Green Gardeners

- Save time & $$
- Invite birds & butterflies
- Recycle by composting
- Use organic principles
- Use more native plants
- Save water
- Use rain barrels
- Build rain gardens
- Reduce use of power tools

The Art of Maintaining a Florida Native Landscape

Please click on image to order "The Art of Maintaining a Florida Native Landscape."

Please click on image to order "Sustainable Gardening for Florida" on Amazon.com.

Please click image to order my book "Organic Methods for Vegetable Gardening in Florida."

Search This Blog

Loading...

Sustainable Gardening for Florida on Facebook.

Visit us on Facebook

Follow by Email

Email address... Submit

Green gardeners remove turf near trees.

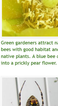
Green gardeners enjoy organically grown produce.

Green gardeners will plant extra parsley on dill for the black swallowtail larvae.

Green gardeners build rain gardens to absorb rainwater. This small rain garden catches runoff from a downspout.

Green gardeners attract native bees with good habitat and native plants. A blue bee dives into a prickly pear flower.

Green gardeners encourage the predators in their yards.



Green gardeners install water features for frogs and dragonflies.

To go to the Transplanted Gardener website, click the graphic. The old garden log entries, links to the podcasts, and to the archived articles are still there.

Like Sustainable Gardening for Florida Facebook page.

Blog Archive

- ► 2015 (11)
- ► 2014 (29)
- ▼ 2013 (33)
  - ► December (1)
  - ► November (4)
  - ► October (3)
  - ▼ September (2)
    - The Eagle has Landed, Fall Gardening, and more...
    - Invasive vs. Aggressive: plants and animals
    - Further lawn reduction, more edible garden space, ...
  - ► August (1)
  - ► July (1)
  - ► June (2)
  - ► May (4)
  - ► April (4)
  - ► March (5)
  - ► February (1)
  - ► January (3)
- ► 2012 (38)

Thursday, September 26, 2013

The Eagle has Landed, Fall Gardening, and more...

Fall is the beginning of our best growing season- the cool-weather vegetables. Here in north Florida we normally experience our first frost sometime in late December, but the soil never freezes and we can grow many crops right through the winter. This is why we set up the three planting calendars (for north, central, and south Florida) to begin in September, not January. In "**Organic Methods for Vegetable Gardening in Florida**."

After more than a month of in-the-ground composting, freshly uncovered soil in the middle bed.

Kitchen scraps used in the trench between the rows.

The Middle Bed

We have three beds next to the western-facing back of the house: the herb garden next to the porch door, the middle bed, and the north bed.

I'd grown marigolds across most of the north and middle beds over the summer and had also grown tomatoes and cucumbers in the middle bed.

When I finally pulled the tomatoes in August, I turn marigolds under in both beds except for the peppers row--they are still producing to some extent. I also had composted kitchen scraps under all of the north bed.

Early last week, I raked back the grass clippings and pine needle mulch and planted some cool-weather crops. I created a wide row across the back of the bed and planted broccoli. With wide row planting I plant seeds (or seedlings) in a just the right spacing like square-foot gardening, but include a trench of variable width between the rows to accommodate the size of the plants and to divert the heavy rainfall that we get here in Florida.

The I planted short rows of white kohlrabi and kohlrabi. Next to the kohlrabi row I dug the trench a little deeper to compost some kitchen scraps. Now we wait, but not too long--the radishes will be mature in 35 days. Also, see my article: **Wide-row planting and Trench Composting.**

Three wide rows are planted with broccoli, kohlrabi, and white bicle radish. The square on the left is unplanted at this time and now is mulched with pine needles.

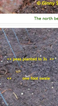
The north bed next to the house is ready for planting.

The North Bed

This bed is a foot wider than the middle bed because of the configuration of the house. First I worked some compost in the bed and then created three foot-wide swales on the north end of the bed for the super snap peas. I planted more than normal since this was the last of my pea seeds that had been packed for 2009! I planted three seeds together in four groups around each swale, then I placed the tomato cages offset from the swales. I'll urge the peas over to crawl up the cages. I've had good luck with peas even through the winter here. If there is a frost, the flowers may die, but the vines themselves are more cold-tolerant and they put out more flowers when it warms up.

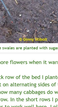
3 foot-wide swales are planted with super snap peas.

In the back row of the bed I planted two cabbage seeds in each of five holes that are a foot apart on alternating sides of the row. Later I'll thin the seedlings to five total, because how many cabbages do we need at one time? I planted lettuce in the rest of the cabbage row. In the short rows I planted a red-stemmed spinach (Burpee's reddy hybrid) that seems to work well here. I planted half and half cosmic purple carrots and Nante half carrots (I've decided that I won't buy the short carrots again because I'd rather have whole carrots,) and then a row of curly parsley. I'd soaked the parsley seeds over night to encourage faster germination.



This bed next to the house is planted with sugar snap peas, red-stemmed spinach, orange & purple carrots, curly parsley, cabbage, and lettuce.

Ten days later...



As expected, the radishes are up in just a few days and before most of the other crops.

The beginnings of the butterfly garden: I transplanted some scarlet sage plants and one irises-squarestem. The tall tropical-looking plants are **hidden ginger lilies.**

As mentioned in a **recent post**, I'll be replacing a weird lawn space with butterfly plants. I'll remove lawn a little at a time as I acquire the butterfly plants because the lawn does hold the soil in place, but it won't be mowed. The first installment is in place--a bunch of scarlet sage plant (*Salvia coccinea*) that had volunteered in an inconvenient place and a snow squarestem (*Melanthera nivea*) that had grown right where I'll be building the next compost pile.

More chips. Yay!

I'd used the last of my chips a couple of months ago, so I was feeling naked, gardenwise, without a supply of arborist's wood chips to use for mulching.

This is a very large load and the truck didn't back far enough into the chip space, so half of the chips are on the county right-of-way. It will take some extra effort to move the chips to their final destinations or at least behind the fence. Who needs to work out in a gym when you have gardening to do! I feel skinnier already!

The truck ready to dump its load.

See my previous posts on chips: **A Requiem for a Hickory Tree** and **Follow the Yellow Mulch Road.**

A nearly large load means a couple of days of extra effort to remove chips from the county right-of-way.

Dean smooths out new chips in the garden path. The chips are as deep as the raised gardens, but they'll settle in time.

A turkey vulture finishes off the turtle.

The eagle has landed!

A few days ago, I was quite excited to see a huge bald eagle land just outside of our fence.

First I noticed several vultures (both black and turkey) swoop in to the trees and down to the ground. Then the eagle came in and the vultures took off.

The eagle was there for only three or four minutes before a screeching red-shouldered hawk chased him off. This whole drama happened so quickly that I did not have enough time to circle around the back to take some pictures. The dense shrubbery next to the fence blocked my view from the house.

By the time I could catch a shot, only one turkey vulture was working on the carcass of a Florida cooter, a common turtle in the neighborhood. Since the shell was not crushed, it's possible that the eagle had lifted it out of the lake and dropped it there when harassed by the hawks. It's wonderful to see the eagles in the neighborhood.

A cormorant has trouble donning its catch at sunrise in the St. Johns River. Photo taken on 9/21 from Spring Park in Green Cove Springs.

Sunrise over the St. Johns River as seen from Spring Park in Green Cove Springs.

Yes, there is a famous hot spring in historic Green Cove Springs that flows into a concrete pool and then a hundred yards or so through Spring Park into the St. Johns River. The pool used to be a destination for many so they could bathe in the spring water for its health benefits. I have to say, I've not been tempted because of the high sulfur content--I'd smell like rotten eggs!

I hope you have started your fall garden and have been enjoying many sunrises.

Green Gardening Matters,
Ginny Stibolt

No comments:

Post a Comment