



FYN Garden Q & A Series

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Yards & Neighborhoods



FYN Topic: Bleeding Hearts

Question: How and when do I prune and fertilize bleeding hearts?
 —Email from Gerry

Answer: (Provided with the assistance of Lee County Master Gardener, Jake Tomlinson). Bleeding hearts are a large group of spring and summer-blooming tropical and sub-tropical shrubs or twining vines. All are exotic and non-native shrubs or vines in the genus called *Clerodendrum*. Now widely cultivated in South Florida, this plant’s showy flower clusters are popular with visitors. For someone trying them for the first time, choose a mostly shady and dappled sunny spot along a foundation wall and well out of reach of intense direct sunlight. *Clerodendrum thomsoniae* is known by two common names, either bleeding heart or glorybower. A houseplant up North, this small shrub has large bloom clusters. Each red flower has a large, bishop’s hat-shaped, white cover or sepal. Flaming glorybower, *Clerodendrum splendens*, also develops similarly red sepals and red flower. Plant breeders crossing these two types created an improved sterile hybrid with better vine and flowering habit and rose-purple sepals. Like its two parents, *Clerodendrum Xspeciosum* only flowers on new growth. Trim out crowded or winter-killed woody stems in the late winter or early spring before new growth begins. Bleeding hearts also require watering in the dry season (regular weekly sprinkler watering is okay in winter) and some cold protection when temperatures dip below 45°F. Prune and fertilize to promote flowering and increase healthy new growth. Use a standard bloom-enhancing liquid or granular fertilizer (6-8-10, 8-8-8, 4-8-12, etc.). Apply in late winter and, if needed, again the following spring. Use a slow or controlled release fertilizer that also contains essential minor nutrient elements like iron and manganese. Do not fertilize again until the following October. Fertilize after Lee Counties’ rainy season restricting use of Nitrogen and Phosphorus fertilizer between June 1 and Sept. 30. Trim only as needed in the summer months. If newly planted, train the new shoots to climb on a supporting stake or trellis.



Useful Links

- <http://www.floridayards.org>
- <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>
- <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>
- <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>
- <http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by emailing Extgardener@leegov.com. Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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