



Master Gardener Thymes

www.lakelandsmastergardener.org

MARCH 2007

MEETING CALENDAR FOR MARCH

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.

MARCH 8TH-JOYCE MARSHALL ON ORCHIDS- Phalenopsis, Dendrobium, Oncidium, Paphiopedilum, Cattleya and hundreds of others will be the subject for the evening. A Master Gardener since 2002, Joyce and her husband have made Orchids their passion for over 24 years. A wealth of information awaits as we travel into the world of Orchid care and cultivation, one that is becoming very popular today. Joyce will have many specimens available for us to enjoy, so don't miss this opportunity! This meeting is open to the public and counts toward continuing education. We will also have door prizes available, thanks to Rebecca McLain at Lakelands Nursery. Don't miss this opportunity to snatch a door prize and hear expert advice on Orchids on the same night!

March 22nd - BOARD MEETING 5:30pm at the Mall Office

ATTENTION: THE DATE FOR THE APRIL MEETING HAS BEEN CHANGED DUE TO SPRING BREAK. THE NEW DATE IS APRIL 19TH, THE THURSDAY AFTER THE REGULAR DATE. PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS WITH THE CHANGE. THE TIME WILL REMAIN THE SAME, 6:30.

APRIL 19TH-ANNUAL PLANT EXCHANGE IN LAUREN BOYLSTON'S GARDEN- "A Delight for the Senses" is what awaits us in the Boylston garden. For 6 years, Lauren and her husband Jim have made their yard a wealth of color, from the hundreds of Azaleas and Creeping Phlox to the Bearded Iris and Viburnum, all surrounded by green areas of mixed fescue. This will be the perfect backdrop for our annual plant exchange. All should bring a plant or more to exchange with your fellow MG's. They do not have to be in bloom, just alive. All are welcome to attend and participate in this exciting evening.

The address is 4 Harper Lane in Greenwood: **DIRECTIONS:** From the 72 BYPASS, head North on Hwy 254 toward Greenwood High School. After you pass the entrance to Rock Creek Subdivision, look for a yellow two-story house on the right. Harper Lane (A PRIVATE ROAD) is immediately after that. Turn right onto Harper Lane and the Boylston drive is clearly marked with a large piece of granite with 4 Harper Ln on it. Carpooling is recommended. More on the Plant Exchange in this newsletter.

PRESIDENTS CORNER—*Julee Marshall* Speaking of Bonsai.....

The Program Committee got off to a great start having Mike Runyan as our speaker on February 8. He was very informative and a lot of fun. I have always been intrigued with Bonsai so I really enjoyed seeing his Bonsai specimens and learning more about the art.

Would you like to see some more Bonsai? I have been to the North Carolina Arboretum several times and would heartily recommend a visit. They have a very impressive outdoor display of Bonsai trees. They will also let you go to their greenhouses to see other specimens not currently on display. There, you will see people working on the plants and can talk to them about the process.

The Arboretum also offers eleven trails, ranked from easy to difficult, for pedestrians, pets on leashes, and cyclists. They range from .3 to 1.3 miles in length. They also have nine other themed garden areas such as a "Stream" garden, a "Quilt" garden, and a "Holly" garden. The entrance plaza at the Visitor Education Center features the most wonderful containers of seasonal plants that surround three water features representing the pools, cascades, and waterfalls of Southern Appalachian streams. Each time I have been, I've not had my camera and have regretted it.

The Arboretum is just off of I-26 at exit # 33. The property is open from 9am-5pm, Monday-Saturday and from 12pm-5pm on Sunday. The greenhouse hours are from 8 am-2pm Monday-Friday. Parking is \$6.00 per car and it is free on Tuesdays. If you feel a bit peckish during your visit, they have a café serving sandwiches and such. They also have a very nice gift shop with a large selection of garden and nature books. Enjoy!

JUDY KELLEY'S CORNER—*A Gardener's Journal*

During this month I've had time to reflect on other special plants in my garden of memories that hopefully will burst into literal bloom soon. My dear Aunt Mollie has been leaving me bit by bit each day now. As I sit here in Wesley Commons with her, I realize I won't have her with me much longer, but I'm reminded of a special camellia (*C. japonica*) beside our house that will be a constant reminder of the loved she shared with me. This bush was just a 'little sprout' as we might say when my uncle and she brought it to us. Every year it has done its best to produce lovely white flowers for a centerpiece that we enjoy as we have our meals.

My uncle had a passion for peony plants (*Paeoniaceae*) and grew lovely ones that he shared with everyone. During the reclining years of his life, the plants started disappearing from their yard. Yardmen kept them cut back with their regular grass cutting schedule. One day in the early spring four years ago, I was walking in their backyard and saw some unusual growth under their pecan tree. I was able to rescue several peony plants before grass cutting time started. They've grown well for me, and hopefully this year will put on some blooms.

Aren't gardens wonderful! They do require sweat, toil, and sometimes tears from those sore muscles you've put to work again. It is worth that labor when you see those lovely flowers burst forth.

Today, as I finish this article, I have once again reflected on my dear Aunt Mollie. She left this earthly garden on Saturday evening, February 17. Yesterday, February 20, was her memorial service. She will continue to bring pleasant memories to me in many ways, but when I see her flowers in bloom in my yard, she will be especially close.

Remember, if you have some plants that could be included in your own personal journal that you'd like to share, email your info to me and I'll add them to this article. Title them as Garden Journal and email to jskelley@simplepc.net.

SYMPOSIUM REVIEW—*Submitted by Kris Cheeseman*

"Good gardens provoke smiles, but great gardens also evoke reflection". That was the theme several Lakelands Master Gardeners enjoyed at the Greenville Master Gardener symposium: "Through the Looking Glass: Creating a Remarkable Garden" which was held at the Palmetto Expo Center on Feb 10. It was 7 hours of gardening tips, correct tool usage, and design solutions for all interested gardeners. The perfect jump start needed to help you become more successful and satisfied with your gardening experience. With the expertise of Elizabeth Dean and her "Get thee out to the shrubbery" discussion, Hunter Stubbs and his description of smart tools for the handy dandy gardener, and Brent Heath with his 30 plus years experience with bulbs and perennials it was well worth the day! Mark your calendar for next year – February 2008- it is an enjoyable day that gets the creative gardening juices flowing!

RAILROAD MUSEUM GARDEN UPDATE AND MEMORIES—*Submitted by Sandra Johnson*

In February a dedicated group of workers (Julee Marshall, Miriam Smith, Patty Huff, Jeff Thomas, James Hodges, Jeff Thomas, Lee Natvig, and Sandra Johnson) came out on a drizzly day and discovered a rock garden that had been covered with shrubs and ivy for years.

February 21, 2007

I was trying to find the list of the 2007 RRHC Work Days on my computer so Glennis could send an e-mail reminder to the MG group. I couldn't find the dates for awhile but found Lauren's Newsletter for April 2006 & saw the above paragraph

Earlier today, James Hodges, Sandy Stachurski, John Wham & I had walked around the RRHC to survey any 2007 damage and come up with a work plan. As we walked around each bed, James & I shared memories and stories about last year's MG workdays. The rock garden we found last February is filled with eleagnus, weeds, and scorched cast iron plant. As we toured the gardens, we remembered the bamboo, Lee's tree cutting and fountain project, piles of dead limbs and debris, James' January pruning demonstration, James & Steve tackling a shrub, more limbs, ivy, weeds, Jane's rock walkway, and more.

The RRHC gardens will return to the Flower of Festival tour this year in June. And Steve Odom has plans for a Roland Alston visit for his ETV show.

So join us for the upcoming scheduled workdays. Our schedule includes both Saturday and weekday hours. For more information, contact Sandra Johnson at sandramjohnson@earthlink.net or 864.299.1248 or Sandy Stachurski at drglenn7@earthlink.net. Hope to see you there! Scheduled workdays are below:

Saturday, February 24, 9:30 – 12:30

Thursday, March 22, 9:00 – 12:00

Saturday, March 24, 9:30 – 12:30

Thursday, April 19, 3:00 – 6:00

Saturday, April 21, 9:30 – 12:30

Thursday, May 17, 3:00 – 6:00

Saturday, May 19, 9:30 – 12:30

SWITCHGRASS

Autumn is not only beautiful for all the wonderful colors of the changing leaves, but also for the fantastic textures and colors of the native grasses lining roadways and filling fields. One of the most amazing of our native grasses is SWITCHGRASS or *Panicum virgatum*.

Switchgrass once was once found growing from Canada to Florida and nearly coast to coast. Considered to be one of the five great prairie grasses, this is one tough plant and no wonder why. The American Midwest is one of the worst (most extreme) environments, consisting of temperatures ranging from -50 to 110plus, and Switchgrass, along with other grasses, has adapted to become about 70% roots. This has caused the soil in the Midwest to become extremely fertile, because about 1/3 of the roots die off annually. These roots penetrate to 10 feet, die off and naturally add organic matter to the soil as well as helping to aerate. These dense roots also get like sponges and greatly increase infiltration of rainwater in to ground water aquifers!!!!

Switchgrass has also become hot in the ethanol market. All of the CO2 it utilizes while growing is given off when burned and this cellulose-based ethanol is more efficient than the sugar-based corn ethanol.

In mass plantings, Switchgrass is also considered tops for providing winter cover for wildlife.

In the garden it looks great in informal groupings including sedums, coneflowers and conifers. And because of its beautiful upright lush growth and delicate airy seedheads, it would look wonderful in more formal settings and backlit by the sun.

There are about 15 or so cultivars coming in blue, red and green colors and ranging in height from 2 to about 8 feet. Some of the blue clones are: "Dallas Blues", "Pathfinder", "Heavy Metal" and "Cloud Nine". Red cultivars are "Rubrum", "Squaw", "Warrior", "Shenandoah" and "Rotstrahlbusch".

After the first year of establishment, this grass requires no fertilizer or irrigation to perform beautifully and it thrives in any soil, pure sand to solid clay.

ANNOUNCEMENTS—

- **PLANT SALE at the Farmers Market!!!!** Remember that each year the Master Gardeners and Clemson Extension team up at the Farmers Market for the Spring Plant Sale and Information Booth! As you begin clearing, separating and cleaning your bed plants, remember to pot some up for the PLANT SALE!!! The dates for this year's sale are April 27-29 and we will need not only your donated plants but ALSO volunteers to work the booth. Remember, as you pot up your plants to donate, please mark them CLEARLY with pertinent information: Plant type (name), growing needs and any other type data that will help. As the dates grow nearer, the Fundraising Committee will be looking for YOU to donate plants and offer to work a few hours at the Farmers Market. With this early warm weather, plan early and get your donations ready!
- **ANNUAL PLANT EXCHANGE AT APRIL MEETING.** That's right, it is time again to share that special perennial, rose, lily or whatever with a fellow Master Gardener. When you are potting up those extra plants for the Plant Sale, keep one or two aside for the Master Gardener Plant Exchange. Just bring a plant (or two or three) to the April Meeting and take home something NEW for your garden! This is a great way to get a new specimen plant and to share one of yours! Please remember to mark your plant well with growing information and name or type. You will get another reminder for this event in next months newsletter but PLAN EARLY! NO EXCUSES! This is always a fun event. Don't be left out!
- **Daniel Nolan has finished the plan for the Lander University Master Gardener Project!!!!** Workdays will begin in March and on into April. Keep an eye on your email for notice on the upcoming workdays. This is a very large project and we will need all the help we can get. Lander will prepare the site for us but we will be planting quite a bit of shrubs and small trees. As soon as we have definite workdays, you will be notified by email! Stay tuned.
- **Haven't paid your dues?** If you haven't paid your dues, this might be your last newsletter. Please support our organization and pay your dues. We NEED YOU to keep our group going!

BOARD MEMBER UPDATE--The Board Members and Officers for Lakelands Master Gardeners for 2007 are:

President: Julee Marshall patmarshall@bellsouth.net 998-3189

Vice President: This position is open

Secretary: Kris Cheeseman ewcheese@aol.com 227-0492

Treasurer: Terri Mostiller tmostiller@wesleycommons.org 227-7480 (H) 456-2664 (W)

Past President: Jane Price janemprice@greenwood.net 227-8992

Please feel free to contact your Board Members with questions, comments or suggestions. Your participation and opinion are greatly appreciated. If you would like to recommend someone for the Vice President position, please contact a Board member today!

CHECKLIST FOR MARCH—Submitted by Lauren Boylston

This is the time of year when gardening work really gets busy for me. I have a “Spring Routine” that I repeat year after year, with pretty good results. Actually, I got in about 6 days of good garden preparation work in February due to the unseasonably warm weather. It is always great to get a bit of a head start!!! My property really needs a lot of attention this year, so I am off and running!!!

- I hope you have already cut back your Liriope this year. This is actually a February chore but it is not too late to do this now! Make sure you don't cut the tender new shoots already beginning to come up!
- Cut back your Miscanthus now. I always cut my back to the condensed low growth and shape up the sides. This is also a great time to divide these. Depending on the variety, they can get quite large and “take over” an area! I split mine every couple of years and share it with fellow gardeners.
- Begin cleaning your beds. Remove old or possibly infected debris. Clean out any early weeds.
- Separate perennials and pot up extras or share with friends. Or, if you are making a new bed, move extras to the new area.
- In March, my “Spring Routine” begins. I always clear my beds, spread Treflan, spread or replace newspaper, fertilize all of my plants (if this is the appropriate time for them) and then put down a thick layer of mulch. Frankly, this is a tedious process for me because I have so many beds and so much property. But it has proven to be a worthwhile effort every year. For those of you that garden organically, I have to bow to your expertise as it regards bed preparation each year. If I didn't put down Treflan, I would spend the rest of the year on my knees weeding.
- It is not too late to trim back your roses but you need to do it now. I am not a big rose grower but the few I have get cut back about half way at this time of year.
- Separate hostas as the new eyes emerge.
- Keep your eyes peeled for aphids that can appear on tender new growth quite early! Spray with an insecticidal soap and this should take care of any early infestations. Aphids always seem to get on my tender new Day Lily plants first.
- It might be a good idea to treat your entire lawn with an insecticide (broadcast) to help cut down on Japanese Beetle larvae. This is probably the best offense (versus defense!) against these little buggers. This will also help control fleas, ticks and some other unfortunate insects. Again, if you grow organic, you are on your own.
- Clean up Holly Ferns and Hydrangeas....

This year, I am trying a new fertilizing program. In the past, I always used 10-10-10 around all my plants as I did my “Spring Routine”. But, after visiting Linda Cobb's garden in Spartanburg last year and then hearing her speak at our monthly meeting one month, I decided to try the “Linda Cobb” method. She describes it well in her book, if you purchased one at the meeting. If not, it is as follows: 1/3 peat moss, 1/3 10-10-10 with trace minerals and 1/3 cottonseed meal. Mix all together in a wheelbarrow and spread a handful around each plant, being careful to avoid any new and tender growth. Then place your mulch over this. I will have to let you know in a few months how this appears to be working but if my garden looks HALF as healthy as Linda's, I will be thrilled. By the way, I have always mulched with chipped leaves and it has worked great for me. However, this year and I am using soil conditioner, also like Linda Cobb. Mine came from McCormick. STAY TUNED!

RECIPE CORNER—Submitted by Lauren Boylston

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

This is the “cheaters” way to make Chocolate Mousse. No one will ever know that you took only 5 minutes to make it. It is so smooth and creamy. So get the blender out and make some tonight! Yummie! I serve this to dinner guests all the time and they think I'm a genius....well...maybe not a genius.

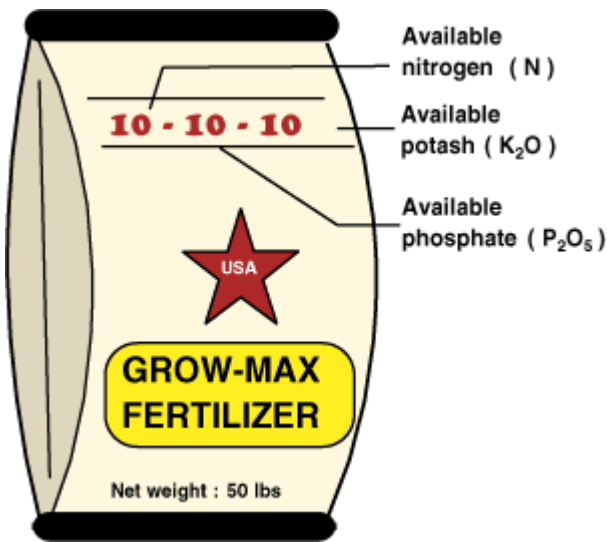
In a blender:

1 egg
2 tablespoons of rum
2 tablespoons of instant coffee crystals
1 6 oz package of chocolate chips
¾ cup SCALDED whole milk

Blend on high until smooth...just a few moments. Pour into ramekins and refrigerate immediately.

You can double this recipe. I normally do double it.

“Up, Down, and All Around”



Those three little numbers on a bag of fertilizer, like “10-10-10,” – what do they mean?

- The first number is Nitrogen (N), which promotes overall plant growth (**that’s “up”**).
- The second number is available Phosphate (P₂O₅), which promotes strong root growth (**that’s “down”**).
- The third number is soluble potash (K₂O), which helps plants withstand stress, drought or disease, and produce fruit and flowers (**that’s “all around”**).

The numbers are percentages, so “10-10-10” means 10% of each ingredient. The remaining 70% is “ballast,” generally inert ingredients to avoid excessive amounts of fertilizer ingredients. Excessive nitrogen, for instance, can lead to pest problems by increasing the birth rate, longevity and overall fitness of certain pests

When plants are nitrogen deficient, they are marked by reduced growth and yellowing of leaves. Plants also need phosphorus, a component of nucleic acids, phospholipids, and several proteins. It is also necessary to provide the energy to drive metabolic chemical reactions. Without enough phosphorus, plant growth is reduced. Potassium is another major substance that plants get from the soil. It is used in protein synthesis and other key plant processes. Yellowing, spots of dead tissue, and weak stems and roots are all indicative of plants that lack enough potassium.

So remember: **“Up, down, and all around,”** and you’ll have a head start on fertilizer.

IMPORTANT REMINDER!!!!!!!!!!

- There will be an afternoon training session with **Linda Halsey** at the mall office March 16th from 1-4 pm. This training will cover how to report your volunteer hours using the computer spread sheet available for Excel. This is truly the best way to keep your hours up-to-date and organized. If you have access to a computer and want to learn how to use this process, please plan on attending this training session.
- On the same date as mentioned above, **James Hodges** will be at the mall office to train anyone interested in working in the Master Gardener/Clemson Extension Mall office. If you have signed up to work in the mall office and need to be given training on what to expect, how to use the resource material or any other aspect of the office, please plan on attending this training session. It is also from 1-4pm. Gain some confidence and get a feel for the layout of this important part of our organization.

Be there or be square!!!!

This space is BLANK because YOU didn't submit an article for the newsletter!!!
Shame on you.

Remember to submit articles, recipes, book reviews, garden reviews, symposium reviews, work day reviews or WHATEVER to LBoylston@earthlink.net

We want to hear from you!!

**Lakelands Master Gardeners
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