



Master Gardener Thymes

www.lakelandsmastergardener.org

March 2010



Attention!!!

Regular meetings will be held only January, March, May, July, September, and December. The meeting time will still be at 6:30 and the meeting place will be announced.

Newsletters are planned to coincide with the months we have meetings. Time sensitive information in between newsletters will be emailed and also will be on the website.

and specifically how they are both tied intimately to the natural world in which you all live-Greenwood county. I'll focus broadly on contemporary knowledge of the flora and fauna as compared to historical knowledge in an attempt to demonstrate why we need both programs to have strong ecological underpinnings." Dr. Karen Hall

***** The Community is Invited *****



Directions to Greenwood Genetic Center Auditorium:

From Hwy. 25 South, turn onto Alexander Avenue West. Pass Self Memorial Hospital, pass the Highway Dept. As soon as you go over the bridge, put your right blinker on then turn on Liner Dr. into the "Professional Park" medical complex.

Take Liner Dr. until you come to the stop sign @ Gregor Mendel Circle. From the circle you will see their 3 buildings. Go 1/2 way around the circle and turn right. The middle building is the auditorium. There is a road past the 3rd building that will take you to the parking area.

Lakelands Master Gardener Meeting

Thursday, March 11th
6:30 pm

To be held at
The Greenwood Genetic Center Auditorium
101 Gregor Mendel Circle
Greenwood, SC 29646

Master Gardener Program ~ Master Naturalist Program "Natural" Companions

Guest Speaker

Karen C. Hall, Ph.D.

Extension Assistant Professor
Director, SC Master Naturalist Program
State Coordinator, SC Master Gardener Program

"Both the Master Gardener and the Master Naturalist programs are focused on delivering scientifically sound information about the natural world to the public, though both do this in unique ways. In this presentation, I'll discuss the differences and commonalities of these programs



Greenwood Farmer's Market Spring Plant Sale & Festival

April 9th & 10th 8AM - 4PM

Remember to sign up for service at the Master Gardener tables. Contact John Wham at 864-229-0416 or 864-554-2274 about donating plants for the Master Gardener Plant Sale Fund Raiser. Set up for the event will be Thursday evening from 4PM - 8PM. Any service you can offer will be greatly appreciated.

Jimson Weed

During walks through fields and pastures in upstate South Carolina – especially in fallow cultivated bean or cotton fields and around old barns – you will frequently notice a striking plant with pale lavender to white, one to three inch blossoms shaped like little trumpets. Later in the year the plants will be covered with walnut sized fruit with little spikes all over. Break a leaf or a stem, pick a flower or a fruit and you will immediately smell the unforgettable aroma of Jimson Weed. If you have done so with a bare hand it's time to find some soap and water to remove any trace of the plant from your hand! It is very poisonous and the poison can be pulled into your bloodstream by contact – especially contact with the mucous membranes.



Fig 1. Jimson Weed Plantsⁱ

The plants are found in groups where seeds were dropped the previous year. In bare soil a high percentage of the seeds germinate; and left unchecked one plant will cover a large amount of ground in several years. Most Jimson weed plants in this area reach a height of 2 to 3 feet and have lots of seedpods on each plant. There are between 40 and 60 seeds per pod and they rest in the burr until it opens in late summer.

In many cultures the simple Jimson weed is used as a medicine for the treatment of a long list of conditions from ear-ache to angina to palsy and agents from the plants are used in modern pharmacology as drugs in the treatment of asthma, intestinal cramps, and both diarrhea and bed-wetting. People in many cultures (including our own) sometimes use parts of the plant for hallucinogenic “trips” induced by the belladonna, atropine and scopolamine contained therein. However many of these “trips” are to the hospital and sometimes to the morgue. Jimson weed is a dangerous plant for people, pets and livestock and should be eradicated when found. It is interesting that the plant is not a controlled substance, because people seldom use it twice. How do you recognize this plant? Compare it to the pictures in this article. Once you see the plant – and release the odor associated with it by brushing against or crushing a leaf – you will have no problem identifying it in the future. Jimson weed burrs (also known as thorn-apples) are easy to recognize by size (about the size of a walnut) and the covering of thorns.



Fig 2 - A Jimson weed seed podⁱⁱ

If you happen to be traveling in Central America and see necklaces made from seeds, beware!ⁱⁱⁱ

A necklace of *Datura* seeds from Costa Rica
Light-colored seeds are immature



The best way to deal with Jimson is to dig it up and put it in the trash. Don't compost it because the seeds might not be destroyed and you could end up with Jimson weed everywhere. Be sure to use protection for your hands and make sure that children and pets stay away! Where did the name come from? Well the story goes that British soldiers in Jamestown, Virginia plucked, boiled and ate some of the greens as pot-herbs. The results were recorded as “whimsical” and “a very pleasant comedy”^{iv} by their commanding officer who confined the soldiers for several days while the effects wore off. The plant was given the name “Jamestown Weed” which, according to the story, slowly changed to the name Jimson over the years.

Technical Data:

COMMON NAME: astenagir

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Jimson weed, Stinkweed, Moonflower, Angel's Trumpet, Devil's weed, Thorn-apple

FAMILY: *Solanaceae*

LATIN NAME: *Datura stramonium L.*

STANDARD PLANT NAME: *Datura stramonium L.*

Article by Mike McKinney, Master Gardener Intern, Class of 2009

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ⁱ Fig 1- From www.knpr.org/dbloom/images/jimson.jpg

ⁱⁱ Fig 2 – From Phil Westra, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

ⁱⁱⁱ Printed with permission from Author, Ruth Smith, From http://www.botanicalbeads.com/BBB_page_5.html

^{iv} http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datura_stramonium

The Divine Dogwood; Storied tree remains a staple in local landscapes

New and exotic plants arrive on the landscape scene each year to dazzle the eye. Many consumers are searching for small or medium size trees that will fit smaller lots and won't take over the entire landscape, push up sidewalks or drop large amounts of fruit, flowers or leaves. A standard in landscapes for centuries is still difficult to beat; the American dogwood (*cornus florida*) provides spring flowers, fall leaf color and colorful fruit for birds and wildlife.

Often, dogwood trees are part of our native vegetation on wooded lots when they are converted to new home sites. Rarely do these trees transition into new landscapes without difficulty because they are easily damaged by construction activities. Shallow root systems can be damaged by large mechanical equipment used to level lots and dogwood trees grown in heavy shade rarely transition well if opened up to full sun. Dogwood trees left with groups of trees in undisturbed areas are much more likely to survive than a single dogwood tree left in an area converted to lawn in full sun.

Though not the easiest tree to grow, dogwoods will thrive and flower under sun or shade conditions if given good growing conditions. Dogwoods planted in full sun need extra site preparation and aftercare treatments. Dogwoods planted beneath taller pines and hardwood trees place them in their typical natural growing environment. Avoid planting under very dense shade such as oaks with very low limb structure. Well spaced hardwood and pine trees with clean stems pruned to 20-30 feet up the tree offer generally good conditions for dogwood plantings.

It is critical to select good trees from the nursery free of damage and disease and prepare the planting site before placing the new tree. Use these steps to establish new trees in full sun:

- Avoid planting trees into a lawn area without creating a grass free zone. Grass is a

severe competitor for water to any newly planted tree, especially dogwoods.

- I find it very useful to create a low raised bed into which the dogwood tree is planted. This keeps those dogwood destruction machines (mowers and weed eaters) away from the tender bark at the base of dogwood stems.
- Improve heavy clay soil in the bed by tilling in large portions of composted organic materials into the surface 4-6 inches. This will improve growing conditions and reduce water stress on the new trees.
- Dig a planting hole at least twice as wide as the root ball of the new tree and the same depth as the root ball. Do not plant the tree deeper than it was grown. Find the top roots of the tree in the container and keep these at the surface of the planting hole.
- Mulch the trees with 2-4 inches of organic mulch such as pine straw or bark, but leave the stem of the tree around the tree clear. Do not pile mulch around the stem of trees.
- Water the tree on a regular weekly schedule when it does not rain for the first year. Since dogwoods are drought sensitive, water any tree every few weeks during mid-summer if there is no natural rainfall. Avoid wetting the leaves and water deeply each time.
- Clemson Extension website bulletins <http://hgic.clemson.edu> provides several bulletins on dogwood care, managing problems and cultivars. Bulletins are available on azalea, camellia and hydrangea care too.

For me nothing announces the arrival of spring more than the burst of white in the landscape provided by our native white dogwoods.

James F. Hodges
Greenwood County Extension



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