



The Garden Dirt

March 2011



FROM THE GROUND UP

INCORPORATING EDIBLES WITH ORNAMENTALS

Our "new" garden designs incorporating edible plants with ornamental plants is not new at all. The ancient Egyptians created pleasure gardens, plots that were often closed off from surrounding areas. Inside these enclosures were found fish ponds, arbors of grapes, fruit trees, and other edible plants, as well as ornamental plants and flowers. The ancient Persians were the first to design their garden beds both in shape and color to resemble the rugs they wove.

By the time the Renaissance arrived, gardeners were putting edible plants and herbs in specially designed beds of their own. Knot gardens which originated in monasteries supplied herbs to the brothers for their food.

People moved away from food gardens around the first of the 20th century. They concentrated more on ornamental plants, trees, and lawns which were separated from each other. It is no coincidence that this was also the time period when people began to be able to store food in refrigerators in their own homes and most urban areas were still regularly visited by vegetable vendors.

The 1950s and '60s introduced the suburbs and many people left congested city areas for more verdant locales. Shopping centers arose with grocery stores where meats and vegetables were available close-by.

The late 1960s and early '70s created a new generation of young people who wanted to move back to the country and live off the land. Pesticides were shunned in their gardens and more concentration was paid to the soil itself.

By the 1980s, edible plants were being tucked in among the other plants. We became more ecologically aware, and began to appreciate food plants for their beauty as well as their obvious use.

Nowadays in the middle of a serious recession, we are gardening at our homes even more. We have even seen vegetable plots in the front yard, hitherto a real NO-NO in the gardening world. You don't have to reorganize your entire yard to incorporate edibles into your landscape. Fruit trees are lovely and can be added either as other trees in your yard die or succumb to drought, or can be utilized ornamentally in dwarf size as foundation plants. Other foundation plants can change from Ilex helleri to Vaccinium ashei. You can even use these dwarf trees in containers. An arbor can be erected to support all manner of beans, peas and berries. Herbs lend themselves to all sorts of landscape design. We can copy the old monastic knot gardens or create plans of our own design. Rosemary and lavender are two upright herbs which can be utilized at the back of a border, with smaller herbs, like thymes, oreganos, and basilis arranged around them towards the front.

However you design your garden, incorporating edible plants in your landscape reaps great rewards.

Judy

Executive Board

Judy Hawks, President
lee1569@charter.net
Teresa Morrison, Vice President
trackingmama@yahoo.com

Elizabeth Thurmond, Secretary
EThurmond@gmail.com
Teddy Lapaquette, Treasurer
Lapaquette@gmail.com

Sandra Rogers, Publisher & Listserv
aamgalistserv@gmail.com
Immediate Past President, Merry
Anderson
merry.anderson@att.net

AAMGA Meeting Minutes for February 15, 2011

Our meeting was called to order by President Judy Hawks.

Minutes included in the newsletter and website: Hal Short moved for the minutes to be accepted as published and Teddy Lapaquette seconded the motion. There were no objections.

Hospitality Committee: Harold Neal, Doug Lair and Lisa Douglas provided the refreshments. Chair Heather Gray-Jordan was absent, but she left a signup sheet for upcoming meetings. Please let her know if you want to help.
richard_jordan@bellsouth.net

New Projects committee chair, Alice Zwaagstra, asked for reports:

- PAR Athens** – Merry Anderson told us she knew the winter garden was still producing cabbage and spring planting prep would soon begin.
- PAR Oconee** – Judy Hawks said the Oconee gardens would also soon be readied for spring plantings.
- Rain Barrels** – Frank Johnson let us know about four barrels sold at Thyme after Thyme and two sold by Lisa Douglas. He thinks we have approximately 39 more in stock.
- Plant Sale** – Anne Walker let us know that our annual plant sale will be on April 23rd at the extension office. The setup will be on Friday from 3-6 pm and the sale will be from 8 am-2 pm on Saturday. She asked us to be ready to put prices and plant names on the plants we donate. There will be plant tags available at our March meeting.

New Business: Jackie Williams announced that the slate of officers will be presented at our March meeting and asked if anyone is interested in serving to please let her know at jkwill82@hotmail.com

B.J. Garrett let us know that there will be several combined plant sales on April 9th. SBG, the Hort Club and the Trial Gardens will all be having sales. She also told us about the Trial Garden's new website. For details about the sales go to www.ugatrialgardens.com

Merry Anderson informed the group about the open enrollment for the Georgia Master Gardeners. You can pay your dues online at www.GeorgiaMasterGardeners.org. The spring conference will be in April and there are details on the site. Merry introduced Barbara Turner. Barbara has joined as a friend and she will be a great addition to our organization.

Old Business: Judy said that all slots were filled for the upcoming Home and Garden show at the Classic Center. The opening will be on Friday evening the 25th and it will be open to the public on Saturday, the 26th. She also let us know that the Northeast Georgia Science and Engineering Fair will take place on February 25th. This fair is for middle school to high school age students. We have provided a \$200.00 general grant and a \$100 standing grant for an award in the category of Plant Sciences which will have AAMGA as donor of the award.

Announcements from Extension, Amanda Tedrow: Amanda presented Lifetime Georgia Master Gardener awards to three of our members who were present. They were Pam Bracken, B.J. Garrett and Elizabeth Thurmond.

Other local Master Gardeners who earned the 10-year, Lifetime award for 2011 are: Connie Cottingham, Betty Irwin, Ed Long, Sue Maier and Jane Noe.

Program: Teresa Morrison, VP introduced Kate Austin. Kate serves as the Community Garden Coordinator with the Athens Land Trust. ALT was one of just 27 organizations throughout the country selected to receive a grant as part of NIFA's Community Food Projects program, which funds projects that build community food systems and fight hunger and food insecurity. For more information, please go to www.AthensLandTrust.org.

The Meeting Adjourned at 7:02 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Thurmond, Secretary

You are all aware of the great things that Master Gardeners do in the community but once a year we get to toot our own horns. Each year the third Saturday of March is Georgia Master Gardener day. For 2011, **March 19th** is the big day. Across the state Master Gardeners host special activities in their local community. Some Master Gardener groups have plant clinics, work on Habitat for Humanity projects while others have special ceremonies with local officials in honor of the day. There is even a proclamation by the governor in honor of the occasion.

Here in Athens on Georgia Master Gardener day we are having Ask a Master Gardener booths in the local nurseries. As of right now we will have a presence in 5-6 locations answering questions and providing gardening publications to nursery patrons. Needless to say we will also be providing information on the local Master Gardener program. If you would be interested in helping out at a plant nursery in your neighborhood I will be sending out a sign up email soon.

I also wanted to acknowledge the impressive accomplishments of the local Master Gardeners in 2010. Master Gardeners in the Athens area volunteered almost 12,000 hours, contacting over 33,000 local residents. Those are pretty impressive numbers when you realize all this was accomplished by about 140 individuals. Just as in other areas of the state the projects were far reaching and community based. Some of our volunteers worked at the Botanical garden, others worked at Plant a Row for the Hungry, and others work at the Extension office or Farmers market. While I can't list all the local projects I can tell you they all have an impact and help the community.

Since I began my career with Extension 5 years ago the hours and contacts have grown each year. I don't pretend to think this increase has something to do with me. I attribute this increase to lots of great individuals who enjoy spreading what they have learned to others. I urge all of you to continue your amazing work in 2011.

Please let me know if you have any ideas to improve the local program and volunteer opportunities. Thanks for all you do!

Amanda Tedrow

GEORGIA MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM - ANNUAL COUNTY SUMMARY OF MASTER GARDENER ACTIVITIES 2010

AAMGA Master Gardener Report

31 Number of New Master Gardeners (completed training this year)

112 Number of Veteran Master Gardeners returning.

1. Total # of volunteer hours this year 11,874.3 x (18.04* per hour) = \$ 219,554.88.

2. Total # of in person contacts 32,229.7.

3. Total # of telephone contacts 1,536.

4. Total # of miles traveled 56,400.9 x (.32 per mile) = \$ 31,020.90.

5. Please indicate beside each how many of each activity:

207 Children's Programs (project # 1)

39 Civic or Garden Club Presentations (project # 2)

1421 Community or Demonstration Gardens (project # 3)

14 Conducted or Judged Flower Shows (project #4)

27 Exhibits (project # 5)

437 Extension Office (project # 6)

4 Habitat For Humanity (project # 7)

141 Home Garden Visits (project # 8)

84 Newsletters (project # 9)

11 Newspaper or Magazine Articles (project # 10)

291 Plant Clinics or Fairs (project #11)

18 Teaching Adult Classes (project #13)

25 Research and or Writing (project #12)

4 Advisory Committees (project #15)

5 TV & Radio Programs (project #14)

247 Local MG Program Administration (project #17)

26 GMGA Committees (project #16)

300 Other (describe in Special Project Reports) (project # 18)

FLOWER OF THE MONTH: DAFFODIL

The flower for March is the daffodil. For many, the daffodil is the very definition of spring.

The early Romans believed that the sap of the daffodil could be used to heal wounds. However, that theory was a real error because the sap of the daffodil contains sharp crystals which keep animals from eating it. This crystal is calcium oxalate which is an irritant. This is why daffodils cause other flowers to wilt when placed in the same vase.



The Greeks associated the daffodil with death. The myth of Persephone is centered around the daffodil. Persephone was abducted by Hades while she wandered away from her mother while collecting these flowers. The legend goes that these flowers overspread the plains of the underworld when Persephone was taken there and were the favorite food of the dead.

The early British preferred asphodels to daffodils, but they could not always get asphodels because these flowers had to be imported. For this reason, they had to settle for the daffodil:

["daffodil" = "bastard 'affodil" or false asphodel]

Their sweet fragrance was thought by the Victorians to be as dangerous as a narcotic.

There are endless varieties available in the nursery trade. Some can be naturalized; however, like most bulbs that need a long cold winter to perform best, they are lovely for a few years, and then dwindle over time. Luckily for gardens in our area, most daffodil bulbs are modestly priced and we can just continue to replenish our supply. It's hard to beat a large area of such perfect yellow with intoxicating fragrance.

Congratulations to the new Lifetime Master Gardeners



Pictured: Pam Bracken, Elizabeth Thurmond, B.J. Garrett
Not Pictured: Connie Cottingham, Betty Irwin, Ed Long, Sue Maier and Jane Noe

The awards ceremony was held in the auditorium at Athens Tech on Friday, Friday, February 25 at 5:30 p.m. Not only were we donors to the Fair itself which serves 21 northeast Georgia counties, we also gave a gift of \$100 to the student who won the competition in the Plant Sciences area. That student is Daniel Derochers, East Jackson Middle School. There was a packed auditorium of excited students competing.



MARCH GARDEN CHORES

- * Fertilize pansies. Since the soil is warming, use any water soluble houseplant fertilizer, one half pint to one pint of solution per plant.
- * Prune boxwood - but not with shears. Use hand pruner to make foliage "holes" in the greenery so light can penetrate to the trunk.
- * Fertilize Daphne now. Apply 1 Tb. of 10-10-10 per foot of height of plant. Also mulch 2 inches deep around the roots, but pull back 3 inches from the stem. Plant new daphnes in the spring.
- * You can renewal prune giant holly shrubs back to a manageable size. Cut them to eighteen inches tall and they will come back.
- * Plant bare-root roses in soil that contains plenty of organic matter and which has been thoroughly tilled.
- * Divide hosta now that you can see leaves unfurling aboveground.
- * Fertilize camellias after they finish blooming at the rate of 1 Tb. of 10-10-10 per foot of height.
- * Apply pre-emergent to centipede lawns this month.
- * Fertilize Lace Bark Elms with 1 cup of 10-10-10 per inch of thickness of trunk, measuring 4 feet up the trunk from the ground.
- * Check backside of euonymous and camellia leaves for scale insects. Thoroughly spray with horticultural oil if the pests are found.
- * Remove spent camellia blooms from the bush and from the ground. This will prevent camellia petal blight.
- * Repot houseplants that you want to relocate outdoors. Their roots will need more room as they grow rapidly in the sun.
- * Plant beets, cauliflower, mustard, radish and turnips in your garden.
- * Run your mower on its highest setting over lirioppe foliage.
- * Start seeds of tomatoes and annual flowers inside. It takes 6 weeks to grow strong transplants.
- * Wait to plant gladiolus, canna and caladium bulbs until mid-April.
- * Last chance to prune bush roses to approximately one-half their present size.
- * Fertilize pecan trees with one pound of 10-10-10 for every inch of trunk thickness.
- * Fertilize tree peonies, Japanese Kerria, Vitex, Hydrangea and double-file viburnums towards end of March with 1 TB of 10-10-10 per foot of height.

PAR GARDENS: GET READY TO DIG, WEED AND HARVEST

Both PAR gardens are turning soil and getting ready for spring planting. I'd like to urge all members to volunteer to help in both of our PAR gardens this spring and summer. It's a great deal of fun to work together - we are not in competition with each other. Neither garden "belongs" to any one person or group of our members. We are trying to grow as much produce as possible to donate to area food banks. The more we all help at both gardens, the more we can produce for this worthy cause. Vegetable gardening is exciting work, and there will certainly be plenty of work for us all.

Green Anoles

The green anole is one little green guy that we want to see in our gardens. Although some people call the green anole the American chameleon because of its ability to change color, the anole is not a true chameleon. In fact, many lizards are capable of changing color.

Anoles are members of the Iguanid family. Iguanids are visually-oriented creatures: they communicate at a distance by changing their color and by body actions, such as head-bobbing, open mouth displays, flaring their throat fans, and performing body push-ups. When the throat fan is flared, a bright pink color is exposed to the view of other lizards. Although classified as arboreal, the green anole can be found almost anywhere. It is most active in warmer weather and can be seen basking in the sun, climbing up walls, or darting around chasing insects.

Green anoles are about 5 to 8 inches long. Females are smaller than the males. All have adhesive pads on their feet which enable them to climb up walls and along the sides of just about any structure. They are found throughout the Southeast in moist greenery or in shady cover. Their most striking characteristic is changing color depending on the temperature, the humidity, their health or mood.

Males are easily identified because of the pink dewlap below their neck. This can be flared for attracting females or to show dominance. The males will bob their heads up and down when in the presence of other males, possibly to appear more menacing. Highly territorial, they will even perform this display when they see themselves in a mirror.

Anoles eat small insects and spiders. They stalk their prey on leaves, vines, along walls, and in shrubs. If picked up by the tail, they will discard the tail so that they can escape. A new tail will grow back in its place. In fact, anoles can discard and grow tails many times during their lifetimes when they feel threatened.

Males court females by flaring their dewlaps and bobbing their heads. They must catch the females in order to mate. Females lay eggs in about a 2 to 4 week period, usually 1 or 2 at a time. In all, the female will produce about 10 eggs. She buries them in the soil and abandons them. Babies fend for themselves. After hatching, they must avoid other anoles as well as other larger reptiles and mammals.

The main enemy of the green anole is the brown anole from Cuba. This lizard has made its way to Florida most likely through eggs being deposited in the soil of nursery plants imported for sale in the U.S. The brown anole is highly invasive and is taking over the green anole's habitat and food.

Green anoles have been raised in captivity and can live up to 7 years if kept in an environment with adequate moisture, greenery and some shade. They are fed small crickets twice a week, but no matter how much food you give them, they refuse to sell insurance like their cousins.

Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, "Green Anole"; The Audubon Society Field Guide to N. American Reptiles and Amphibians; [Green Anole Fact Sheet](#), The Smithsonian National Zoological Park; Wikipedia "Carolina anole".



Male Anole with extended dewlap.



Female Carolina anole

Calendar of Events

March

March 4 & 5: Piccadilly Farm will host its 19th annual Hellebore Days. Admission is free. 10 AM - 4 PM each day. Call 706 - 769-6516 for information & directions.

March 25 - 26: Specialty Ornamentals in Watkinsville - retail opening weekend. For details call Flo Chaffin at 706 - 310-0143 or e-mail: www.specialtyornamentals.com.

March 31: Junior Ladies Garden Club of Athens are presenting a flower show "Locally Grown", open to the public from 10 AM - 2 PM at the Bottleworks on Prince. For information contact Greta Covington at (404) 245-0089 or at gretat@mindspring.com

April

April 9: Plant Sale of the Century: State Botanical Gardens, 8 AM - 2 PM (sbgvol@ugs.edu) Conservatory. Dr. Armitage's Trial Gardens (www.ugatrialgardens.com) and UGA Horticulture School Plant Sale are all on this date. Check with Andrea Fischer about The Bot Garden Sale, B.J. Garrett about the Trial Gardens' Sale and on-line with the UGA Horticulture School about their plant sale.

April 23: AAMGA PLANT SALE ATHENS EXTENTION OFFICE 8 AM - 1 PM. Anne Walker is again in charge of our annual plant sale. She will be setting up for the sale and receiving plants for the sale on Friday, April 22 from 3 PM - 6 PM at the Extension Office. Plant tags will be available at the March meeting. Volunteers' hours start 30 minutes earlier on each day. Please label and price your plants ahead of time, keeping in mind that we want to give our customers a really good deal for their money. Questions: Call Anne Walker at (706) 342-9471.

April 29 & 30: GMGA Spring Conference. Rome, GA. Check with Merry Anderson for details or go to www.GeorgiaMasterGardeners.org. for all details and for registration.

NEXT MEETING: MARCH 15. 5:30 PM - State Botanical Garden in the Adult Classroom (Conservatory). Our speaker will be DR. WILF NICHOLLS, new director of the Garden.
PLEASE JOIN US

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.

Committee Chairs and Other Leadership	Shirley Baker - Historian and Photographer 706.546.0325 ShirleyBaker555@gmail.com
Anne Walker - AAMGA Plant Sale 706.342.9471 WAWalk@netzero.net	Elizabeth Thurmond - Secretary and Membership 706.354.0055 ethurmond@gmail.com
Carole Holmes - Keep ACC Beautiful cholmes_ccsd@yahoo.com	Heather Gray-Jordan - Hospitality 706.453.9757 richard_jordan@bellsouth.net
Cheryl LaValley & Liz Conroy - PAR Vegetable Garden (Fall & Winter) celavalley@bellsouth.net or mikeliz@bellsouth.net	Merry Anderson & Pam Bracken - Clarke PAR Vegetable Gardens (Spring & Summer) 706.549.4121 merry.anderson@att.net 706.548.3861 pamb824@aol.com
Alice Zwaagstra - Projects Committee Chair alice@zwaagstra@net	John Quackenbush - Oconee PAR Quack17@bellsouth.net
Carol Wolf - Flower Garden at PAR 706.613.1122 CarolWolf@charter.net	