iris Society General Meeting @ East Bank Regional Library, Jefferson Parish	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/177185779797045/
July 8, 10 AM	Ikebana Flower Arranging For Beginners @ Longue Vue House & Gardens	\$30 nonmembers	https://www.facebook.com/events/181447282528563/
July 10, 8:30 AM	MarketReady Training @ Market Umbrella (For urban farmers!)	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/1958584147804183/
July 11, 6 PM	Horticulturist Laura Reiff <u>Obstinate Beauty: Native Wildflowers of New Orleans</u> @ The Hermann-Grima + Gallier Historic Houses	\$10 advance tickets. \$12 at the door.	https://www.facebook.com/events/218482532288756/
July 14, 9-10	Water Wise Workshop	Free	https://waterwisegulfsouth.org/workshops/
July 14, 10-2	Water Wise 7th Ward Green Infrastructure Visioning Session.	Free Lunch will be served.	https://waterwisegulfsouth.org/workshops/
July 14, 9 AM	Pelican Greenhouse Plant Sale @ City Park	Free	http://neworleanscitypark.com/files/events/NOBGPlantSale0917_%284%29.pdf
July 24-25, 8 AM	Beginning/Advanced Organic Farming Workshop @ University of Lafayette Cade Farm, St. Martinsville, LA	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/222755458317013/
July 26, 6 PM	The Science & Art of Homesteading: Kitchen Chemistry (Garden-Focused!) @ 1531 Eagle St.	\$30	https://www.facebook.com/events/1055777601243508/

In the Kitchen with Austin

Summer is the time for enjoying the bounty of your backyard garden, and nothing screams summer louder than vine ripened Creole tomatoes and crisp cucumbers. This recipe is simple and delicious. Enjoy!

Tomato & Cucumber Salad

4 tomatoes, sliced
2 cucumbers
salt & black pepper
red wine vinegar
olive oil



Cut tomatoes and cucumbers into 1/4 inch slices. Place slices decoratively on a platter. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Then, drizzle with vinegar and oil. Serve at room temperature.

Note: Do not refrigerate this salad! Any exposure to cold will destroy the flavor of the tomatoes and cucumbers. Feel free to personalize this recipe by adding your favorite herb.

Serves 4

July Checklist/Garden Tips

Sharpen or replace your lawn mower blades. They have generally gotten dull by this time of the year.

Spray peach tree trunks with permethrin to prevent the peach tree borer from causing damage.

Cut back perennials in the garden when they finish flowering and the foliage begins to look tired.

Keep caladiums well watered during hot, dry weather to keep the foliage in good shape through the summer. You may apply a fertilizer now to encourage vigorous growth. Break off any flowers that form.

Unless it is absolutely necessary, avoid placing saucers underneath container plants outside. Saucers full of water will keep the soil in the pots too wet, an unhealthy condition for most plants. In addition, saucers full of water provide breeding sites for mosquitoes.

Keep up with weeding. This time of year weeds can get out of hand very fast. Use mulches wherever possible. If you need help with herbicide recommendations, contact your local LSU AgCenter Extension office.

Container plants should not be placed directly onto wooden decks. The moisture underneath can damage the wood (saucers do the same thing). Boost pots off of the surface an inch or two with pieces of brick, small blocks of wood or special terra-cotta pot supports available at some local nurseries and garden shops.

You may fertilize your lawn now to encourage faster growth and a darker green color

Keep old flowers cut off roses. Trim back to the first five leaflet leaf. Spray weekly with a combination insecticide/fungicide product labeled for roses if the types you grow are susceptible to black spot.

Generally, avoid using herbicides to kill broad leaf weeds in your lawn now. High temperatures increase the chance of discoloring or damaging the grass. It would be best to spot treat if necessary.

Remember to harvest herbs such as mints, basil, rosemary, lemon balm and Mexican tarragon regularly to keep the plants shapely and under control. Some herbs such as thyme, sage and lavender tolerate heat and rain poorly and may not be doing well now as a result.

Fine, silvery webbing appearing on the bark of area trees is completely harmless. The webbing is produced by tiny scavenging insects called bark lice. Do not let any tree care company convince you that they are damaging your tree and charge you for unneeded treatments.

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