



March 2015

Volume XXIII Issue III


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President's Notes by Myra Lassere

As we March into spring, it's time to get your "green on" and get in the spirit of the season. Many of your fellow MGs have been busy planning the educational series "Tuesdays in March with Master Gardeners" and our annual Spring Plant Sale in April at Weeks Bay. The 2015 Intern classes are progressing very well. The Helpline has officially opened and could use your assistance.

As we spring forward, remember that Daylight Savings Time begins on Sunday, March 8, 2015 at 2:00am. Clocks should be set one hour ahead.

You may want to plant potatoes before the vernal equinox (March 20) and harvest them before the Summer Solstice (June 21). Those 12" to 18" high tomato plants should be in the ground or in containers now. If you want to succeed with tomatoes, plant cherry tomatoes. They make great container plants, are easy to weed if any weeds should show up, and are just easier to maintain. They have a built in resistance to diseases that plague full-size tomatoes. Yes, they are vigorous growers, but can simply outgrow many diseases. They are flavorful, abundant and come in many sizes, shapes and colors. Not only are they delicious but they are good for you too! In only 55 to 70 days they are ready for picking and mouth-popping goodness. Try Sweet 100, Yellow Pear, Green Grape, Juliet or Sun Gold. Can you imagine a salad with all the different colors and varieties? The more the merrier!

Finally some words by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

"Kind Hearts are the Garden
Kind thoughts are the Roots
Kind Words are the Blossoms
Kind Deeds are the Fruits"



Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities in March:

Spring Workshops: March 10, 17, 24, and 31: Set up, Clean up, Snacks

March 12: General Meeting, Set -Up, Clean up, Snacks

March 19-22 Mobile Botanical Gardens Plantasia! Plant Sale, Help needed each day from Master Gardeners advising shoppers. "in the field" Contact Marie Dyson at MBG

March 26-29 Festival of Flowers—contact Tampa Sykora and Pam Tucker

The Spring Education Workshops Tuesdays with Master Gardeners".

An excellent start to the 1st night. Many thanks go to the workshop speakers Ellen Huckabay and Marie Dyson for giving their time and expertise in making it a very educational evening.

In total there were 37 attendees. There were 15 paid attendees for a total of \$75. There were 22 Master Gardens and Interns attending. The MG's brought food for the Refreshment table so there was an excellent selection of edibles which helps keep our expenses down.

The Workshop titles were: 6pm - Lawn Care & Maintenance - Ellen Huckabay, 7pm - Low Maintenance Gardening - Marie Dyson. As part of the Workshop series there is a short bonus talk that we call a "Gardening Infomercial". This was presented by Gene Sellier. The topic for the Infomercial was "Growing Herbs - Parsley & Sage". Gene Sellier also created a looping power point that played before the workshops began. The PowerPoint gave information on our upcoming April Plant Sale, How to Become a Master Gardener, and the Captain Compost talk at the Plant Sale.



Everything went smoothly due to the 1st night Volunteers who made it happen. A big thanks go to: Barb Comstock, Pat Cotton, Bernie Fogarty, Jim Greer, Pat Greer, Carolyn Koch, Peggy Loefstedt, Anita O'Connor, Gene Sellier, Tampa Sykora and Tanys Waldron. The behind the scenes Volunteers were: Cathy Banning from the ACES office who designed the workshop flyer, Mike McQueen - ACES, and Shasta Boothe in the Research Station office.

Stone Soup



Glorious Springtime By Ottie S. Dailey

Isn't the world beautiful at this time of year? After a really cold winter, we can see wonders of nature all around us. The Taiwan Cherry trees have been outstandingly lovely, and now the Japanese Magnolias are showing off their beauty. As I drive down the street, I look around and notice all the beauty we have to enjoy. My Forsythia really benefited from the cold weather as the branches are literally covered with those golden blossoms. My Ocame Cherry trees are in full bloom with their pink dresses. The camellias, flowering pears, Redbuds, and plum trees are spectacular. The bridal wreath will be bursting forth in all its glory and the Azaleas are peeping out here and there, and shortly the world will be covered with their showy blossoms. I delight in everything that is announcing Glorious Springtime!

I have always loved working with plants and flowers, ever since I was a little girl when an Aunt encouraged me to start a flower bed. I dug seedlings that came up in her lawn and planted them in my yard. Thus the beginning of a wonderful hobby. For years I subscribed to Organic Gardening and I was hooked on the methods described in those magazines. I acquired a number of books related to gardening, and although I felt I was an accomplished gardener, I decided to take the Master Gardener course which I completed in spring 1997. My first big venture was at Care House in Bay Minette, and with the help of a number of my fellow Master Gardeners, we completely re-landscaped that property.

I have enjoyed every minute of my association with my Master Gardener friends. I love every one of you. It is so much fun to share knowledge and plants. Now I am trying very hard to succeed with growing beautiful roses. As a gentle reminder, I hope everyone has pruned their roses. I want to share one of my poems I wrote when I was age 16:



A Red Rose For Me

White roses are they that look like the snow, and are gorgeous to behold
When in the wind they do blow.

They are the fairest that you will ever see,
But always, anytime, a red rose for me.

Yellow roses look like the first rays of the dawn,
With the sun's golden cast early in the morn.
They are so pure and lovely as to and fro they sway,
But as for me, I want a red rose any day.

Pink roses are delicate like a tiny babe's skin
And many a person's heart they do win.
They seem sometimes to have fallen from above,
But the red rose is the one that I love.

For the red rose tells of the deepest love;
The greatest on earth or heaven above.
And if you love for me will always be so,
Just send me a red rose to let me know.

FERTILIZING CAMELLIAS by Brenda Litchfield with comments by Bobby Green

After your camellia plants bloom is the time to fertilize. The ideal schedule is;

1st application (heaviest) - late March/early April - to stimulate new plant growth

2nd application (lighter) - June - to set flower buds for next year's blooms

3rd application (lightest) - September - avoid applying nitrogen

If you have just a few plants you can use the camellia-azalea fertilizers from gardening shops. The main thing is for folks to use "balanced fertilizer" to establish their camellias. The three number (N-P-K) everyone is familiar with on fertilizer is not enough nutrients for camellias. The best fertilizers contain what are called micro-nutrients such as iron, sulphur, manganese, zinc, and others. Iron in particular is very important. Many plant nutritionists nowadays are arguing for a five number coding on fertilizers.

Now is the time to apply. For every year in recent memory we have had an April drought so applications now take advantage of rains.

As a general rule a camellia should be lightly fertilized the first year. The same is true for transplanted camellias. The reason is that nitrogen in fertilizer stimulates leaf growth, which makes the top grow before the roots have become well enough established to support the new growth. Too many new leaves plus not enough roots equal dead or stressed plants, especially in hot weather. Because root growth is very important at first, however, an application of Triple Superphosphate in the planting hole will help. This promotes root growth during the first year and can be purchased at most garden centers.

After a new camellia is established, spring is the best time to fertilize. Apply the fertilizer around the time the camellia is nearing its flush of new growth. As a rule of thumb, camellias should receive a good balanced fertilizer, spread around the drip line, in March and May. A slow-release, camellia-azalea fertilizer is a good choice that is formulated for acid loving plants. Some growers also use cottonseed meal, which is a good organic source of nitrogen that decomposes and releases slowly. Around late September some growers may apply a light treatment of low nitrogen fertilizer.

Fresh mulch is highly recommended each spring and fall. Mulch helps the roots stay cool in summer, warm in winter, and retains moisture in the root zone. It also prevents erosion and weed growth. Most mulch materials can be used but most growers on the Gulf Coast prefer pine straw. It does not pack down or shed water as do many other mulches. A layer of 1-3 inches of pine straw once or twice per year is sufficient.

Remember the key is to not over-fertilize and pay attention to dates and amounts.

If you can just fertilize once, now is the time.



March *What to Plant and What to Do*

Annuals: Dianthus and other cool-season annuals continue to flourish. Consider planting warm-season annuals such as Angelonia, wax begonia, and zinnia at the end of the month.

Bulbs: Plant dahlia, canna, and Gloriosa bulbs for spring and summer flowering. Provide stakes as needed to support growth.

Herbs: Consider growing edible ginger (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mv067>). Plant a rhizome in well-drained soil in full to part sun.

Vegetables: Plant warm-season crops, such as bean, tomato, squash, and corn, early in the month for late spring harvest. Protect from frost.

Shrubs and trees: Prune when new growth begins after the end of the dormant season. To guard next season's blooms, begin pruning after the last flowers fade but before the new buds set.

Palms and shrubs: Fertilize palms, azaleas, camellias, and other ornamental shrubs, if needed. Choose a fertilizer in which at least 30% of its nitrogen is slow release.

Azaleas: Prune azaleas just after plants finish blooming to shape or produce a fuller plant.

Irrigation: Check sprinkler systems for issues, such as broken heads or inefficient spray patterns. See: *How to Calibrate Your Sprinkler System* (<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/IR00003389/00001>)

Plant Propagations Class for 2015 Interns and Members by Loree Hadley

The Master Gardener Interns arrived ready to learn propagation. They are a great group with lots of good questions. We started off with a welcome from Pam Tucker and she introduced Tanys Waldron. Tanys told them about upcoming . I was introduced and from there we went on a garden tour. I felt it was important to teach them a little about pruning, so I explained about how I accomplished a beautiful shaped tree with formative pruning. The Japanese Maples that I am growing need a little pruning each year to get to the shape they are in today. Several had Japanese Maple trees so they all seemed to learn a lot. We looked at my greenhouse and all that is growing in there. From there we went on around the yard to my mist system and showed them how I mostly propagate my cutting under mist in the spring and summer. Just about then it started to rain so we went inside.

We talked about our soil and they were given several soil recipes to try. From there we went on to propagating an amaryllis and I showed them 2 different techniques that I use to make more amaryllis. I grafted a Japanese Maple and showed them how to make the cuts and then how to prepare the scion wood to put together and how to care the graft area afterwards to keep the scion from drying out until the graft takes. I also demonstrated how to graft a camellia onto a sasanqua. I went on to demonstrating division on several plants such as a daylily, Aster, Agapantha and Amaryllis. Also explained how propagation is done with a fern and hosta.

I explained how to make a sweat box so they could start making their own plants. I'm sure they will all give that a try.

We broke for lunch time to enjoy some homemade chili and a dump cake I treated them to. It was really good on a cold and rainy day. And it really rained. Thankful it held off until after our garden tour.

After lunch we got to get down and dirty and got into the dirt to plant plants. We talked about how to plant seeds and what depth and how to care for the plants such as light, moisture, heat and plant seeds if they wanted to. Everyone got to take home lots of different plants as a gift from me. The plants they went home with were; Amaryllis, Blue Daze, Creeping Jenny, a ground cover, Aloe Vera, Variegated Hydranga, Acuba Japonica, Purple Lantana, Fire Spike, mint, Princess Flower Tibouchina, Begonia, Plumeria, Kalanchoe, cuttings from a Night Blooming Cereus and Sago Palms.

It was another successful propagation class and I really enjoyed teaching them. Looking forward to getting to know them all better. [Editor's Note: I think is is very kind and generous of Loree Hadley to give up her valuable time—and plants—to volunteer to not only to give the plant propagation presentation to interns, but also to have it at her home and gardens, plus providing them with lunch. What an exceptional Master Gardener !]



List of publications referencing BAMBOO:

Most Publications and web sites from the Alabama or Florida Cooperative Extension System:

Growing Bamboo in Alabama: www.ag.auburn.edu/landscape/bamboo.html

Invasive Species Plants—Golden Bamboo , <http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/goldenbamboo.shtml>

Pruning Ornamental Plants ANR-0258

Alternative Crops & Enterprises for Small Farm Diversification: <http://afsic.nal.usda.gov/list-alternative-crops-enterprises-small-farm-diversification>

From ACES Forestry and Wildlife Series, *Update on Bamboo in the Southeast*, TIS—Update—Bamboo.pdf

From American Bamboo Society: www.bamboo.org/publications/: BSCv25-LR.pdf, *Bamboo Science and Culture*

Bamboo Control by the University of Florida, IFAS Extension, AG26600.pdf, SS-AGR-75

Bamboo Control, <http://hodgardener.blogspot.com/2008/02/question-how-do-i-control-run-away.html>



Pruning Blackberries by Barb Comstock

Owners, employees, and their families from Petals from the Past are enjoying their 17th year of production from the same Kiowa blackberry plants using **"trellis production using primary cane suppression."** In a series of three videos on their website under "Educational Videos", Artie Powell, who spoke at our 2014 fall seminar, instructs us on growing healthy, productive blackberries with minimal attention. The following information is a paraphrased attempt to explain Artie Powell's method of raising healthy blackberries, using a home based scenario with someone "starting from scratch".

Blackberries are bramble berries. They produce on the second year canes. Let's say you have a two year old blackberry plant. It is a mass of canes. This plant needs to have all but two of the best of last year's canes removed. These two canes will be this spring's producing canes. These two canes, new from last year, need to be tied into a trellis or onto cables. The plant needs to be fertilized with calcium nitrate, 2 or 3 ounces per plant. The plant also needs to be mulched with 5 to 6 inches of pine bark mulch. Twice in April, twice in May, and again in early June, any new shoots from the crown of the plant need to be removed, leaving just the two existing production canes you saved from the previous year.

By the first week in July the two canes of blackberries will be done producing. This is when the primary pruning to prepare for next year's production is accomplished.

Clean pruning tools before use. Use something equivalent to Clorox to clean your tools.

Precut any plastic holding canes to the cable.

Lift and remove canes from the cable.

Prune out spent, fading, old producing canes all the way to the bottom of the cane.

Cut out all but two of the best new canes. Cut all the way to the ground. Be careful you don't cut out your carefully selected new canes.

Selecting the shortest of the new canes, and using poly tape, tie cane securely to the lowest cable (3') by wrapping the tape several times around the cable (to prevent slipping in the wind) and a couple times around the cane.

If the cane is about 6 to 9 inches above the cable, it should be cut back to 1 1/2" above the cable to encourage branching. If it isn't that tall yet, wait until it is before cutting it back.

Selecting the tallest of the new canes, and using ply tape, tie cane securely to the highest cable (5') so that it is about 6 inches away from the other cane.

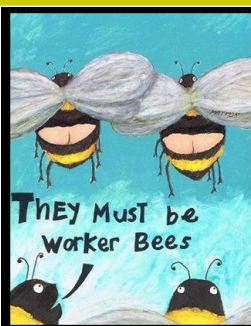
If the cane is about 6 to 9 inches above the cable, it should be cut back to 1 1/2" above the cable to encourage branching. Again, if it isn't that tall yet, wait until it is before pruning back.

If the canes develop basal shoots below the lower cables, they need to be removed. The basal shoots adjacent to the cables are encouraged because they will be your side shoots, traveling along either side along the cable.

Because diseases and fungus can travel to the canes from rain splashing off the ground, cut and remove all the leaves off the two selected canes up to about 6" from the lower cable.

If you have any questions, please take a moment and watch the videos:

www.petalsfromthepast.com/educationalvideos/blackberries/. Also check out the publication, "Training and Pruning Small Fruits", ANR-53-L from the ACES website, www.aces.edu



I hate it when I think I'm buying ORGANIC vegetables, but when I get home they're just REGULAR donuts.

NO LIFE IS WITHOUT DIFFICULTIES
NO GARDEN IS WITHOUT WEEDS

Longleaf Pine Forest and Arboretum:

March 20th will be the date of the next work project at the Longleaf Pine Forest and arboretum. We will be weeding with loopers and sprayers. The more volunteers the faster we'll be done. Wear proper protective gear, if you have it, including goggles and gloves. Long sleeves and long pants are recommended. Try to meet at 8 am. Lunch will be provided by Weeks Bay.

This will be the first plant sale where we can direct customers toward some of the growing, established examples of the plants and trees we have to offer in the sale. Thusly we are better able to explain how tall and wide a plant might become and what kind of form it might develop

As you come to volunteer or shop or share in the seminars at the Plant Sale, please be aware—and applaud—the extensive efforts of a group of volunteers that have put in many hours of often back-breaking work toward improving the Longleaf Pine forest and our developing arboretum. If you happen to come across one of these dedicated volunteers, shake their hand, pat them on the back, buy



Calendar of Upcoming Events

March 12:	General Meeting 10 am: Danny Doege, "Boo 4You" He has over 230 varieties of bamboos along with bananas, gingers, ornamental grasses, elephant ear plants, and ground covers growing in Pensacola. His business and gardens have been featured in 'Southern Coast Home Design' magazine.
March 8	Day Light Savings Times begins, "Spring Forward"
March 10	Green Drinks at Fairhope Brewing Company
March 10	Spring Workshop: 6 pm and 7 pm (See handout)
March 11	Intern Luncheon provided by Interns and Mentors, 11:30 am
March 12	General Meeting 10 am
March 17	Spring Workshop: 6 pm and 7 pm (See handout)
March 19-22	Mobile Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale, <i>Plantasia!</i>
March 20	Work day at the Weeks Bay Longleaf Pine Forest and Arboretum
March 21	Mobile Arts and Crafts Fair
March 23-25	AMGA Conference in Cullman Alabama
March 24	Spring Workshop: 6 pm and 7 pm (See handout)
March 26-29	Festival of Flowers
March 31	Spring Workshop: 6 pm and 7 pm (See handout)
April 2	Board Meeting
April 8	Set up at Weeks Bay for Spring Plant Sale
April 9	Garden Club Day at BCMG Spring Plant Sale, 'Captain Compost' presentation
April 10-12	BCMG Spring Plant Sale at Weeks Bay
April 18	Earth Day, Fairhope Pier and Park
April 18	Bald Eagle Bash , 4-7 pm, at the Tonsmeire Resource Center on Weeks Bay - Tickets on sale NOW!
April 29	Intern Presentations and luncheon

Grass Roots is compiled and edited by Barb Mühl Comstock. The publisher is Sandra Walton at the Baldwin County ACES office in Bay Minette. The newsletter is available before the monthly general meeting on our website:
www.baldwincountymastergardeners.com.

Submission of articles, items of interest, photos of BCMG events, garden tips, garden jokes, etc. are greatly encouraged and appreciated. Send to grassrootsnews@gmail.com



Baldwin County Master Gardeners
% Baldwin County Extension Office
302-A Byrne Street
Bay Minette, AL 36506
Attn: Sandra Walton

Next meeting:

@ 104 "Boo for You" on
Bamboos

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