



Can You Dig It

Newsletter of the Piney Hills Master Gardeners of Louisiana

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Publisher Kathy Love

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County Agent urges Caution Around Poisonous Plants

Springtime is here and summer is just around the corner. The air is filled with pollen and our gardeners are starting to plant their seeds in the ground. Flower beds are starting to take shape with many new buds and blooms. There is nothing like the site of a beautiful home place with azaleas, morning glory, holly, irises, and many other shrubs and flowers. Let us not forget that we have some plants, while beautiful, may also be dangerous to little children and ourselves.

Here are a few plants that we commonly know are dangerous: poison ivy, oak and sumac-all parts of these plants are poisonous with the major complaint being Dermatitis, but there could also be some vomiting and diarrhea. Pokeweed and ink weed-the entire plant is dangerous with symptoms of cramping, nausea and vomiting. The raw berries of these two can be fatal.

We have several plants that we just do not realize are poisonous. The apple tree and seeds inside the fruit can cause nausea and vomiting if consumed in large amounts. The foliage and seeds of the cherry, peach, plum and apricot can cause stupor, vomiting and coma. The fleshy part of the fruit of a cherry laurel may also cause coma, stupor and vomiting with very rapid onset and few or no warning signs. The ole buckeye's leaves, flowers, young sprouts and seeds have caused weakness and depression.

Of course, there are many plant varieties that can prove fatal to adults and children. Here are a few and what parts cause the fatality: dapine-berries, jasmine-entire plant, lantana-berries, mistletoe-berries, nightshade-unripened berries, poison hemlock-entire plant, rosary pea-seed, castor bean-seed, water hemlock-entire plant and yew-berries and foliage.

These are just some of the plants known to be poisonous. Remember in case of accidental exposure or ingestion, contact the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. For a complete listing of Common Poisonous plants contact your Webster Parish County Agent Calvin Walker at 318-371-1371 or cwalker@agcenter.lsu.edu.

2009 Piney Hills Louisiana Master Gardeners Garden Tour, Seminar & Plant Sale to be held May 16, 2009

The Piney Hills Louisiana Master Gardeners proudly announce their fourth annual tour, Trails and Trellises, featuring three lovely gardens.

The Piney Hills Louisiana Master Gardeners have again enlisted garden-owners in the Minden area to share their gardens with the public. The 4th annual *Trails & Trellises* Garden Tour will take place on May 16, 2009 in Minden, Louisiana from 9am until 4pm. Three lovely gardens will be available to enjoy as well as vendors, a plant sale, and

door prizes. Two seminars will be presented at Minden High School at 11am and 1:30pm. With so much to see and do, it would be best to get an early start the morning of the tour. Visit the gardens as you wish between 9 am and 4 pm. You need not visit in any particular order. Guides will be available at each garden to answer your questions and assist you as necessary.

The garden of Betty and Foster Halford invites you in with surprises around each corner. The Master Gardener plant sale will also take place in this lovely garden. Here will be plants propagated and grown by Master Gardeners and offered for sale to you. Proceeds from the plant sale and the Tour itself will be used to benefit projects of the Piney Hills Louisiana Master Gardeners.

Breathtaking is the best word to describe Susie and Henry Lester's garden. Susie is a tried and true gardener. When the first Master Gardener class was offered in Shreveport in 1998, Susie was there, and her garden reflects all she has learned from the class and over the years. A refreshing drink and yummy cookies will be offered at the Master Gardener hospitality table. Sit and rest and take in the tranquil atmosphere.

After graduating from the Master Garden class in 2008, Sybil Ray is eager to share her and her husband John's garden with you. Curving beds filled with a variety of colorful plants will entice you to wander the garden and discover all it has to offer. Vendors will also be located in this garden to give you a chance to take home that special something for your garden.

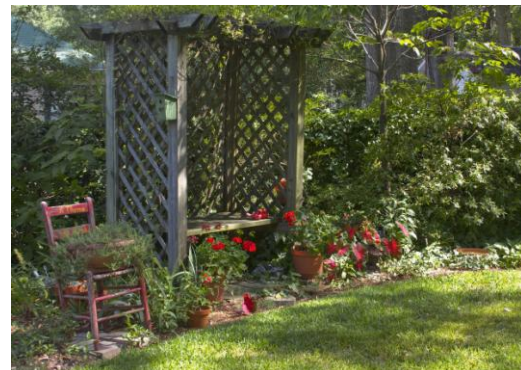
You'll want to find your way to the Minden High School at 400 College Street for the two seminars at Minden High School. Joyce Ohern of Akins Nursery in Shreveport will be the speaker. Joyce has been an avid

gardener since childhood. Her two talks will be Butterfly Gardening at 11:00 a.m. and Container Gardening at 1:30 p.m. During the break between lectures take advantage of the delicious box lunches that will be offered for sale at a cost of \$5.

Door prizes have been generously donated by area businesses. Sign up for drawings at the high school. Drawings will be before and after the lectures. You need not be present to win. Please patronize these contributing businesses which are listed on your ticket.

Purchase your tickets in advance for \$10 at the Extension Office at 1202 Homer Road in Minden or call 371-1371 or email Glenda at gcollums@agcenter.lsu.edu. On the day of the Tour tickets may be purchased for \$12 at any of the gardens or at the high school.

So put on your sun hat and your comfortable shoes and enjoy a day in Minden on May 16, 2009. The Piney Hills Louisiana Master Gardeners await you with anticipation. As with most gardeners, they love to share gorgeous gardens and their knowledge of plants and gardening. We hope to see you there!!



A glimpse of the Lester Garden

Trails & Trellises 2009
Guidelines and Instructions
For Volunteers

Friday, May 15

Bring your plants potted and labeled to the Halford garden when you come to the plaque presentation **or** bring them to May meeting.

PLAQUE PRESENTION:

This is your opportunity to see all 3 gardens on tour!!

SCHEDULE:

9:30 AM Foster and Betty Halfords
268 Chris Drive
10:00 AM Henry and Susie Lester
700 Buchanan Street
10:30 AM Sybil and Johnny Ray
127 Woodard Drive

Saturday, May 16

DRESS CODE: White blouse or Trails & Trellises shirt or MG shirt or apron with jeans, Capri length or longer. No shorts, please. All workers are expected to wear their name tags.

Be at your assigned place at 8:00 a.m. and stay until 4:00 p.m. or later as needed. (Kitchen Committee is to be at the Minden High School at 8:00 AM.) Workers are not to leave their location until the tour is over.

We plan to videotape the lectures and use them at future PHLMG meetings.

Restrooms facilities at the gardens are available to you and emergency use by visitors.

At the end of Saturday, make sure nothing is left behind (tables, trash, water, ice chests, signs, money, table cloths, etc)

Pick up the advertising signs you put up or any you see and return to our room at the Extension Office on Monday or thereafter.

The signs cost \$10 each, so we don't want to lose any.

TICKET TAKERS

Tickets are \$12 on the day of the tour.

You will be given extra tickets to sell. If you should run low on tickets, please tell Kay Elzen when she comes by, or call Linda Berry at 465-6740. We will get more tickets to you.

Children 12 years and older must have a ticket. Under 12 are free with an adult. Visiting MG having ID badges can pay \$10. Sue, as treasurer, will give you a cash box and change and will pick up \$ during the day.

Tickets for lunch will be sold at Minden High School for 5 from noon until we run out or the 1:30 lecture starts. Drinks are provided with lunch.

This might be difficult to do, but try to get a count on the number of people visiting your garden.

Have someone bring a table and lawn chairs, pencils, pens, trash can etc. that you might need during the day.

Lunch will be brought to you. Bring extra drinks and snacks you might need during the day.

GARDEN GUIDES

Guides are in the garden to welcome and educate the visitors. Chat with them. Become familiar with the plants in the garden or your section of the garden so you can be as knowledgeable as possible. Point out plants and features. Answer questions and be available during the tour. Use your map to help you. If you don't know the answer, try to find out. **Allow no digging or picking of the flowers.**

DOOR PRIZES

Door prizes will be drawn at Minden High School prior to or after the lecture in the AM and PM. Visitors will sign up for the drawings at Minden High School. **MASTER GARDENERS DO NOT REGISTER FOR DOOR PRIZES!!!!!!**

PLANT SALE

The plant sale is at the Halford garden.

HEAD GARDEN GUIDES

Please call Mary Anna Perryman (518-4598) with the number of workers at your garden before 10:30. Include the home owner. She will deliver the lunches.

If any problems arise, tell your headen garden guide or notify Mary Anna (518-4598) or Linda Berry (465-6740).

Lasagna Gardening ~ a Fun Approach to Gardening

At the *Buds & Blooms* seminar held in February, Master Gardener Evelyn Dandridge shared an innovative way to grow flowers and vegetables – lasagna gardening. Lasagna gardening is a technique for raised bed garden construction, where the bed is built up in layers like lasagna.



Evelyn Dandridge demonstrates the technique for making layers

Advantages:

- You can have a garden even if you are tired and lazy
- Saves time and work
- No need for a tiller or other big tools
- No fuel consumption. Reduces greenhouse gas emissions
- Increases soil fertility and maintains soil biological diversity
- Increases earthworm activity
- Maintains soil “crumb structure” and improves tilth
- No chemicals
- Less weeding

Simple instructions for beginning your garden:

- Choose a spot, size and shape of your choosing, but should probably be no more than 4 or 5 feet wide
- Place at least 6 layers of wet newspaper over chosen site
- Add 2 or 3 inches of manure, preferably composted, or any available compost
- Make additional layers of grass clippings, shredded leaves or straw, some more soil if available, maybe a little peat moss or other organic matter shredded or chopped. Should be 10 to 24 inches deep.
- Sprinkle layers with water as you build, should be like a wet sponge but not too juicy
- You may now plant seeds or plants into this mixture or you may wish to let it cook for a month or so
- Take a nap

Piney Hills Master Gardeners begin Scholarship Fund



Elaine Burns presents \$1000 scholarship to Beau Cook, the recipient from Webster Parish

Master gardeners share many things in common – to gain and share horticultural knowledge, to enjoy the friendship of others who share their interest and to give back to the community through their volunteer commitment.

A major emphasis of the group is to support the activities of the 4-H program. The Piney Hills Master Gardeners have begun a scholarship for 4-H students. This year a total of \$4,000 was awarded to deserving students -- \$1,000 each to a student from Webster, Bossier, Claiborne and Bienville parishes. The recipient from Webster Parish was Beau Cook from Doyline.

Recipes

Linda Christy brought this fabulous cake to a recent meeting and everyone wanted the recipe. Here it is.

APRICOT CRUMBLE CAKE

8 oz. Philadelphia cream cheese
1¼ c. granulated sugar
½ c. margarine
2 eggs
¼ c. milk
1 tsp. vanilla
2 c. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
¼ tsp. salt
10-oz. jar preserves (apricot, pineapple or peach)

Blend cream cheese, margarine and sugar. Gradually add eggs, milk and vanilla. Sift dry ingredients and stir into cream cheese mixture, mixing until blended. Spoon half of batter into greased and floured 9"x13" baking pan. Cover with preserves and top with remaining batter. Bake at 350° F. (325° for glass pan) for 35 to 40 minutes.

Topping

Combine the following and spread on cake. Broil until golden brown (watch carefully).
2 c. shredded coconut
2/3 c. brown sugar, packed
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/3 c. margarine, melted
(can substitute chopped pecans or sliced almonds for coconut or include with coconut)

Helpful Hint: for easier spreading, spoon batter into pan, then spread; so the same for the preserves.