



# Three County Master Gardeners' Association

## Newsletter

September 2011

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### President's Corner

Greetings Master Gardeners! As summer comes to a close and fall awaits us I can only say, "Whew, it sure has been a busy time!". But working by the sweat of our brow is good for the soul so I trust you are in good shape by now. Find a shady spot and just reflect on how good it has been just to see things grow and produce and reward us for our efforts. What can compare to a good tomato sandwich?

Our fall quarterly meeting of the Three County Master Gardeners is drawing nigh: Thursday evening, Sept. 8th, 2011, 6:15 ish, at the Winder-Barrow Extension Office in Winder. We fellowship and eat from a little bit after 6pm -7pm and try to get started with the business and program around 7pm. We usually are having such a great time that it is hard to know when it is over, but if you have to go before we are done, it is fine. Our featured

speaker is Aldo Ramos, a local organic farmer and owner of Sunshine Farms, who the 2008-2009 Master Gardener class knows well. He was our classmate and has stayed active with us. We always have some surprises to give away so you can look forward to that too. So, come and join us, bring your favorite dish or dip and we will put it altogether for a wonderful evening. And if you have a friend who is interested in what Master Gardeners do, then feel free to invite them. New Certification classes start in January at the State Botanical Garden and we need to keep growing.

See you in Winder on September 8<sup>th</sup>!

*Rosemarie*

### **Master Gardeners at the Boys and Girls Club Social Circle**

By Rosemarie Sells,  
Association President & Master Gardener

You never know where being a Master Gardener can lead you, especially around your own community like Walton County, Social Circle to be more specific. Last year when planning the Social Circle Friendship Festival Mr. Mike Miller, the director of the Better Hometown organization, afforded us a free space to put up a booth for our Master Gardener plant sale. Thanks to Jean Selph, who made arrangements, we had a happy experience and are being given that space again come October 1<sup>st</sup>. The Three County Master Gardeners mixed and mingled with the community and sold plants and shared our knowledge at every opportunity. So when the new director of the Boys and Girls Club, needed some help in selecting some plants for a makeover of the grounds and facilities, guess who he was told to call --- yep, the Master Gardeners.

Early April, Mr. Darrell Corder, gave me a call to tell me that Home Depot had given a \$10,000 grant to the SC Boys and Girls Club to do landscaping and work on their building. Having been a former school teacher, that was an astronomical amount of money to spend for anything, especially with a considerable amount for plants, etc. He wanted advice and help with selection. So, Jean, Elaine Burress, and I set out to make suggestions and then to go help pick out the plants. Felt like going to the candy store! We did it.

Elaine and I met at the Club on the special appointed day, picked up our shovels, and worked alongside the great group of community volunteers to put the plants and

trees in the ground. What a beautiful sight it is now with everything blooming....a real transition from the red clay and spotty grass. Then, Mr. Corder, spoke in his most kind Mississippi accent, "Would ya'll come out and do a little teaching with our boys and girls this summer?"

Former teachers are always teaching, so Elaine and I set out to plan some activities that would combine learning about gardening, especially vegetables and herbs, and doing a little art for dessert. We found ourselves immersed in a learning environment again, just very different from the usual setting. Never knew who or how many we would see or if they would like what we were doing. Well, we talked and we brought examples of herbs and vegetables, which we tasted and cooked, and did a little art like pressing flowers and okra prints. Now they know about the dill in dill pickles and where it comes from and what it looks like and tastes like. The children were very open to everything we did and paid us back with hugs and smiles. Farmer Ed (Novak) visited us on our fourth summer lesson and brought us a watermelon and jumped into the teaching arena as well. Needless to say, this experience left a good taste of learning about gardening in all of our mouths and hearts. Mr. Corder was so appreciative and told us that the Master Gardeners were welcome at his place anytime. I have a feeling we will see him again. I'm enclosing a picture Mr. Corder took for your enjoyment



## Walton County Projects up Dates

By Jean Selph, Walton  
County Coordinator  
& Master Gardener

Hello to all Master Gardener members in our three counties. I hope all of you have had a great summer and are no worse the wear for this extreme heat and humidity we have had. Despite the temperatures we have had some worthwhile projects ongoing and hope many of you were able to participate in some of these.

Several of us went over to "A Child's Voice", in Loganville, in the spring and helped to do weeding and general clean up in the flower beds surrounding the facility. I know Rosemarie Sells and Elaine Burress (friend of the gardener's), spent a lot of time working with the Boys and Girls Club in Social Circle, helping landscape as well as teaching crafts and doing cooking projects with vegetables that the children helped grow.

I know we are all aware of the "Plant-a Row", at the Harris Homestead in Walton County and that was our collective largest project this year. We began the planting in May and have grown a lot of produce which has been donated to individual families as well as food pantries and community service organizations. Despite the extreme humidity and heat we grew a lot of food!

This is the list of crops we grew and the number of pounds we donated: cucumbers 231.4; beans 43.1; squash 27.6; okra 40.5; tomatoes 269.1; peppers 59.4; cantaloupe 63.5; watermelon 120;

Other donations totaling 195.5 pounds were made by Three County Master Gardeners John Gladney, Debbie Maund, Dot Parish and Butler Farms from their personal vegetable gardens.

Thanks for all the hard work!

## Gardening Tip and Question!

From Jean Selph

I have one little tidbit of knowledge of growing corn in a small garden and getting it to produce. I had read an article that said you could grow corn in a circle and get it to cross pollinate. I tried this by planting in a 10x10 circle and each stalk produced an ear of corn. The only problem I had was keeping the ants from getting into the silk and devouring my corn. If anyone can tell me how we can prevent the ants from doing that I would appreciate the information. Jean's e-mail address is [willowoaks@hotmail.com](mailto:willowoaks@hotmail.com). Please send a copy of your answer to

## A Rare Beauty

### Cahaba Lily or Shoals Spider-Lily

By Donna Hut, Jackson County  
Coordinator & Master Gardener

We are fortunate to live within driving distance of a rare and unusual plant – the Shoals Spider-lily (*Hymenocallis coronaria*). An aquatic, flowering perennial plant, it is native to the Southeastern United States and grows in only 3 states – Alabama, South Carolina, and Georgia. Within Alabama, it is known as the Cahaba Lily, named for the area of Alabama in which it grows- the Hargrove Shoals within the boundaries of the Cahaba River National



Wildlife Refuge. Outside of Alabama it is known as the Shoals Spider-lily because it requires a swift, shallow water current and direct sunlight to flourish. The plant grows from a bulb lodged in between the rocks of the shoals, reaching a height of about 3 feet. In early May to late June the plants develop a lovely, fragrant white flower, each bloom lasting only a day.



The plant is under consideration for federal protection - entire populations have been wiped out as a result of dam construction. Two of the largest remaining stands of this plant (in the world!) are located at Landsford Canal State Park on the Catawba River in Chester County, South Carolina and along the Cahaba River near West Blocton, Alabama. In Georgia, the largest population of the lilies is in northwest Harris County off Ga. 103 between Whitesville and West Point at Flat Shoals Creek. The owner of the property on which they grow, Mr. Stephen Johnson, has been opening his property up to the public on weekends in May for several years in order to share these wonders of nature; he has placed the 323 acres on which the lilies reside in a conservation easement so they will be protected against future development.

Consider taking a drive next May to see a sight that is truly unique – I promise you won't be disappointed!

## Problems with Yellow Jackets?

By Britt West,  
Barrow County Extension Agent

Yellow jackets belong to same family as bees, wasps, hornets, and ants. Yellow jackets build their nest in the ground, on the ground (in leaf litter) or attached to retaining walls or tree limbs. This nesting practice puts them in close contact to humans. Unlike bees, yellow jackets can sting repeatedly which can make an attack even more painful.

Yellow jackets require two types of food: **sugar** from nectar, fruit, soft drinks, etc., (utilized by the adults for high energy) and **protein** from garbage and carrion (which is fed to the larvae). For this reason they are attracted to picnic and recreational areas, back yards, garbage cans, pet food, fallen fruit and sometimes even to soft-drink machines.

The methods of control are barriers, traps and insecticides. Good sanitation should be the first step attempted before grabbing for a can of pesticide. This

includes sealing garbage in air tight bags but also rinsing soda or food cans before adding them to the recycling bin, removing insect, diseased or bird damaged fruit from backyard fruit plants, and limiting outside feeding of pets. Filling holes in the ground left by decaying roots or stumps will also prevent access to potential nesting areas. Expandable foam caulking can be sprayed into voids in retaining walls.

Traps are another method of **reducing** but probably not or eliminating colonies of yellow jackets. Traps will not provide 100% control but they are one tool for limiting numbers during short special events such as picnics and garden parties. Traps can be store bought or homemade. A simple trap may be made by filling a coffee can 3/4 full of water, and adding enough cooking oil to cover the water (1/4 to 1/2 inch is adequate). The trap is baited with a piece of ripe fruit (apple, pear) by piercing the bait with a stiff wire or slender stick, and placing this such that the fruit is toward the center of the top of the can. The yellow jackets will, in their attempts to get to the bait, fall into the water-oil mixture, and drown. (The oil layer retards evaporation of the water, and also tends to clog the spiracles of the insects). Locate all traps away from the areas you want to protect so the pests are attracted away from activities.

The best control method is the use of insecticides. If you cannot find the nest then don't waste your money on chemical applications. When treating nesting areas take precautions and dress appropriately. Wear a long sleeve shirt and pull your socks up over your pant legs. The best time to treat the nest areas is around **sunset** when the yellow jackets have returned and they are least active.

Purchase 1-2 cans of an aerosol spray that is labeled for wasps and hornets. These premixed sprays should have nozzles designed for application from a safe distance away (about 15 to 20 feet). Most of these aerosols contain *pyrethrins* or *pyrethrin derivatives* which are quick knock-down chemicals with low mammalian toxicity. Spray the aerosol around the opening to knock down any yellow jackets guarding the nest. Then you can use the rest of the can, by spraying it into the nesting cavity or you can apply an *insecticidal dust (Sevin)* in and around the opening. Dusts are effective when located in areas where they come in direct contact with the adult insects but they are not quick acting like aerosol sprays. If you can't find a nest put out a saucer of soda or Kool-Aid and follow visiting yellow jackets back to their hive.

Happy Hunting!

## Challenges

By Dora Fleming, Newspaper Columnist  
& Master Gardener

My less busy gardening days are often spent browsing through seed catalogs shopping around for new plants. I've finally learned that no matter what I do though, any new plant I buy is not going to flourish and look like the grand ones pictured. I've also learned to read between the lines on cultural advice.

Cultural descriptions on plant labels are often a lot like teacher notes on report cards. "Is growing in self control" sometimes means that Johnny has stopped jumping over two rows of desks to get to the head of the cafeteria line and now only jumps over one row of desks to get to the head of the cafeteria line. "Works well with others" probably indicates that Johnny talks incessantly and pays attention only to his peers.

For example, if the plant label states "Needs strong support" what you have probably ordered is a beautiful flowering vine that will bring down the Taj Mahal if watered and fertilized for a season. Wisteria comes to mind.

"Slow to establish" doesn't mean what we think it means either. What they're really trying to tell you is that this plant will probably die a lingering death in its first year despite all our coddling and attention. Neither water, mulch, nor our heartfelt prayers are going to help much with this one.

"Resents disturbance" doesn't mean that the plant doesn't like to be moved once it is big. It means it may not make it if you transplant it out of the pot from the nursery.

Always assume "May become invasive" is an understatement. If the propagator feels he should mention this growing habit, then what we have on our hands is a vigorous little wonder that is going to have to be repeatedly grubbed out of flower beds, borders, our neighbor's yard and sidewalks.

"May need to be staked" on your plant label? Change this to "Most assuredly must be staked". This plant will charge out of the ground growing straight up and plop its little face down in the dirt way before it has set its first flower bud. Ginger lilies, peonies.... But, really, Master Gardeners I know even if told the whole unvarnished truth will still take the described plant home because they know that in our hands everything is going to turn out fine.

And it usually does.

## Three County Master Gardeners Like Getting Their Hands Dirty

Submitted by Ed Novak, Master Gardener  
Written by Robbie Schwartz, WaltonTribune.com

The soil is being tilled at The Harris Homestead, and the fruits of the labor will benefit many of those in need.

The Three County Master Gardeners — comprised of residents from Walton, Barrow and Jackson counties — have planted a garden to feed the hungry at the historic homestead. The produce will be distributed to various organizations with the three counties, including food pantries, homeless shelters, battered women's as well as children's shelters.

With their knowledge, expertise and physical strength, many with the Three County Master Gardeners were compelled to make a commitment to help feed the hungry in the area.

"Thanks to the generosity of the estate of William Harris, a large planting field was prepared and donated for this purpose," said Ed Novak, a Walton County resident and member of the Master Gardeners. "As a retired financial advisor, I took the course to increase my knowledge in gardening to keep up with my wife's expertise in gardening — she was raised on a farm in Kansas. After completing the three-month course, what I learned is how much I didn't know. However, it was eye opening as to how, in retirement, I can give back and help others. "My greatest joy is working with other gardeners who have the same love of nature that I do."

It is that love of gardening that banded together 17 gardeners — 12 from Walton County — for the Harris Homestead effort. Part of the Plant-A-Row project, soil samples were taken first and eight rows of different vegetables were planted: bush beans, squash, cucumbers, cantaloupe, okra and watermelon. The seeds and fertilizer were donated by Homeport Farm Mart in Winder in addition to tomato and pepper plant seeds paid for by the Harris Homestead.



Rain delayed the original planting by a week, but 15 Master Gardeners and three friends of the garden got their hands dirty beginning April 23. A maintenance schedule was set up for Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays for weeding, watering and harvesting as needed. Within six weeks, the garden started producing yields of 6 pounds on June 9, 10 pounds on June 18 and 24 pounds of June 21. These first yields, mainly of squash and tomatoes,

were given to individual families in the three counties as well as the Barrow County food kitchen.

The Master Gardener program was established to assist the Cooperative Extension in reaching the consumer horticulture audience. There are more than 3,000 volunteers in 69 counties who participate in the program. Master Gardeners are community volunteers trained by county extension agriculture and is for those interested with extensive training in many phases of gardening. In return, they serve as volunteers to teach others about gardening. In Walton County, that means ongoing landscaping efforts at the Social Circle library; landscaping, vegetable gardening and teaching children at the Social Circle Boys & Girls to plant, grow and prepare meals from scratch; working on the grounds of the Healing Through Expression children and family center; and additional hands-on efforts at churches throughout Walton County. There are currently 18 active Master Gardeners in Walton County.

After going through the initial training and completing 50 hours of volunteer work, participants become Master Gardeners and are expected to volunteer 25 hours each year. For more information, call 1-800-275-8421 or visit [www.ugaextension.com](http://www.ugaextension.com)



### Three County Master Gardener Association 2012 Annual Dues

Please complete this form and give your payment to Ed Novak, Treasurer, at the Association's Christmas Party **or** include the completed form with your payment and mail to Ed Novak, 5725 Kings Court, Bethlehem, GA 30620  
**The deadline for payment is March 1, 2012.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_  
Include area code, please.

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Monthly Birth Flowers

September Flower: Aster, Morning Glory



October Flower: Calendula, Cosmos



November Flower: Chrysanthemum



December Flower: Holly, Narcissus, Poinsettia



