



The Garden Dirt

April 2011



FROM THE GROUND UP

This is my last newsletter as your president. I have really enjoyed this part of the job as much as the actual gardening. Through research for each newsletter, I have learned much more about gardening, plants and animals than I previously knew and I have enjoyed every minute of it.

This has been a record-breaking year for AAMGA. We donated over a TON of produce to two local food banks. Oconee PAR donated 1,253 pounds of produce to the N.E. Georgia Food Bank and Clarke PAR donated around 750 pounds of produce to the Athens Food Bank. This is more than we have ever donated before. This is quite an achievement, and I was happy to be a part of establishing the Oconee PAR with the generous help of Paula and Jerry Thomas of Thomas Orchard. I truly believe that the only limit to our food donations in the future is the amount of effort we receive from our members. I know we can make 2011 an even greater year of donations to food banks from our gardens.

Also in the past year, we completed work on the raised beds at the Oconee County Senior Center, built a garden at the Butterfly Dreams hippotherapy farm, helped fifth grade 4-H members in Oconee County prepare for county-wide competition and district competition, participated in Reward Day for all 4-H members who entered competition, donated \$100 to the winning Middle Schooler in the field of Plant Sciences at the N.E. Georgia Regional Science and Engineering Fair held at Athens Tech, and donated two scholarships of \$1,000 each to two horticulture students at U.GA.

As I leave office, there are still 3 projects in the works: the Downtown Athens Rebeautification Project, a partnership with the Rain Harvesting Project at the UGarden, a possible partnership with a new garden being installed on the site of the N.E. Georgia Food Bank property and the King's Bridge Middle School Garden and PAR .

Also this year we partnered with Thyme After Thyme and Thomas Orchard to sell rain barrels. In the future, we may be partnering with Athens Land Trust for future sales to them at reduced rates should their project be approved by Clarke County.

Beginning April 1, Andrea Fischer will take over as your president. I hope you will welcome her as warmly as you did me. She is going to be an excellent president, with a strong background as Volunteer Coordinator at the BotGarden as well as her work with the Master Gardener classes and helping our new members earn all of their required hours for certification. Her friendly personality will serve her well. Hooray, Andrea!

Judy Hawks

Executive Board

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AAMGA Meeting Minutes for March

Our meeting was called to order by President Judy Hawks.

Presentation: Jim Pope, the volunteer coordinator for the Northeast Georgia Food Bank told us about their large gardening projects. When the time is right, he hopes to get some expert advice and assistance from our members.

Minutes included in the newsletter and website: B.J. Garrett moved that the minutes be accepted as published and Teddy Lapaquette seconded the motion. There were no objections.

Hospitality Committee: Hal Short, Cheryl Johnson and Jackie Williams provided the refreshments.

New Projects committee chair, in Alice Zwaagstra's absence, Judy Hawks asked for reports:

- Rain Barrels** – Frank Johnson let us know he took the last five barrels to Thyme after Thyme. There are 64 barrels ready to put together. He also mentioned the possibility of selling some to the Athens Land Trust when they are ready and at a possibly reduced amount.
- Plant Sale** – Anne Walker passed around a signup sheet for volunteers for our plant sale on April 23rd at the extension office. She provided plant tags and asked us to put prices and plant names on the plants before we drop them off.

Announcements from Connie Cottingham: There is a lot going on at the botanical garden this spring! Please go to their website at <http://www.uga.edu/botgarden/> so you won't miss anything.

New Business: Jackie Williams announced the slate of officers and asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Teddy Lapaquette nominated Jean Colquette as vice president, George Watson made the motion to accept and Frank Johnson seconded the motion. A vote was taken by secret ballot. Our new officers are: Andrea Fischer, President; Jean Colquitt, Vice President; Teddy Lapaquette, Treasurer; Elizabeth Thurmond, Secretary.

Shirley Baker gave a report for the audit committee. She and Anne Walker audited our books for 2010 and had several bookkeeping suggestions.

Announcements from Amanda Tedrow: Amanda left a lot of pamphlets and fertilizer samples for the membership.

Program: Dr. Wilf Nicholls, Director of the State Botanical Garden of Georgia, let us know about the many volunteer opportunities at the botanical garden.

The Meeting Adjourned at 7:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Thurmond, Secretary

APRIL PLANT OF THE MONTH: DAISY

The name "daisy" comes from the Anglo-Saxon "daes eage" meaning day's eye. This symbolizes the way the daisy opens early each morning and closes in the evening. The daisy belongs to the family Asteraceae and is native to north and central Europe. The daisy is not one flower; it is made up of two types of flowers, disk florets and petal-like ray florets. Disk florets are at the center and ray florets are at the periphery; however, their arrangement gives the impression of one single flower. The stems are smooth and leafless and each holds a single daisy. It is a hardy perennial that loves full sun. It is generally not bothered by insects or disease and is relatively drought-tolerant. It is hard to imagine spring without this pretty face.

The daisy is the emblem of Freya, the mother goddess. It is also associated with Venus, and represents innocence and new beginnings. Medieval knights wore daisy chains made by their ladies to wear as they rode into battle as symbols of their ladies' affection and also as a defense of their ladies' honor. The practice commonly used to divine a lover by plucking petals and saying "He loves me, he loves me not" was begun in the Age of Chivalry.

Daisies are very commonly used in herbal medicine, with the flowers used in fresh or dried form. They are used in infusion and tincture forms and applied for inflammatory coughs. They are known as a reliable, safe medicine when used to relieve rheumatic pains or arthritis, and are also used to treat kidney and liver conditions. They are often used in lotions and are one of the main ingredients in L'Occitane en Provence Immortelle series of skin creams, owing to their reputation as an everbloomer (and this, admittedly, does give one hope of becoming a Bellis perennis herself).



Diana Wells, 100 Flowers and How They Got Their Names, Algonquin Press, Chapel Hill, 1997; www.suite101.com; <http://livingartsoriginals.com>

BIRD FEEDERS IN THE SPRING

Some people set out bird feeders during winter and then take the feeders down in spring. However, once you've begun feeding birds, it's best to leave your feeders out for them until plants begin to bear edible seeds. Some birds switch from seeds to insects for sustenance in the spring. They will help control unwanted caterpillars and other insects. Other birds eat only seeds year round. For seed-eating birds, the early spring is a time of very little natural food because plants have just begun growing and have not yet produced flowers or seeds. Since baby birds cannot digest seeds, the parent birds must eat insects, worms and caterpillars to feed their young. By providing bird feeders for the adult birds, you are actually encouraging them to stay in your garden to search out food for their babies. It's a win-win proposition!

CLARKE PAR TO MAKE MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS

After a rather lackluster growing season, it is time to revamp the entire garden at Clarke PAR. New cross-ties need to be installed and older ones need reinforcing with rebar. Bed #8 needs to be put in working order. All of the beds have had pH tests run and every one needs the soil to be amended. We need new compost and mulch; and the irrigation needs expanding and possible re-fitting. The Executive Board has voted to give Clarke PAR a much-needed boost in its budget this year to get everything up and running to its old standard.

On Sunday, March 27, a reception was held for retiring Oconee Extension Agent Henry Hibbs at the Oconee Civic Center. There was a huge crowd on hand to honor his service to this community, and we had quite a few Master Gardeners in attendance. His help has been invaluable to AAMGA, particularly during this past year.

Eat Lots of Fruits & Vegetables

It's been said that God first separated the salt water from the fresh, made dry land, planted a garden, made animals and fish... All before making a human. He made and provided what we'd need before we were born. These are best & more powerful when eaten raw. We're such slow learners...

A sliced Carrot looks like the human eye. The pupil, iris and radiating lines look just like the human eye... And YES, science now shows carrots greatly enhance blood flow to and function of the eyes.

A Tomato has four chambers and is red. The heart has four chambers and is red. All of the research shows tomatoes are loaded with lycopenine and are indeed pure heart and blood food.

Grapes hang in a cluster that has the shape of the heart. Each grape looks like a blood cell and all of the research today shows grapes are also profound heart and blood vitalizing food.

A Walnut looks like a little brain, a left and right hemisphere, upper cerebrums and lower cerebellums. Even the wrinkles or folds on the nut are just like the neo-cortex. We now know walnuts help develop more than three (3) dozen neuron-transmitters for brain function.

Kidney Beans actually heal and help maintain kidney function and yes, they look exactly like the human kidneys.

Celery, Bok Choy, Rhubarb and many more look just like bones. These foods specifically target bone strength. Bones are 23% sodium and these foods are 23% sodium. If you don't have enough sodium in your diet, the body pulls it from the bones, thus making them weak. These foods replenish the skeletal needs of the body.

Avocadoes, Eggplant and Pears target the health and function of the womb and cervix of the female - they look just like these organs. Today's research shows that when a woman eats one avocado a week, it balances hormones, sheds unwanted birth weight, and prevents cervical cancers. And how profound is this? It takes exactly nine (9) months to grow an avocado from blossom to ripened fruit. There are over 14,000 photolytic chemical constituents of nutrition in each one of these foods (modern science has only studied and named about 141 of them).

Figs are full of seeds and hang in twos when they grow. Figs increase the mobility of male sperm and increase the numbers of Sperm as well to overcome male sterility.

Sweet Potatoes look like the pancreas and actually balance the glycemic index of diabetics.

Olives assist the health and function of the ovaries.

Oranges, Grapefruits, and other Citrus fruits look just like the mammary glands of the female and actually assist the health of the breasts and the movement of lymph in and out of the breasts.

Onions look like the body's cells. Today's research shows onions help clear waste materials from all of the body cells. They even produce tears which wash the epithelial layers of the eyes. A working companion, Garlic, also helps eliminate waste materials and dangerous free radicals from the body.

Elizabeth Thurmond

April Garden Chores

*It's finally becoming spring and days are growing longer. The sun is brighter for a longer time every day. Time to repot your houseplants. Remember to keep a pitcher of water at room temperature for watering plants; water comes out of the faucet so cold that it can shock plants.

*Many vegetable plants are sensitive to cold soil, cold wind and late frosts. You need to wait until the danger of frost is past before planting corn, melons, okra and tomatoes. Melons are the most sensitive to cold conditions.

*Move houseplants outdoors gradually. Never place them in full sunshine; filtered shade is best.

*Spray azaleas with insecticidal soap if you have had azalea lace bug problems in the past.

*Plant the seeds of annual flowers such as marigold, cosmos, zinnia and celosia. Mix lots of soil conditioner in beds to help them become drought tolerant.

*Look for aphids clustered at the tips of fast-growing crape myrtle branches. Blast them off with a water hose.

*Plant Easter lilies outdoors after removing their faded blooms.

*Remove guy wires from your fall-planted trees. Trees that move with the wind grow stronger than those supported for more than a few months.

*Examine the backside of euonymus and holly leaves for the white crust that signifies scale insects. Thoroughly spray leaves with horticultural oil.

*Divide over-wintered baskets of Boston fern into four sections. Plant new hanging baskets using two sections of fern in each.

*Plant dahlias, elephant ear, gladiolus and caladiums now.

*Mulch tomatoes immediately after planting to prevent early blight fungus from splashing from the soil onto the leaves.

*Use a soaker hose in your garden to water rows of vegetables. You'll prevent disease and weeds plus save water.

*Check with local Extension Service office for pamphlets about planting annual flowers. "Flowering Annuals for Georgia Gardens" is free. Call 706 - 613-3640 or go to www.ugaextension.com/clarke.

TEN GARDEN VINES

Besides the seemingly millions of choices of Clematis which are undoubtedly the main blooming vines found in gardens, there are other interesting vines from which to choose. Some of the following are common, some lesser known, but all can thrive in our area, and all are relatively easy to grow.

Cypress vine (Ipomoea quamoclit)

This beautiful vine has feathery leaves and bright red flowers. If you've walked around outside the Cafe at the BotGarden in summer, you've seen this spectacular vine. Like all members of the morning glory family, the seeds do best if scarified and soaked overnight before planting. Usually grown as an annual, it can grow up to 20 feet long with support. It can self-seed in warmer areas. Grow this vine in full sun and provide a trellis or arbor for it to climb on. It loves fertile, well-drained soil and blooms summer through fall.

Hyacinth bean (Dolichos lablab)

This fabulous vine is neither a hyacinth nor a bean. It is a fast-growing ornamental climber with fragrant purple blossoms, dark green veined leaves, and dark purple "beans" 3 to 4 inches long. This annual vine can grow over 10 feet long easy and needs a sturdy trellis. Plant in sunny area after the soil warms; it will not tolerate cold conditions.

Fiveleaf Akebia (Akebia quinata)

Native to China, Japan and Korea, this vine, which grows 20 - 40 feet long, can be semi-evergreen in our area. Used as a screen with upright support, Akebia is a fine-textured vine that blooms in May (sometimes earlier here). The new



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leaves are purplish in color and it produces brown flowers in groups of 2 to 5. The flowers have 3 petals and are fragrant. The flowers are followed by sausage-shaped pods. This vine likes fertile, moist, and well-drained soil in partial to full sun. This is sometimes hard to find in the nursery trade and you might have to search catalogs to order one.

Crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*)

This is a wonderful vine because of its orange trumpet-like flowers and it is deer-resistant. It can grow over 9 feet in a season. This evergreen (or semi-evergreen, depending on the year) vine works well on a trellis or arbor, but it needs training. It can cling to stone or brick without any support. The leaves are gummy, so be careful not to plant it near a sidewalk or porch area. There are no serious disease or insect problems with this native plant. It loves full sun, but it can tolerate partial sun (however, it will not bloom as much). This is a perennial vine and a good plant for quickly covering fences or trellises.

Spanish Flag Vine (*Ipomoea lobata*)

This vine is grown as an annual in our area. With rapid growth pattern, this vine with twining stems can grow from 10 to 20 feet in a season. It is best grown on a small lattice. There are two varieties: "Citronella" (with cream flowers and red buds) and "Mexican Fiesta" (with red flowers and yellow buds). It loves full sun, but will tolerate partial shade. Again, like all morning glory family members, the seeds should be scarified and soaked in water overnight before planting. It prefers moist, rich, well-drained soil.

Yellow Jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*)

This vine is the state flower of South Carolina and is an evergreen vine that grows very well here. It is a native perennial climbing vine growing over 30 feet long. The bright yellow tubular flowers are fragrant, blooming from December through March. Jessamine thrives in full sun and is easy to grow. Like the trumpet creeper, it quickly covers fences or trellises. All parts of the plant are poisonous, but butterflies love the blossoms. Unfortunately, deer often nibble on it.



Passion Vine (*Passiflora incarnata*)

This is a rampant perennial vine in our area and is approaching invasive status in neighboring states. It grows 15 - 20 feet and will wind its tendrils around any support. The flowers are complex, blooming spring throughout summer and into the fall. Passion vine is practically a weed and is carefree. It likes sandy, organic and well-drained soil. Plant it where it has lots of room to roam. There are over 400 species of this vine and they are available in many colors. Some are even fragrant. It is the primary food of the Gulf Fritillary butterfly.

Hops (*Humulus lupulus*) T

his is a lovely green vine which produces pale yellow fruits in late summer (used in making beer). It can grow 20 - 25 feet long in a season. Hops grows best in full sun to partial shade, but it does not like dry conditions. Remember to water it deeply once a week in dry, hot summers. Hops can easily be trained to a fence or a trellis. Cut the vines back to the ground in late fall. A lovely Hops vine can be seen at the BotGarden on a trellis between the International Garden and the Heritage Garden.

Trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*)

This very aggressive deciduous vine reaches 30 - 40 feet in a season of growth, but it can be pruned back to keep it neater. You don't have to worry much about pruning in a persnickity manner because it grows back very quickly. The flowers are deep orange and red, trumpet-shaped and prolific. They are hummingbird magnets. Trumpet vine can tolerate almost any soil except heavy clay. It is considered a native plant and is quite stunning in bloom. It does not like to get its feet wet. A real beauty!



Climbing Hydrangea (*Deucamaria barbara*) or also seen as *Hydrangea anomala* subsp. (*Petiolaris*).

This deciduous vine can be spotted near the lotus pond at the BotGarden. It climbs nearly anything and can grow 30 - 40 feet long. It has hairy root-like structures to attach to stones and brick, but it also twines up other supports. It can take several years to get the roots established, but once it gets going, it really grows fast. It likes to be planted in lots of compost and enjoys an extra helping each spring. It does not like standing water. Although considered a native plant, it may not flower much in our area as we are on the outer edge of its hardiness zone; but it is a vigorous vine with great coverage once it gets established.

Calendar of Events

April

April 9th: DON'T FORGET PLANTAPALOOZA. Spring Plant Sales at the BotGarden, the Trial Gardens at UGA and the Hort Club's annual spring sale.

April 23: AAMGA PLANT SALE ATHENS EXTENSION OFFICE 8 AM - 1 PM. IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT AAMGA PLANT SALE - Please have your plants potted, labeled and priced before you bring them Friday, April 22 from 3 PM - 6 PM for the AAMGA Plant Sale April 23. We will be in a smaller space than last year, and this preparation needs to be done before you bring your plants. Don't expect other Master Gardeners to do your work for you.

NEXT MEETING: April 19th. 5:30 PM - Jean Colquette's home. For those of you who have not yet visited Jean's garden, it is full of beautiful Japanese maples and native azaleas, plus many little pathways meandering among many lovely perennials and charming garden "art".

Jean's address is 395 Sandstone Drive in Cedar Creek subdivision. From Gaines School Road turn into Cedar Creek Drive and then turn right at the 3rd stop sign onto Sandstone Drive. Jean's house is the 7th house on the left.

SPECIAL THANKS

I would like to thank the officers who served with me during this past year: To Teresa Morrison: thanks for all of your work setting up speakers and planning programs and a special thank you for the tremendous amount of work it took to set up and coordinate our wonderful Christmas Party. To Elizabeth Thurmond: thanks for your good ears (I really could not have taken as good notes - especially since I forgot my hearing aids half the time!) - your great sense of humor also was a boon. To Teddy Lapaquette: thanks for taking care of our money and keeping up with all the many receipts, notes, and the checkbook itself. And Merry Anderson: your experience last year sure helped keep me grounded and another wry sense of humor is always a gift. Special thanks go to Sandra Rogers who has taken my scribbles and turned them into works of art in the beautiful newsletters each month.

Thank you all.

Judy Hawks

If you have any Master Gardener announcements, please send them to:

AAMGAlistserv@gmail.com by 7:00 pm on Tuesday evenings. Our newsletter deadline is 7:00 pm on the 27th of the month.

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