



Raccoons

The Northern Raccoon, *Procyon lotor*, is found throughout the United States. Raccoons can be found in nature, such as in areas with large trees and bodies of water, as well as in towns and cities. As urbanization increases, encounters with raccoons in these areas are becoming more common. They easily adapt to their surroundings, whether that be in forests or cities. Raccoons have a grizzled gray color, bushy tails with black and gray rings, and a characteristic black mask-like marking on their face. They are primarily active at night but can occasionally be seen during the day.



Raccoons eat a variety of foods, including crawfish, frogs, fish, eggs, fruits, and berries. They will also forage around homes eating food left out for pets or placed in the trash can. To prevent this, trash cans should either be kept in a garage or shed, or fastened with straps. It's also a good idea to bring in any pet food that's left outside. Raccoons can be a problem in vegetable gardens as well. Placing electric fencing around the garden area is one method to keep them out. Homeowners should never feed raccoons as this can increase their population around the home and potentially lead to bites. Raccoons can be a carrier for rabies, parasites, and other pathogens harmful to people and household pets.

Raccoons can occupy spaces under sheds or porches, or in attics. The best way to prevent this is by removing openings into these spaces. Chimney access can be prevented by covering up the chimney opening with a heavy metal screen or sheet metal cap. Attic access can be reduced through screening and by removing overhanging branches and other routes of access to the roof.

If a raccoon does appear in your yard, the best option is to give it space. Most animals, if they aren't used to people, will try to either escape or hide until the coast is clear for them to leave. It is when people get closer, either accidentally or intentionally, that the animal feels the need to defend itself. Contact the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks for questions related to injured or stray raccoons.



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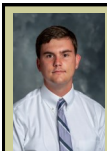
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Watering Your Vegetable Garden

Vegetable gardens usually need about 1 inch of water (630 gallons per 1,000 square feet) per week in the form of rain or irrigation during the growing season. Gardens in sandy soil may need as much as 2 inches of water per week in midsummer. Where a water source is located close to the garden, there are few excuses (a local ban on watering during a shortage) for letting the garden suffer in dry weather.

Mulches that slow soil surface evaporation can reduce the amount of water needed. Soaker hoses and drip or trickle irrigation systems wet only the soil in the root zone and can cut in half the amount of water used.

Where a water source is not close to the garden, it is possible to water some plants with a little work. Partially bury 1-gallon plastic milk jugs between tomato, pepper, eggplant, squash, and other widely spaced plants. Punch a few small holes near the bottoms of the jugs before placing them in the soil. Fill the jugs periodically with water hauled to the garden. The water will slowly seep into the soil, providing moisture to the root zone.

Sprinklers

There are several choices of garden sprinklers, ranging from the simple garden hose with a spray nozzle to semi-automatic equipment. Many portable lawn sprinklers are adequate for the garden. Adjust the rate of water application so that it is not faster than it can enter the soil. Water applied too rapidly runs off, resulting in erosion or puddles, and causing soil compaction.

Since overhead sprinklers wet plant leaves, water early enough in the day to allow time for leaves to dry before night. This helps keep leaf diseases from developing and spreading. Each watering should wet the top 3 to 5 inches of soil. Frequent, light watering results in shallow rooting, susceptibility to damage by drought, and plants that are easily blown over.

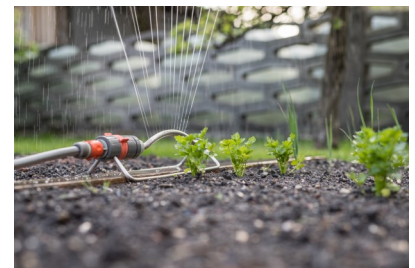
Drip and Trickle

Soaker or perforated plastic hoses are excellent for watering the garden. Place the hose with holes up along one side of the plants or underneath an organic or plastic mulch.

A number of different drip and trickle irrigation systems are available through mail order catalogs, magazine ads, and local distributors. The systems operate at low pressure and deliver small amounts of water very slowly through pores in the delivery tubes or emitters punched into the delivery tubes. An irrigation system makes it possible to water a large garden all at the same time.

Correct use of a drip irrigation system should keep vegetable plants actively growing in dry periods yet cause no problem when rain occurs following irrigation. The system, when properly operated, keeps soil at the base of the plant (root zone area) moist. This may require operating the system for short periods three or four times a week during dry weather.

Drip irrigation, when used correctly, prevents drought stress but is not designed to correct drought stress like sprinkler irrigation, which wets all the soil.



Garden Calendar: June

Planting

- Plant Crape Myrtles in bloom to be sure of color.
- Replace turf in deep shade with ground cover: Liriope, Ajuga, or Jasmine. Set out Caladiums in shady areas.
- Plant summer annuals: Ageratum, Cockscomb, Impatiens, Marigolds, Sunflowers, Four-o'clocks, and Periwinkle.
- Plant Tomatoes late this month to insure harvest late into fall. Cherry Tomatoes are a choice that are heat tolerant.
- Choose Daylilies now that they are in bloom for planting in your garden.
- Divide and replant Iris, cut leaves back to 6 inches after transplant.
- Plant Zinnias and Marigolds now for a second crop of flowers.
- Plant Snapbeans, Lima beans, Cucumbers, Eggplants, Peppers, Squash, and Tomato plants.
- Gladiolus planted now will give lovely fall blooms.



Fertilizing

- Fertilize Camellias with Azalea-Camellia fertilizer if not done earlier in the year.
- Fertilize Bermuda and Zoysia grass. Fertilize Tomatoes, Cucumbers, and Zucchini monthly with 5-10-10.
- Fertilize annuals and perennials.

Pest Control

- Mow lawn in the morning to reduce the chance of starting Brown Spot (fungus).
- Remove Zinnias with powdery mildew and replant.



Pruning

- Prune Oleander after blooming ends. Pinch Dahlias and Mums to assure a compact growth habit.
- Remove blackberry fruiting canes after harvest. Prune new canes to encourage side branching.
- Faded flowers should be removed from Daisy, Daylily, and other summer flowers.
- Prune out dead and damaged wood from trees and shrubs.

In Bloom

- Ageratum, Althea, Balloon Flower, Bee Balm, Begonia, Blackberry, Butterfly Weed, Coreopsis, Cornflower, Feverfew, Funkia, Gladiolus, Hollyhock, Japanese Iris, Lily, Nicotiana, Petunia, Phlox, Rose Scabiosa, Shasta Daisy, Sweet Pea, Verbena, Butterfly Bush, Golden-rain Tree, Hypericum, Mimosa, Stewartia, Sourwood, Vitex, Yucca, Jasmine, Crape Myrtle, Daylily, Geranium, Hibiscus, Hydrangea, Impatiens, Lantana, Morning Glory, Oleander, Plumbago, Portulaca, Purslane, Salvia, Veronica, Dusty Miller, Four O'clock, and Zinnia



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Get Kids Involved in Gardening

Some of my fondest memories are of growing up helping my dad in the vegetable garden. As a youngster it was hard work at times but that's how we always had fresh vegetables in the freezer. My dad seemed to have the "it" factor when growing a vegetable garden so we always had more than our family of five could eat. As a result, much was always given away so it wasn't wasted. I'm sure that's the way it is with most people growing vegetables, we want to share with family and neighbors. It can be a rather proud moment when showing off what you've grown!

By helping my dad, I learned a lot about growing vegetables at a young age. I didn't always look forward to the beginning of gardening season in early spring because that was prep time and we had a rather large, conventional garden to prepare for planting. But from the time you placed the seeds in the ground until the time of harvest you got to witness something special. A garden can be a wonderful place for kids. Gardens provide opportunities for playing, learning, and having fun!

In my job I've had many opportunities to provide school garden projects. In fact, it's one of my favorite things to do as an Extension Agent. If you want to get kids excited, plant a garden. Allow them to help and, if they want, let them do most or all the work. Explain to them why we do or do not do certain things to help plants grow; what plants need to survive: light, water, nutrients; what plants will do best for your growing situation and why; when do we plant and when do we harvest?, etc. Don't just tell them, show them! There's a LOT of learning possibilities! Many people these days don't have an area for a conventional garden but don't let that stop you. There's a lot of vegetables that can be grown easily in pots or other containers. You can even plant other things like annual and perennial flowers to get them involved, and excited!

Young kids have a very short attention span. Digging holes is one thing that seems to hold endless fascination so let them get dirty! Make sure that you have lots of options available so they can get started immediately and stay busy. Have soil, seeds, pots, and maybe a seed starter tray ready. If a few or several kids are involved, have enough for everyone, even garden tools, to prevent competition.



When choosing your vegetables include a few radishes. Radishes are quick to germinate and harvest time is relatively short. This allows kids to reap their planting rewards without getting easily discouraged or just plain bored. Growing their own vegetables will generally get kids to try eating things they otherwise wouldn't touch.

As our society becomes more urbanized and less connected with nature, gardens provide chances for kids to learn about nature, how to grow food, and the importance of the natural world. Gardening with kids can take place at home, at community centers, school, and/or at after-school programs. Kids soak up knowledge at an early age so it's a rewarding opportunity to share your gardening knowledge with them.





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Composting

What better way to start the summer than recycling our natural resources? By composting yard and kitchen wastes, you can create your own mulch and fertilizer. Compost is a free source of “slow release” nutrients. It also loosens compacted soils and helps sandy soils hold nutrients.

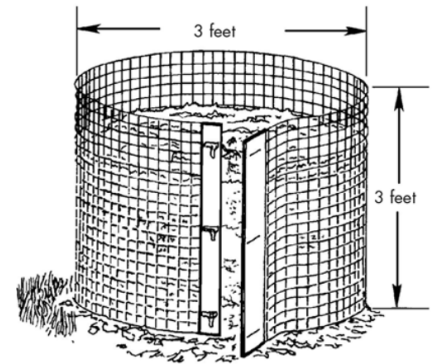
Fallen leaves and shrub clippings are a good start to your compost project. Other compostable organic materials you can use are grass clippings, pine straw, and vegetable/fruit peelings, paper, and coffee grounds.

When constructing your compost pile, alternate using brown (leaves, straw) and green materials (grass clippings, vegetables) in your compost bin. Any table scraps containing meat or oils are not recommended to be used as they attract critters that aren't beneficial and can be harmful. Eggshells are okay.

Rainfall will provide most of the needed moisture, although you may need to add water to the pile during extended dry periods. For the best results, keep the pile moist but not soggy. If you pick up a handful, it should not drip water when squeezed.

Turn the pile on a regular basis to move oxygen through the pile to increase decomposition. You can buy compost bins with moving cylinders that can be turned with a handle. The process of decomposition will generate extreme heat (over 150°F in the summer) within the pile, which can kill weed seeds and disease-causing organisms.

Done correctly, composting is very easy to do and is a great way to do something good for your community, your yard, and your wallet! For more information on composting, contact your local Extension office or visit extension.msstate.edu and search for composting.



The size of a compost pile can vary depending on how much organic waste material is available. Typically, a compost pile 3 feet wide by 3 feet high is sufficient; anything smaller and the organic waste will not decompose properly

Private Applicator Certification Training

MSU Extension is offering the PAT online. Since May, 2020, this program individuals from all 82 counties have (re) certified through the program. Go to <https://myaccount.extension.msstate.edu/> and select Register through the MSU Canvas Portal. Fill in all required fields including personal information, physical address, mailing address, and password for your account. After all required fields are filled with your information, select **Sign UP**. You will receive an email with instructions to finish setting up your account.

The MSU Extension Service conducts courses of training for private pesticide applicators wishing to obtain certification. A private applicator is defined as an individual who is at least 18 years of age and who is producing an agricultural commodity on his/her land or on rented land.

For those needing a private applicator license and do not want to take it online, please contact your local Extension office.



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Visit <http://msuext.ms/agmes>
or contact your local MSU Extension office for info on how to register.



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Sicklepod, The Weed Everyone Loves to Hate

Known by many as “coffeeweed or coffeebean,” sicklepod is an annual herb that can be found in most horticulture and agriculture setting across the Southern United States. From lawns and gardens to the pastures and row crops, almost everywhere you scratch the soil and have a little moisture you will find sicklepod sprouting. This plant is native to tropical and subtropical regions of North and South America. It has also been widely introduced to many warmer regions of Africa, Asia, and Australia.



Emerging from mid-spring through mid-fall, the plants grow vigorously and range from 1-6 ft tall at maturity with showy, yellow flowers, with long slender seed pods and compound leaves that are long oval shaped. The branching tap root can reach up to 3 feet in length. All parts of the plant give off a distinctive odor when crushed.

The seeds of sicklepod are very hardy and form a persistent seed bank when allowed to mature. In studies as much as 270 pounds of seed per acre have been recovered from soil samples.

In some areas of the world sicklepod is used as a pot herb, but this plant is widely viewed as a noxious weed with toxins that can affect humans. It is included on several invasive plant lists while also being unpalatable and toxic to livestock.

There is a multitude of herbicide options to control sicklepod. Recommendations vary with the setting, and it is recommended to check labels or consult with someone such as your local Extension Agent for best management practices. In crops or gardens shallow cultivation is an option along with physical removal. Clipping or cutting back prior to flowering to inhibit seed production can help to avoid seed bank build up in the soil.





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Slime Mold in Home Lawns

Walking into the office the other day I noticed some slime mold spots in the lawn at the extension office in George County. So I know if I'm seeing these then other people are as well. These slime mold spots are very common and if you see them in your lawn there is no reason to be concerned that it will kill your grass. These type of molds grow in areas that are high in moisture and organic matter. The most common slime mold on turf in our area is Physarum.



In extreme cases of slime mold the plants can become covered so heavy that yellowing can occur but this is not common. Most of the time the area will dry out and the mold will disappear. If you see this in your lawn and don't like the way it looks and you just have to do something about it you can spray it with the garden hose and wash the mold off, sweep it with a broom, or mix one tablespoon of mild dish soap per one gallon of water and spray the areas. The easiest thing to do is go ahead and mow your lawn being as it probably needs to be mowed anyway.

Calendar of June Events

Date	Event
MEDICINAL PLANTS FOR GARDENS OF THE SOUTHEAST—Crosby Arboretum	
June 1st 10 AM— 11:30 AM	Jennifer Blanchard coordinates the medicinal plant certification program at Louisiana State University and has developed a new course focused on the native indigenous plants of Louisiana. She is enthusiastic about sharing information on the propagation and use of native medicinal plants in the landscape and the value-added benefits these plants provide to human health and the environment. Registration is required (see below). \$10 for non-members; \$5 for members.
WILD EDIBLES & USEFUL PLANTS OF THE GULF SOUTH—Crosby Arboretum	
June 1st 1:30 PM— 3 PM	Dr. Charles Allen will be providing an exceptional and enlightening program on foraging for wild edibles and the region's useful plant species. The event will begin with a discussion of plants gathered by Dr. Allen, and a "hands-on, mouth-on, and nose-on" overview of the uses of each, with jars of dried aromatic leaves and other spices to smell. Registration is required. Members \$20; non-members \$25. This program is sponsored by The Crosby Arboretum Foundation.
BUG PHOTOGRAPHY SEMINAR—Crosby Arboretum	
June 22nd 9 AM— 12:30 PM	Join photo experts Donna Bush and Robert Smith for their photography seminar focusing on photographing invertebrates. This seminar will begin in the classroom to cover the basics. Participants will then head outside to put these techniques to work. The seminar is targeted to adults but interested children are welcome. Participants are requested to bring their cameras, lens, and tripod, along with a charged battery and a fresh memory card. This seminar is great preparation for our upcoming BugFest 2024! Photo Competition which will feature arthropods. Donna and Robert will once again be our competition judges. The registration fee is \$30 per person and includes a reflector for each participant.
TO REGISTER FOR THESE PROGRAMS:	
Go to http://crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu/ and select "Events" from the menu for the calendar. Select the program to access webpage with information and link to sign up.	

The Crosby Arboretum

presents a

BUG PHOTOGRAPHY SEMINAR



Instructors
Donna Bush, Robert Smith



Saturday, June 22nd
9 am to 12:30 pm

9 to 11 am

Classroom work covering the basics of photographing invertebrates with a power point presentation

11 to 12:30 pm

Field work utilizing the basic techniques followed by a wrap-up session



The class is targeted to adults, but interested children are also welcome!
Participants - Please bring your camera, lens & tripod, along with a charged battery & fresh memory card.

Registration Fee: \$30 per person - Each participant will receive a reflector
(the class is limited to 20 participants)



We are pleased to have
WILDLIFE MISSISSIPPI AND HUNT'S PHOTO & VIDEO
as sponsors of this seminar!

Hunt's

DONNA BUSH

is an accomplished photographer, writer, animal and nature-lover, yoga instructor, and computer programmer. She has gone from protecting our country's cyber-data to becoming an award-winning photographer and writer. Donna's work in Slidell Magazine (and beyond) has won numerous prestigious awards. You can visit her on Facebook at [Donna Bush Photography](#), or contact her by email at donna.bush@yahoo.com.

ROBERT SMITH

Robert is a wildlife biologist and an award-winning outdoor photographer. He currently lives in coastal Mississippi and is the Coastal Program Coordinator for Wildlife Mississippi. Robert has worked with and photographed a broad variety of southeastern flora and fauna. The pictures he initially started taking for documentation and personal enjoyment grew into seminars, magazine articles, fine artwork, commissioned shoots, and photography workshops

Register in advance by going to our Arboretum website: www.crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu
Click on Events to get to the Event Calendar and follow the prompts!

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