

Garden Thyme



Monthly Newsletter of the East Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association

November, 2014

From Our President, Ann Hammond...

Well another year is coming to an end. I will be leaving you as president but will be with you in the ranks. Thank you for putting up with me for two years. And thank you for all your support. You are a great group of Master Gardeners and I am proud to be a part of this association. May the next president have as much support as I did. Let's continue to grow and be an important part of our community. Love y'all,

Ann



He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. Ecclesiastes 3:11

DUES

2015 dues for East Central Alabama Master Gardeners are now due. Yearly dues are \$30 and are to be paid by the November 17th monthly meeting. We are required to have our yearly dues paid to the state MGs by the end of December, 2014. For those of us that have already paid, thank you. For those of us still needing to pay, please make note and have them paid by November 17th or as soon as possible after that.

Our final monthly meeting of 2014 will be November 17, 2014 at 6:00pm at Ava UMC. This meeting will be our election of officers so if you or someone you knows wants to serve as an officer for our MG association speak up and let us know. We will also be sharing our holiday pot luck meal so come on out and enjoy good food and even better fellowship. Put your thinking caps on and come up with some ideas for our 2015 "field trips".

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Just a reminder – your volunteer hours and CEUs need to be reported by December 31, 2014, The associations hours have to be reported to the state MG association in January. So – let's get those hours reported. If anybody needs help reporting their hours I'll have my computer at our November 17th meeting to help you out.

Just a reminder about our Garden Friends Program. If you find yourself needing help with your garden, please contact Ann, Martha or myself and we'll get the ball rolling to help out!





Autumn

There's a crispness in the air that greets the morning sun,
a feeling of anticipation, a new day has begun.

Harvest days are ending, winter is drawing near,
yet in between is surely the most special time of year.

They call it Indian Summer, and it seems to fit the bill,
for it's as if the Lord took a feathered brush and painted
all the hills.

Now as I sit contented, atop of one of these,
a book in hand to pass the time, the sound of a gentle
breeze,

I can almost imagine an Indian child upon this
mountaintop,
looking down at the land of her forefathers,
lost within her thoughts

For in every persons lifetime
some heartache may occur,
but on these hills in quiet solitude,
God helps us to endure.

So I say that the eyes are a window,
beauty is found within the soul,
and upon the hills of Autumn,
that are strewn with red and gold.

poem by Julie L. O'Connor
www.familyfriendpoems.com



NOVEMBER CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

Vickie – 11/2

Paul – 11/5

Syble – 11/7

Laura – 11/15

Cookie – 11/23

Harry – 11-24

ANNIVERSARIES

Cookie and Lonnie – 11/3

Did you know?

November 2 – Deviled Egg Day

November 4 – National Dandy Day

November 5 – National Doughnut Day

November 8 – National Harvey Walkbanger Day

November 11 – VETERANS DAY

November 13 – Sadie Hawkins Day

November 14 – National Pickle Day

November 17 – Homemade Bread Day

November 19 – International Men's Day

November 20 – National Peanut Butter Fudge

Day

November 23 – National Cashew Day

November 27 – THANKSGIVING

November 28 – National French Toast Day

November 29 – Throw Out Your Leftovers Day

November 29 – National Square Dance Day

90 percent of the pumpkins grown in the United States are raised within a 90-mile radius of Peoria, Illinois.

It takes about 36 apples to create one gallon of apple cider.

Thanksgiving is Thursday, November 27th. We're thankful for our families, our health, our friends and any number of things. I firmly believe we are able to enjoy these things as a direct result of the sacrifices made by our military. If not for the sacrifices these brave men and women made we would not be able to have our Thanksgiving celebrations, our parties, dinners and good times. So, for me, my Thanksgiving will be full of thankfulness for the freedoms provided by our military. Do you know a veteran? Shake their hand, give them a hug and tell them "Thank You".

Thyme

By Gary and Janet Smith

A delicate looking herb with a penetrating fragrance, thyme is a wonderful addition to bean, egg and vegetable dishes. Both fresh and dried thyme are available in your local supermarket throughout the year.

A friend of ours in North Carolina used creeping thyme in her stepping stone walkway, thus ensuring a positive attitude from visitors by the time they reached her door. We can promise the scent was exquisite.

For thousands of years, herbs and spices have been used to help preserve foods and protect them from microbial contamination. Now research shows that both thyme and basil contain constituents that can both prevent contamination and decontaminate previously contaminated foods.

Next time you are nursing a cold, try a warm soak with a tub infused with thyme and rosemary. You'll swear you feel better, and chances are you actually do.

Thyme leaves are curled, elliptically shaped and very small. Measuring about one-eighth of an inch long and one sixteenth of an inch wide. The leaf is green-grey in color on the topside, while the underside is a whitish color. Along with fresh sprigs of parsley and bay leaves, thyme is included in the French combination of herbs called bouquet garni used to season stock, stews and soups.

Thyme loves chicken and fish. If you are one of the very few who do not enjoy a sprinkle of thyme on your roast chicken, please make your mouth happy and try it next time.

Listerine (™) was the one item field hospitals would not be without in World War I. It was used to clean wounds, prep soldiers for emergency operations and cleanse surgical instruments. The key ingredient in Listerine is thymol,

the primary volatile oil constituent which gives thyme its characteristic scent and flavor.

Thyme also contains a variety of flavonoids, including apigenin, naringenin, luteolin and thymonin. These flavonoids increase thyme's antioxidant capacity, and combined with its status as a good source of manganese, give thyme a high standing on the list of antioxidant foods.

From WebMD:

Thyme is an herb. The flowers, leaves and oil are used as medicine. Thyme is sometimes used in combination with other herbs.

Thyme is taken by mouth for bronchitis, whooping cough, sore throat, colic, upset stomach, stomach pain (gastritis), diarrhea, bedwetting, a movement disorder in children (dyspraxia), intestinal gas (flatulence), parasitic worm infections and skin disorders. It is also used to increase urine flow (as a diuretic), to disinfect the urine and as an appetite stimulant.

Some people apply thyme directly to the skin for hoarseness (laryngitis), swollen tonsils (tonsillitis), sore mouth and bad breath.

Thyme oil is used as a germ killer in mouthwashes and liniments. It is also applied to the scalp to treat baldness and to the ears to fight bacterial and fungal infections.

Thymol, one of the chemicals in thyme, is used with another chemical, chlorhexidine, as a dental varnish to prevent tooth decay.

In foods, thyme is used as a flavoring agent.

In manufacturing, red thyme oil is used in perfumes. It is also used in soaps, cosmetics and toothpastes.

How does it work?

Thyme contains chemicals that might help bacterial and fungal infections and minor irritations. It also might relieve smooth muscle spasms, such as coughing.

Thyme is best cultivated in a hot, sunny location with well-drained soil. It is generally planted in the spring and thereafter grows as a perennial. It can be propagated by seed, cuttings or by dividing rooted sections of the plant. The plants can take deep freezes and tolerate drought well, once established. It is a must for your kitchen garden.



photo from flickr.com

Thymus vulgaris

Thyme, *Thymus vulgaris*

Scientific classification

Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Asterids
Order:	Lamiales
Family:	Lamiaceae
Genus:	Thymus
Species:	<i>T. vulgaris</i>

From Wikipedia.com

The Chemistry of Colors

Being a born and bred Alabamian, I find myself struggling to look forward to the chilly temperatures of our reasonably mild winters. While some folks relish the bitter coldness of ice and snow, I personally find the stifling heat and humidity of Alabama summers a bit more sufferable than our northern neighbors. Although I openly chide the coming cold, there is one benefit of the diminishing daylight and cooling temperatures: the astounding colors of autumn. Though, not being famous for our long autumn and fall seasons, we are blessed to have a state with such varied topography that yields a broad selection of plant life. With over 4,000 species of plants listed in Alabama, we are the 5th most floristically diverse state within the Country. Given that we have a plethora of which to feast our mind and eyes upon, we are destined to see some amazing colors in the ensuing months. To fully appreciate the varied shades of red, orange, yellow and green that will soon grace our landscapes, I believe that it is important to consider the “behind the scenes” action that takes place to give us such a splendid show.

First, let us take a trip back to middle school science and biology. There are three primary colors of light: red, blue and green. When mixed in certain amounts, we get the colors of yellow, cyan (blue-green) and magenta. We all learned that the colors we see are those that are reflected by certain pigments. For example, if a shirt appears red to our eyes it is in fact absorbing the blue and green light, thus reflecting red. To continue that, a leaf that appears green is actually absorbing red and blue light waves and reflecting green. The compounds within a leaf that absorb the blue and red light from the sunlight are called chlorophyll. The molecules of chlorophyll are contained within structures called chloroplasts, in which photosynthesis takes place. Photosynthesis is the life giving process of converting carbon dioxide and water into oxygen and carbohydrates using light. The chlorophyll absorbs light from the sun to supply energy used by plants during photosynthesis.

Finally, it is important to note here that chlorophyll is considered an unstable molecule when exposed to bright light, and is constantly being broken down and regenerated all summer long.

So, chlorophyll is the compound that is responsible for the everyday green that we all overlook throughout the summer and is generated on warm and bright days. So what is responsible for the shades of fall? In most leaves, two other compounds are also present, carotene and anthocyanin. Carotene is considered an accessory absorber, capturing the blue-green and blue light of the sun and supplying energy for photosynthesis. When combined with chlorophyll, the two reflect the standard green. As the temperatures cool down and chlorophyll production begins to decrease, the more stable carotene reflects several shades of yellow, as often seen in birch and hickory trees in the fall.

While chlorophyll and carotene are spectacular in their own right, the award winner for “best in fall color” is certainly the last compound to be discussed: anthocyanin. Anthocyanins absorb the blue, cyan and green light, resulting in leaves that contain anthocyanins reflecting the many shades of red that we all know. When mixed with other compounds in the leaf, colors including burnt orange, crimson and even shades of blue can be found. Some plants, such as red oak, red maple, and sumac, contain more anthocyanins than others, giving them a display of the brightest red and deepest purple.

Anthocyanins are formed later, during the cooler and dryer times of the year, when levels of sugar in the plant sap are high. Since cool temperatures mixed with bright light destroy chlorophyll, bright sunny days that have cool nights make for a more gorgeous fall. That being said, I think that we are up for an astonishing show, due to our mostly clear cobalt skies and lack of rain as of late. So, take time this fall to drive the country roads and enjoy the vast array of fall color that our great state gives us. Drive North to Jackson and DeKalb County early and continue your way south as the season progresses; I assure that you will not be disappointed.

written by Hunter McBrayer of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, C. Beaty Hanna Horticulture & Environmental Center, which is based at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens.



FALL GARDENING EXTRAVAGANZA

By Paul Smith

On October 10, 2014, our Alabama East Central Master Gardeners joined with about 300 other Master



Gardeners to attend Fall Gardening Extravaganza in Alexander City, AL. This event was hosted by the Tallapoosa County Master Gardeners and The Tallapoosa County ACES and held on the campus of Central Alabama Community College. The event was excellent in every respect – the facility, the college, the catered lunch and the speakers. It was clear that this event was well planned by the Tallapoosa MGs and the ACES office and with support from numerous local businesses. People came from other states as well!

Speakers included Buddy Lee from Encore Azaleas in Louisiana with over 30 years in plant nursery management. Buddy advised Azaleas:

- like well-drained soil, don't like clay soil
- never plant on the west side of a building with hot sun exposure
- Best time to prune is right after bloom
- Fertilize plants in late winter and never fertilize if the plant is in a dehydrated state
- The first years these plants require LOTS of water!
- Use pine bark mulch for it's acidity and an acidic fertilizer

Some of his favorite plants are Autumn Royalty – Encore Azaleas; Ruby Slippers – Hydrangea; Cherry Dazzle – Crepe Myrtle and Jubilation Gardenia.



Lois Chaplin from Bonnie Plants spoke about lifestyle and food quality. She recommended several sources - *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto* by Michael Pollan and *Folk's This Ain't Normal* by Joel Salatin. A trend in our society is to improve our eating and return to community gardens and urban farms. If you have limited garden space consider planting kale in flowerbeds – very cold hardy, naturally beautiful and harvestable! Consider parsley and pansies together, red leaf mustard and swiss chard are beautiful and edible. Bonnie Plants do not sell any GMO seeds and they tightly control the use of pesticides in their plants prepared for transplant by gardeners.

(Fall Gardening Extravaganza continued)



Steve Bender from Southern Living, aka The Grumpy Gardener, talked about problems we face in our gardens. When a plant such as Knockout Roses is planted all over creation we set ourselves up for plant disease transmission. These plants are attacked by a microscopic virus carried by mites in the wind. When Knockout Roses show a “bright red branch”, you might as well dig up the plant and toss it! This disease is systemic and will not go away with spray. Most disease problems occur when we do mass plants in an area. Impatiens are susceptible to Downy Mildew and leaving water on a plant to long can contribute to this. Steve advises to avoid planting ash trees as they are susceptible to the Emerald Ash Borer which, in in 2002, killed millions of ash trees. The Asian Ambrosia Beetle bores holes and pushes out sawdust that looks like toothpicks sticking out of the trunk and brings in a fungus. This fungus kills trees/plants such as Crepe Myrtle and many more. Stink bugs eat all vegetables and fruits and soapy water is a good solution to knock them off the leaves into. Mole traps work to eliminate moles and are commonly available.

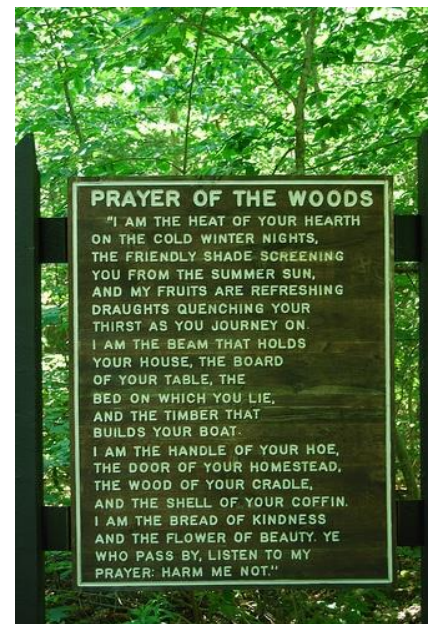
Our final speaker was Jason Powell, owner of Petals from the Past, and he shared the story of their nursery. Jason emphasized planting plants that our grandmothers grew and to plant in the fall. Plants he spoke of included: Texas Red Bud Tree; roses such as old garden tea Duchess de Brabant; climbing pinkies from the 1880s – Polyantha class and much more. He shared the story of Peggy Martin, a New Orleans gardener who could not return to her home for several months after Hurricane Katrina. When she did return she found two rose plants surviving. These plants were propagated, are thornless, known for their vigor and are called the Peggy Martin Rose. Other plants Jason recommended for the garden include Petunia Integrafolia, Hardy Blue Plumbago as a ground cover, Bear’s Breeches, Salvia Farinacea, Salvia Greggii, Ryan’s Pink Chrysanthemum and Mexican Bush Sage. He recommends growing Kiowa blackberry on a trellis, which can be seen at Petals from the Past.



photo from 'Fall Gardening Extravaganza' brochure

We all had a marvelous time and this clearly should give our ECAMGA group something to think about for our community.

event photos taken buy Paul Smith



2015 MASTER GARDENER CLASS

The Randolph County and Clay County Alabama Extension offices are now accepting applications for the 2015 Master Gardener Volunteer Class!

Master Gardeners are trained in many areas, including soils and plant nutrition, composting, plant physiology, plant diseases, landscape design and plant selection, weed identification and control, entomology, pesticide education, fruit culture, plant propagation, home lawn care, vegetable gardening, care and maintenance of landscape plants, wildlife management, bedding plants and much more.

Classes are taught by specialists from Auburn University, Extension agents from Alabama Extension, fellow Master Gardeners along with local horticulture professionals.

The Master Gardener Program includes more than 50 hours of classroom and hands on instruction.

The 2015 Master Gardener Program will be held on Fridays beginning in mid January. Class attendance is very important. During the duration of the 13-week course you are required to attend at least 12 of the classes. The majority of the course sessions will be held at Ava United Methodist Church in Wedowee, AL. In addition, some classes may be held in other locations (field trips). The cost of the class is \$125. Couples may take the class for \$200 and will receive one book. Tests will be given each week.

Upon completing the class work, Master Gardener Interns will be expected to contribute 50 hours volunteering the next year. These hours will include assisting Alabama Extension with programming, and providing demonstrations to the public, along with many other opportunities. Once certified, interns become Alabama Master Gardeners, providing 25 hours of volunteer service each year to remain active in the association. Master Gardeners are ambassadors of their local county Extension offices, helping share their knowledge and experience gained through the program.

Anyone who wants to learn more about gardening and the environment and has a strong willingness to volunteer are welcomed to apply. Participants are selected primarily based on their commitment to volunteering in their communities as an educational outreach of Alabama Extension.

If you have any questions about the Master Gardener classes or would like an application, call or stop by the Randolph County Extension office. Also, consider liking us on Facebook: East Alabama Smart Yards or East Central Master Gardeners.

By Dani Carroll, taken from ACES Randolph County Extension Newsletter, Fall 2014, page 10

Wedowee School Gardens Update

The four twelve foot beds at Wedowee Elementary School are growing beautifully. Recently, Susan Reynolds, Janet and Gary Smith, Alyce Johnson, Marcia Houze, Judy Conaway and Valerie Morris have been meeting on Thursdays (11:00-2:00) to plant weed, mulch and teach the fun of short work gardening to more than 200 kids and their teachers. The students are really enthusiastic. Alyce had them singing a "mulching song", Gary showed and talked about the Cherokee Candy Rooster squash and recently the kids helped separate earthworms from a box of vermipost – making for a rather tedious task!

The gardens are planted with radishes, lettuces, beets, collards (lots of collards!), broccoli, kale, swiss chard, parsley and even a few cabbages and brussel sprouts. Several "Student Ambassadors" showed off the gardens when adults from the Leadership Randolph County program toured the school in October.

A special thanks to Linda Barnes who kept the gardens going this past summer, to Andrew who added compost and prepared the soil for us in September, and especially to Susan Reynolds who checks on the plants and water system between our weekly programs. We plan to turn the gardens over to the teachers for the winter and resume programs in the early spring at potato planting time. Marcia and Janet have been talking about ways to grow our own transplants so we can get a jump start on a spring garden, introduce the kids to some of the harder to find but very interesting vegetables and also, maybe, send each child home with a tomato seedling of his or her own



Story and photos by Valerie Morris

INSECT INVASION: MULTICOLORED ASIAN LADY BEETLES

When temperatures begin to drop, the multicolored Asian lady beetle makes a move. Believe it or not, it wants to come inside your home. These orange and black ladybugs are notorious for congregating on the sides of buildings during fall months and moving indoors when given the opportunity. Awareness of the multicolored Asian lady beetle and understanding why it invades homes is key to preventing an infestation before it begins.

As one of the world's most invasive insects, the Asian lady beetle (*Harmonia azyridis*) is often seen as a pest because of its tendency to enter homes, have an unpleasant odor and leave stains on fabrics or walls. Although the beetle can be a pest, it also serves a valuable role in the environment.

"The presence of lady beetles has both direct and indirect beneficial impacts on the environment," Dr. Xing Ping Hu, specialist with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, said. "They reduce or even eliminate insecticide use against certain pest insects. This reduces toxic contamination to water, soil and air, and increases health and safety for people, wild animals and the environment. This, in turn, reduces the cost of pest control and increases harvests."

Hu explained that the multicolored lady beetle is native to Asia and was imported for use as a biological control agent for crop-destroying insects in the United States. It is characterized by a black M marker on its cream-yellow head.

"Biological control agents are natural enemies of pests," Hu, who

is also a professor of entomology at Auburn University, said. "The Asian lady beetle was originally introduced to the United States because there was no efficient, native, natural enemy to control certain agricultural aphids. The beetle's natural control of aphids in pecan orchards and some ornamental plants has decreased insecticide usage against those pests."

But why do these insects enter homes and what do they do?

According to Hu, in its native country, this beetle hibernates in caves, cracks and crevices during the winter. In the United States, these insects use buildings to protect themselves from winter weather and to retain the heat emitting from them.

"The greatest damage caused by Asian lady beetle is the discomfort they give to residents," Hu said. "It is common for thousands of beetles to congregate in attics, ceilings and wall voids. At warm hours, they may enter into house living areas. Additionally, they release a yellow fluid as a defensive chemical when being handled or squashed. The yellow fluid has an unpleasant odor, and can not only stain walls and fabrics, but also cause mild skin related allergic reactions in some people."

Prevention is the key to controlling the Asian lady beetle's ability to enter the home

"Before Asian lady beetles seek overwintering sites in late fall, homeowners should caulk and seal exterior cracks and crevices around door and window frames, and cable

and pipe openings," Hu said. "Lady beetles are typically attracted to light and lighter colors. So, don't turn on outside wall and door lights at night during the time when they are seeking overwinter sites."

If the beetles do find a way to get indoors, Hu recommends using a vacuum to remove them.

"Chemical application is not typically recommended, unless the infestation is very heavy. In this case, professional pest control advice should be sought. The best approach is prevention. Don't let them become a household nuisance in the fall and winter."

Hu encourages homeowners to use the catch and release practice since the Asian lady beetle can be beneficial to gardens and backyard plants.

The good news about lady beetles is that they are not poisonous or harmful to humans, just unpleasant to have around or inside the house.

According to Hu, "The comforting thing about Asian lady beetles is that they don't damage homes, chew or bore holes in walls or eat carpet or furniture. This makes the Asian lady beetle a mixed blessing

by Sarah Buck, author at Extension Daily, <http://news.aces.edu/blog>



PLANT SALE



Everyone was a little anxious about the sale – it was the first fall plant sale we’ve ever held Friday evening saw a good turn-out with a great variety of plants brought out - tables at the park and the ones brought by members were filled. It really resembled the spring sale with the quantity of plants.

Saturday morning brought more plants and quite a crew to help out. The advertising before the sale paid off. The sale, being in conjunction with a show on the hill and some great signs on 431 at the park turn-in, brought a great number of shoppers.

Plants for fall planting, other than the generic Lowe’s type, seem to be appreciated and probably more difficult to find close to home.

Overall the sale was a great success and a good follow-up to the spring plant sale. A lot of time and hard work by the members resulted in a success. There were some plants left over for the spring sale as well as some plants from the spring sale that were sold at the fall sale!

By Jack Bolen



Photos by Elaine Harris

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Thank You!

As our Master Gardener year comes to a close I want to say “Thank You” to everybody for the great jobs they’ve done this year. We’ve had a GREAT year with field trips, spring and fall Plant Sales, our Seed Saver 101 Workshop, Garden Friends help, a new class of SUPER Interns, the presentation at the national convention in Mobile and the list goes on. We’ve all worked long and hard, learned a lot and shared many great times. Nothing goes better with work than good fellowship. Let us not forget the good food we’ve shared along the way. I hope that, starting in January, we’ll all be back and ready to play in the dirt some more! Who wants to make mud pies with me???? See you all on November 17th! *Sheila*

F E R T I L I Z E R C O R M
U M A O L J R O V I N E O C
N B N O O N O N E B U S C O
G R K B I T N E R R S V K S
U Y D A G O O R G A N I C T
S O I L H R F O R K M R I A
B A R K S E E D E E R U T K
H O T A C I D E E E Y S U E
W E D L I M U N N N O Z B A
O O A I D E B T O H H M E P
S Y L N E U O E R A O O R H
I A A E L O P P E R E U O I
L R N B L O W E E D E S S D
T D D D A Y L I L Y E E E E



Ride with pride with the new Alabama Master Gardeners License Plate. You do not have to be a Master Gardener to order this plate. Just an enthusiast who is willing to support the volunteer efforts of the Master Gardener Program. Order your Distinctive Plate today thru your local Alabama Department of Revenue Motor Vehicle Division. For further information on this plate or the Master Gardener Program please contact Ann, Martha or Sheila.

FUNGUS	EMBRYO	RANK	BOOT
IRON	ZONE	EVERGREEN	FERTILIZER
ROOT	NOON	SOIL	STAKE
TUBER	ORGANIC	ALKALINE	BARK
ACID	RODENT	DEER	FORK
VINE	RIB	GREENHOUSE	HARDY
WEED	DAYLILY	HOSTA	HOTBED
BUD	BULB	MOUSE	SAND
SUN	CLAY	RAKE	HOSE
ROT	BAY	PEONY	ROSE
LAND	SILT	YARD	APHID
HOE	LOPPER	SEED	DIRT
POA	ROW	VIRUS	NEEM
MOSS	CORM	HOT	TOOL
AIR	ROCK	SOD	MILDEW



2015

So, where would you like us to visit in 2015? Know of any awesome gardens we need to see? Know of somebody that needs help with their gardens? When we come back to our meetings in January, come with ideas and suggestions. All suggestions and ideas gladly accepted and discussed. Anybody know of any good volunteer opportunities or workshop topics? Put on those thinking caps!!!!