

The Garden Dirt

JUNE

Athens Area Master Gardener Association

2008

President's Words:

Thanks to Thomas Orchard and Nursery for hosting our May meeting. The container demonstration was full of great tips on making the containers look great and be water savvy. The pound cake and peach ice cream were delicious.

Refreshments for the June meeting will be provided by Merry Anderson and Frank and Cheryl Johnson. The meeting will be on June 17, at the Callaway building, at 6 p.m.

It seems we are approaching another hot and dry summer. I hope everyone has a way of watering that does not include city water. Our rain barrels have certainly made it easier for many gardeners. My favorite water saving tool is a moisture meter. This handy tool is a great way to test the soil to see if it really is as dry as the top of the soil appears. I have saved many hours and much water by checking the depth of the soil moisture before I water.

As a member of Athens Area Master Gardeners, your in-put is important. If you have a suggestion, let your elected officials know. You don't have to be an elected officer for your ideas or opinions to matter. Be careful what you suggest--you might be asked to put it to work!

Don't forget to sign-in and wear your MG badge at our June meeting. Pam Snyder will be on hand with the sign-in sheet and stick-on make tags of you forget yours. Brenda

JUNE GARDENING CHORES

- Keep the spent flowers of such annual ornamentals as marigolds, petunias, salvias, and zinnias picked off to encourage even more blooms.
- Stake any tall annuals or herbaceous perennials to prevent them from toppling over in the garden later.
- If you have a fescue lawn, it is time to raise the lawn mower blade to help the grass cope with the heat of summer.
- Watch for leaf galls on azaleas and camellias. Pick them off and dispose of them if found.
- Are you prepared for Japanese beetles? Set traps on the perimeter of your garden to keep the beetles away from your plants. Or you may hand-pick them from your ornamentals.
- Rake up and discard any fruit that falls from fruit trees to discourage insects and diseases.
- Keep the vegetable garden looking neat: Apply a heavy mulch to hold weeds in check; Stake or cage tomatoes; Train running beans to climb supports.
- Prevent bitter cucumbers by keeping the plants on an established watering schedule and mulching them heavily.
- Holes that have begun to appear in the flowerbed can be quickly filled with heat-seekers such as sun coleus, celosia, impatiens, nicotiana, portulaca, or zinnia, which thrive in the summer sun.
- If you weed the old-fashioned way by hand, remember the best way to prevent even more weeds is to pull the pesky plants before they develop seed heads. Also, right after a soaking rain is the easiest time to pull up weeds with their roots intact.
- Dry, hot weather can cause blossom drop on peppers, so during arid times, irrigate regularly and even mist the plants' foliage once or twice a day.
- Don't over-mulch or over-water herbs. Most are tougher than you think and will thrive in hot, semi-arid conditions.
- If you are going on vacation, ask a neighbor to check on your garden every few days to irrigate if necessary, harvest mature crops and pick spent flowers. Also ask them to keep the bird bath filled with fresh water.

OFFICERS OF ATHENS AREA MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

President—Brenda Beckham	410 Morton Road	Athens, GA 30605	.....	bbeckha2@bellsouth.net
Vice President—Pat Brown	440 Brookwood Drive	Athens, GA 30605	.....	615pmcb@uga.edu
Treasurer—Susan Drinkard	1081 Godfrey Place	Athens, GA 30605	.....	Sudrinkard@aol.com
Publisher—Charles Huber	230 Cedar Creek Drive	Athens, GA 30605	.....	charleshuber@charter.net
Editor—Jean Colquett	395 Sandstone Drive	Athens, GA 30605	.....	greent39@yahoo.com
Project Chairman—Kathy Lawler	2332 Jug Road	Monroe, GA 30656	.....	lawler2332@comcast.net

OUR NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be June 17 at 6 p.m. in the Callaway building at the State Botanical Garden. Mark Fockele will present a program on "Thoughtful Water Use in the Garden." Pat Brown

Minutes of AAMGA -- May 20, 2008

By Rachel Magnuson

1. The May meeting of AAMGA was held at Thomas Orchards. Stephanie Hudack presented a program on container gardening and Paula Thomas provided cake, peach ice cream and refreshments. Thanks to both!
2. Brenda Beckham, President, called the business meeting and asked for projects reports. She also presented Bob Wolf, our past president, with a gift certificate and gave a word of appreciation for his dedication to our organization.
3. Susan Drinkard provided the Treasurer's Report. Cash on hand was \$15,206.36. Total expenses for the month were \$1,430.09. Total income for the month was \$9,852. AAMGA now has 131 paid members.
4. Amanda Tedrow asked for a donation from AAMGA of \$100 to be given to the State Cooperative Extension Conference for refreshments cost, a vote was taken and approved by those present. She also made an announcement on the success of the Athens Farmer's Market. They were completely sold out by 9:30 a.m.!
5. Bob Wolf announced an "Adopt-a-Highway" trash pick-up will be scheduled for early next month. An email will be sent out regarding date and time.
6. Carol Wolf announced some maintenance and dead heading is needed at the rain garden at Clarke Middle School. Merry Anderson reported the April 26th work day at the Plant-A-Row garden was a success. There will be a sign-up sheet soon for summer harvesting.
7. B.J. Garrett requested help in constructing and washing rain barrels. Thyme after Thyme has graciously offered to sell our rain barrels at no cost to AAMGA.
8. Kathy Lawler, Projects Chairman, announced the need for a new AAMGA Plant Sale chair. A special thanks to Cher Chen for her hard work and dedication to this project over the last several years.
9. Cher Chen announced a planting day at the Athens Welcome Sign once the county replaces the sign.
10. A sign up sheet was circulated for volunteering at the UGA Trial Gardens Open House on June 21st. A reminder that volunteers need to stay until 2:30 p.m. to help clean up and tear down afterwards.
11. Jackie Williams reported 11 container gardens were planted at Women's Services with 22 participants in attendance. Containers were planted at the North Avenue and Miles Street locations as well.
12. Connie Cottingham with the State Botanical Garden reminded attendees of on-going events at the Gardens. Information found at <http://www.uga.edu/~botgarden/>.



ATHENS AREA MASTER GARDENERS

Charles Huber
230 Cedar Creek Drive
Athens GA 30605-3310