

Garden Thyme



Monthly Newsletter of the East Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association

March, 2015

Musings from Jack ...

At our place the peaches, blueberries and huckleberries are all begging for warmer weather – their buds are really swelling!. For those of you that do grafting, when the warmer finally gets here it'll be time to get busy with doing the grafts. We planted more strawberries a couple weeks ago – one of these days we'll get to take the straw off them and let them see sunshine!

My book recommendation this month is *Life On A Line* by Dr. Dave Merchant. For those of us that work with ropes, knots and such this is a great resource! It's written by a doctor that does cave rescues. It's an uncommon book on rope usage and is the accepted text for the world's rescue teams. Think you know the new ropes?

"Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them" Jeremiah 29:5

Jack



MONTHLY MEETING HYPERTUFA WORKSHOP

Monday March 16th – 11:30 – be there or be square! If you want, bring a lunch to eat during the first part of the meeting – the hypertufa part will be MESSY Dani will be there to certify our new interns – YEA!!!, Martha will be presenting our Reach For The Stars awards, we'll have a short business meeting then we'll play in cement. I'm so excited to be able to share my little bit of knowledge with everybody. So come on out, welcome our new members, applaud the star winners, help keep our group going by voting on issues, then be creative!!!

FIELD TRIP

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

When: April 11th

Time: Meet at Ava UMC @ 8:00 AM

Bring: Sack lunch and drink

BBG is having their annual plant sale that weekend so after we shop we'll have a short lunch meeting then do a self-guided tour of the gardens.

For those meeting at BBG – we'll meet at 10:00 at the plant sale. I'll have a cooler in my car if anybody needs to put their lunch on ice when they get to the gardens. Wonder what goodies they'll have at the plant sale that I need????



SPRING PLANT SALE

April 25th 8:00-12:00 Kiwanis Park.

Get those plants ready!

We'll need tables, chairs (if you want to sit) pop-up tents and help setting everything up on Friday the 24th.



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:

Garden To Do List March

We'll soon know if March is going to come in like a lamb and go out like a lion or the reverse. Time will tell. What I do know is that even though the weather can still be wintry, it's time to start working in the garden.

- In mild weather regions plant cool season annuals for early spring color such as pansies, violas, snapdragons, nemesia, sweet peas and alyssum.
- It is important that your greenhouse is properly ventilated during early spring when fluctuating temperatures are common. Open the windows on mild days and close them before nightfall. My Riga greenhouse has automatic ventilators. This saves me from making 2 trips to the greenhouse every day. Read more about greenhouse ventilation.
- Plant potatoes as soon as the grass begins to green up. Read more about planting potatoes.
- If you live north of the Mason Dixon line plant grapes as soon as the soil is workable. Southern gardeners should plant grapes in fall so they will have plenty of time to get established before summer heat sets in. Read more about planting grapes.
- As temperatures begin to warm and plants emerge from dormancy, slowly remove protective mulches. Beware of removing mulches too soon since hard freezes are still possible.
- Transplant roses, shrubs and ornamental trees before the leaf buds open.
- Walking on wet soil will cause it to compact. So after the spring thaw wait until the ground dries to start working in your flower and vegetable beds. To test the moisture level squeeze a clump of dirt in your hand, if it breaks apart when you open your hand, it is dry enough to work.
- Apply slow release fertilizer to shrubs and perennials.
- Plant parsley in your herb garden
- Get your lawn mower ready for the growing season. Replace the spark plugs, clean the air filter, remove grass and debris clogging the fins of the engine cover, and take it in to a small engine repair shop to have the blade sharpened and balanced.
- Feed peonies with a low nitrogen fertilizer when they are about 2 – 3 inches tall.



Susan Reynolds - March 10
Judy Conaway - March 15

- Most perennials bloom for a 2 to 4 week period. When adding new perennials to your garden go for those that have great foliage as well as blooms or extend the flowering time by choosing a mix of early, mid and late blooming varieties.
- To repair bare spots in lawns combine 5 shovels of sand, 1 shovel of sterilized topsoil, 1 shovel of grass seed and 1 cup of slow release fertilizer. Cover bare spots with this mixture, tamp down and water.
- Harvest horseradish while still dormant, but when the plant begins to show green around the crown. Wear gloves because the roots can cause skin irritation. After digging the roots you can replant any unused portions such as side shoots or the crown for more horseradish later!
- Transplant and divide snowdrops (galanthus) and snowflakes (leucojum) after the flowers fade, but the foliage is still green.
- Clean water features and fountains. Make sure pumps and lights are working properly. Remove leaf guards.
- Hot house azaleas are popular gifts this time of year. To grow as a houseplant give your azalea consistent moisture and place it in indirect light away from sources of heat such as a fireplace or air vent. Sheet moss placed on top of the soil adds a finishing touch to the container and helps retain moisture. Feed with a liquid fertilizer, diluted to half strength every time you water. If you feel the need to prune your azalea, do this immediately after the flowers fade and before it sets buds for next year.
- Check your compost pile. Turn it every two weeks and keep it moist, but not wet.
- Order bulbs such as crocosmia, eucomis, gloriosa, kniphofia and lycoris for interesting summer blooms
- Set up an outdoor thermometer and a rain gauge. Keep a journal of the weather and when plants start to bloom.

<http://www.pallensmith.com/articles/garden-to-do-list-march>

MARJORAM

By Gary and Janet Smith

Sweet marjoram is native to Asia Minor (Turkey); however, it grows plentifully all over the Mediterranean and southern parts of Europe. This herb plant is a small woody-stemmed shrub that grows abundantly in well-drained, lime soils. It reaches about 75 cm in height; feature a hairy stem with soft oval shaped dark-green leaves, and tiny pinkish-white flowers. In some Middle-Eastern countries, marjoram is synonymous with oregano, and there the names sweet marjoram and knotted marjoram are used to distinguish it from other plants of the genus *Origanum*.

In general, its leaves can be harvested from the plant just after the formation of its flower buds but before flowering. To blanch, hang the harvested stems in dark, dry room for about 7-10 days, then strip its leaves from the stems and store inside an air-tight container.

Considered a tender perennial (USDA Zones 7-9), marjoram can sometimes prove hardy even in zone 5.

Marjoram is cultivated for its aromatic leaves, either green or dry. For culinary purposes, the tops are cut as the plants begin to flower, and are dried slowly in the shade. It is often used in herb combinations such as herbes de Provence and za'atar. The flowering leaves and tops of marjoram are steam-distilled to produce an essential oil that is yellowish in color (darkening to brown as it ages). It has many chemical components, some of which are borneol, camphor and pinene.

In its varied forms: marjoram essential oil, fresh or dried marjoram leaves, or marjoram powder (ground up marjoram), it has many uses. As a culinary additive, it is commonly used to flavor soups, sauces, salads, and meat dishes. Marjoram compliments carrots, chicken, corn, duck, eggs, fish, halibut, lamb chops, meats, mushrooms, peas, pork chops, potatoes, rabbit, ravioli, salads, soups, spinach, squash, stuffings, tomatoes, tuna and zucchini. It should be added near the end of cooking or the heat will destroy its delicate flavor.

Cosmetically, marjoram is used is skin

cream, body lotion, shaving gel, and bath soaps. Whether used as an essential oil, powder, fresh leaves, or dried leaves, marjoram has many uses with numerous health benefits.

The herb contains many notable phytonutrients, minerals, and vitamins that are essential for optimum health and wellness. The herb parts contain certain chemical constituents like eugenol sabinene, α -terpinene, cymene, terpinolene, linalool, cis-sabinene hydrate, linalyl acetate, terpinen-4-ol and terpineol. These compounds have been known to have anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties. Fresh herb has high levels of vitamin C (ascorbic acid); provide 51.4 μ g or 86% of RDA per 100 g. Vitamin-C is one of the powerful natural anti-oxidant help remove harmful free radicals from the body. Ascorbic acid also has immune booster, wound healing, and anti-viral effects. Marjoram herb contains exceptionally high levels of beta-carotene, vitamin A, cryptoxanthin, lutein and zeaxanthin. 100 g of dry marjoram leaves carry 8068 IU or 269% of DRI levels of vitamin-A. Carotenes, xanthins, and lutein are powerful flavonoid anti-oxidants. Together, these compounds help act as protective scavengers against oxygen-derived free radicals and reactive oxygen species (ROS) that play a role in aging, and various disease processes. Vitamin-A is known to have antioxidant properties and is essential for healthy eye-sight. It is also required for maintaining healthy mucus membranes and skin. Consumption of natural foods rich in vitamin A and carotenes are known to help protect from lung and oral cavity cancers. Zeaxanthin, an important dietary carotenoid, is selectively absorbed into the retinal macula lutea in the eyes where it thought to provide antioxidant and protective light-filtering functions. It has proven beneficial action against age-related macular disease (ARMD), especially in the elderly. Sweet marjoram is one of the richest herbal sources for vitamin K. 100g of dry leaves

provide about 518% of recommended daily intake. Vitamin-K has a potential role in bone mass building by promoting osteotrophic activity in the bones. It also has established a role in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease by limiting neuronal damage in the brain. Marjoram is a great antiseptic, antibacterial, antifungal, and antiviral agent. As a result, it fights against a variety of common illnesses: food poisoning, staph infection, tetanus infection in wounds, typhoid, malaria, influenza, common cold, mumps and measles. Marjoram is also an anti-inflammatory herb. Taken internally, it is great at relieving a variety of problems caused by inflammation, including: Asthma, Muscle spasms, Sinus, earaches, Migraines, Fever and general body aches.
















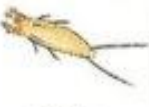








































Although marjoram plants are tender perennials, they are typically treated as annuals, as freezing temperatures will cause serious injury or death to the plants. When growing marjoram plants, it is generally best to start the seeds indoors during late winter or early spring. Push seeds just below the soil surface. Seedlings can be transplanted outdoors once all threat of frost has passed. Marjoram should be located in areas receiving full sun with light, well-drained soil. Likewise, marjoram plants can be grown in containers indoors and treated as houseplants. Since the plant is somewhat cold sensitive it should be planted against a sunny south wall. Even there it may winter kill. Remember how well it goes in soups and stews. Include marjoram in your indoor kitchen herb bed, and snip a few leaves just as you serve one of those wonderful winter soups. It grows and spreads quickly, so harvested leaves will quickly regenerate, making it an ideal winter kitchen garden plant for frequent use.

What's Bugging You?

The following insect identification chart depicts some commonly found indoor and outdoor pests. The listings are arranged in such an order as to show:

1. Insect's common name.
2. Identifying picture.
3. Outdoor control (if appropriate) in black ink.
4. Indoor control (if appropriate) in blue ink.

Some insects will list both controls since they are capable of breeding and multiplying both indoors and outdoors.

GARDEN	BEAN BEETLE  Bug Blaster Mal-A-Cide Liquid Sevin Quik-Kill	CANKER WORM  Dipel Dust	CORN EAR WORM  Liquid Sevin Bug Blaster containing Diazinon	CUCUMBER BEETLE  Mal-A-Cide	CUT WORM  Bug Blaster Dipel Dust Liquid Sevin Spray Quik-Kill	HARLEQUIN BUG  Bug Blaster Liquid Sevin	HORN WORM CANKERWORM  Dipel Dust Quik-Kill
	ORANGE DOG WORM  Dipel Dust	POTATO BEETLE  Bug Blaster Liquid Sevin Quik-Kill	POTATO LEAF HOPPER  Bug Blaster Liquid Sevin Quik-Kill	SQUASH BUG  Liquid Sevin	SNAIL/SLUG  Snail & Slug Bait Eliminate Snails & Slugs Paste	SOW BUG  Snail & Slug Bait	JAPANESE BEETLE  Bug Blaster Mal-A-Cide Liquid Sevin
LAWN	ARMY WORM  Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster Quik-Kill	BERMUDA MITE  Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster	CHIGGER  Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster Wettable Sulphur	CHINCH BUG  Kill-A-Bug Kill-A-Bug plus Lawn Food Bug Blaster Liquid Sevin	FLEAS  Bug Blaster Kill-A-Bug Quik-Kill	GRUB  Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster	MOLE CRICKET  Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster
	MORMON CRICKET  Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster	SPRINGTAIL  Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster	THIX  Bug Blaster Kill-A-Bug	CRICKET  Bug Blaster Quik-Kill	LAWN MOTH (Sod Webworm)  Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster Liquid Sevin Quik-Kill	CLOVER MITES  Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster Mal-A-Cide Wettable Sulphur	IMPORTED FIRE ANTS  Kill-A-Bug Home Garden & Pet
HOME & PATIO	EARWIG  Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster Liquid Sevin Quik-Kill Home Garden & Pet Spray	FLY  Quik-Kill Home Garden & Pet Spray Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster Time Release Indoor Outdoor Spray	MOSQUITOES  Mal-A-Cide Quik-Kill Home Garden & Pet Spray	WOLF SPIDER  Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster RTU	ROACH  Kill-A-Bug Quik-Kill Home Garden & Pet Spray	SILVERFISH  Bug Blaster RTU Quik-Kill Home Garden & Pet Spray	ANTS  Bug Blaster Kill-A-Bug Quik-Kill Home Garden & Pet Spray
	APHIDS  Triple-Action Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster Mal-A-Cide Quik-Kill	BAGWORM  Bagworm & Tent Caterpillar Killer	BLISTER BEETLE  Liquid Sevin	CODDING MOTH  Triple-Action Fruit Tree Spray	FALL ARMYWORM  Kill-A-Bug Quik-Kill	GRASSHOPPER  Kill-A-Bug Bug Blaster Quik-Kill	MEALYBUG  Triple-Action Whitefly Mealybug Spray Mal-A-Cide
TREE & SHRUB	LONGHORN BORER  Tree Borer Killer Lindane Borer Killer	LEAF MINER  Lindane Ornamental & Evergreen Spray	LEAF HOPPER  Triple-Action Bug Blaster Liquid Sevin	LACE BUG  Azalea Carnelia Crepe Myrtle Spray	PEACH TREE BORER  Lindane	PINE TIP MOTH  Liquid Sevin Dipel Dust	SPIDER MITE  Triple-Action Red Spider Mite Spray Quik-Kill
	SCALE  Scalecide Dormant Oil	STINK BUG  Kill-A-Bug	TENT CATERPILLAR  Bagworm & Tent Caterpillar Killer	THRIP  Rose Spray	WHITEFLY  Whitefly & Mealybug Killer Quik-Kill	TWIG GIRDLER  Triple-Action	PECAN WEEVIL  Bug Blaster Liquid Sevin Kill-A-Bug

The time for working in our gardens is getting closer by the day. Remember our GARDEN FRIENDS program and let us know if you need help in your gardens. It's always more fun to share the work and laugh with friends then work by yourself!

U.S. approves biotech apple that resists browning

By Carey Gillam, Reuters

(Reuters) - U.S. regulators on Friday approved what would be the first commercialized biotech apple, rejecting efforts by the organic industry and other GMO critics to block the new fruit.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) approved two genetically engineered apple varieties designed to resist browning that have been developed by the Canadian company Okanagan Specialty Fruits Inc. Okanagan plans to market the apples as Arctic Granny and Arctic Golden, and says the apples are identical to their conventional counterparts except the flesh of the fruit will retain a fresh appearance even after it is sliced or bruised. Okanagan President Neal Carter called the USDA approval "a monumental occasion." "It is the biggest milestone yet for us, and we can't wait until they're available for consumers," he said in a statement. Carter said Arctic apples will first be available in late 2016 in small quantities, and it will take many years before the apples are widely distributed. The new Okanagan apples have drawn broad opposition. The Organic Consumers Association (OCA), which petitioned the USDA to deny approval, says the genetic changes that prevent browning could be harmful to human health, and pesticide levels on the apples could be excessive. The OCA will be pressuring food companies and retail outlets not to make use of the apples, said OCA Director Ronnie Cummins. "This whole thing is just another big experiment on humans for no good reason," he said. USDA said it had determined the apples were "unlikely to pose a plant pest risk to agriculture" and they are "not likely to have a significant impact on the human environment." The law only allows the agency's decision to be based on its analysis of the plant pest risk to agriculture or other plants in the United States. The Food and Drug Administration, which has no mandatory review process for genetically engineered foods, is looking at the new apples through a voluntary consultation with Okanagan. Several science, environmental and consumer groups said they worry the genetic changes could have unintended consequences on insects, animals and humans. "We think there are some possible risks that were not adequately considered," said Doug Gurian-Sherman, a plant pathologist and senior scientist with the Center for Food Safety non-profit group. Okanagan said in a statement its apples have undergone "rigorous review," and are "likely the most tested apples on the planet."

<http://www.businessinsider.com/r-us-approves-biotech-apple-that-resists-browning-2015-2>

I thought this item was worth sharing with everybody. Jack said he has already seen these apples on the produce shelves at WM.

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