MEETING SCHEDULE

June’s meeting will be in the Calloway Building at the State Botanical Garden on the 16th at 6:00 pm. There are several options for next month’s program so look for upcoming details.

Garden Party

May On June 5th we will enjoy Kristi Sego’s wildflower garden located on Cleveland road in Bogart. (See page 14)

Unless otherwise notified, our meetings will take place at 6:00 pm on the third Tuesday of each month and in the Gardenside Room downstairs below the Conservatory level.

Mike Sikes
Vice President & Program Chair

Executive Board

President - Anne Walker
Vice President - Mike Sikes
Secretary - Kay Petroff
Treasurer - Shirley Baker
Athens-Clarke County Extension Agent: Amanda Tedrow

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Elizabeth Thurmond
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AAMGAlistserv@gmail.com
The Monthly Newsletter of the Athens Area Master Gardener Association

AAMGA Committees
Audit: Ruth Smith, Chair
Members: Jackie Williams, Susan Drinkard

Budget: Doug Lair, Chair
Members: David Hoechst, Merry Anderson

By Laws: George Watson
Members: Bob & Carol Wolf

Historian: Kay Petroff

Hospitality: Heather Gray-Jordan
Cheryl & Frank Johnson

Membership: Jean Ryan, Chair
Members: John Aitkens

Nominating: Jean Colquett, Chair

Programs: Mike Sikes, Chair
Members: Gary Wade and Jean Colquett

Photography: Andrea Fischer
Publicity:

TREASURER’S REPORT
Apr 21 to May 19, 2015
Beginning Balance 16,374.28

Deposit-Member Dues 70.00
Deposit-Bulb Sales 694.23
Deposit-Raffle Sales 36.00
Deposit-Plant Sales 4,464.90
Total Deposits 5,265.13

Expenses:
Hostess Expense 22.48
Plant Sale Expense 44.00
Gaines Garden Club 9.20
Oconee PAR 36.36
Clarke PAR 445.70
Barnyard Garden @Ugarden 285.87
Athena Gardens 18.94
Misc Admin. 34.62
Total Expenses: 897.17
Ending Balance: 20,742.24

Submitted by Shirley Baker, Treasurer
Shirleybaker555@gmail.com

AAMGA Projects
Projects: Brenda Beckham, Chair
BBbeckha2@bellsouth.net
Members: Gary Wade and Dortha Jackson

Clarke PAR: Merry Anderson & Pam Bracken, Co-Chairs
Merry: merry.anderson@att.net
Pam: pamb824@aol.com

Winter Garden: Gary Wade Gwade@uga.edu

Flower Garden at Clarke PAR: Jill Hyche, Chair
jillhyche@gmail.com

Flower Bulb Project: Andrea Woodall & Jean Colquett, Co-Chairs
Andrea: aawoodall58@gmail.com  Jean: greent39@yahoo.com

Oconee PAR: Gary Wade & Frank Johnson, Co-Chairs
Gary: Gwade@uga.edu  Frank: frankandcherylj@bellsouth.net

Junior Master Gardener Classes:
Gaines School Elementary - Brenda Beckham, Chair
BBbeckha2@bellsouth.net
Dortha Jacobson: dorthajacobson@yahoo.com

AAMGA Plant Sale: Heather Gray Jordan & Donna McPipkin, Co-Chairs
Heather: hgheather29@gmail.com
Donna: DYates01@yahoo.com

Horticultural Therapy Project: Brenda Beckham, Chair
BBbeckha2@bellsouth.net

Backyard Pollinator Garden at SBG
Co-Chairmen: Jackie Williams, Shirley Baker
Jackie: jkwill82@hotmail.com  Shirley: ShirleyBaker555@gmail.com

Barnyard Demonstration Garden at U Garden
Co-Chairmen: Shirley Baker, Petty Thomas
ShirleyBaker555@gmail.com  PettyThomas@gmail.com

Salvation Army Vegetable Garden
Chairman: David Hagaman
dchagaman@gmail.com

Athena Gardens Retirement Community Vegetable Garden
Chairman: Gary Wade GWade@uga.edu

Gardening with Native Plants Workshop
Athens-Clarke County Extension is holding a free Gardening with Native Plants Workshop on Wednesday, June 17 from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Athens-Clarke County Library (2025 Baxter Street, Athens, GA 30606). Attend this workshop to learn what native plants are suitable for Georgia and ways to incorporate them into your land-
MINUTES FOR MAY 19, 2015 MEETING
Kay Petroff, Secretary

The May meeting was held at the Barnyard portion of the UGArden with President Anne Walker presiding. Finger-food refreshments were served. She called the meeting to order and Vice-President Mike Sikes introduced the speaker, Dr. David Berle, Director of the UGArden. Dr. Berle gave an overview of the garden including groups that are involved and projects that have been accomplished. Members can learn more by visiting the UGArden.uga.edu website or on Facebook. Volunteers are welcome.

Meeting Begins
Anne Walker welcomed everyone and encouraged members to volunteer at the UGArden. She presented a gift to Jackie Williams to thank her for her 2 years of service as President.

April Secretary’s Report – Filed as submitted by Kay Petroff.

April Treasurer’s Report – Filed as submitted by Shirley Baker.

Garden Party - Those attending the Garden Party at the Extension Office on May 15, enjoyed the beautiful garden and a lovely evening. The next party is scheduled for June 5 at Kristi Sego’s garden. Directions will be sent soon.

Plant Sale Report - Heather Gray-Jordan reported that sales at the Extension office totaled $3,507.90 in spite of the pouring rain. The sales from the Marigold Festival were $957.00. She thanked all those who donated plants and volunteered with the sales. Anne Walker thanked both Heather and Donna McPipkin-Yates for their work to make the sales so successful.

Projects Reports

Clarke PAR- Merry Anderson reported that all beds have been planted and doing well. As of Sunday there were small squash and tomatoes on the vines. She thanked Jill Hyche, Gary Wade and David Hagaman for moving the 7 tons of compost into the beds. The watering system is working and students helped to plant the last 4 beds. Volunteers are needed to work in the garden during July and August.

Oconee PAR - Frank Johnson reported that the garden has been tilled, 20 rows set and planted. The irrigation is in. Workdays are scheduled for Thursday mornings. Members are encouraged to volunteer.

Horticultural Therapy Project - Madonna Roberts reported 12-15 residents with varied interest level attending. They do different projects and members have as much fun as the residents.

Junior Garden Club - Brenda Beckham reported that the last meeting of the year was 2 weeks ago. Students enjoyed the experience and the project will be repeated next school year.

Salvation Army Garden - David Hagaman said the garden is fully planted with potatoes ready for harvest and a great winter squash crop. Many volunteers and interns have worked in the garden. The sprinkler has been fixed. He thanked AAMGA for helping to fund the project.

UGArden - Shirley Baker said much had been accomplished in the area. She and Petty Thomas are open to ideas from members to create demonstration gardens. Plans for the next portion of the project are unclear at this time. Petty Thomas shared that students had helped to clean out the area and install gardens. She also thanked Bob Wolf and Doug Lair for building the trellis and Carol Wolf and Susan Drinkard for their work.

Pollinator Garden at SBG – Jackie Williams thanked all who helped at the recent workday. Many of the plants from last year came back. The goal is to have 3 blooming plants every season.

Bulb Sale - Jean Colquett had the poster of bulbs being offered and order forms at the meeting. Members are encouraged to order before the June 15th deadline. Anne Walker thanked Liz Lohmueller for her work on the bulb poster.

Athena Gardens - Gary Wade reported that there are 25 raised beds planted with 6 residents participating. Most of the work has been done so only 2 volunteers are needed each Friday morning to help the residents. He thanked Frank Johnson, Cathy Roth, Brenda Browning and Lamara Martin for their work to get the project going.
Minutes, continued

New Business

Refreshments - Starting next month each meeting will be a potluck to give Frank and Cheryl Johnson and Heather Gray-Jordan a break. Members who want to enjoy food and fellowship should arrive at 6:00. Members attending just the meeting should arrive at 6:30.

Volunteering - Amanda Tedrow, Extension Agent, sends email notices for volunteer opportunities. Members are encouraged to sign up.

Plants - Gary Wade had tomato and pepper plants leftover from the PAR garden for members to take home.

Next Meeting - Mike Sikes reminded everyone that June’s meeting will be in the Calloway Building at the State Botanical Garden. There are several options for next month’s program so look for upcoming details.

Raffle - There was a last call for raffle tickets sales before choosing the winning tickets.

The meeting was adjourned by President Anne Walker.

-Ramblings from the Field-
Gary L. Wade, Ph.D., retired UGA Extension Horticulturist

Palms for the Piedmont

To most folks, the word palm triggers thoughts of Florida, southern California, Hawaii or Georgia’s coastal islands. But you don’t have to live in any of these areas to enjoy palms. There are a few cold-hardy palms that will grow as far north as Tennessee and North Carolina where the average winter temperature may reach zero to -10°F. Palms not only lend a tropical look to the landscape, they also are low-maintenance, drought tolerant and evergreen.

The Windmill Palm, *Trachycarpus fortunei*, is one of the hardiest of all palms. It will grow throughout Georgia and has been reported to survive temperatures as low as -10°F. During the deep freeze on January 23, 2003, windmill palms in Athens weathered 9°F without a scratch. The windmill palm looks particularly nice when planted in groups of 3 to 5 to accent the corner of a building or courtyard entrance. It’s also a great plant for use around swimming pools because it does not drop litter into the water like deciduous trees. It grows 20 to 25 feet at maturity and has fan-shaped leaves and a brown trunk covered with burlap-like fibers. It is native to China.

Needle Palm, *Rhapidophyllum hystrix*, is a clumping, understory palm with deep green fan-shaped leaves. It’s also native to the Southeast and has become an endangered species as its native habitat is becoming increasingly destroyed by development. Its name stems from the numerous needle-like spines along its petioles, which are usually not a problem until pruning becomes necessary. Once established, it’s a care-free plant and one of the hardiest of all palms, reported to survive winter temperatures as low as 5 degrees below zero. Surprisingly, Needle Palm does better inland than it does along the coast because it does not like salt spray. It has a mound-like growth habit, growing five feet tall and wide, so a single specimen will fill a large space. Some beautiful old specimens can be found growing at some of the historic estates in Madison, GA.

Continued on next page
Ramblings, continued

**Saw Palmetto, Serenoa repens**, is a native palm species commonly found in Georgia. This is the small palm one sees growing in large quantities under pine trees along the highways in south Georgia. It grows 5 to 10 feet tall and occasionally forms a trunk. A form with silver foliage is available in the trade and is highly prized among collectors. The berries of this plant are harvested from the wild, processed into capsules and sold in the pharmaceutical industry to treat prostate cancer. This palm would not be hardy in the Piedmont without special cold protection. Temperatures as low as 10°F to 15°F will cause significant foliar damage. Growing it in a container for moving indoors may be a cold protection method for those wanting to grow the plant in the Piedmont.

**Dwarf Palmetto, Sabal minor**, is native to river floodplains throughout the southeast. It grows 4 to 5 feet high and wide with green to blue-green fronds. Although it’s not as hardy as needle palm, it has been reported to withstand temperatures down to 10°F without damage. Due to its small stature, this palm looks best when planted in clumps of 3 to 5 plants. Moist, sunny locations are preferred. Unlike the Saw Palmetto, *Serenoa repens*, that grows rampantly throughout the woodlands of south Georgia and Florida, dwarf palmetto is not invasive and does not bear needle-like spines like the saw palmetto.

**Cabbage Palm, also called the Palmetto Palm, Sabal palmetto**, is the state tree of South Carolina and is native to coastal areas from North Carolina to Florida. It is also found in the wild throughout the Florida panhandle and parts of southern Georgia. It usually can be grown without cold protection along a line from Columbus to Augusta, but cold protection is advised in areas to the north of that line. This means planting it in a sheltered courtyard or on the southeast side of a structure where it is sheltered from cold winter winds, and wrapping the fronds and center bud in blankets to protect them from freezing when temperatures dip below 25°F. A courtyard planting in the town of Greensboro, GA, just south of Athens, contains some beautiful old cabbage palms.

A more cold-hardy alternative to the Cabbage Palm in the Piedmont is the Birmingham Palmetto, *Sabal 'Birmingham'*. This cold hardy form of Sabal palm was discovered outside Birmingham, Alabama and is known to have survived temperatures to 0°F. It grows like a large shrub, and will eventually form a small, squatty trunk after several years. However, it is not expected to grow as tall as the cabbage palm.

Winter protection of palms involves tying the fronds together in bundles and covering them with burlap or blankets. Small palms can be covered with a cardboard box. Protecting the central bud is most critical because it is where new growth originates. Wrapping the trunk, which is commonly done, actually does little to protect the palm from cold injury because the center bud is the most cold sensitive part of the plant, not the trunk. Once well established, the palms listed above should be able to survive winters in the Athens area without winter protection.

For more information on Hardy Palms for the Southeast, check out the Southeastern Palm Society’s web site: [http://www.sepalms.org/page/index.html](http://www.sepalms.org/page/index.html)

*Palms in the Wade Landscape, Watkinsville*

![Windmill Palm](image1)

![Windmill Palms, Trachycarpusfortunei](image2)
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

HOPE Garden

At Athens Greenfest 2015, The Athens Land Trust awarded The Salvation Army the Community Garden of the Year. Heather Benham (ED) and Alﬁe Vick (Board Member) presented a Golden Pitchfork to Adrienne Bumpers, Director of Social Services, and Janie Day Whitworth, H.O.P.E. Garden Intern, to signify the award. In the photo are Dave Hagaman, AAM-GA project director for the Salvation Army Hope Garden, Adrienne Bumpers, and Janie Day Whitworth.

Athens-Clarke County Plant a Row for the Hungry

Yea! All 14 beds are planted and harvesting has begun! A huge thank you goes out to the volunteers – Jill Hyche, Zita Portillo, David Hagaman, Bob Quinn, Andrea Woodall, Cathy Roth, Monica Mutombo, and Gary Wade—who gathered on April 29 to move seven tons of compost from David Hoescht’s truck to the four relocated beds. It’s amazing what can be done in just a couple of hours with a great crew. Thanks, too, to Andrea Woodall and Kay Petroff who worked with two students from Clarke Middle to plant the last four beds on May 14.

Our first harvest was during the week of May 19, a full two weeks earlier than in 2014. With good weather, a functioning irrigation system, and great volunteers, we should be able to reach our goal of surpassing the 2,061 pounds of produce we donated in 2014. Keep up the good work!

Please let Pam Bracken know if you can help! Just zap Pam Bracken an e-mail at pam.bracken@georgiacenter.uga.edu and she will add you to the schedule!

Merry Anderson

Rockin’ and Rollin’ at Oconee PAR

Gary L. Wade and Frank Johnson, project co-chairs

April rains delayed the planting of the Oconee Plant-a-Row until May 15, but we now have 15 rows planted with drip irrigation, mulch and ground cloth between the rows. On May 21 we installed trellises on two rows of pole beans and a row of cucumbers. Since the field went fallow so long, many weeds had matured, and they cast their seeds freely when the garden was plowed, so we anticipate a major crop of young weed seedlings and lots of ho-ho-hoeing in our future.

Special thanks to David Berle for bringing two loads of beautiful compost from the UGA Bio-conversion Center that we carefully added to each row before planting. We also want to thank Paul and Jerry Thomas of Thomas Orchards for providing the land, plowing for us, and providing us the use of their well water for irrigation.

Please join us if you can on Thursday mornings from 9 am to noon at Thomas Orchards, Hwy. 441 By-pass, just south of Watkinsville. There is always a lot to do, and we never turn anyone away. Produce goes to the Action Agency in Bishop that provides assistance to low-income seniors in Oconee County.

GWade@uga.edu frankandcherylj@bellsouth.net
Vegetables are Thriving at Athena Gardens Retirement Complex

Gary L. Wade, project chair

This is the first year Athens Area Master Gardeners have helped the residents of Athena Gardens plant and tend their vegetable gardens. Currently there are 6 residents of the retirement complex gardening on raised beds that were developed 4 years ago with a grant from Athens Land Trust. The beauty of this garden is that the grant also paid for chain link fencing 15-ft. high around the entire garden to keep out deer. Master Gardeners helped the residents obtain the seeds and plants needed for their summer garden. David Berle delivered a load of compost, and the complex manager bought 30 bales of pine straw for mulch. We helped them get their crops in the ground.

Kudos to Frank Johnson, Brenda Browning, Cathy Roth and Lamara Martin for helping with this project. Now that the garden is planted, two of us are going by each Friday morning from 9 am to 11 am to assist the residents with weeding, staking, fertilizing and other tasks needing done. The residents are no strangers to gardening, so they know how to tend their crops.

We anticipate that we may need help from other Master Gardeners with canning expertise when harvest season is in full swing. The residents indicated that they don’t know a lot about canning but would like to preserve some of their produce for use next winter, particularly the tomatoes. We’ll give a shout out for help when that time comes.

"Look deep into nature. You will understand everything better."

- Albert Einstein
Athens-Clarke County Plant a Row for the Hungry

Images showing people working on various gardening tasks.
PLANT A ROW Workday, Continued
GREAT WORKDAY AT THE BARNYARD!

We had a great workday at our new Barnyard Garden on April 28th located in the UGarden complex on Milledge. We had eight Master Gardeners who helped and numerous students who came through in waves every two hours.

The flower beds had been previously tilled by UGarden staff and amended but the students were a great help in outlining all the beds with stones and broken pieces of concrete that were on site. We then proceeded to plant out eight different flower beds including the Rain Garden with irises and elephant ears, the Keyhole Garden with mostly medicinal herbs, the Pollinator Gardens with multi-season blooming plants, and a Cutting Garden with zinnias and sunflowers.

We were especially grateful to Bob Wolf and Doug Lair (and Carol Wolf) for building a beautiful wood arbor to grow some gourds. A big thank you also to Petty Thomas for her beautiful signs and clever caricatures of a rooster and a woodpecker. More of those to come.

The students were a delight to work with—some with a great deal of knowledge having worked in their grandfather’s garden—and some not so much, who required a little more supervision and instruction. Most of the students are not in horticulture programs and this may be their one chance to learn something about gardening for later in life.

Our next step is to put in drip-line irrigation in all the flower beds and nurture and tend the gardens through the summer. This is an evolving garden and when the students return in the fall, we will be planning more gardens and calling on master gardeners for help.

Shirley Baker
Co-Chair

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

- How much water should you apply? Each week a shrub needs one gallon per foot of height.
- Low limbs in the way when you mow? You can safely remove one fourth of the foliage of any healthy tree during the growing season.
- Collect the seeds from foxglove stalks. Scratch the soil around the plant, scatter the seed and cover with a bit of earth. Water occasionally and the seedlings that sprout this year will bloom next year.
- Look for small new seedlings under your Lenten rose. They can be transplanted now to other spots.
- Lure slugs and snails under a hollowed out half-cantaloupe near your hosta. Check at noon every few days and scrape them into a bucket of soapy water.
- Use soaker hoses and a water timer to irrigate annuals, perennials and shrubs. The hose conserves water and the timer makes it easy. Most hoses apply 1 gallon per foot per hour.
- Remove stakes and guy wires from trees that have been planted for several months. They can stand on their own now.
- Mulch your vegetable garden. Try using three sheets of newspaper to cover the ground around each plant, then cover the paper with straw or leaves. Otherwise, pine straw or wheat straw by itself works fine.
- Plant annuals in small beds that make a visual impact but are still easy to water. Try color bowls or large container plantings near the entry to your home.
- Fertilize outdoor houseplants regularly. Constant watering in the summer washes nutrients from the soil.
- Raise the height of your mower by one notch. It will help your lawn grass withstand dry weather. Remove the faded flowers from geraniums and marigolds to help them make more blooms.
- Pick okra and squash regularly. Just one fully ripe fruit halts blooming on the entire plant.
- Keep your lawnmower blade sharp. A ragged cut makes grass use more water.
- Big green caterpillars on parsley and fennel are the precursors to beautiful swallowtail butterflies. Try not to kill them.

IT IS EASY BEING GREEN

Garlic (Allium sativum) has been cultivated for more than 3,000 years. Is it any wonder when you look at the many and varied culinary and medicinal purposes it has? Garlic is widely used in the kitchen and its health benefits are outstanding as a natural antibiotic as well as having antiseptic properties. In organic gardening it is often used as the base for various insect deterrents. Not only that, it has anti-fungal properties too.

Step-by-Step cultivating tips: Where’s the best place to grow it?
Choose an open, sunny position. As a companion plant, garlic can kind of disappear between larger, leafy plants – especially if the stems suddenly die back. Now I’m not suggesting you don’t grow garlic as a companion plant, but also have a plot of its own so that you can be sure you’ll have enough to last you the season. A plot about 1m (1 yard) square is big enough to grow about 60 bulbs.

What soil does garlic prefer?
Garlic is a bulb, so it needs quite a well drained soil otherwise it may just rot under the ground as the bulb is starting to form. Soil that is friable with plenty of organic matter is great for garlic. Dig in blood and bone or similar organic fertilizer prior to planting, or you can top dress with compost. Don’t add fresh manures. They are often high in nitrogen, which will encourage the green stems rather than the development of healthy bulbs. If you have heavy clay soils, try growing your garlic in raised beds, or alternatively you can grow them in pots.

When do I plant it?
Garlic grows through winter, but it needs to be planted in autumn (fall), then harvested in summer. Planting time depends a bit on your own climate. The hotter the autumn temperatures, the later the planting. If you live in a sub-tropical climate, it may be best to leave it till winter. Garlic has two growth stages. Roots and foliage grow through autumn and winter. Then the bulbs begin to develop with the warmer weather. By summer the bulbs have grown to a good size and by about mid summer the foliage will start to wither.

What bulbs should I choose?
Garlic bulbs are made up of individual corms. Just pull each corm away from the bulb to plant. These will grow into your new garlic bulbs. To start with you might have to buy commercial garlic bulbs, unless you know someone who grows organically who can give (sell or swap) you your starting bulbs.

Garlic from the supermarket or fruit and vegetable shops may have been sprayed with chemicals to stop them shooting. Some garlic is imported and could have a different growing season, so will most likely not grow. A good place to try is your local organic vegetables store.

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Garlic from the supermarket or fruit and vegetable shops may have been sprayed with chemicals to stop them shooting. Some garlic is imported and could have a different growing season, so will most likely not grow. A good place to try is your local organic vegetables store.
Yesterday, I saw sweet, spicy globe and Thai basil at Thomas Orchards in Watkinsville, then lemon, lime and sweet basil when visiting a friend's garden and looking at the vast array of plants she had grown from seed (a lime basil made it home with me to be planted beside my sweet basil plants). Basil is reportedly easy to grow from seed, but I never have. It seems buying the few plants I need from each variety is much simpler and not much more expensive than a packet of seeds.

Choose a sunny site for your basil plants; they love heat and sun. If you do decide to grow basil from seed, sow the seed directly in the ground, following the packet directions. Your seedlings will sprout in 8 to 14 days. If transplanting, space the plants 10-12 inches apart. Keep all blooms pinched off, to get a bushier plant and direct all the plant's energy into producing leaves. You can cut the plant back to about 4 inches high every month to discourage flowering and create bushier plants with tender, young leaves.

Basil is one of the first plants to get damaged by frost, so plant it after all danger of frost has passed. Temperatures below 42 degrees will kill seedlings. Basil roots easily from cuttings, so cuttings taken in late summer can winter-over in your home or greenhouse. This extends your harvest season to a full 12 months.

Basil is a tender annual herb, a native of Asia and Africa with square stems characteristic of the mint family. There are 64 species of this plant, with numerous varieties available. Basil is quick-growing, supplying you with wonderful, fresh flavor throughout the summer. It blends well into the perennial border, but keep it away from sprays and chemicals if you are harvesting it.

Basil is a most sacred plant to the Hindus of India, where it is thought to be the manifestation of the goddess Tulasi and known by the common name tulsi. Sacred basil is a Hindu symbol of love, eternal life and protection. Basil has been found in recipes from 14th century France and 15th century England. A 16th century herbal recommends smelling basil to cure the "infirmities of the heart" take away melancholy, and "maketh a man merry and glad" (Gerard, 1597).

At the same time, some English herbalists (including Culpepper) believed that basil bred scorpions and smelling basil would cause venomous creatures to breed in the brain. Basil found in the garden was evidence the grower was a witch in Salem, Mass.

A Greek legend tells of Empress Helena bringing basil to Greece after finding it at the crucifixion site. In Italy, where a common name for basil is kiss-me-Nicholas, it is considered a sign of love. An Italian girl with a sprig of basil behind her ear is looking for a kiss, a man with basil in his lapel is looking for a mate. I think Italy was a more enjoyable place to live than Salem in 1692, especially for us basil fans.

Basil flavors blend wonderfully with tomatoes, tomato sauce, fruit, cheese, green salads, eggs, rice, pasta, onion, fish, beef, and pork. I combine ground turkey, chopped onion, green pepper and basil in a frying pan to cook, then spoon the mixture and chopped tomatoes into pita bread or wrap it in a tortilla. Fresh basil leaves can enliven a sandwich.

Basil is great to flavor herb butter: Soften a stick of unsalted butter, cream together with two tablespoons of chopped basil and a few drops of lemon juice, then place in small containers or molds. This will last for a week in the refrigerator or can be frozen. This, with a loaf of fresh bread, will be a hit at any gathering.

Using fresh basil is the best choice, but you can use several methods of storing basil for cooking use. The best time to harvest basil for storing is just before blooming. You can dry basil by hanging or laying on screens. Store dried herbs in airtight containers.

Basil—continued on next page
Cottingham: Basil continued

One of the best methods of storing basil sprigs is in olive oil. One source recommends mashing the leaves, adding some olive oil to make a paste, then freezing in ice cube trays. Another option is covering chopped leaves with a little water in ice cube trays and tossing these cubes into soups and stews. The classic pesto is a blend of fresh basil, hard cheeses, garlic, pine nuts and olive oil and is used to add flavor to pasta, pizza, sauces and grilled chicken. Basil can also flavor vinegars.

I could not imagine planting a single tomato plant without taking the time to also plant basil. Perhaps it is because it is a heat loving annual and complements homegrown tomatoes so well. Perhaps it is the amazing fragrance, by far one of my favorite herbs. Pick up a few varieties at a nursery and liven up your cooking this summer.

Basil Varieties

The botanical name for basil is Ocimum, from a Greek word meaning "to be fragrant." Below is a description of some of the more popular basils found in nurseries and catalogs.

- **Sweet Basil** (Ocimum basilicum): This is the most common basil and easy to find in all nurseries and seed displays. It grows 2 to 2 1/2 feet tall and is a bright green. No garden should be without a few of these plants.

- **Miniature Basil** (O. b. 'Minimum'): This basil is much smaller and more compact than sweet basil. It grows 12 inches high and makes a good indoor plant. This is a good basil for cooking.

- **Cinnamon Basil, Lemon Basil** (O. b. 'Citriodorum'), **Licorice Basil, Lime Basil**: These basils have the scent they are named for.

- **Holy Basil, or Sacred Basil** (O. sanctum): This is the basil of the Hindus, with a heady scent. Use fresh leaves in cold salads.

- **Dark Opal Basil** (O. b. 'Dark Opal'): These dense, 2-foot tall, deep purple plants are a striking contrast in the herb garden. This is said to have the best flavor of the purple basils. Used in herb vinegars, coloring them red.

- **Purple Ruffles Basil** (O. b. 'Purple Ruffles'): This purple basil holds its color well. The purple basils tend to have pink flowers, the green basils have white flowers. More ornamental than culinary.

- **Thai basil** (O. b. 'Siam Queen' is one of the best): Part of the cuisines of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, with licorice/anise overtones.
Athens Area Master Gardener Association’s Garden Party

June 5th at 6 p.m.

Kristi and Charlie Sego
670 Cleveland Rd. Bogart
(1 mile off Atlanta Highway, turn at the light near Bojangles)

Charlie and Kristi are inviting AAMGA members, spouses or significant others for our show of spring wildflowers. Enjoy wine and cheese while wandering through the flowers. Parking is ample but please bring a lawn chair and wear walking shoes.

Drawings at Monthly Meetings

If you want to bring something for our drawing at the next meeting, please give Anne Walker a call. She wants to be sure we don’t have more than 20 prizes at a meeting. 3 tickets for $2!

Anne Walker
cell: 404.852.8910
home: 706.342.9471
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