



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
ST. TAMMANY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION



THE GARDENGOER

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May 2008

Hi Everyone, How do your gardens grow? I have almost added all my new treasures into the landscape. This was one of the best swaps ever. Let's keep up the good work. I am almost ready to harvest my first spring veggie crop. Unfortunately it is a horrible crop of nut sedge which gained access in some river sand I imported. I should know better by now. If it's not sterilized don't use it. Oh well I will have job security for the summer as I battle the nuts and other interesting things that are appearing since I disturbed the soil. I have noticed that when I seek solitude in the garden I am never alone anymore. The rabbit nibbles on the greens row while I weed the peppers. I casually leave a hand cultivator on the greens row, but it goes untouched. The blue jays notice the portable radio and swoop down to inspect the shiny surprise. Next they try to change the station by pecking at the radio. No work no radio so off they go in a huff. The bluebirds stop in for some insect work. They search the potatoes thoroughly and make several trips to the offspring. Finally, one species that actually helps, without destroying all my hard work. The doves like to inspect the soil also. The neighborhood ugly red tomcat likes to inspect the doves. The entire day is filled with activity even when I am alone. Next week fertilizing starts. I can't wait to see if help will come again. I know the night crew just parties. I see the armadillo roto-tillers are keeping a low profile and the raccoons are only leaving prints. If I get brave maybe I will put out a spotlight and see if gardening after dark is as action packed as the daylight hours. I always wondered what goes on in the yard while we are away.

The Master Gardener conference is next week. I hope to see some of our group in attendance. The scholarship committee has selected a recipient. He will be present with his family at the May meeting. Please attend if you can.

Now is the time to plant everything! The weather has been very cooperative this spring. The mayhaws and dewberries are beautiful. The Poison Ivy is also abundant this year as are the red ants. Please share your spring experiences at the next meeting. I see a swarm of termites and kingbirds in the yard. I wonder if they did any weeding in the veggie garden? Back in the garden to check, aj

Don't forget to tell your friends about the Master Gardener Program

The St. Tammany Master Gardener Program is now recruiting trainees to help educate home gardeners in St. Tammany Parish. Rusty Batty, LSU AgCenter County Agent, is coordinator of the St. Tammany Master Gardeners program. Batty says "the Master Gardeners have benefited St. Tammany home gardens with lots of horticulture related information through seminars, garden clubs, and their annual Northshore Garden Show." The Master Gardener training will include topics on plant science, insect/disease/weed control, soils, fertilization, safe use of pesticides, vegetable production, fruit and nut production, herbs, perennials, annuals, trees, shrubs and lawn care. Master Gardener trainees will receive training materials that are not available to the public.

Participants should be willing to help people, be outgoing, flexible, dependable, un-biased and be open minded.

The training session will begin on August 12, 2008. Classes will be on Tuesday and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to noon and runs through the end of October. Classes will be conducted at the St. Tammany Extension office on 1301 N. Florida Street in Covington, with the exception of 2-3 field trips. Trainees must attend 80% of classes and pass a written exam to graduate.

Many previous Master Gardeners are still involved with community horticulture outreach with The Farmer's Market, Covington Garden Club, Northshore Spring Garden Show, Native Plant Society and the Slidell Camellia Festival. This year the St. Tammany Master Gardener Association had nearly 40 lawn and nursery exhibitors at the Northshore Spring Garden Show. More than 2,000 residents attended the 2 day event held annually the 3rd weekend of March. The St. Tammany Master Gardeners also coordinated seminars on lawn, landscape care and maintenance. Master Gardener trainees will be asked to conduct many educational activities such as providing information on the phone, assisting in the Extension office, teaching gardening to special audiences, organizing community gardens, helping with school gardening activities, etc. A Master Gardener trainee must agree to volunteer for a minimum of 40 hours of service to earn the title of a Louisiana Master Gardener.

Everyone that applies for the Master Gardener training may not be selected. An application process will be conducted and 25-30 applicants will be chosen. For an application please call **(985)875-2635** or stop by the **LSU AgCenter office. The address is 1301 N. Florida Street, Covington, LA 70433.** The deadline for applying is Friday, June 20, 2008. Confirmation of trainee selection will be made by July 7, 2008.

- Rusty Batty

It is the policy of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability.

At Lacombe Library -



“WEEDING” IS FUNDAMENTAL

On Tuesday, May 13, at 9:30 at the library in Lacombe located on Highway 190 there will be an opportunity for MGs to add a few volunteer hours.

The library has some very interesting plant material that has been neglected for a few years. We will clean the beds and identify the plants. The plant identification and signs are what will make this an education project, thus reportable volunteer hours. Depending on the number of folks that show, this project should go quickly and couple of hours will do it. Bring your gloves and tools that you prefer to use. Also, any plant identification books, etc. I will bring trash bags for the debris.

As an added incentive I will provide a light lunch in my home following the work. Please let me know if you plan to attend so that I prepare enough food for our sustenance following our labor. You may contact me at my email address jazzwood@charter.net

Looking forward to seeing you.

Joy,
Judy Wood



OUCH!!!!!!

We are all aware of the health precautions to take while gardening; use sunscreen, wear gloves, drink plenty of water and take regular breaks to prevent heat stroke. You may not, however, be aware of another potential health threat that affects farmers, horticulturalists, rose gardeners and plant nursery workers. It is Sporotrichosis, a fungus that can cause infection when the skin is broken during the handling of common plant materials (mulch-rich dirt, briars, rose bushes). A small, painless, red lump is usually the first symptom of the skin infection. It will eventually develop into an ulcer. It occurs most often on the hands and forearms as these areas are most commonly injured. If left untreated, the ulcers follow the lymph flow and will spread up the arm.

The good news is that, with treatment of oral medication, a full recovery can be expected for those of us with normal healthy immune systems.

Source: www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus

Submitted by Terry Farrar

THE PERFECT FLOWER – “Honest Excellence”

Submitted by: Marie F. Porche, MG CLASS 1999

Camellia japonica is an elegant and gracious evergreen. The autumn, winter and early spring blooming season ranges in shades of: whites, creams, pinks, reds, solid and variegated flowers producing a mild sweet fragrance. I cannot think of anything lovelier than a single or possibly several camellia blossoms floating in a shallow glass vase.

The Camellia is a native of Eastern and Southern Asia from the Himalayas east to Japan and Indonesia. The plant was brought over to the Americas from Europe and is now found in Southeastern Virginia thru the Carolinas to Florida along the Gulf Coast and even along the Pacific Coast. Since it is not a tropical plant, it prefers a cool winter season. The plants do best when the thermometer does not go below 15 to 20 degrees. Camellias will grow in areas with high summer temperatures with lots of rainfall and winters with light frost. You may consider growing Camellias because they are not only evergreen with beautiful flowers, but they also have glossy leaves and exquisite form and are relatively inexpensive. As with most plants work is required, but it is not that difficult. They may be grown in your home or outside (over the years they become large, but they are slow growers). Camellias need well drained, friable, acid soil with organic material and plant nutrients. If your selected area for planting does not fit this, you could replace the soil with soil that is made up of one-third well rotted cow manure, one-third decayed leaves, woods mold and similar items and then one-third garden soil.

When ready to plant, you want to try to handle the plants in any size with a ball of earth to protect the plant. Set the plants in the new soil just the same as the depth from which you transplanted them, fill in beneath and around the balls and pack firmly in place and water well. Be sure to keep the soil moist and the tops should be sprayed with a fine mist two or three times weekly for about two months. Giving the plants special care in the beginning will give them a good start and better chance of survival.

Diseases one should be aware of are: Camellia Dieback and Canker (one of the most serious is caused by a fungus), Flower Blight, Root Rot, Leaf Gall, and Viruses (transmitted by root grafts and propagation of diseased stock). Insect pests include types of Scales. Other problems: Bud Drop (bud drop off before opening or the tip or the young bud turns brown), Sunscald and Oedema (caused from over watering).

It should be noted that one of the most impressive Camellia gardens in the state is located very near here between Hammond and Robert at the Hammond Research Station. This 2-acre garden located under towering pine trees features over 450 named cultivars and about 200 unnamed seedlings or unidentified cultivars of *Camellia japonicas*. Most of the seedlings were planted in the late 1930's through early 1950. The collection

was planted by W. F. "Hody" Wilson, Jr., superintendent of the station during this time until 1975. He was internationally known for his Camellia breeding during this period.

References: Camellia Diseases & Insect Pests – HGIC @ Clemson University;

http://www.essortment.com/all/camelliaplant_rwjv.htm; <http://www.flowertending.com/camellia-flowr.html>; LSU

AgCenter. Camellia Garden at the Hammond Research Station





Gardeners Night Out

Friday May 9, 2008 4:30 pm

Featured Speaker

Norman Winter

Mississippi State University Horticulturist

**“Newest in Annual Color Plants
for Southern Landscapes”**

Book sale & signing will be available

Open to the Public – Free Admission

4:30 pm Stroll through gardens

5:00 pm Speaker presentation

6:00 pm Dinner served

Hammond Research Station

21549 Old Covington Highway (Hwy. 1067)

(off Hwy. 190 and next to LynHaven)

BARBEQUE BRISKET DINNER \$8.00

Available from Tangipahoa Master Gardeners at 6:00 pm

Membership & participation in activities & events are open to all citizens without regard to race, color, national origin, gender,

religion, age, veteran status, or disability. If you have a disability that requires special accommodation for your participation in this event, please contact Annie Coco at 985.748.9381 by May 7, 2008

A State Partner in the Cooperative Extension System

The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. Louisiana State University and A. & M. College.

UPCOMING LOCAL EVENTS

- May 3 - GNO Bromelaid Society Show and Sale
Lakeside Mall
Metairie, LA
<http://www.gnobromelaid.com/>
- May 3 & 4 - Red Stick Hibiscus Society Show & Sale
LSU AgCenter Burden Center
Baton Rouge, LA
damonveach@cox.net
- May 9 - Gardener's Night Out
LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station
Hammond, LA
rbracy@agctr.lsu.edu or acoco@agctr.lsu.edu
- May 10 - East Baton Rouge LMG annual Mother's Day Plant Sale
LSU AgCenter Burden Center
8:00 am - 2:00 pm
rtrawick@agcenter.lsu.edu
- May 23 & 24 - Region 13 Daylily Meeting
Baton Rouge, LA
http://www.brdaylily.org/convens_regionalsl/conventi.htm
- June 20 - Easy Care Summer Annuals
Louisiana House - Home & Landscape Resource Center
Baton Rouge, LA
<http://www.louisianahouse.org/>

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 21 - Scholarship recipient awards meeting

June 18 - Tomato tasting

July 16

August 20

September 17

October 15

November 19

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