



Master Gardener Thymes

www.lakelandsmastergardener.org

December 2010



Attention!!!

Members will be asked to bring the **sides** and **desserts**. Be thinking about what you would like to bring.

(Please note: There will be **NO** gift exchange this year.)

We need to know how many are coming by Monday, December 6th, so please call or email Catherine Swindell @ 223-8552 – gardencat46@gmail.com.

More info will be provided by our phone tree and by email soon.



Lakelands Master Gardeners Christmas Party



WHEN: Thursday, December 9th at 6:30 pm

WHERE: Greenwood Metropolitan District
"Emmett F. Brooks" Facility
110 Metro Drive
Greenwood, SC 29646
943-8000

Directions

From Self Regional Hospital: Take West Alexander to Premier Dr. – stay on Premier Dr. by turning right – turn left on Metro Dr.

From 225 Ext: Going South on 225 Ext., turn left on W. Alexander, turn right on Joe Bernat Dr., turn left on Premier Dr., turn right on Metro Dr.

Meat and Drinks will be provided by our organization.

LMG MEETING SCHEDULE - 2011

Thursday, January 13th @ 6:30 – **Graduation Banquet

Thursday, March 10th @ 6:30 - **General Meeting

Thursday, May 12th @ 6:30 – Annual Picnic and Plant Swap (To be held @ GMD Picnic Area on Siloam Church Rd.)

Thursday, July 14th @ 6:30 - **General Meeting

Thursday, September 8th @ 6:30 - **General Meeting

Thursday, December 8th @ 6:30 - **Christmas Party

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LAKELANDS MASTER GARDENERS AWARDS BANQUET 2011

**All General Meetings and The Graduation Banquet with the exception of the Annual Picnic will be held @ The Greenwood Metro District Meeting Room @ 110 Metro Dr., Greenwood, SC 29646

Board Meetings are held in February, April, June, August, and October on the second Thursday of the month @ 6:00 pm @ The Clemson Extension Office @ The Brewer Center



Dues

It's that time of the year. Membership dues for 2011 are due January 1, 2011. You should mail your dues to Patti Larson along with the 2011 Dues Remittance Form. If you haven't received a copy of the form, you can find it at the Master Gardener website under the 'Forms' tab.

If you are in the new class, your tuition covered dues only for 2010, so you will need to pay the membership dues for 2011.

The 2011 Due Remittance Form has all the instructions for renewing your membership. It has the membership options that are available and where to mail your dues.

Please Report

Final Quarter **Miles** and **Hours** of the Year are now due – please send any and all to Linda Halsey at halseyfarm@embarqmail.com or call them in at 374-7253 or snail mail P.O. Box 82, Hodges, SC, 29653...many cheers to those who have already done so!

The Awards Banquet will be held on Thursday, January 13th at 6:30 PM at The Greenwood Metro District Building 110 Metro Drive, Greenwood, SC 29646.

The event will be Pot Luck with the Organization supplying the meat and beverages. As with the Christmas Party, please direct all RSVPs, questions, comments or requests to volunteer help and what sides you choose to bring to the Banquet, to Catherine Swindell, Chairperson of the Social Committee @ gardencat46@gmail.com or 223-8552.

2009 Graduates who have fulfilled their 40 hour volunteer requirements will be recognized as well as the Graduates of The Class of 2010. New Officers and Committee Chairpersons and Committee Members will be announced.

This event is coming up fast! Please contact Catherine as soon as possible.



2010 Master Gardener of the Year Award Winner – Nancy Collin

At first glance it is easy to understand why Nancy received the award at the Clemson Extension's annual County meeting in May this year. She contributed hundreds of volunteer hours to the now annual topiary project along with many other volunteers, making it the largest and most beautiful yet.

A deeper look at the individual project hours and comments turned in by Nancy reveals some disturbing plant production techniques. Growing up on a farm with many animals I had never heard of some of the activities Nancy described as work projects from January through June on the project.

- Picking up a camera involved getting stuck in the mud.
- Then there was painting teeth of a Bearcat. What's a bearcat anyway?
- Paint an Eat mor chicken sign?
- Moss a gamecock or worse moss a tiger
- Irrigate a tiger and a gamecock
- Check an irrigation problem on the dog
- Pin a gorilla
- Hang a monkey

Knowing Nancy's integrity, I will approve all of these unusual plant growing techniques as legitimate, but I usually fed the chickens back in my farm days and let them get their own water. We had trouble with our dog and shrubbery too, so I could use here advice on how she solved the dog irrigation problem. But Nancy might ask for help the next time she gets ready to wrestle a gorilla.

I am sure she can give us all some great pointers on working with the topiary project and we thank her for all her hard work that spearheaded the wonderful topiary project during the festival of flowers this season. After all, making Greenwood "A festival of flowers is what Master Gardening is all about.

THANKS NANCY – James Hodges & the Master Gardeners

Moles vs Voles

by Ann Barklow

Wyatt Farms Garden Center
Master Gardener Intern 2010

When I moved here from California I knew everything there was to know about gophers. Much to my dismay in Greenwood, SC we have Voles and Moles. Telling them apart was one of my biggest challenges because the names were so similar. The trick is to know that V is for vegetarian which means Voles will eat my roots and gnaw on the trunks of my plants, and M is for meat eater which means Moles will eat grubs, earthworms, beetle larva, ants and other critters in the soil.

If you have ridges on top of your soil due to lifting from tunneling and piles like small volcanoes on the surface, then you have Moles. Moles have

deeper tunnels for traveling but the surface tunnels are where they find their meals. You will likely see mole damage in late fall and winter because the soil is moist and easier to tunnel through and there are more grubs in the soil at that time of year. Moles can damage plants because their tunneling can harm roots and expose some roots to drying out.

My first reaction when I learned about Moles is that they are beneficial in eating the grubs of Japanese beetles and other beetles. The grubs eat my grass roots the Japanese beetles eat my plants, so Moles are a good thing, right? They also leave my soil soft and fluffy which I love. In my research on Moles from the University of Missouri Extension, they mention that Moles play an important role in soil management and grub control. Two thirds of their diet is grubs. Unfortunately the Moles do some damage by their tunneling and leaving ridges in my lawn and exposing roots to drying out. At those times I have gone out in the lawn and pushed down the ridges and have covered roots that they have exposed.

Moles eat about 70% of their body weight in underground delicacies, so it makes sense to me that they won't stay in your lawn or garden beds very long if there isn't much to eat. Trapping is likely the best solution to killing moles but I can't kill anything with fur on it, so the best solution for me is to control the grubs that are attracting them. They will still eat my earthworms which I'm not thrilled about but if I reduce the grubs I can hope that will reduce the amount of Moles in my landscape. Milky Spore is one of the best non toxic solutions for grubs, in particular the Japanese Beetle grub. It is organic and works on the grubs for at least 15 years or more so only one application is necessary. Since Milky Spore takes a little time to work, I could also use an organic mole repellent with castor oil called Holey Moley while the Milky Spore is taking effect. Unfortunately, using repellents and controlling grubs can have their limitations and might not eliminate them completely.

Voles on the other hand leave no mounds or ridges but they will use the shallow tunnels that Moles have made. If you are having plants shrivel up and die and when you go to pull them out they come out easily you likely have Voles. Also, if you

see holes about the size of a golf ball in the soil and no mounds, you most likely have vegetarians or Voles. Sometimes in the evening they come out and gnaw on the trunks of trees and shrubs. Under the ground they feed on roots. The most common and effective method for control is trapping and/or baits but baits and traps can harm innocent wildlife.

More humane prevention methods include reducing thick ground covers which they will use for shelter, not piling mulch around the trunks of trees and shrubs, and wrapping lower trunks with wire mesh. Mesh garden fencing (hardware cloth) can also keep voles out of your garden if buried at least a foot underground.

I find that there are two types of gardeners: Those that prefer wildlife over landscape plants and those that prefer landscape plants over wildlife. I have to admit I often feel I am on the wildlife's property and prefer to use exclusion and repellents in most situations. I'm from Los Angeles where there is very little wildlife due to the destruction of their natural habitat so when I run into them here I prefer to find solutions that are the least harmful.

If you find ridges of soil, golf ball size holes, or mounds in your landscape, monitor the damage and take action as needed. If there is no indication of moles or voles follow the preventative measures of applying Milky Spore, protecting trunks of shrubs and trees, reducing thick ground covers, and using garden fencing buried a foot down to keep them out when feasible.

Taking time to enjoy the outdoor Plant Kingdom and Learning as you go

Trees, trees, everywhere there are trees. Such is a walk in a little used local Park in Greenwood County. At last count I have identified more than 30 native trees within the park without even venturing off the paved paths around the historical areas. As fall arrives, the number of woodland bugs decreases, so it's time to explore the really wild parts of the park.

I enjoy backyard landscape plants, but a great way to study native trees is to walk among them in an unstructured setting such as Star Fort Park south of Ninety Six. The woodland landscape layout will tell you much about the various species of mostly native trees. Star Fort is unique in that it has all types of Piedmont landscape plant types.

Upland flats or ridge tops, steep eroded side slopes with gullies now healing covered by vegetation. Small piedmont bottomland areas with several small streams running into or around the Star fort pond create wet flats and are home to more water tolerant tree species. Even some hardwood hollows with large oaks and hickory trees exist if you know where to find them.

One must be adventuresome to set out along some of the unmarked and unnamed paths and old roads that crisscross the park. Fall was beautiful in the park with abundant red leafed dogwoods giving way to hickories and then to red and bronze leafed oaks, then finally yellow beech leaves that are now fading to brown. If you missed fall don't be sad because winter is best in the woodlands areas for observing trees.

Each time I visit the park I recall my first ecology class on natural regeneration and plant succession following disturbance. The park has areas from early pioneer succession all the way to late succession oak and hickory stands with a few American beech trees. It is a great place to learn about trees and where they tend to fit in the scheme of landscape areas such as soil conditions, slope and moisture conditions.

Using the information gained from a natural tree landscape settings and applying it to the urban environment is always the difficult part of reproducing a part of nature at home, on a city street or tough business environment.

I am working on plans for a several Master Gardener continuing education classes for 2011 on trees and hope to have a visit to Star Fort as part of the set. Working from the start at the park I am looking for volunteers to work on a project to study street trees in Greenwood at the new Greenwood county library, Lander University and a spot or two in Uptown Greenwood. I will have a plan by January to send out to Master Gardeners.

If you are interested in continuing education or a volunteer project, send me an email or sign up at the December or January meeting.

James Hodges

(Illustrations on next page.)



Star Fort Park is a great place to walk the dog on a fall or winter day among the many native trees



Deep in the woods a beech tree's leaves are the last to turn

FREE WORKSHOP

Pruning Crape Myrtles the Right Way

Date: Saturday, January 22, 2011 (rain or shine)

Time: 10:00 am to 11:00 am

Location: Wyatt Farms Garden Center

Address: 103 Wyatt Court, Greenwood, SC
(on Center Street just north of Lakeview School)

Cost: Free

Join Certified Arborist Ann Barklow for an informative demonstration on how to prune a tree using the Crape Myrtle in the front of the Garden Center. Often Crape Myrtles are severely pruned which stresses the tree and promotes disease while destroying the natural graceful beauty of this popular tree. Come and learn to prune your tree for its health and beauty. The natural pruning of shrubs will also be demonstrated at the end of the workshop.

Wyatt Farms Workshop Series
864-229-6259