

# **Preparing your Garden for Winter**

**Green Thumb Garden Club**

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## What does garden mean to you?

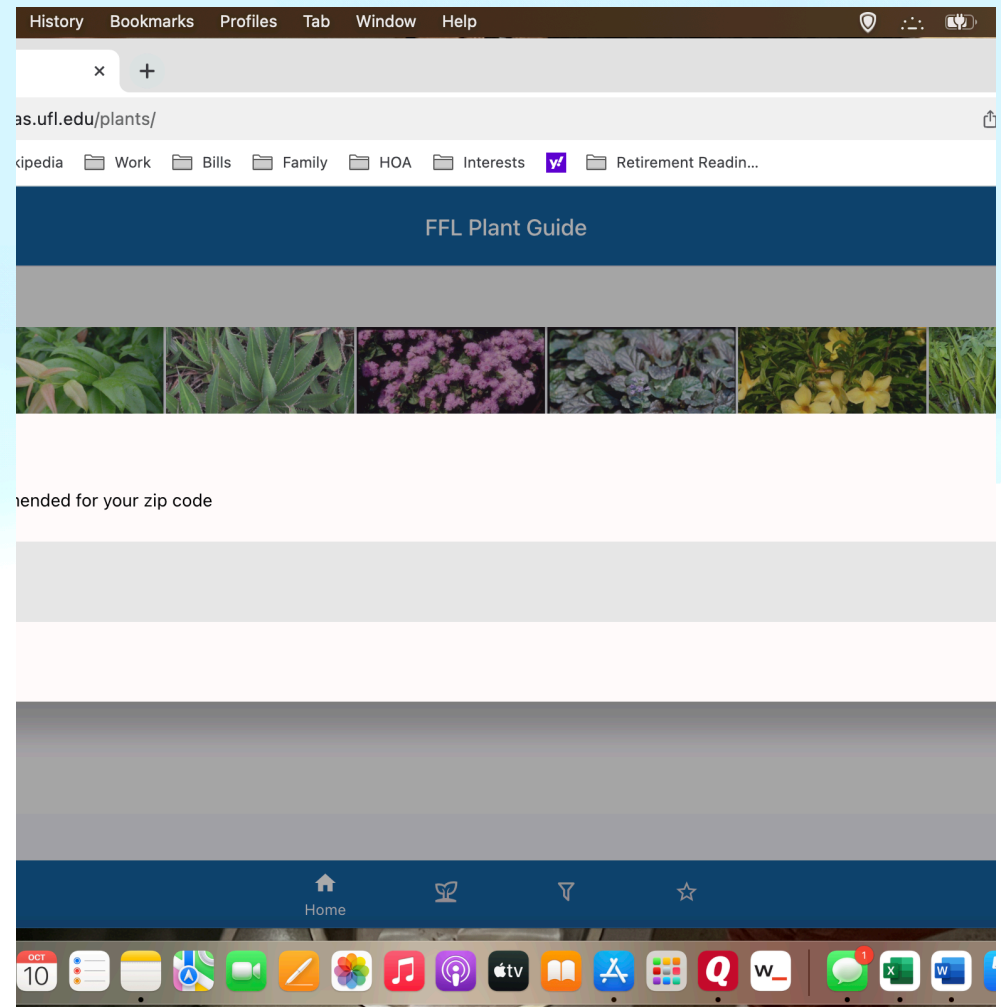
- My Vegetable Garden
- My Flower Beds
- My home's total landscape, trees shrubs and turf grass
- My containers



# Right Plant, Right Place

## Is it Cold Hardy?

- Know your zone and plant accordingly
- <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/>
- Resource Book
- In other words, the single most important step in preparing for winter, is what you plant.



# Prepare the landscape for winter

- Our Challenge: Plants have little opportunity to acclimate gradually to the cold
- The cold comes with a BANG!
- So, don't promote tender new growth
  - Last fertilizer application, no later than mid September for North Florida
  - Don't fertilize the lawn and landscape again until April 15
  - Pruning fosters new growth, avoid stimulating shrubs and vines by pruning in late fall



**MULCH!!!!**

**(Put the fluffy, down coat on your roots)**

# Organic Mulches

## Recommended by IFAS

- Pine Straw
- Pine Bark
- Fallen leaves and grass clippings (needs replenishing often, leaves may need to be shredded)
- Eucalyptus
- Melaleuca (Invasive tree, commercial harvested and treated and sold as mulch)

# Organic Mulch

## NOT recommended by IFAS

- Cypress Mulch
  - While some mulch is the by-product of cypress harvested for lumber and used in fencing and flooring, its origin is often difficult to determine and can come from ecologically sensitive forested wet lands. There is no certification guaranteeing that it is a by-product or sustainably harvested.
- Dyed Mulch
  - The dye isn't the problem, it's the source of wood. It is often made from recycled building materials and site debris. It can contain CCR, chromate copper arsenate which is toxic to humans and animals. (Comes from pressure treated lumber.) Never use in the vegetable garden. Look for MSC certification to be free of CCA.

# Inorganic Mulch

## Not recommended for plant beds

- rocks (I have them next the foundation of my house, but not my planting beds) IFAS recommends them for pathways only.
- pebbles (IFAS recommends for pathways)
- rubber mulch (IFAS never recommends)
  
- All of these need upkeep to stay clean. Can leach toxic chemicals, can increase soil temperature. If use, put landscape cloth underneath to mitigate leaching into our sandy soils.



- DO 3 to 4 inches, it will settle to 3
- DO in the fall before cold weather
  - Will help insulate the roots. Think of a down coat and trapping warm air
- DON'T volcano your trees!
  - rots the trunk, and gives rodents shelter to chew your tree!









**I'm in Florida, I must have Citrus!**



# Right plant, Right place

## Citrus for North Florida

- Kumquat
  - Satsuma
  - Persian Lime
- 
- You can plant these in the ground and have reasonable chance of success



# Better in a pot

You will want to move it!

- Meyer Lemons
- Key Limes
- Very popular here but are NOT cold hardy
- Must be prepared to protect from freezing temperatures







# Light Freeze

## Covering and protecting ideas for all your pots

- Protect from north winds
- Remember cold air sinks
- Cover with lightweight fabrics such as blankets or row covers. Make sure covers don't touch the plant. If use plastic, support by hoops and keep off foliage. (Plastic not ideal, if it touches the foliage it can actually move heat away from plant and increase freeze damage.)
- Make sure covers touch the ground and are anchored
- If possible, move pots together, move up against house (or into house.)



**Wrong Wrap**  
Don't do this at home



# Right Wrap

Yes, do this at home!





# After a freeze

## You must wait!

- Resist urge to prune back what you think is damaged
  - remember, pruning can stimulate growth
- Wait until after spring growth to really assess the freeze damage, then prune
- Tops of bulbs, like Iris or Canna can be cut back to a couple inches above ground if they have died back.
- Don't forget, the roots need water occasionally in the winter
- Don't stimulate new growth too early in Spring. Killer frosts can still happen in early April. Don't fertilize, shouldn't prune until after tax day. (April 15)
- Is my plant coming back from **below** the graft?

# Vegetable Garden

## Fall and winter choices

- Set out Strawberry Plants in October
- Broccoli, carrot, cabbage and collards
- Arugula, lettuce, spinach
- Dill, fennel, oregano, cilantro, mint, rosemary, basil (protect from cold)







# Winter Color Containers

That last through Spring!

- Pansies
- Violas
- SuperPetunias
- Alyssum
- Snapdragons
- Dianthus



# Sum up!

## Preparing for Winter

- Right plant, right place, (right time)
- MULCH!!
- Be prepared to cover
- Be prepared to move
- Don't stimulate new growth with fertilizer or pruning after Sept 15 or before April 15
- water through out winter if no rain
- Actively growing annual containers are the exception to fertilizer rule

