



From the Ground Up

The holiday season is here and I don't know about you, but I'm excited! We joke with each other at how quickly the year passes when all the while we are on a quest to find the perfect gift for our family and friends. I have learned over the years that 'plant people' enjoy giving year round and I suspect that this time of year is no different. The gift of plants and gardening is broad enough, especially for those of you who are creative, to cover everyone on your list. For example, my sister, while not much for gardening, loves to cook with fresh herbs so rosemary, thyme and Italian parsley will find their way to her kitchen window. Rosemary infused olive oil would be another great gift from the garden for the chefs on your list. While I'm still on the subject of rosemary, I know of a few master gardeners who make yummy rosemary cookies.

The beauty of a gardening gift is that it can fit any person and any budget. I have seen gorgeous holiday centerpieces and wreaths created from freshly cut hollies, pines and cedar trees. Add a few oranges adorned with cloves and you can bring nature inside. If your yard is not flush with options, I know personally that locations selling Christmas trees will give you – for FREE – the branches they trim from Douglas fir and other trees.

Whatever you decide to give for the loved ones on your list, as long as you include yourself, it will be the perfect gift!

Merry Christmas & Happy Chanukah!

Andrea Fischer

*You Are Cordially Invited to our Annual AAMGA
Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 20th, at 5:30 pm*

Our party will be held at the State Botanical Garden in the downstairs Gardenside Café. It will start at 5:30 pm with time to socialize and then dinner will be served around 6:15 pm. Our Association will furnish the meats and drinks and members will need to bring a covered dish - one of their Holiday favorites. BYOB: If you wish to bring something extra to drink for your own consumption - please feel free.

As has been our custom for the past several years, we will have a gift exchange. Each person may bring an inexpensive garden related gift \$15 and under. Everyone who brings a gift will take a number and when their number is called, they may select a gift from the unclaimed gifts or take one from someone who has previously drawn a gift. These gifts may only be "claimed" two times!

Each member is welcome to bring one guest. Please RSVP to Jean Colquett at greent39@yahoo.com or 706.548.6612 no later than December 10th.

Our Christmas Party will take the place of our regular monthly meeting.

Our meeting was called to order by: President, Andrea Fischer.

Minutes included in the newsletter and website: Teddy Lapaquette moved that the minutes be accepted as written and George Watson seconded the motion. There were no objections.

Treasurer's Report: Teddy Lapaquette let us know that we presently have \$15,593.61 in the bank.

Hospitality Committee: Heather Jordan-Gray told us that Harold Neal, John Atkins and Sue Hall helped provide refreshments

Clarke PAR: Andrea and Merry reported to the membership that both collards and muscadines were picked this week and donated to the FoodBank.

Oconee PAR: Closed until Spring planting.

Rain Barrels: Frank Johnson let us know that Thyme After Thyme has sold 4 more barrels. He also said that Clarke County had a rain barrel making workshop, but no one attended.

Announcements from SBG: Connie Cottingham talked about the many opportunities at the Bot Garden. Check out <http://www.uga.edu/botgarden/events.html>.

Announcements from Amanda Tedrow: Amanda let us know that 37 signed up for the Master Gardener class that starts in January. She also reminded us about the master composter class in January and the master naturalist class in April.

New Business: Andrea announced that a plant sale at the Tree Fair added \$212.50 to our coffers. Some of our members sold consignment plants from Thyme after Thyme and we received one-half the proceeds.

Old Business: Ruth Smith wanted everyone to know that The Trial Garden, through B.J. Garrett, furnished the pansies for the Oconee Senior Center.

Program: Sam Ingram presented an interesting program on Backyard Critters. Sam was Amanda's intern this year and has recently accepted the position as the new Jackson County Extension Agent. Congratulations Sam!

The Meeting Adjourned at 7:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Thurmond, Recording/Corresponding Secretary

AAMGA Treasurer's Report Activity	
Beginning Balance:	\$16,700.00
Deposits:	0.00
Checks Cleared and Pending	
1409 GMGA Scholarship Endowment	1,000.00
1414 Kandy Duke - Clarke PAR Winter Plants	70.95
1415 Cheryl LaValley - Clarke PAR Soil Amendments	35.44
Totals	1,106.39
End Balance: \$15,593.61	Available Balance: \$15,593.61

The chill is on, near and far, in all the months that have a "R". -- Unknown



AAMGA: www.ugaextension.com/clarke/anr/aamga.html
GMGA: www.georgiamastergardeners.org



Meeting Schedule - Mark Your Calendars!!!

December 20th - Christmas Party at the Garden Side Room at SBG. Specifics are on the front page of this newsletter.

January 17th - Greenup for interns at SBG at 5:30 pm

February 21st - Jack Eisenman - raised bed gardening at 5:30 pm at SBG

Organized by Jean Colquett, Vice President/Program Chair

Martin Luther King Parkway Adopt-A-Highway - volunteers needed

Our Adopt A Highway project is in conjunction with Keep Athens Clarke County Beautiful. We meet four times a year on a Saturday morning to pick up trash on a stretch of Martin Luther King Parkway between North Ave. and the Loop. I have scheduled a clean up for Saturday, Dec. 3. We will start at 10 am. We meet at the Greenway parking lot at the corner of College Ave. and MLK. KACCB provides "grabbers" and bright colored vests and bags. You should probably wear gloves and clothes appropriate for the weather. I'll bring water and a snack. It usually takes about two hours.

E-mail me at cholmes_ccsd@yahoo.com or call 706-353-8568 to let me know you will be there or if you need further information.
Thanks,
Carole Holmes

Membership Renewal

It is time to renew memberships in our Athens Area Master Gardener Association. A renewal form is on the last page of this newsletter. Send it in ASAP so you won't forget!{:0}

Master Gardener Hours

www.ugaextension.com/clarke/anr/aamga.html

Garden Related Items For Free/Trade or For Sale

Free: Iris - you dig, mixed varieties & colors, call George Watson at 706.548.9088

Free: Native River Oats - you dig. I'm clearing out a path that they have seeded to. Kandy Duke kandy.duke@gmail.com

Recycling Fact:
Recycling a 3-foot-high stack of newspapers can save one whole tree.

Q. I received so many beautiful poinsettias for Christmas, I just hate to throw them away and buy more next year. How can I save these sentimental plants? Will they bloom again next Christmas?



A. The best policy for handling poinsettias is to use them, then lose them! However, some folks are sentimental or maybe skeptical that people won't love them enough to give replacement plants next year. Regardless, the poinsettia plant you received for Christmas can be brought into color next year. The results usually aren't worth the effort since the flowers (colored bracts) you produce won't be of the same quality as the ones you had on the plants last year.

After the most of the poinsettia leaves fall off, reduce the watering and store the dormant plant in a cool, well ventilated place at 60 degrees F. or above (the garage is an excellent place for these less than attractive plants).

In March prune back the stems to about 6 inches above the ground and re-pot the plant into a container which is one to two inches larger in diameter than the original pot. A good potting mix, one of the commercially prepared potting mixes, should be used.

Water the plant thoroughly and place it in a sunny window, keeping it at 70 to 75 degrees F. When new growth begins, the poinsettia should be fertilized every two weeks with a water soluble, complete fertilizer. The rate recommended for pot plants on the label of the fertilizer container should be used.

Once the danger of frost is past, the plant can be moved outdoors where it received moderate shade in mid-afternoon. As growth develops, the top can be cut or pinched back leaving three or four leaves on each shoot. This procedure should be repeated each time the plant sends out new shoots until mid-August. Then bring the plant indoors and set it near a sunny window where the temperature will remain between 65 to 70 degrees F.

DON'T PLANT THE POINSETTIA IN THE GROUND. If you do you will have an earth-bound plant which will be more difficult to color at the right time. To have the plant in full bloom by Christmas, you must keep it in complete darkness from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. starting the first week in October and continuing until Thanksgiving. Flowering will be delayed if the plant receives any supplemental lighting during this period. The poinsettia will set flower buds only after being exposed to the short day (10 hours of light or less) for about 10 weeks. In the daytime the plant must be in a sunny location for maximum growth and development of bracts and flowers. Continue to apply water soluble fertilizer until mid-December, then reduce applications to one-half the normal amount.

It possesses the same full-bodied flavor of the toilet bowl, yet it has a distinctive woody taste.



Rake the last of the fall leaves from your lawn. If you leave a pile of wet, matted leaves now you'll have big dead spots next spring.

Fertilize pansies, snapdragons and ornamental kale and cabbage with a fertilizer that contains ^nitrate nitrogen^, which helps your plants grow and bloom in cold soil.

Keep holiday plants in the coolest indoor spot possible. Otherwise the flowers and leaves will drop prematurely.

Sprinkle pine straw over bulb foliage that has emerged too soon. The green leaves won't be hurt by the cold but the straw will help hide them.

Prune your evergreen shrubbery and bring the cuttings indoors. Juniper, holly and magnolia foliage is quite decorative. Use holly and nandina berries for a red accent in table centerpieces.

Poinsettias do not need fertilizing now but they do need watering. Check the dryness of the soil daily to keep them looking their brilliant best.

Prune short stubs and dead limbs from trees now that all the leaves are gone.

Ficus plants that lose leaves are reacting to insufficient light or a drafty site. Can you move yours to a better place in your house?

Poke holes in the foil wrapping on pots of holiday plants and set them in individual saucers. Otherwise accumulated water will cause root rot.

Bird feeders bring lots of colorful activity to a yard in cold weather. Most bird experts recommend black oil sunflower seed for general feeding. Thistle seed and suet cakes attracts birds you might not have seen before.

Rather than a bottle of wine, bring a houseplant as a gift to holiday parties. Amaryllis, ornamental pepper, Christmas cactus or kalanchoe will be appreciated for weeks to come. Water trees and shrubs you planted this fall. Evergreen plants in particular need regular watering, even in cold weather. Apply 1 gallon per foot of height.

Purchase pots of paperwhite narcissus, African violet or gloxinia for your office and home to bring color and a touch of perfume to the air.

Plant woody vines like Carolina Jessamine, wisteria and cross vine now. Make sure to place them next to a sturdy arbor and loosely tie the young vine to it with twine.

Houseplants don't need many nutrients in the winter. Use houseplant fertilizer at half strength. Don't water them unless the soil feels dry one inch deep.

Pull mulch at least six inches away from tree trunks. Some professional landscapers pile it high and don't pull it back - setting a bad example for all of us.

Remove the faded blooms and bloom stalks from amaryllis but allow the leaves to remain. Water only when the soil feels dry.

Fireplace ashes can be scattered over your lawn. They will provide a bit of phosphorus and potassium plus counteract acidity. Spread no more than ten lb. per 1000 square feet per month.





Helleborus x hybridus Royal Heritage™

The Lenten Rose is one of the earliest perennials to bloom, and extremely easy to grow. Plants produce a bushy clump of thick, leathery evergreen leaves. Flower stalks burst from the ground in late winter. This terrific strain produces blooms in shades from white through to pink, red, maroon and near black. Site these where they will stay many years, since the plants resent being disturbed. Trimming the old leaves to the ground in late winter will make the show of flowers more easily seen.

Executive Board

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sbgvol@uga.edu

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greent39@yahoo.com

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Athens Area Master Gardener Association Committee Chairs and Other Leadership	Carol Wolf - Flower Garden at PAR 706.613.1122 CarolWolf@charter.net
Alice Zwaagstra - Projects Committee Chair 706.769.1435 alice@zwaagstra@net	Elizabeth Thurmond - Membership 706.354.0055 ethurmond@gmail.com
Merry Anderson & Pam Bracken - Clarke PAR Vegetable Gardens (Spring & Summer) 706.549.4121 merry.anderson@att.net 706.548.3861 pamb824@aol.com	Heather Gray-Jordan - Hospitality 706.453.9757 hgheather29@gmail.com
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Bob Wolf - Clarke PAR Vegetable Gardens (Winter) 706.613.1122 robertwolf@charter.net	Shirley Baker - Historian and Photographer 706.546.0325 ShirleyBaker555@gmail.com

AAMGA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
Athens Area Master Gardener Association
January 1, 2012 - December 31, 2012

Please check one of the boxes below and include your name even if your contact info hasn't changed.

AAMGA Member (\$10) 

Friend of AAMGA (\$20) 

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ GA Zip: _____ - _____

Best Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

(Be sure to put AAMGAlistserv@gmail.com on your safe list in your email program.)

Make checks payable to AAMGA, fill in this form and either bring to our next meeting or mail with the completed form to:

Teddy Lapaquette
129 College Street
Fairmont, GA 30139