



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
ST. TAMMANY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION



# THE GARDENGOER

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## SPRING



Hi Everyone,

Spring is here and rapidly disappearing. Plant swaps are numerous. This is gardeners' heaven. I have noticed that since I retired and work only part time, I need 17 hours more per day to get all my volunteer and garden work done. I start at 5 AM preparing food for Jim and me, the wild birds, rabbits, raccoons (who are not all nocturnal), chickens, possums, and cows. Next comes the watering and harvesting, followed by the shower and house chores. Planned volunteer opportunities are waiting their turn also. The library needs its time served also. Then the cooking, followed by more gardening which leads into the night time feeding chores, a shower, and lastly sleep. 24/7 without a weekend off for good behavior. I worked less when I had a full time job. The biggest difference however, is I used to get a pay check every two weeks. Now I just get bills. Oh well, welcome to retirement and living life to the fullest. I do not regret a thing! I would appreciate greatly if anyone out there has some extra time. E-mail me a few hours. I will be waiting! My new electric tiller and I are still dancing down the unplanted rows of my veggie garden. Maybe I left some time by the bench.

May will be our presentation of the scholarships meeting. Mrs. Fletcher and Bobby Jr. will be there. Please bring some finger foods if you can. We will have cake and mini muffelattas. Two of the three recipients will be there. June is tomato tasting month. I hope everyone will bring at least one tomato. Prizes will be awarded. If you have any plants or insects for identifying please bring them also.

**NOW IS THE TIME TO PLANT ALMOST EVERYTHING! LET THE GROUP KNOW - HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?**

We will be getting ready for applicants for the new class. Get the word out if you can. We will be discussing the possibility of interviewing the new applicants in addition to their written applications.

Back in the garden aj



## Top 25 Tomatoes

by Rusty Batty

The tomato is one of the most popular vegetables grown in the home garden. They require little space and can produce 5 or more pounds of fruit per plant. They are low in calories and a great source of vitamins C and A. So what makes a great tomato? The best tomatoes are a matter of taste, looks and production. It's really a personal opinion.

Listed are some of my favorites from different categories.

- Early tomatoes – First Lady, Better Boy, Redstone
- Mid season – Champion, Celebrity, Creole
- Late summer or fall – Solar Set, Sun Leaper, Florida 91
- Extra Large – Beefmaster, Ponderosa, Oxheart
- Small (Cherry) – Elfin, Small Fry, Jolly
- Heirloom – Cherokee Purple, Striped Germany, Brandywine
- Paste – Classic, Roma, Rocky
- Bi-color – Big Rainbow, Zebra, Tigerella, Hillbilly

All of these should do well in our area, although I haven't planted all of them. They have all the traits of terrific tomatoes. At least, that's my opinion!



Linda Franzo introduced a new "garden to table" concept to her neighborhood to encourage more interest in easy garden ideas to share with friends:



I'm sitting in a French cafe in New York, worlds away from our Bayou. Outside, sirens are screaming, taxis are honking, and the subway rumbles under my feet . I have come to appreciate our haven on the water with boats going by, waves beating my beach and bunnies romping. I'm making it sound like Paradise ...Maybe it is.

Stop and smell the roses and enjoy your bayou gardens this summer. Add an old antique rose bush this season to your landscape this season. The fragrance is wonderful and no pesticides are needed. My favorite variety is Zephirine Drouhin, a raspberry pink climber with a fabulous raspberry rose scent. Also, Knock Outs, although not an old rose, gives great color in the landscape year round.

Think out of the box -no frozen veggies - and get fresh produce from our local farmers' market on Saturdays, 8:00am - 1:00pm or go green and do your own veggies this summer. There is still "thyme" to plant your little herb patch. Tomato varieties like cherry, grape, or roma do great in raised beds as well as containers. Try ichaban eggplant. It has pretty purple flowers and long thin eggplant .Don't forget Bush cucumbers, jalapeno, cayenne, banana peppers and zucchini. All of these will give spectacular colorful vegetation and flowers. I your lucky, you will have too much zucchini, so make zucchini pizza (with a peeler, shave 2 zucchini to make ribbons, toss with extra virgin olive oil , 2 minced cloves of garlic and salt and pepper . Spread alfredo sauce over a pizza dough, sprinkle mozzarella add mounds of zucchini ribbons. Bake 450 \* about 15 minutes. (Crunchy

and gooey at the same time) Don't forget the mint for Mojitos, basil for your tomato ~ caprese salad and rosemary to toss on your potatoes. The Garden to Table concept is always on my mind.

Try a new variety of vegetable or technique each season. Once you get your garden in place, you can grow every season here. This year I planted fingerling potatoes from the supermarket and I am going to grow tomatoes upside down. Whether you grow up or down, use good garden soil. I like Miracle Grow garden soil. Mix in some free horse manure from Slidell horse stables, and save your greens, egg shells, and coffee grinds for compost. Mulch with alfalfa or wheat grass to keep the weeds away. This sounds like another recipe.

I'm not sure how many of my neighbors are growing, but get going green! Kudos to Christine and Barry, next door, for catching my garden bug and started their own Victory garden this season. It might be fun to have a progressive garden party in each others garden. I like this idea. If you do, e-mail me at [cherricafe@aol.com](mailto:cherricafe@aol.com) , subject: garden party or call 985 781 4372. This will be a fun way to eat, drink, talk "dirt" and visit in our gardens!

Your Garden Gal,  
Linda Franzo



Thought for the month:

The world's favorite season is the spring.

All things seem possible in May.

- **Edwin Way Teale**

## 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:

May 20

June 17

July 15

### PROJECT COORDINATORS

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