

THE GARDENGOER

Volume 11, Issue 7

July 2008



Hi Everyone,

Everyone knows April showers bring May flowers however, did you know June showers bring bahia seed stalks in just hours? I think you can actually see them grow after a rain. The next day your legs are covered in black stigmas and stamens from the flowers. *Paspalum notatum* (bahia grass) doesn't need a pollinator but I always feel like one when I come in covered with seed stalk debris. This can be a vicious cycle in hot rainy summers. Beware! Bahia grass has dual terminal racemes for double the amount of seeds. As soon as it is dry enough to cut the stalks, it rains again and black leg prevails once more. I think an outdoor shower is needed.

The garden is reaching its summer peak. I can tell because the weeds are starting to seed. It has been a great year for produce. This brings us to another summer ritual at our house. How to get rid of extra produce. After having grilled corn, creamed corn, corn chowder, boiled corn, what do you do with the extra? Bring out the veggie fairy costume and start depositing the extras at friends houses. I use plastic bags. They hang nicely on door knobs. I have a list of likes and dislikes of those closest and when in doubt leave it anyway because the recipient will pass the unused veggies on to someone they know. Everyone loves fresh produce. Beans, tomatoes, peppers, squash, okra, watermelon, potatoes, and cucumbers are the traditional veggie fairy gifts. Be careful, if the recipient is home you may leave with more veggies than you brought with you. However sometimes you can exchange for items you do not have at home. It is one of the most entertaining and delightful problems you will ever have.

Preparations are being made for the newest class of Master Gardeners. Thanks to those who helped in the application process. Thanks to everyone who volunteered in the office also. We will have a garden photography speaker at our July meeting. Congratulations to all our tomato growers. The tomato tasting was a gastronomical success. I hope to have more participants next year. It was fun.

Please bring your weeds for identifying to the next meeting. Pests are bountiful this year also. Fruits to harvest now include: figs, blueberries, grapes, muscadines, and blackberries. The sky is blue, the anticipation of the first tomato behind me, I am thinking of what I should plant for the fall. I think I hear someone on the porch. Hark could it be a veggie fairy? I had better get out there and make sure Miss fairy leaves with more veggies that she brought. Time to lock the gates and pick the crops..... Back in the garden aj



GARDENING IN SWELTERING ST. TAMMANY SUMMERS

by Rusty Batty

Man, it's hot!! I looked for the funniest lines on the internet and found these:

It's so hot - -

- The robins are laying their eggs sunny-side-up.
- The birds have to pick up worms with potholders.
- Farmers are feeding their chickens with crushed ice.
- The Habenaro peppers are looking for shade.

Now, that's hot! And it's only beginning! Keeping the heat in mind, be careful out there while gardening. Consider these safety tips:

- Wear loose clothing.
- Drink water before, during and after working outside.
- Wear a broad-brimmed hat.
- Use sunscreen, at least SPF 30.
- Work in the cooler parts of the day.
- Take advantage of large, shaded areas.

I hope you'll take care of your plants and yourself in our summer heat. Plenty of water, some shade and limited activity are good for both. Keep in mind - - - It's so hotThe trees are fighting over the dogs.....



MAGNIFICENT AND USEFUL PLANTS

By Marie F. Porche, Class of 1999

There are about 150-200 species of bamboo available in our area and because of our mild climate, you can plant most of them at almost any time of the year. The first major decision when considering bamboo will be to choose one of the two general types – running or clumping. Running bamboos grow from a shallow, underground rhizome (root) system. These segmented rhizomes extend horizontally under the soil some distance from the above-ground standing culms. This distance and aggressiveness of spread is somewhat species specific but this characteristic growth pattern is what determines how these bamboos will grow and be contained.

Clumping bamboo grows like an inverted umbrella under the soil, producing new shoots, concentrically, with each annual shoot season. This pattern slowly enlarges the plant's circumference as it matures. Because these plants lack spreading rhizomes, they require no containment. However, their mature, potential circumference must be considered when creating screens, or planting near fences or within contained spaces. The second consideration would be the desired height you wish without having to top or trim the bamboo. Would you prefer a plant reaching 6 feet, or towering to 25-50 feet? Larger bamboo needs more direct sun light. Smaller shrub bamboo (under 16 feet in height), requires less direct sunlight and will be more likely to thrive in partly shaded planting sites. Ground cover bamboo (six feet and under), love shaded sites and will do best out of the direct sunlight.

One should also consider planting two or more species or varieties. Bamboo does flower and produce seeds, and frequently dies after doing so. You can alternate the species in the barrier so that you will end with a thinned, but surviving barrier. You could choose all green plants or a yellow-green mixture. Do you want to achieve a quick, 1 or 2 year barrier or can you wait a few years for growth? Most bamboo will reach mature height within 5 or 6 years. Running types grow about 3-5 feet per year and spread outward at that same rate; while clumping bamboo gain about 1-2 feet of height per year . If an instantaneous screen is desired, most bamboo will not suffer from being planted nearly back to back.

When planting, dig a hole at least three times the size of the root ball. Dig each planting site 4-6 inches deeper than the root ball size. The larger the area of soil you loosen up, the faster the bamboo will spread. Back fill your holes with good topsoil mixed with some composted material. Bamboo should be spaced three to five feet apart to form a dense screen. Make a doughnut depression to help keep water localized around the plant. Always mulch to help retain the moisture between watering. Leaves or grass are preferred over bark which attracts termites and voles (mice like rodents which can damage new canes). Watering and mulching are critical in the beginning. Once bamboo is established, it needs little care and normal rainfall is all that is needed. Fertilizer should not be used for the first year. There after the best method of fertilization is just adding leaves, hay, grass clipping and compost or general lawn fertilizer. Hot chemical or chicken fertilizers will burn feeder roots.

There is a Louisiana-Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Bamboo Society if you want to be more involved or learn more. If you wish to visit a Louisiana bamboo grove, try Jungle Gardens, Avery Island, LA. There are many species of bamboo in the collection. Just be sure not to stay until dusk, when the mosquitoes will be feeding (personal experience). There are two local Bamboo nurseries in our area (one north of Franklinton and one south of Franklinton), Bamboo Gardens of LA 985-795-2300 and Bamboo Co. Nursery 985-789-2584.

Resources:

www.americanbamboo.org/Generallinfo:ages/PlantingAndCare.html; The Bamboo company, 16483 Fisher Rd., Franklinton, LA 70438; www.bamboogarden.com/care.htm; www.bamboogardensla.com/informationfaq/bambootypes.html; www.jmbamboo.com/southeast.htm; www.lewisbamboo.com/plantingisnstructions.html;



RE-USE - RECYCLE – REPURPOSE

Terry Farrar

If you have a tip or suggestion for reuse, recycling or repurposing a product or item, please send it to me. I will include in the monthly newsletter. Here are two items from 2007 class members:

Forwarded by Katie Roberts:



Mosquito Spray...Worth a try

I was at a deck party awhile back, and the bugs were having a ball biting everyone. A man at the party sprayed the lawn and deck floor with Listerine, and the little demons disappeared. The next year I filled a 4-ounce spray bottle and used it around my seat whenever I saw mosquitoes. And voila! That worked as well.. It worked at a picnic where we sprayed the area around the food table, the children's swing area, and the standing water nearby. During the summer, I don't leave home without it.....Pass it on.



OUR FRIEND'S COMMENTS: I tried this on my deck and around all of my doors. It works - in fact, it killed them instantly. I bought my bottle from Target and it cost me \$1.89. It really doesn't take much, and it is a big bottle, too; so it is not as expensive to use as the can of Bug-spray you buy that doesn't last 30 minutes. So, try this, please. It will last a couple of days. Don't spray directly on a wood door (like your front door), but spray around the frame. Spray around the window frames, and even inside the dog house.

From Don Hames:

We all acquire plastic containers from nurseries. If you do not use them in your own greenhouse, consider bringing the cleaned containers to the next Master Gardener meeting. Don has offered to bring them to a nursery that will re-use them. Much better than having them wind up in the landfill!!!

FUTURE MEETINGS

St. Tammany Master Gardener meetings are held at the LSU AgCenter Office in Covington and begin at 10:00 a.m. Be sure to wear your name badge to the meetings to be eligible for the door prize. The next Master Gardener meetings will be:

July 16

August 20

September 17

October 15

November 19

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