



Can You Dig It

Newsletter of the Piney Hills Master Gardeners of Louisiana

Publisher Kathy Love

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Trails & Trellises 2008 Exceeds Expectations

Back in 2005 we started planning our first T&T. Our goal was simple - provide an enjoyable day for those who love gardening and raise a little money along the way to help this newly formed group of Master Gardeners develop and fund projects and programs. To this end, we featured gorgeous gardens to inspire and admire and the people came. In 2007 we added a plant sale to the tour of gardens, and again the people came. This year we had 3 gardens, a huge plant sale and, to keep it interesting, we added 2 lectures by nationally renowned author, Felder Rushing, to educate and entertain. New this year also was selling box lunches of delicious homemade chicken salad sandwiches at the First United Methodist Church where Felder was speaking.

From comments we heard, the visiting public was pleased.

“Great & enjoyable activity!”

“We always enjoy your tour”

“Thank you for bringing Felder”

“Lovely day – thanks for the speaker!”

“We want to know about the next time you do this wonderful thing.”

And the numbers indicate we are on to something: In 2008 406 folks toured the gardens, 173 bought lunches, 270 attended the first lecture, and 220 attended the second. And if success were measured by money only, this would be our most successful year yet. As a nonprofit organization, we aim to give back to the community through our service, projects and

programs such as Buds & Blooms and Trails & Trellises. That said we will be looking for more ways to return our '08 profit of \$ 5150 to the community.

I credit our success with the dedication of our garden owners who so willingly work to make their gardens showplaces. Wow! Also to the dedicated members of the T&T committee who work numerous hours planning and preparing to make the Tour run smoothly, and to all the PHLMG who work the Tour. We could not do it without the help of our members.

I want to thank Lynn Warnock-Dorsey of the Webster Parish Visitor & Tourism Center for her invaluable help with publicity, Coca Cola for supplies and signs and Judy Bryant, one of our garden owners, who donated many plants for our sale, and the businesses who contributed supplies or door prizes:

- ❖ Ace Hardware
- ❖ The Butterfly Garden
- ❖ Cone's Farm & Garden
- ❖ Culpepper Nursery
- ❖ Grace's Garden
- ❖ Green Acres Nursery
- ❖ Haughton Farm & Garden
- ❖ Hilltop Farm & Garden
- ❖ Minden Farm & Garden
- ❖ TG's Nursery
- ❖ Twin Oaks Nursery
- ❖ Webster Parish Visitor & Tourism Center

I thank each one of the PHLMG for the support, cooperation, contributions and ideas. This has been a team effort! Though you called me chairman, we are a group of

garden-loving friends striving to achieve our goal of giving to the community. I thank you for the opportunity to serve you. I have thoroughly enjoyed birthing and nurturing T&T. So now after 3 years, I turn over the reins to Linda Berry and Mary Anna Perryman. *“Do they really think it will take 2 to replace me?”*

Submitted by Marjorie Thomas, Chairperson

Editor’s Note: Members of the PHLMG are indebted to Marjorie for her tireless work the past four years. Through her efforts we have made a name for itself in our town and surrounding areas as a group who works together to give back to their community. And yes, Marjorie, we are hopeful that *two* people can take up the work load! Thank you for a job well done.

Grace’s Garden for Something out of the Ordinary

Master Gardeners and invited guests enjoyed a day of fun at the official opening of Graces’s Garden, owned by Master Gardener, Cheryl Calhoun. Shoppers sipped on Delta mint tea and lemonade and nibbled on scones as they strolled through the garden admiring the unique collection of plants. Later, lunch was served at Yellow Pine Inn, owned by Mary McKinney, also a Master Gardener.

Cheryl specializes in perennials and herbs for the discriminating gardener. If you are



searching for a hard to find plant, she just might have it. Cheryl plans to host another “by invitation only Plant Sale” sometime in October. If you would like more information you may contact Cheryl at 318 382-0561.

Haynesville Celebration of Butterflies celebrates Tenth Anniversary

Loice Kendrick-Lacy has done a monumental job organizing and overseeing the Butterfly Festival that is held each September in Haynesville, Louisiana. This year’s event, planned for September 13th will have several new events. The day long celebration will kick off with a parade at 9:30, with Grand Marshals, Charles and Nora Garrett. Activities begin at 10:15 a.m. at the Claiborne Parish Fairgrounds.

Various speakers who will give informative talks throughout the day include:

- Norman Winter: *Hot New Plants that Attract Butterflies & Hummingbirds and Captivating Combinations for the Butterfly/Hummingbird Garden*
- Charles Allen, Ph.D. *Butterflies from Scratch and Edible & Useful Plants (listen, look, smell, touch, taste, enjoy)*
- Richard Johnson: *Briarwood Plants for Butterflies*

One of the main attractions of the Butterfly Festival is the butterfly conservatory where young and old can get “up close and personal” with butterflies. It is a delight to see the expressions of the faces of children as butterflies land on their fingers.

Thanks to the hard work of MG Rita Frankie, the Piney Hills Master Gardeners will have a plant sale this year. Plants should be brought to the Extension Service office Friday

afternoon. Helping with the plant sale will be: Gale Anderson, Bobbie Anderson, Pat Lasseigne, John Yarbrough, Sybil Ray, Edwina Whitlow and Sue Coburn.

A new event this year will be the Master Gardening Quiz Bowl with Robin Bridges as emcee. So put on your thinking caps and let's have some fun.

Note to PHLMG: Please come even if you haven't signed up for a specific job—there will plenty of jobs to do.

Graduation Party Held For Class of 2008

This year's class of Master Gardener inductees has certainly caught the attention of their peers. They were all anxious to learn, challenged their teachers, and became involved from the start. One class member has even risen to the occasion by writing the article for this edition of the newsletter. Dan Shidiskis gave a short talk during class about his experience with trying to grow a Sago Palm, and even shared seeds with everyone. Dan has distinguished himself by being voted class representative for 2008—and he even scored 100% on the final exam—Way to go Dan!

Completing the 10 week course this year were: Gina Eubanks Almond, Bobbie Anderson, Gale Anderson, Linda Christy, Linda Dean, Fred Evans, Laura Evans, Cindy Harmon, Cindy Madden, Jeanene Nolan, Sandra Pixley, Sybil Ray, Dan Shidiskis, Charles Short, Melissa Slaid, Thomas Talley, Sue Tucker, Joy Webb, Misty Wise, Mary Wright. Evelyn Dandridge and her dedicated crew planned a fabulous "Western Theme" party to celebrate the graduates and install new officers for the coming year: Marjorie

Thomas, President; Melba Love, Vice-President; Kathy Love, Secretary; Sue Ranger, Treasurer; Parliamentarian/Historian Charlotte Martin; Executive Board Members, Harold Johnson and Kathy Johnson; and 2008 Class Representative, Dan Shidiskis.

Camellias – A Southern Favorite

For those of you who love camellias and sasanquas and the wonderful color they bring to the winter garden, anticipation of the bloom season can be as difficult for us as a child awaiting Christmas. Don't have any camellias? Want to add more? But have questions? Here are some recommendations:

When you begin to see blooms on sasanquas and see camellia buds swelling, let that be a signal that this is the best time to plant. Planting in the fall reduces stress on new plants and gives them time to get established before having to deal with our summer heat.

Does your landscape have room for a camellia or 2 or 3? A good rule is to plant no more than you can care for. Camellias are relatively low maintenance, but during the heat of summer need at least 1 inch of water weekly.

Camellias like partial shade. Under tall pines is ideal. Filtered afternoon sun is preferred. They like acid, well-drained soil, high in organic matter. Have your soil tested and add the recommended supplements to achieve a pH of 6.0 – 6.5.

Consider the size of a mature plant. Camellias get big, really big! So don't plant under windows or at your front door. Plant them at a corner of the house or scattered throughout the yard.

To plant, dig a hole as deep as the root ball and twice as wide. Add pine bark, sand and compost to the natural soil. Plant, leaving 1 inch of root ball above ground. (Most camellia deaths are caused by planting too deep.)

Mulch with several inches of shredded leaves and cover with pine straw. Keep mulch away from the trunk. Water well.

Using organic fertilizer upon planting can help the plant get established by encouraging root production. Wait until spring before using 8-8-8 or 13-13-13.

If you only have room for one camellia, make it a "Debutante." This is a profuse bloomer, pale pink peony form that blooms in early winter and is easily found in local nurseries. Other good performers for our area are Ville de Nantes (red & white variegated), Lady Clare (deep pink), Prof. Sargent (red), Betty Sheffield (various pinks), Mathoniana Supreme (red), R.L. Wheeler (red), and Marie Bracey (pink).

An excellent pamphlet, "Camellias," is available through LSU Ag Center. Visit their website: www.agctr.lsu.edu
Submitted by Marjorie Thomas

Editors note: Marjorie's parents were both camellia judges and she grew up learning to love and grow these fantastic shrubs. We thank her for sharing her knowledge of camellias.

Volunteers Needed for Local Project

While our area of Louisiana did not suffer devastation from the ravages of Katrina, we have certainly felt the effects of its aftermath. Many displaced people that fled the New Orleans area have decided to make Minden their home. The Fuller Center for Homes

has come to the rescue by building two new houses. Each house is in need of landscaping to make it a home. PHLMG has approved the project on an ongoing basis and has allotted money for materials. If you would be willing to help with this project contact Kathy Love at 377-6394.

Sago Palm-- A Plant Worthy of More Research

My experience with this lovely plant began many years ago when my darling sister Phyllis of Alexandria wanted to thin out her huge Sago Palm grove. I was hooked!

After transplanting my pup several years ago, low and behold one spring (2005) my now grown up plant began doing something very strange. A large "thing" (Photo #1) began to form in the center. It kept growing and growing and growing until it was the size and shape of a large upside down mixing bowl. It was soft and fuzzy to the touch and was tan in color.



Searching the net I came across the following web site www.rhapisgradens.com and learned a multitude of information about the Sago Palm (*Cycas revolute*) and just what my plant was going through. I had only to find her a mate! (Photo #2) After making several calls I contacted Ann Demaline at a local nursery. She told me they had a customer just the day before asking questions

concerning her Sago Palm. After learning the name and address of that person I paid the nice lady a visit and sure enough there it was. Standing straight and tall (18"-22") just waiting till the right time.



Waiting & watching. How slow time can pass when you are impatient! As time would have it my Sago showed signs of opening her flower and I knew it was getting ready for the big day. I went to check on her mate; sure enough he was opening his cone of pollen and was also ready. I cut the male cone and went home to give my flower a shower of pure sweet pollen. Several days later she began to close up tight.

Waiting & watching, again! For a couple months she looked dormant but then suddenly she began to swell and you could see small orange/red seeds amongst her petals. Finally, latter January early February she was showing rather proudly so I started gathering her seeds.

Well, I kept picking and picking and picking. After dropping several and filling a bucket, the final count in my possession was a whopping 262 seeds the size of walnuts. After checking the seeds to see if they were

pollinated, as covered in the web site listed above, I began to share my treasures.

Here it is 2008; my Sago and I are doing fine. She did bloom again but I did not find her a mate. I have learned so much about this beautiful plant that grows throughout our state. If you have a Sago Palm, or know anyone that does, I fully recommend you go to the web site listed above and learn more about it.

Submitted by
Dan Shidiskis

Pizza Casserole

1 can Grands biscuits
Hamburger meat
Pizza Quick Sauce
1 Cup grated cheese
Toppings of choice
Brown meat and drain, Add Pizza Quick Sauce and simmer for about 15 minutes. Grease casserole dish. Layer with biscuits, press them where they cover the bottom of casserole. Pour meat and sauce over biscuits and add whatever toppings you like and top with cheese. Bake at 400 degrees until biscuits are brown.

Fiesta Corn Dip

2 cans corn, drained
3 green onions, chopped
1 cup sour cream
3 jalapenos, chopped
1 c. mayonnaise or miracle whip
1 small jar pimento
1 small can green chilies
ground red pepper to taste
1 (8-oz.)pkg. shredded cheddar & Monterey jack cheese

Pour all ingredients into a bowl and mix well. Serve with Fritos and enjoy!

Master Gardeners are known for their cooking skills and the two recipes above won great reviews when served at a recent meeting. Thanks to Judy Burge and Gayle Walker for sharing these with us.