April Gardening Guide (2011)
By Patricia Porchey

Q. My crape myrtles are leafing out, but I’m finding the edges of the leaves are being eaten by something.
A. Crape myrtles are but one of over one hundred plants with notches on the leaf margins caused by the chewing of Sri Lanka Weevils, exotic pests introduced into Florida in 2000 and now inflicting damage to ornamentals and fruit trees in many counties. Adults are whitish grey with dark mottling (spots) and approximately ¼ inch in length. One adult may lay 360 eggs in a 3-day period and the larvae will eat on roots for 1-2 months before pupating and emerging as adults. Adults are voracious eaters on fruit trees such as avocado, loquat, lychee, mango and papaya as well as ornamentals such as bottlebrush, hibiscus, plumbago, live oak, orchid trees and palms.

Their control has been difficult because they can fly and they drop from a leaf when alarmed. An upside-down umbrella has been used to catch them after a plant is shaken. The insects can then be dumped into soapy water. There are no known natural predators.

Arbor Day is April 22. Plant a tree!

PLANTING GUIDE
Vegetables & Herbs: Anise, basil, beans, borage, cantaloupe, chervil, comfrey, corn, cucumber, cumin, horehound, lemon balm, marjoram, mint, okra, oregano, peas, summer savory, sweet potatoes, tarragon and thyme.
Annuals: Amaranthus, aster, Celosia, Cleome, Coleus, Cosmos, dusty miller, Gazania, geranium, Impatiens, Lobelia, morning glory, Nicotiana, ornamental pepper, Pentas, periwinkle, Phlox, Portulaca, Salvia, Torenia, Verbena and Zinnia.
Perennials: African iris, Amazon lily, Aztec lily, blue daze, blood lily, Caladium, Canna, Coreopsis, Crossandra, Dianthus, Gaillardia, Gaura, Gerbera daisy, Gloriosa lily, milkweed, Mexican heather, Philippine violet, rain lily, Salvia, Scabiosa, shell ginger, shrimp plants, Tithonia and Verbena.
Fruits in Season: Banana, blueberry, carambola, citrus, (calamondin, grapefruit, Key lime, lemon, lime, and orange), kumquat, loquat, Mysore raspberry, Surinam cherry, and strawberry.
Blossoming Plants: Amaryllis, avocado, azalea, bottlebrush, Bougainvillea, confederate jasmine, dwarf Indian hawthorn, Jacaranda, Jatropha, Cordia, Lantana, Macadamia, Magnolia, Nasturtium, orchid tree, rose, society garlic, Simpson’s stopper, trumpet trees, and Turk’s cap.

Upcoming classes
Call 861-9900 or register on-line sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu for the following classes.
• Chickens 101, Lauderbach Farm, 8:30 a.m. April 2
• Seasonal Landscape Problems, Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. April 6
• Herb Gardening, Phillippi Estate Mansion, Noon April 6
• Ants, Ants, Ants, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. April 6
• Trees in the Landscape, Shamrock Park, 2:00 p.m. April 7
• Irrigation Display and Demo, Phillippi Estate Mansion, Noon April 13
• Rural Pond Management, Twin Lakes Park, 4:00 p.m. April 13
• Energy Efficient Home Series, Twin Lakes Park, 6:00 p.m. April 13
• Rain Barrel Workshop, Englewood Sports Complex, 10:00 a.m. April 16
• Fruit Trees for Sarasota County, Phillippi Estate Mansion, Noon April 20
• Irrigation 101, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. April 20
• What Bug Is That? (insect walk), Shamrock Park, 2:00 p.m. April 21
• Turf Alternatives, Phillippi Estate Mansion, Noon April 27
• Alternatives to Citrus, Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. May 4
• Bed Bug Menace, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. May 4
• Irrigation 101, Twin Lakes Park, 2:00 p.m. May 5

GETTING HELP
The Master Gardener Help Desk is available to answer your questions, 861-9807, mghelpdesk@scgov.net. Walk-ins are welcome Monday-Friday from 9-Noon and 1-4 p.m., Twin Lakes Park, Clark Road east of I-75.
Satellite Help Desks: Weekly at four South County libraries and Gulf Gate Library and Phillippi Farmhouse Market, every 4th Saturday at Fruitville Library and every third Saturday at the Downtown Farmers’ Market, Sarasota.
New locations: every first Saturday at Lowe’s Sarasota, 10:00 a.m.-noon and Lowe’s Venice, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. and every third Saturday at Lowe’s North Port, 10:00 a.m.-noon.

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Submitted March 29, 2011

Adult Sri Lanka Weevil

Feeding damage on leaves