



Master Gardener Thymes

www.lakelandsmastergardener.org

AUGUST 2007

MEETING CALENDAR FOR AUGUST

Meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of each month at NW Volunteer Fire Department @ 6:30pm, unless otherwise noted. The Fire Department is located behind Harris Baptist Church off of Center Street.

AUGUST 9th---Phyllis Zuehlke will speak on recreational parks in our area. She will discuss the history of parks in Greenwood County and where we stand at the present time with the newest proposed park site. Phyllis is a retired school teacher who taught for 30 years. She was appointed Chair of the Greenwood Parks Commission at its inception and served for many years in that role. Phyllis remains very active as a supporter of the Parks Commission. Come hear Phyllis speak and learn about what YOU can do to become active in our community with this important group.

SEPTEMBER 13th----Garden of Gray and Cheryl Moore in Hodges SC. Cheryl says "being married to a contractor, building and change are constant" at the Moore's log home and garden. The yard has several different features, including a pond, a 25 foot waterfall and a koi pond below. There are fruit trees and small animals in the barn area. The many levels of the yard have been landscaped and planted over the past 8 years. The owners have no formal training in landscaping, just the love of gardening. Directions to the Moore's lovely home and garden are:
Take Hwy 254 north towards Park Seed. Three miles past Greenwood High School, take a right onto Gary Road. Take an immediate right onto Windsor Road and the Moore's driveway is the 2nd on the left. 307 Windsor Road. There is a wagon wheel at the entrance.

PRESIDENTS CORNER—*Julee Marshall*

Our carbon footprint...

Being concerned about global warming, my husband's oldest daughter, Clare, has begun a personal campaign to reduce her carbon footprint on the earth. She has unplugged her freezer to save electricity since she can get by without it. She didn't fly to Quebec with her husband on a business trip since flying is one of the most inefficient uses of fuel. She is trying to grow a little food so that her daughter will learn that tomatoes and squash do not come from the bin at the grocery store. She, as well as others, has got me thinking more along those lines than ever.

This spring, there was an article in the Greenville News by Ellen Goodman of the Boston Globe. She was starting to plant her garden in Maine with seeds purchased from catalogs during the long cold winter. She notes that the food on our plates "has traveled an average of 1500 miles" and that "85 cents of each food dollar goes to the processors, manufacturers and transporters that make up the food industry." She quotes Barbara Kingsolver who is the author of "Animals, Vegetable, Miracle." "Transporting a single calorie of a perishable fresh fruit from California to New York takes about 87 calories worth of fuel." That's certainly not very efficient. She reminds us of the holes in the food safety net. The same global economy that gives us raspberries from Chili in January also gives us melamine from China in our pet food. Meanwhile, our food policy supports all the processed food that fills the center aisles of the supermarket." Remember the e-coli in the spinach?

Ms. Goodman ends her article with this paragraph. "But reading the label on my seed packets this morning, I count the days until the carbon footprint on my plate shrinks and taste expands. As someone who spends most of her time working for the money to buy food, I am briefly a collaborator with the Earth. In a world of global warming and global warning, these are moments when hope is itself a triumph."

With all that said, it makes me glad that I have been growing vegetables for all these years. As Ms. Goodman, I realize that I am not self-sufficient and growing your own is certainly not inexpensive. But, it does give me a certain satisfaction that at least a portion of my food is grown as organically as possible and only travels from the garden to the kitchen where I can cook and preserve it in its freshest state with superior taste.

I think those funny looking light bulbs are next.

Big City Advancements in Tree Care

I just got back from Michigan and an Extension training session. The newest innovations were part of the indoor sessions and field trips. When I travel I am constantly looking at what others are doing in the horticulture field. Several useful indoor sessions gave me a few choice tidbits to bring home to South Carolina and share with local Master Gardeners.

I enjoyed the location in Grand Rapids, Michigan along the Grand River. The area along the river downtown has been well developed for walking and enjoying the river. There were connecting walking paths and several parks and overlooks along both sides of the river with walking bridges at several points. The Gerald Ford Museum was located in a nicely landscaped area along the west side of the river. My greatest discovery was along the east side of the river in what was called Sixth Street Park.

I know that Michigan has a much shorter growing season than South Carolina, but I was surprised as I approached Sixth Street Park on the path to see several trees with foliage that had started to turn red in July. This leaf change is early even for Michigan, and as I got closer it was obvious that this was not a fall phenomenon. As we discussed in Master Gardener training class, this was Abiotic problem, not a normal biological occurrence.

Untrained brutes with weed eaters had been at work in the park. Along a ¼ mile stretch I counted 6 dead trees and several dozen others in various stages of died back and color change caused by stress. Some of the dead trees were twenty feet tall and 4 inches at the base, but constant weed eater damage had eventually girdled the entire trunk. Also, I discovered a number of trees hit by mowers with large chunks of bark knocked loose or off the tree.

As I continued my walk I came upon the icing on the cake, or maybe the cherry on top, for tree care. Obviously, someone finally realized that knocking large chunks of bark off the tree with a mower might actually create a wound, so they had applied first aid. The band aid was wrapped around the tree to hold the bark tight so that the wound might heal. I know the medic had to be male because the band aid was duck (duct) tape wrapped tightly around the base of the tree.

Education and training in tree care is definitely needed in many other areas of the country. Speaking of tree education, I attended master gardener coordinator training for an advanced Tree Care program for SC Master Gardeners in June. This program is intended to train volunteers to handle calls and make visits to look at tree problems. Roughly, it is 20 hour training session with a nominal fee. I am considering organizing a program for early 2008. If you are interested in this training let me know. I will provide more details through the fall.

New Master Gardener Class Notes:

Final details are being made for this fall's Master Gardener Class. We have a signup class scheduled for July 31st at 6:00PM at the Tennis Center near the Civic Center. We have a large number of names on the waiting list and will likely signup a large class of 25-28 people. If you are interested in signing up to work on several class nights contact Helen Spiller.

If you have friends and co-workers who would be good candidates as a master gardeners have them call our office at 942-8590 to get on the waiting list. We often have space when those on the waiting list do not signup. Our class will tentatively start on Tuesday night, August 21st at 6:00PM at the Tennis Center. We can take applications until around August 10th before the books must be ordered.

JUDY KELLEY'S CORNER—A Gardener's Journal

Have the warm days of summer gotten you down, or have you been able to enjoy a cold glass of lemonade and a cool breath of fresh air in a nice shady place in your garden? Unfortunately, my yard doesn't have much shade – I just have a big sunny area. Actually, the only tree that occupied a place of honor in my yard was the eucalyptus tree I planted when I first made my herb beds twelve years ago. That was one tree that really surprised me by its growth. I never expected it to grow so large, but grow it did. This tree became a provider for shade to the herbs, as well as a landing strip and resting area for our cardinals that frequent our feeders. Of course, I was also able to use its branches for decorations throughout the year. As the herb beds were replaced with the ever growing water and fish pond, its branches provided the morning shade that was so urgently needed. So, you can say that that little eucalyptus tree grew up to be a friend.

As things will happen, though, friends sometimes leave us. Unfortunately, my dear eucalyptus tree gave up the ghost, so to speak. You might say that there's no cause for despair – just put another tree there. Easier said than done! It took twelve years for that one to reach a good height. It would take a while for another to provide for the fish, the birds, AND ME. I really have missed looking out at it each morning. Can you just imagine how the birds must feel? I laughed as I just happened to be mournfully gazing out the window the day after the downfall of the tree and watched a bird go flying to the tree (sigh) and quickly making a U-Turn. You'll never convince me that that bird wasn't trying to make his daily landing before going to the feeders.

Well, until I decide what I'm going to do about a replacement for my friend, a banana tree in a container has taken its place to do the best it can. Someone special gave me this little plant year before last and it has started growing new leaves by leaps and bounds. Hopefully it can provide a little much needed shade for my fish. Do you think the birds will be able to tell the difference? I'm trying to think up some way to add creative yard art with height and branches to that container, too, because personally, I don't think I would want to land on a floppy banana leaf, myself. I surely would hate to lose my birds all because of my tree.

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden

On a recent trip to Charlotte, Linda suggested that we visit Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden in Belmont, North Carolina. We were really glad that we took the time. It is an absolutely beautiful place.

In 1989, retired Belmont textile executive, Daniel Stowe, set aside 380 acres of rolling meadows, woodlands, and lakefront property, as well as a \$14 million endowment for the development of a world class botanical garden. In 1999, it opened. The first phase was 110 acres including gardens, fountains, buildings and grounds. There is a \$5 million, 13,500 sq. ft. visitors' pavilion which contains a garden shop, as well as the Great Hall and Wren Rooms, which are available for meetings and receptions. Under construction is a conservatory that will highlight many tropical plants, with a special emphasis on orchids. This should be completed by early 2008. In the planning stages is the new Willow Maze. Designed to be educational for children, the Maze is in the shape of a potted plant. It will cover an area of approximately 3,000 sq. ft. and about 600 linear feet of hedging. It should be completed by the fall of this year.

After paying our admission fee, we were given a pamphlet which told us the plants in the garden that were featured and which garden they were in. During our visit there were 8 gardens with featured plants. For instance, the White Garden featured WHITE BLOODY CRANESBILL, 'Clara Mack' KENTUCKY WISTERIA, and 'Gourmet Popcorn' SCHRUB ROSE. The other gardens were Four Seasons, Cottage, Canal, Allee, Scroll, Ribbon, Conifer, Fall-Flowering Azalea, and Serpentine. The Cottage, Canal, Perennial, Allee, Scroll, and Serpentine contain fountains.

Many activities take place at the garden throughout the year, such as flower shows, photography contests, camps for children, bird watching, and gardening workshops.

The garden is open 7 days a week from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. It is closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, and New Year's Day. If you are headed in that direction, it is well worth the \$10 admission.

RECIPE CORNER

Penne with Roasted Eggplant, tomatoes and Onions

From "Pasta Verde," by Judith Barrett (Macmillan, \$23).

Submitted by Linda Kellam

1 large eggplant (about 1 and 1/2 pounds)	2 tablespoons chopped fresh marjoram, oregano or basil leaves
Kosher salt	1 pound uncooked penne (narrow, tubular pasta)
1/2 cup olive oil	2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves
2 pounds plum tomatoes, seeded and coarsely chopped	2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 large onion, peeled and coarsely chopped	Freshly grated Pecorino Romano cheese
2 cloves garlic, pressed or peeled and minced	

Heat oven to 450 degrees. Trim off and discard stem end of eggplant. Cut eggplant into 1-inch cubes. Place in colander and sprinkle lightly with salt; toss. Allow eggplant to drain at least 30 minutes.

Pour oil into large roasting pan. Add eggplant, tomatoes, onion, garlic and marjoram. Season with salt to taste and stir well to coat vegetables with oil. Spread vegetables in even layer in pan. Place pan in oven on topmost rack; roast, stirring occasionally, until eggplant and onions are lightly browned, 25 to 30 minutes.

While vegetables are roasting, bring large pot of water to rolling boil over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon salt and penne. Cook, stirring occasionally, until pasta is tender but firm, 7 to 10 minutes. Drain; immediately add pasta to roasting pan with vegetables. Add parsley and oil; toss well. Transfer to large serving dish.

Serve with grated cheese. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Peanut Butter Crunchies

Submitted by Jane Price

1 cup light Karo syrup	12 oz. peanut butter
1 cup sugar	7 oz. box (6 to 7 cups) crushed cornflakes

Bring syrup and sugar to a boil; boil 1 minute. Remove from Heat and mix in peanut butter until melted. Add cornflakes. Spray hands with Pam and roll mixture into balls. Place on wax paper to set.

On Dry Land
How to Plant a Drought-Resistant Garden

By Constance Casey

As printed in Slate Magazine July 2007

On these hot, dry days, your plants may look as though they're pleading for water. You used to be able to just haul out the hose and soak every wilted thing. Now, though, in many parts of the United States and more and more places around the world, water is limited. Snow cover has diminished in shorter winters, reservoir levels are sinking, and many parched Western states keep adding more water consumers.

Just this month the U.S. Department of Agriculture declared the state of Alabama a drought disaster. Alabama's governor called for prayer (some rain came, but not enough, said the spoilsport climatologists), but there are other ways of coping. Home gardeners might take a lead from farmers who can't so easily switch a field from corn to cactus or soybeans to sedum. They're looking at improving their soil's ability to hold water and their crops' ability to take it in. Gardeners can plan ahead by making their soil water-retentive, planting drought-tough foliage, and nurturing perennials with plenty of moisture before the water runs out.

Over the past decade, we've been advised by garden writers and garden centers and environmentalists that the way to go in a hotter and drier world is to buy and use drought-tolerant plants. When home gardeners began including more drought-resistant plants, it was certainly a good change from green lawns in Phoenix and hydrangeas in El Paso, Texas. Those resinous water-storing plants harmonize with what's left of the surrounding landscape. But some drought-resistant combinations have become tiresome clichés. Look at the planting around almost any North American airport. You'll see Russian sage, yellow "Stella d'Oro" daylilies, sedum "Autumn Joy," and prairie grasses.

The gray leaves of Russian sage, the deep roots of prairie grasses, and the succulent water-holding leaves of sedums are evolutionary adaptations to arid environments. For the nonarid parts of the country, though, drought is a relative and temporary condition. Meanwhile, the yucca and sage you plant today could be drowning in the next rain. I'm haunted by the words of the meteorologist who predicted a future of "more rainfall, in fewer events." Where are the gentle showers of yesteryear?

What's more, you might not want your yard to look like the Denver Botanic Gardens, lovely in their dryish way though they are. You may have plants that need moisture at the roots—a rose that grew from a cutting in a graveyard, or a rhododendron planted by the people who lived in your house 30 years ago, or an apple tree left over from when your suburb was an orchard, or, let's face it, a Japanese maple that cost \$175.

A good response to longer periods of dryness broken by more violent rainstorms is to make your soil drought-resistant. What you want is a way for your valuable plants to survive a temporary water deficit, without having to use a lot of water and perhaps pay a fine to your municipality. So, make sure that the water from a deluge doesn't run off. Make the water percolate down to plants' roots. Don't till the soil; bare plowed soil loses water to evaporation. Leave organic material lying on the soil surface or plant groundcover (a cover crop like clover or alfalfa in the case of farmers). Midwestern farmers are now leaving corn plants up after harvest to catch the snow and protect the soil. Encourage worms, whose tunnels, about the diameter of a pencil, direct water down to root level.

Plants are, in a sense, cannibals. They thrive when they have partially decomposed plant material—little bits of bark or crumbly leaves—to consume. (Though they'll also happily take up the minerals in decomposed animal material.) Little bits of bark or crumbly leaves work like sponges, holding moisture in the soil. Humus, the name for that decomposing stuff, is sort of like exercise, which can make fat people thinner and thin people more rounded. It improves both sandy soils and clay soils, increasing the water-holding capacity of sand and water penetration in clay. Some of the boosters of arid-region plants have insufficiently stressed that in a garden with heavy clay soil that doesn't drain well, or where water fails to percolate, drought-tolerant plants will suffer in times of average rain.

The cheering news is that perennials on the whole are drought-resistant once their roots have developed well; they may flower less in dry conditions, but they're in it for the long haul. Annuals panic and go to seed, hoping their offspring will find moister conditions next year.

Perennials, even the prairie and desert ones, do have to be watered thoroughly when they're planted. Last weekend I saw a woman filling the back of her station wagon with about a dozen achillea (aka yarrow, often first on the list of drought-tolerant plants) with lovely terra-cotta colored flowers.

"So, I don't have to water these at all, right?" she called in parting to the nurseryman, who kind of nodded as he moved on to another customer. I suppose it's a good thing that I restrained myself from running after her car, yelling that newly planted perennials don't have a big root system, that they need a lot of water at planting time and attentive watering through the first year until their roots have matured and spread out. It's a complex message to get across while appearing to be a deranged person running down the road.

The achilleas at the home of the woman at the nursery may well be wilting right now, their nice ferny gray leaves sagging limply; she may be considering calling the nursery and asking for replacements. Roots have a hard time making contact with dry soil; watering at planting makes the soil stick to the roots and gets rid of air pockets where a root might dangle. Here is a gift to Scrabble players, a word likely to be mocked and challenged—turgor. To exhibit turgor means to be in a state of distension. From the Latin *turgidus*, swollen, inflated. (From which we have derived the idea of turgid prose—inflated and, thus, pompous.)

When the roots encounter a dry place, a hormonal message travels to the leaves to close their pores to slow down water loss. The pores, called stomata, are usually on the underside of the leaf. Squash and cucumber plants, which have

ON DRY LAND....Continued

pores on both sides, are extremely sensitive to lack of water; veteran vegetable growers use them as the canaries in the coal mine. Plants owe their capacity to be erect to water pressure; with less water in the system, they grow limp.

Which takes us to a much bigger picture. Scientists are working to make food crops that aren't adapted to arid places better at surviving drought by making their roots more efficient. A team of scientists headed by Roberto A. Gaxiola at the University of Connecticut has discovered a way to manipulate plant genes to increase root proliferation. Many naturally drought-resistant plants, especially the grasses of our great prairies, develop deep and dense root systems. It's a new idea; roots haven't previously been targeted in genetic engineering. Deeper, wider roots can spread out to more territory in search of water. The point, Gaxiola said, is to help agriculture in arid regions—Pakistan, Africa, China, and his native Mexico, not to mention Alabama.

In the past we've coddled our crop plants, giving them lots of fertilizer and water, things we used to think were unlimited. Gaxiola is aware that not everyone is on board with the manipulation of plant genes: "We are the witches of our time. People who don't understand the science would like to burn us."

Instead of being burned by drought, home gardeners, track the conditions in your area here and here, and check out these suggestions of plants that can thrive in gardens wanting for water. There's nothing wrong with praying for rain, but consider how nature keeps the soil moist—plenty of mulch, no bare earth.

Constance Casey, a former newspaper editor, was a New York City Department of Parks gardener for five years.

RAILROAD MUSEUM WORKDAY

SATURDAY AUGUST 4TH

Tired of watching the plants, trees and shrubs swelter in your yard? Then come down to the Railroad Historical Center Saturday & see some different swelter. Still need some volunteer hours? Better yet, take a tour of the cars after you work in the yard.

We'll be there from 8:30 until noon. Hope to see you there!

UPDATE FOR INTERNATIONAL MASTER GARDENERS CONFERENCE

From Janet Carson---Extension Horticulture Specialist @ University of Arkansas

Gardeners:

Almost three months have passed since the International Master Gardener Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas. We had such a great time hosting you all and hope you come back to visit! This event could not have happened without the 408 Arkansas blue shirted volunteers. They did an outstanding job.

We had 1315 conference attendees from 45 states and 3 provinces in Canada. Thank you for all your wonderful comments and for turning in your evaluations! I have already visited with Las Vegas, Nevada-host of the 2009 IMGC, and West Virginia-host of the 2011 IMGC, and shared your thoughts and input. Both groups are hard at work planning outstanding events. So mark your calendar for March 22-26, 2009 for Las Vegas. Also note the date for the Southern Region meeting in Oklahoma City is June 18-21, 2008. Their website is: <http://www.mastergardener2008.com/>

If you visit our website at mg2007.uaex.edu and click on speaker and seminar presentations, you can view 46 PowerPoint presentations. They have all been converted to pdf's to make them easy to view. Some have handouts as well. Please share this site with your local Master Gardeners so even if they couldn't attend, they can still see the quality presentations made by our presenters. You can also see the Search for Excellence awards, the new national MG logo and the presentations from Las Vegas. We will leave these up for several months to give you time to see them all.

You will also see a list of our wonderful sponsors. We were fortunate to raise slightly over \$100,000 for our conference, and we couldn't have had the quality program we did without them. A big thank you to all of them! We also have a list of our Taste of Arkansas vendors. That event was fantastic and made more so by the generous contributions of our food and beverage vendors. If you visit any of their establishments, please say thank you! From the reviews, attendees and vendors alike had a great time.

Thanks again for coming to Little Rock, Arkansas. We thoroughly enjoyed showing off our state to you. You were wonderful guests and we'd love to have you come visit again. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments. Have a great summer and come see us!

IN SEARCH OF THE NEW MASTER GARDENER THYMES EDITOR

We are actively looking for a new Editor the MG Newsletter beginning with the February 2008 Edition. I will have written it for two years and it is time to pass it along to a new individual. This is a great way to get hours and to help share news and educational tidbits with our members. Perhaps someone who cannot contribute through "hands on" volunteer work in our community projects or someone who likes to work from home would be interested. Please consider this worthwhile endeavor. Contact me at LBoylston@earthlink.net or any Board Member.

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