



Three County Master Gardeners' Association

Newsletter

Spring 2011

Our Executive Board

President: Rosemarie Sells, rosemariesells@yahoo.com, 770-267-7404

Vice President: Donald Syke, donaldsyke@aol.com, 706-367-4562

Treasurer: Ed Novak, edvisor@aol.com, 770-267-3853

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County Coordinators

Barrow County: Charlotte Phillips, charlienwinder@netscape.com, 770-307-0638

Jackson County: Donna Hut, dlhut1@windstream.net, 706-654-2689

Walton County: Jean Selph, willowoaks@hotmail.com, 770-266-6985

Newsletter Coordinator: Margaret McCollum, margaretandy@bellsouth.net, 678-753-1030

President's Corner

Hello Everyone-

I can't help but say---Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah, Zip-A-Dee-Ay, My, oh my, What a wonderful day--- Plenty of Sunshine headin' my way---Now you finish it out. Wonderful feeling, Wonderful day! This is the way I feel as spring approaches. How about you? As master gardeners I think we are blessed with this contagious happy spirit when we see the temperatures climbing into the sixties and know that we are bound for the outside to work or play.

Our next quarterly meeting is coming up soon on Thursday evening, March 10th, 6pm, at the Barrow Co. Extension Office where we share the best of times. Jackson County will be our host and present a wonderful program after our meal. We always try to help each other out with the food, but it is not required. There will be interesting news about plans such as the Harris Plantation Plant a Row project and more. Barb Misner, our new district director, will join us and share her thoughts. Please know that we want the pleasure of your company and bring a friend if you like. Anyone can join us as a Friend for \$15 a year and participate in the great activities. Hope to see you there.

Well, here comes Mr. Bluebird....gotta go!

Rosemarie

Three County Master Gardeners Active in 2010

By Ed Novak, Master Gardener
& Association Treasurer

WOW! What a year. I know it was only yesterday, that we all gathered here for a Christmas Party. Tonight we are all back again to celebrate Christmas again and recall the events of the last year.

With our new slate of officers, (President: Rosemarie Sells; Vice Pres.: Don Sykes; Secretary: Shirley Turner; Treasurer: Ed Novak. County Coordinators are Charlotte Phillips for Barrow County, Donna Hut for Jackson County and Jean Selph for Walton County. We have the expert guidance from our beloved County Extension agents: Britt West of Barrow, Mark Shirley of Jackson, and William Carlan of Walton. We have concluded a very busy and successful year.

Oh, where to start? We began our new year with monthly meetings of the Board on every first Tuesday of month, starting with February. This allowed us to be more productive and to keep on top of all the activities that we were involved with or planning to be involved with.

Next we chose the county events that we wanted to be involved with. Would it be: selling plants at the Hall County Master Gardener's Plant Sale, the William Harris Homestead's Plant-A-Row, Auburn's "Spring Gardening Expo", Fort Yargo's Tree planting, or "With Pride & Patriotism" Festival, Barrow County's New Animal Shelter, and Museum, Walton County's Post Office, New Hospital, The Art Guild, the Walking Trail at the library, The Crepe Myrtle Festival, the Old Jail & The Court House in Winder, The Art In The Park Festival in Jackson County, or the Friendship Festival in Social Circle? O My, what a list. Well, with our 42 registered Master Gardener's we proceeded to attract our list. Starting in spring, we sprayed the trees at Fort Yargo (John King & Yvonne Pierce), and had an information table at the "Pride and Patriotism" Day. We were represented at the "Auburn's Gardening Expo" with John Gladney doing a demonstration on "growing Sweet Potatoes", and later John met with some Russell Middle School students to help them start a garden. Meanwhile Della Helfin and Yvonne were working with landscaping and plantings at the new Animal Shelter in Winder and Charlotte Phillips was coordinating a beautification and planting project at Winder's Museum. Several Master Gardeners assisted with the William Harris Homestead Auction on May 1st. We were offered a plot of land for a "Plant-A-Row" project but it was too late in the season to get started. We are looking forward in 2011 to have this project.



What about Plant Sales

We started with the "Crepe Myrtle Festival" in Monroe. If they wanted Crepe Myrtles, We had them. Thanks to Britt West and his connection with Athens Nursery, we were able to get a variety of crepe myrtles on consignment at a reasonable cost. We held a seminar on the variety and gave out instruction sheets on the planting and the care of. As a result of this sale we netted \$621. We sold: [Natchez Crape Myrtle](#) [Arapaho Crape Myrtle](#), Tuscarora, and Pink Velour.

Next we were invited to "Art in the Park", a 2 day Festival. We set up our tent and Banner and enjoyed two days of selling some plants and getting to meet some great Jackson County people. We sold Camellias, Gardenias, Crepe Myrtles, Spiraea, Agastache, Autumn Fern, Heuchera and Rudbeckia. We netted \$805.

We were ready to go again, when we received an invite to the "Friendship Festival" in Social Circle, GA. (By the way this is my home, so I could not refuse), they offered us two spaces at no charge. We sold Camillias, Azaleas, Spirea, Autumn Fern, Heuchera and Forsythia. We netted \$532.

For our three plant sales we netted \$1958.

Our three quarterly meetings were very successful. In March, Jackson County hosted, and our speaker Mr. Ken Goring spoke about Georgia's native plants and plant rescues.

In June Barrow County hosted and had for their speaker, none other than Mike Sikes (spelled with an I, not to be mistaken for Sykes, who is our vice-president.) Mike brought many new species of plants that we gave as door prizes.

The fall quarterly meeting was hosted by Walton County. They did a skit about country girls and city girls. Donna Dixon, our speaker did a wonderful presentation on perennials. Well I could go on and on, many more activities took place.

Let me just say how proud I am to be a part of you, the Three County Master Gardeners Association, who are truly the greatest and friendliest gardeners I know.

Now for the Business at hand.

December Three County Master Gardener Meeting

The Christmas meeting was held on December 9, 2010 at B section at Fort Yargo. The business meeting started after we finished the fantastic meal. President Rosemarie welcomed everyone.

Secretary's report was approved.

Treasurer report-\$1,381.79. Budget was presented, motion to accept by Don Sykes and seconded by Grant Crate. Motion voted and passed by all present. Next, the \$100.00 for each county was discussed. If someone needs additional funds, the project needs to be submitted in writing to the board. This was presented to the Master Gardeners present.

The officer slate was presented to all and there were no nominations from floor. The motion to accept the officers was Harry Hauck and seconded by Don Sykes. Motion voted and passed by all present.

Rosemarie did a wonderful presentation on Lucky the Chameleon. Then she presented Lucky to everyone present. The best line was from Rosemarie's husband who said that they switched to Geico 2 weeks before.

Door prizes were given out and everyone had a great time. Merry Christmas!

Meeting adjourned by President.

Minutes submitted by *Shirley B. Turner*

It's Not Complicated

By Dora Fleming, Master Gardener
& Newspaper Columnist

Gardening really isn't all that complicated. Dig a hole and put a plant in it. If it dies, pull it up. If it lives, water it. Pruning, however, isn't so simple. Even with my book of instructions, my plants never look like the drawings in the book. Usually I fake it and hope for the best.

There are some general guidelines I try to remember after I shake off the confusion from reading the book. Cut off all branches that grow toward the center of the plant. Leave the ones that grow outward toward the light. If you have branches that cross and rub against each other, prune out the weaker of the two. Always prune just above an outward-facing bud. Prune dormant plants in winter only if they bloom after June. Stay away from anything that is an early spring bloomer like weigelia or forsythia. Pruning now will mean you have sacrificed this year's blooms. Prune these early bloomers immediately after bloom. Here's an easy one.

Cut out all diseased, dead or damaged shoots that you notice. Variegated plants all want to revert to green. To discourage this, cut out any green growth that you see. Some plants, especially grafted ones, produce suckers from the roots or below the graft. Cut these off. Unless you are at war with a plant that is pushing the house down, stay away from old, dark wood. Usually pruning one-half of the new growth on any plant will give you the results you want.

On plants like forsythia that bloom in early spring and produce new growth at ground level, cut out one out of three of the older, woodier ones. This is usually not necessary except every three or four years.

Some things need to be pruned hard – cut back as close to the ground as possible. These include butterfly bushes and ornamental grasses. These plants need to be pruned the second new growth appears in the spring.

Hydrangae blooms on old wood. Prune after bloom only if needed for shaping. Don't prune clematis now if it has large flowers in early summer. If your clematis blooms in late summer and early fall, prune it now.

So you got carried away, did it wrong or pruned too much off? Don't fret. An over pruned plant is like a bad haircut. It will grow back.

Lawn Weed Control

Britt West

Barrow County Extension Agent

Controlling lawn weeds is more than just buying the right weed killer. Weeds are present for a reason. First decide why the weed is present, second properly identify the weed pest, and lastly determine the least toxic product that will control the weed and if your lawn grass is tolerant to that herbicide.

You probably remember a weed can be any plant growing where it is not wanted. Fescue for instance, in a sodded bermuda lawn can be considered a weed. Certain weeds though, pop up because soil conditions are just right for their existence. With a little research you can learn why some weeds pop up and how to prevent them without the use of pesticides. Clover is a legume plant that makes its own nitrogen. So when clover is present in your lawn the soil is starved for nitrogen. Applications of nitrogen fertilizer on a regular basis will help prevent clover, though it will not kill clover. Other weeds that might be present in soils with low nitrogen levels include chickweed, lespedeza, and broomsedge. Wet or poorly drained soils will encourage moss, algae or dichondra. Areas of lawn where soil is hard and compacted (children play areas, pet traffic, vehicle parking, or new subdivisions) will encourage goosegrass, annual bluegrass, and knotweed.

The next step in lawn weed control is to positively identify your weeds. Some weed killers better known as herbicides kill a broad spectrum of weeds while some only provide control of 4 or 5 weeds. You can bring your weed(s) by our office for positive identification and control recommendations. Or the internet is full of weed identification resources. Also, the University of Georgia maintains an excellent website that can help you identify your weeds (<http://commodities.caes.uga.edu/turfgrass/georgiaturf/WeedMngt/index.html>).

The last step in lawn weed control is to select the least toxic product to control your weeds. Generally, pre- emergence herbicides are safer to your lawn and other plants but you cannot overseed for 2 -6 months after application. Pre emergence herbicides work in preventing weeds from germinating but will not kill weeds that are already growing. Since you cannot see the weeds when applying a preemergence herbicide you have to treat your whole yard instead of spot spraying. There are also post emergence herbicides which are made for controlling weeds after they have germinated. Some post emergence products are made for only grasses like crabgrass; some for broadleaf weeds like dandelion; and some are

non-selective herbicides which are made to control both grasses and broadleaf weeds. For this reason it is very important to read and follow the label directions with regards to rates of product and cautionary statements. Many beautiful lawns have been killed by improper applications of herbicides. There are 2 -3 organic herbicides on the market utilizing corn gluten meal, acetic acid or citric acid but these are less effective and much more expensive to use. Again you can visit a UGA website (http://www.ent.uga.edu/pmh/Hm_Turf.pdf) to obtain the latest recommendations on labeled products for home lawn weed control, insect control or disease control. You can also call us to obtain advice on product selection and timing of herbicide applications.

Three County Master Gardener Association 2011 Annual Dues

Please complete this form and give your payment to Ed Novak, Treasurer, at the Association's March 10 meeting **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, 2011.

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone # _____ Include area code, please.

E-mail Address _____

Birthflowers

MARCH

Flower: Jonquil, Violet



APRIL

Flower: Daisy, Sweet Pea



JUNE

Flower: Honeysuckle, Rose



Hello To All MG's From Walton

By Jean Selph, Master Gardener
& Walton County Coordinator

We certainly had an interesting winter didn't we. I had always said I would like to have one white Christmas in my lifetime and I finally got it this past season. It was really beautiful, but the third snow was the charm for me and I am now happily awaiting the arrival of Spring! The official arrival of spring isn't until March 20th, but as I drive along our roads I see all the old fashion jonquils and daffodils and for me they herald the coming of spring.

The members of our board are starting to plan and search for projects for our members to be involved in. I know everyone received the "snippets" information form Ed Novak and I hope you marked your calendar to participate in some of these outstanding events and opportunities that are upcoming in the near future.

As most of you know Ed has been asked to serve on the Heritage Committee for the Harris Homestead in Walton County. They are planning the "Plant A Row" community garden to be planted there and the details for the planting and care of the garden will be forthcoming. I hope everyone will make a concrete effort to try and participate with the garden this year since we didn't get to have the vegetable garden last year; due to the lateness of the planning and being able to get a commitment from enough volunteers.

We are also in discussion with Ann Shannon at the Counseling Center in Loganville and we are hoping to get some grant money to help us finish the project that was started there in 2009. That project would greatly benefit from some hardscape as well as addition planting. When we have some of the details worked out we will be asking for help to make that a really beautiful place for the families who are there in very difficult situations.

Finally I have an opportunity for our "Master Gardener's" to get some of their volunteer hours and not have to do any physical work. I have been told by Mr. Brian Arrington at the Walton Tribune that he would love to print gardening articles and "tips" in the paper, as he has the space. If you like to write and know any handy "tips" that you would like to pass along, send your articles to him at (brian.arrington@waltontribune.com).

Our first member quarterly meeting is coming up on March 10th, in Winder and we are looking forward to seeing ya'll there.

* If you take Southern Living magazine you probably saw this little idea in there, but for those who didn't see it I just want to pass it along. Take an old aluminum colander and attach three wires to make it a hanging basket. Then plant it with any variety of strawberries you'd like. Hang it where it gets good sun and the berries will grow downward and make a nice and different hanging basket. Then just enjoy the fresh berries.

ORCHIDS!

By Donna Hut,
Master Gardener and Native Plant Nut

There is a wonderful show on now at the Atlanta Botanical Garden in Piedmont Park – Orchid Daze. My husband and I visited recently and were enthralled with the bright colors and interesting forms of these exotic beauties from foreign lands. But ... did you know that there are *Native* Orchids as well? They are growing right here in Georgia, perhaps even in your own backyard! And while not as showy as the tropical varieties, they each have their own unique beauty.

Probably the most commonly found in our area, and perhaps Georgia, too, is the Crane-Fly Orchid (*Tipularia discolor*). I have quite a few of these growing in my yard, and honestly, I think the bloom looks similar to some of the flowers we saw at the show – maybe a distant cousin? The orchid is generally found growing in hardwood forests; it blooms in mid-July to late August, then grows a single leaf in September that disappears in the spring. The flower looks like a bunch of little crane-flies (hence the name) and the leaf is deep green and ridged, with a dark purple underside.

Another that grows in my woods is Downy Rattlesnake Plantain (*Goodyera pubescens*). **The leaves are** 1 to 2.5 inches long, oval-shaped dark green with a white mid-rib and having a network of whitish veins. **There are** small white flowers in a long, narrow, dense cluster on a downy 6 to 18 inch stalk. The plant blooms in summer, but as with *tipularia*, it's almost easier to spot by its leaves than by the bloom.

One that I *don't* have, but would love to, is Showy Orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*). Found in rich woods, it is low-growing (only 5-12 inches) with numerous small and two large, oval medium green leaves at the base of the plant. Blooming in late spring to early summer, the flowers are about an inch long, white and pink-to-lavender. As you might guess from the name, this one is one of the prettier native orchids and the distinctive flowers make this one easy to identify.

And finally, what I think is absolutely the prettiest, the Yellow-Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera ciliaris*). Whoever gave this plant its common name must have been color-blind, as the flowers aren't yellow at all, but rather an apricot-orange! They did get the "fringed" part right however as the lower petal is most definitely that. You will find

these lovelies growing in bogs, moist meadows and woods; generally in acidic soil. With their bright blooms (a good-sized cluster of ¾ inch flowers, not counting the long spur) and their height (1 – 2 feet) it would be hard to miss them when in bloom (June – September).

If you are not fortunate enough to have any of these growing in your own yard, I have it on good authority that every one of these can be found (with a bit of luck) along the Nature Trail and Becky Branch Falls Trail in the Warwoman Dell Picnic Area just outside Clayton, GA. Happy Hunting!

Georgia Man's Death Confirms Presence of Africanized Honeybees

By Sharon Dowdy
University of Georgia

Last week's death of an elderly Dougherty County man has been attributed to Africanized honeybees. This fatality confirms the bees' arrival in Georgia, according to the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

"The victim was operating a tractor and mower, aggravated a nest of bees and received more than 100 stings," said Keith Delaplane, a University of Georgia Cooperative Extension entomologist.

Africanized honeybees have been in the United States since October 1990 when they were found in Texas. In 2005, they were confirmed in Florida.

European Cousin Essential to Crops

A sub-species of honeybee, Africanized honeybees can interbreed with the European honeybee that is well known throughout Georgia as an important pollinator and producer of honey. One-third of American diets contain food crops that rely on European honeybees for pollination, according to the Georgia DOA.

Africanized and European honeybees look and behave alike in some respects. Each bee can sting only once, and there is no difference between Africanized honeybee venom and that of a European honeybee.

However, "the African variety is extremely defensive and responds with a massive stinging reaction with little provocation," Delaplane said.

Don't Swat, Run, Get Inside and Stay Inside

The UGA honeybee expert urges the public to become aware of how to react if Africanized honeybees attack. He offers the following lifesaving tips:

1. **Be cautious** around places where Africanized honey bees are likely to nest, such as abandoned sheds, bee hive equipment, discarded tires and underground cavities.

2. If you are attacked, **RUN AWAY**. "You may think this sounds silly, but experience has taught us that people don't run away," he said. "Instead, they stand and swat, which simply escalates the defensive frenzy until it reaches lethal proportions."

3. Get inside a closed vehicle or building as fast as possible, and **STAY** there. "Here's another hard lesson we've learned. People don't stay inside a closed vehicle if a few bees follow them inside,"

Delaplane said. "Instead, they panic and flee back outside where tens of thousands of angry bees attack them." This pattern has repeated itself over and over in the stinging incidents entomologists have monitored in Latin America and the southwestern U.S., he said. "The lesson is, don't worry about the few bees that follow you indoors. **Get inside, and stay inside.**"

4. European honeybees and beekeepers are our best defense against Africanized honeybees. "Some communities may be considering zoning restrictions against all forms of beekeeping. This essentially cedes territory to the enemy. Only gentle European bees can genetically dilute the defensive Africanized variety," he said.

First Aid Tips

If stung, the Georgia DOA says to follow these steps:

- **Scrape** – do not pull – stingers from skin as soon as possible. Pulling the stinger out will likely cause more venom to be injected into the skin.
- **Wash** sting area with soap and water.
- **Apply ice** for a few minutes to relieve pain and swelling.
- **Seek medical attention** if your breathing is troubled, if you're stung numerous times or if you're allergic to bee stings.

For more information on Africanized honeybees, read the UGA Extension publication at http://pubsadmin.caes.uga.edu/files/pdf/B%201290_2.PDF.

The Differences between European and African Honey Bees: A Fact Sheet is available at this website:

entnemdept.ufl.edu/afbee/Files/pdf/Difference_factsheet2.pdf