FYN Topic: Seasonal Color

Question: Are there seasonal color changes in Southwest Florida landscapes? Do you recommend adding seasonal color this time of year?
—From Floridayards website

Answer: Yes and Yes! Fall to winter and spring to summer landscape color changes are the most pronounced. But, in late spring, expect to see more vivid flower and fruit colors. Recent rainfall has prompted a flush of flower color like the bright orange flowers on the Geiger tree and the lavender, trumpet-shaped flowers on the jacaranda tree. Frangipani, Shell-ginger and Jatropha are a few other plants with bright flower colors. When designing with strong flower or foliage color, plant in groupings or in brightly colored borders.

Examples: combine the reddish-toned, variegated copperleaf with the silver-leafed, buttonwood trees or the bright red flower spikes of red Canna lilies growing next to Duranta ‘Gold Mound’ shrubs surrounded by the groundcover beach sunflower. Or, use bright colors to bring harmony to the landscape. If done right, bright colors in the landscape should appear natural like on a vista or as a field of wildflowers. Designing a landscape with continuous color all year round is easier said than done. Changing seasonal conditions can produce unexpected results each year and each season. Flower color might be short lived, delayed or revealed earlier than expected. Watch for color changes when leaf buds break or flower buds begin to open. Rare foliage color these days in landscape beds seems to be pure green. Consider using these natives with pure green foliage: Coontie or Florida privet. White is the often the unifying factor. Plants having silver-colored foliage yield similar results as white flowers.

Useful Links
http://www.floridayards.org
http://fym.ifas.ufl.edu
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/
http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml
http://gardeningsolutions.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

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, martial status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M 05/05/2012.