

Garden Thyme



Monthly Newsletter of the East Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association

February, 2015

Musings from Jack ...

I don't know about you but I 'm sure ready for it to get warmer. Sheila's already trying to talk me into another plant rack for her seed starts! I guess it is getting close to time to start those seeds indoors and start making plans for plant sale plants. Have you got any ideas on what you'll have ready for it? We need to start thinking about having a draped hypertufa workshop so we can have planters ready for the plant sale, too. We tried a few the other day – we'll bring them to the next meeting to show how these turned out, little different formula this time.

It's time to tap trees for maple syrup as the sap is starting to rise. Also, the earliest trees are showing a start of bud growth around our place – warm days increase budding.

I love books – anything you want or need to learn you can learn from a book. That said, I thought I'd recommend a book in each newsletter that I have found to be very educational and worth reading, if not just having as a resource. So this month's book is "Botany in a Day" by Thomas J. Elpel. Check it out!

*"Live generously and graciously toward others,
the way God lives toward you." Matthew 5:48*

Jack



GARDEN FRIENDS

- Q. What is it? What does it cost?
- A. A group of Master Gardeners willing to work in your garden in return for your doing work in their garden. The only cost is your time and effort.
- Q. What kind of work?
- A. Here are some examples: prune shrubbery or fruit trees, make a garden path, build a new flower bed, propagate plants, put in bedding plants, move or install shrubs and small trees, make a compost pile, divide perennials, design and lay out a landscape, identify and tag landscape plants, build a trellis, make raised beds, install a drip irrigation system, edge beds, weed and clean up a garden.
- Q. How much time is involved?
- A. If your garden is one of the work sites then you will be expected to reciprocate with other Garden Friends. If your garden is not one of the work sites then you are welcome to join the work party without any commitment.
- Q. What about volunteer hours?
- A. This work does not count as volunteer hours since we will be doing work for other Master Gardeners.
- Q. How do I join?
- A. If you would like your garden to be one of the work sites, do a work order and get it to Jack Bolen at sheilabolen@hotmail.com or by mail. Also contact Jack if you have any questions (256-354-2188).

Remember our Garden Friends Program. Let us know if you need help in your garden. It's always more fun to work in the garden with friends than by yourself!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Face and Body Art Day
2 Groundhog Day	3 Carrot Cake Day	4 Quacker Day	5 Nutella Day	6 Canadian Maple Syrup Day	7 Bubble Gum Day	8 Molasses Day
9 Read in the Bathtub Day	10 Clean out your Computer Day	11 White Shirt Day	12 Safety Pup Day	13 Get a Different Name Day	14 Valentines Day	15 Gum Drop Day
16 Almond Day	17 Champion Crab Races Day	18 Pluto Day	19 Chocolate Mint Day	20 Love Your Pet Day	21 Sticky Bun Day	22 Margarita Day
23 Dog Biscuit Day	24 Tortilla Chip Day	25 Clam Chowder Day	26 Pistachio Day	27 Strawberry Day	28 Floral Design Day	

DailyHolidayBlog.com



PLANT SALE

April 25, 2015
Kiwanis Park
8-12

If you haven't started planning on what plants you'll be bringing to the spring plant sale there's no time like the present to start doing that. It would be awesome to have this be the biggest plant sale yet. And that leads me to the next topic:

HYPERTUFA WORKSHOP

At our regular monthly meeting on March 16th, we will be having a workshop to learn how to make draped hypertufa pots. The meeting will be at Ann's shop on 431. Directions and a list of items you will need to bring will be forth coming so keep an eye out for them! We all like the looks of draped hypertufa pots and personally, I believe they would sell good at our plant sale. Having the workshop a month before the plant sale will ensure the pots have time to cure before the plant sale/. So come on out and learn something new, and hopefully, improve our plant sale returns!



Wedowee School Garden Update

Several of our members recently completed a significant upgrade to the Wedowee Elementary School vegetable teaching garden, adding low retaining walls above and below the garden beds, which are on a significant slope and suffering erosion and presented potential safety problems.

On Tuesday Master Gardeners Vicki Stapler, Tom Harris, Susan Reynolds, Marcia Houze, Janet and Gary Smith, and project leader Valerie Morris and her husband Barry cut into the upper hillside and extended the concrete block wall the full 70' length of the 4 garden beds, and put cap blocks over the block openings. They also sank sixteen treated 4x4 posts just below the beds to hold the lower wall.

On Wednesday even more gardeners showed up for work. In addition to the Tuesday group, Jack and Sheila Bolen, Alyce Johnson, Judy and Ken Conaway, and Ann and T.C. Hammond helped finish the walls and haul more than a cubic yard of dirt (more like mud) provided by the county to fill in eroded areas and fill in above the lower wall. Then they carried nearly two cubic yards of gravel that was trucked in by Ann and TC to cover the entire area. Most of the hauling was done with buckets as the soil was very wet and soft. Meanwhile a handrail was added to the post tops of the lower wall so the students won't fall backward off the edge.

Also on Wednesday members turned up the Middle School gardens (around the corner on the school grounds) and built potato boxes from wire fencing and cardboard for the elementary garden.

The garden programs, taught during the spring and fall by Janet and Gary Smith, Susan Reynolds, Valerie Morris, Alyce Johnson, Marcia Houze, and Judy Conaway have been very popular with the students and teachers. Adding the walls and flattening the area all the way around the beds will make it easier and safer for more children to participate in the weekly lessons. The children will be really happy when spring programs begin soon.

Materials, money or in-kind donations were provided by the ECAMGA, the school PTO, Randolph County Concrete, Wedowee Building Supply, Wedowee Landscape and Nursery, and by friends of the gardeners.



photo by Valerie Morris



photos by Sheila Bolen



SPRING DOINGS

Looks like this spring is going to be a busy one! So I've started a list of happenings based on what folks have told me. So, here goes:

FEBRUARY

16th - Regular monthly meeting - 1:30 at Ava UMC

28th - We are planning to install new raised beds at Knight Enloe Elementary School in Roanoke on Saturday, Feb 28, 2015 roughly from 9:00 to 12. Will let you know more as details get finalized. Materials are already purchased and bundled up for our use. This will be a combined Slow Foods Group, KES parents, and Master Gardeners for those available and wishing to help.

All of this is subject to change with weather variables. Let's hope for warm sunny day

MARCH

3rd - Seed Swap - tentative date still to be confirmed by Dani.

16th - Monthly meeting with a draped hypertufa workshop - details to follow

23-25th - AMGA State Conference at Cullman, AL

APRIL

10th - Farm Day at Kiwanis Park

11th - Community Work Day in Roanoke - tentative date - email will be sent when details are firm.

20th - Monthly meeting - 1:30 at Ava UMC - last meeting before Plant Sale

24th - Plant sale set-up - 4-6PM at Kiwanis Park

25th - Plant Sale - 8-12 at Kiwanis Park. Be there at 7:00 to finish any set-up and get ready for the best plant sale EVERE!!!!

Gary and Janet Smith invite you to their annual wild onion pot-luck dinner from 2 pm till 6 pm, Sunday, March 8, 2015. This is a get together pot-luck spring cleansing meal (adopted from the tribes in Oklahoma). We'll provide scrambled eggs and wild onions, hominy, pork and kraut, grape dumplings and sassafras tea. Contact Janet (256-276-8599) or email (janet@thelovelyjanet.com) or Facebook (Janet Garner Smith) if you have questions about appropriate foods or need detailed directions to get here. Plastic utensils, cups and plates are helpful, too. Bring chairs or blankets to chill on the lawn. The cleansing also means putting down differences you may have with someone else. It's a true fresh start to the coming year. We are located at 5186 County Road 5, Ashland AL. The easiest way to find us is on Google Maps (only). Just make your destination "The Lovely Janet Heirloom Vegetables and Herbs". It even provides a handy street photo. We'll be parking as many as we can on the yard. Overflow parking will be across the street, thanks to Richard and Diane Britt. There will be prayer. You don't have to participate, but we hope you will.

PARSLEY

by Gary and Janet Smith

We considered two options for herbal discussion this issue, one was oregano's very close relative marjoram and the other was to complete the fourth member of the song "Scarborough Fair", parsley. Parsley won and marjoram will be the topic next month, assuming you, the reader, and Sheila, the editor, want us to share these articles on herbs. For the record, we love writing them.

Parsley or garden parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) is a species of *Petroselinum* in the family *Apiaceae*, native to the central Mediterranean region (southern Italy, Algeria and Tunisia), naturalized elsewhere in Europe, and widely cultivated as a herb, a spice and a vegetable. Parsley is the world's most popular herb. It derives its name from the Greek work meaning "rock celery" (parsley is a relative to celery). It is a biennial plant that will return to the garden year after year once it is established.

Parsley is included in the list of the World's Healthiest Foods, maintained by the George Mateljan Foundation, a not-for-profit foundation with no commercial interests or advertising. The delicious and vibrant taste and wonderful healing properties are often ignored in its popular role as a table garnish. Highly nutritious, parsley can be found year round in your local supermarket.

A sprig of parsley can provide much more than a decoration on your plate. Parsley contains two types of unusual components that provide unique health benefits, both as nutritious food and as a powerful medicine.

The first type is volatile oil components – including myristicin, minonene, eugenol and alpha-thujene. The second type is

flavonoids – including apiin, apigenin, crisoeriol and luteolin.

Parsley's volatile oils – particularly myristicin – have been shown to inhibit tumor formation in animal studies, and particularly, tumor formation in the lungs. Myristicin has also been shown to activate the enzyme glutathione-S-transferase, which helps attach the molecule glutathione to oxidized molecules that would otherwise do damage in the body. The activity of parsley's volatile oils qualifies it as a "chemoprotective" food, and in particular, a food that can help neutralize particular types of carcinogens (like the benzopyrenes that are part of cigarette smoke and charcoal grill smoke).

The flavonoids in parsley – especially luteolin - have been shown to function as antioxidants that combine with highly reactive oxygen-containing molecules (called oxygen radicals) and help prevent oxygen-based damage to the cells. In addition, extracts from parsley have been used in animal studies to help increase the antioxidant capacity of blood. In addition to its volatile oils and flavonoids, parsley is an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of vitamin A (notable through its concentration of the pro-vitamin carotenoid, beta-carotene).

In addition to the many health benefits, parsley is just good eating. It's peppery bite adds a vibrant tone to many soups, stocks and baked meats.

The two most popular types of parsley are curly parsley and Italian flat leaf parsley. The Italian variety has a more fragrant and less bitter taste than the curly variety. There is also another type of parsley known as turnip-rooted (or Hamburg) that is cultivated for its roots, which resemble salsify and burdock.



photo www.themarketoflafayettehill.com

Many dishes are served with fresh green chopped parsley sprinkled on top. It has been used in presentation of many popular dishes in Mediterranean and European cuisine since ancient times. Along with other herbs and spices, it is being used as flavoring agent in the preparation of vegetable, chicken, fish and meat dishes. It is one of the common ingredients in famous Mediterranean green sauce, "salsa verde". A cold sauce made of parsley, capers, garlic, onion, anchovies, olive oil and vinegar. Freshly chopped parsley is a great addition to green salad. We personally consider it indispensable when creating chili salsas, along with its cousin in the family *Apiaceae*, cilantro. Parsley is a key ingredient of West Asian salads such as Tabbouleh from Lebanon; Gremolata, which accompanies veal stew; and Persillade, a mix of chopped garlic and parsley in in French cuisine. Parsley is also used as part of a bouquet garni (or bundle of various herbs) to flavor soups and stock while boiling. Mainly used in European and American cooking as a garnish for food.

What's Bugging You?

The squash vine borer (*Melittia cucurbitae*) is a diurnal species of sesiid moth. It is a pest that attacks wild and cultivated varieties of squash. The moth is often mistaken for a bee or wasp because of its movements, and the bright orange hind leg scales. The females typically lay their eggs at the base of leaf stalks, and the caterpillars develop and feed inside the stalk, eventually killing the leaf. They soon migrate to the main stem, and with enough feeding damage to the stem, the entire plant may die.

Pesticides are ineffective after the larvae are inside the plant. Gardeners find this a difficult pest to combat. Some try to avoid the pest by timing the production season to harvest before the pests can build up, or after they have peaked.

Prevention includes pesticides to kill the adult moth (such use must not contaminate the flowers, as pollinators would be killed by poisoned nectar or pollen). Organic controls include wrapping the lower stem with nylon stockings or aluminum foil to prevent egg laying, which generally occurs within a couple inches from the point where the stem emerges from the soil. Row covers can be used up until bloom. An old gardener trick for vining squash and pumpkin cultivars is to cover the vine with earth at various points along its length, inducing rooting at several points, thereby continuing to feed the developing fruit despite the loss of the original stem. It may be noted that after the vine has taken root at multiple points, the infected portion of the plant can be cut off, along with another inch where the larvae is eating into healthy tissue, without significant damage to the plant. Some gardeners chose to place a yellow bowl filled with water to attract and drown the pest, while also letting themselves know they are nearby. This method usually coincides with checking the plant for eggs daily and is popular with organic gardeners.

Once larvae are present within the stems control must be quick. Often the first noticed sign of the problem is wilting of the vine, and it is too late for control efforts at that point. Experienced gardeners watch the stems for signs of frass protruding from small holes, which is a giveaway to the presence of the larva inside. Some gardeners carefully cut the stem along its axis and remove the caterpillar before it does too much damage. Others use a stiff wire, a needle, or a toothpick to kill the borer without too much damage. (frass – debris or excrement produced by insects – www.merriam-webster.com)



photo credit: Mary Foley Benson, USDA

www.Wikipedia.org

How to Catch Vine Borers, Cucumber Beetles & Other Insects

I read about a simple way to keep your squash/zucchini, eggplant, etc almost completely free of insects and it doesn't include using any pesticides.

One can use a yellow frisbee filled with water and dishwashing soap. The yellow attracts the bugs as they think it is a flower on a vegetable. I have one near my cantaloupe and change the water out every 3-4 days.

Another neat little trap uses "Tanglefoot Paste". You can purchase this at Ace Hardware, Amazon.com. I'm sure there are other places but these are the ones I was able to find.

Supplies needed:
Yellow plastic cups, stapler, cotton balls,

essential oils (clove, allspice, peppermint, lavender), Tanglefoot Paste, duct tape, garden stake.

- 1) Staple a couple of cotton balls to the cup.
- 2) Using the garden stake, you can either staple it to the inside of the cup or use duct tape and tape the stake to the inside of the cup.
- 3) Next, smear the top and all around the cup with Tanglefoot Paste. This is very sticky so you'll need to use a brush or a paint stirrer.
- 4) Once that is done, use essential oil of your choice to sprinkle the cotton balls
- 5) Put the stake into the ground near the squash or any vegetables you want to protect and within a day, you'll start seeing results.



Article and photos from www.rccg.org
and authored by John

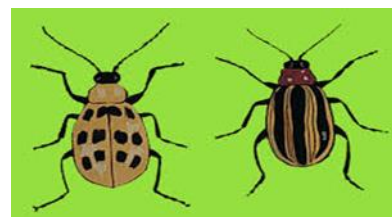


photo from www.choplesommers.blogspot.com



2015 All Bugs Good and Bad Webinar Series



Fire Ant Management Using Baits

March 6, 2015
2:00 PM EST

Dr. Lawrence "Fudd" Graham

Learn how to make the biology of fire ants work for you not against you. Dr. Lawrence "Fudd" Graham from Auburn University will discuss fire ant baits and other control methods. He will also provide information on the *Pseudacteon* phorid flies, natural enemies of fire ants. The moderators will be extension agents Charles Pinkston, Bethany O'Rear and Vicky Bertagnolli-Heller.

Go to learn.extension.org/events/1852 for information on how to connect to this webinar.



The All Bugs Good and Bad Webinar Series provides practical information you can use. Webinars will be on the first Friday of each month at 2:00 PM Eastern time. For more information on the series visit: extension.org/pages/72197.



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Tentative Meeting Dates

March 16

April 20

May 18

June 15

July 20

August 17

September 21

October 19

November 21

