FACT SHEET: CALADIUMS
LYNN BARBER, FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING™ AGENT

Caladiums (*Caladium x hortulanum*) are beautiful low maintenance ornamental foliage plants that add a huge pop of color to landscape beds. They are pest-free and don't require the inputs of fertilization or pesticides. Caladiums are commonly used in containers, landscape beds by themselves or mixed with perennials, as borders, houseplants or in floral arrangements. There are a wide variety of colors, vein patterns and leaf shapes available for this tuber/bulb.

Caladiums were first introduced in Florida in 1910, and today Florida is the Caladium capital of the world. If you have not attended the Caladium Festival held in August in Lake Placid, Florida, (August 24-26, 2012), you may want to add that to your list. It's truly a sight to behold; fields upon fields of beautiful Caladiums decorating the horizon.

There are two types of Caladiums; those with fancy leaves and those with lance or strap leaves. Fancy leaves have the leaf stem attached within the leaf blade, are heart-shaped, less sun and cold tolerant, last for shorter periods, are taller and have an upright growth habit. Lance or strap leaves have the leaf stem attached at or near the edge of the leaf blade, have elongated arrow head shaped leaves which are generally smaller, more sun and cold tolerant, last longer, are spreading and shorter in height.

Caladiums prefer well-drained organic, acidic soil with a low pH of 5.5-6.2, temperatures of 60 degrees Fahrenheit and above and high humidity. Bulbs should be stored at temperatures below 60 degrees Fahrenheit because they cannot tolerate cold temperatures. You can leave the bulbs in the ground to winter-over or dig them out of the ground before the leaves deteriorate for which yellowing/drooping is a signal. If you remove the bulbs for winter storage, lift them out of the ground, clean them, dry and store them dry.

Caladiums are a great landscape addition and are as showy as flowers. Many of us Florida ‘transplants’ miss midwest and northeastern bulbs. However, there are a lot of bulbs we can grow in Florida that are as or more enjoyable than those we remember from the past.


Information in this article was adapted from Master Gardener Cynthia “Meems” Glover’s “Growing Caladiums in Florida” presentation. Be sure to follow your architectural control committee.
procedures before you install changes in your landscapes. Contact your local Extension office for assistance with gardening-related questions and visit the University of Florida website: http://solutionsforyourlife.com.

As always, follow the landscape or architectural control procedures in your deed restrictions before making changes. For assistance with horticultural questions, call the Hillsborough County Extension Service, 5339 County Road 579, Seffner, FL 33584 or call: 813-744-5519. More gardening information is available at http://hillsborough.extension.ufl.edu and http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu.
Florida White Ruffles

Florida Cardinal – Photos contained in article by Z. Deng and B.K. Harbaugh