

2015 CALENDAR

9/10 Rusty Wilson on Snakes, American Legion Upstairs 806 Calhoun 6:00 Membership Meeting 6:30 Speaker

9/16 Abbeville Extension Office Farm City program (see newsletter)

10/01 Spartanburg Community College Arboretum talk and dinner 5:30-see flyer

10/08 LMG Board Meeting, Gwd Library 4:30 First Floor

10/18 City Garden Cookout for volunteer workers

11/12 Speaker and membership meeting, Janet Ledebuhr, Social Media Gardening Gwd Public Library 6:00 Membership Meeting 6:30 Speaker

12/10 Board Meeting, Library, 4:30



President's Letter-Donna Feldmaier

Happy September! I cannot believe that our summer is almost over. How did that happen!

Our new Master Gardener class has started with 15 students. Because of our success with our plant sale, we were able to offer 6 scholarships this year. That being said I have already started separating plants for the 2016 plant sale. My goal is to have at least 25 donations

Please see the enclosed flyer on Rusty Wilson's Snake Talk this month. It should be a very educational talk.

This month's membership meeting, September 10, will be a great opportunity to sign up and turn in the following:

- Turn in your volunteer hours or better yet, send them to Linda Halsey at: halseyfarm@embarqmail.com Linda works very hard on this and we all have been a little slow getting our hours in to her.
- Renew your membership. Betsy Russ will be there to hand out forms and Melody McInville will be waiting to take your dues.
- Sign up to assist with the Master Gardener's class. Linda Halsey will have the schedule with open opportunities.
- Ann Barklow will also have opportunities in the greenhouse.

Be sure to read Barbara Well's article on the castor bean plant. She has me hooked on the plant. I had to place mine on the other side of the invisible fence so Zoey the wonder dog wouldn't get into it.

Please extend your prayers and sympathies to Linda Halsey on the death of her Aunt in August.

Enjoy your week and I will see you at the September meeting,
Donna

“SNAKES”- LOVE THEM OR FEAR THEM, DON'T BE “TEMPTED” TO MISS THIS

Our own Rusty Wilson will share his reptile expertise at our September 10th , 6:30 meeting at the American Legion across from the City Garden. Rusty is already well known for his wonderful bird talks. (His photography is smashing). Apparently Rusty also appreciates the creatures that eat them.

POKE IS NOT FOR “SALAT” RIGHT NOW!- Dr. Jan Haldeman, Erskine

Poke plants have grown, produced flowers and now have ripe dark purple poke berries. This native "shrubby" plant, which can grow 6 to 10 feet tall, is a member of a relatively small family, Phytolactaceae, with 35 species worldwide. Its botanical name *Phytolacca americana*, from Greek *Phyton* = plant, French *lac* = lake and *lacquer*, with berries that produce a dark red juice reminiscent of a deep black lake, and *americana* = American native!

It's commonly found from Canada south to Florida and west to Texas. In addition to "Poke" common names include: Pokesalat, Pokeroot, Pokeweed, Pigeonberry, Red plant, Gargetweed, Bear's grape, Cancer root, Red nightshade, and Ink berry. names which have originated from its medicinal, food and other uses. "Poke" is reported to be derived from an Indian word "pocan" for plants that yield red dyes. Apparently many early American letters and documents were written with poke ink.

Poke has small, stalked white flowers arranged along a blossoming stem called a raceme. These flowers are exceptional because their white petal like parts are actually sepals, which are green in many flowers.



Pokeweed Bush in fruit in summer



Flowering and fruiting stalks of Pokeweed

Very young poke shoots make a delicious nutritious cooked, as well as canned vegetable, according to "Wild Greens": <http://www.wildpantry.com/wildgreens.htm> . It states, that one half cup of greens provides 90% of Vitamin A, 60% of Vitamin C, 8% of calcium, and 6% of iron, and this serving is only 35 calories! It's a misnomer to call it

poke "salat", because uncooked greens are toxic, and require two changes of cooking water to be safely eaten. "Salat" is German for salad, and may have been applied to poke by German settlers in the Ozarks where they still celebrate "Poke Salat Days" in the spring. It's the custom there to cook up a tasty combination of wild greens including poke, lamb's quarters and curly dock. It's also reported that folks there eat one poke berry each year for arthritis!



Young plants with edible leaves ready for harvest.

Poke root, which concentrates the plant's most toxic chemicals, is used extensively in herbal medicine, both in internal and external preparations for everything from tonsillitis and respiratory infections to boils, mastitis, and cancer.

Some other species of *Phytolacca* are native to China and South America, and at least one species growing on the pampas of Argentina should be mentioned. It is the amazing Ombu tree, *Phytolacca dioica*, also called "Bella Sombre" which means "beautiful shade". These "trees" are actually bushes that grow to over 60 feet tall with a very broad canopies, massive trunks and buttress roots that store water enabling them to survive raging pampas fires. It has become a symbol of the struggle of life on the wild pampas. Interestingly though, the same tree has escaped from cultivation in South Africa and is on their Invasive Plant List.



Ombu (Bella Sombre) Tree.

MY NOMINATION FOR PLANT OF THE MONTH - Barbara Wells

When our summers turn to the predictably hot and muggy norm of South Carolina, I appreciate tough plants that require little time or effort and still pack a powerful punch in our landscape. For those attributes I officially nominate castor bean, *Ricinus communis*, for the plant of the month award.

Some of you may have just uttered a surprised intake of air at my nomination. I will now address this wonderful plant's primary issue. Yes, the seeds of this plant are poisonous and are the source of ricin, the deadly poison used in political assassination plots. But I am going on the assumption that we are all gardeners and not assassins.

Any assassins or future assassins are requested to stop reading now and please join a different group. Because the seeds are poisonous, extreme caution should be taken growing this plant in areas where small children or pets might accidentally ingest any parts of this plant. The seeds, however, are perfectly safe to handle and are available for sale through several seed companies in the United States.

Now that I've covered the disclaimers, allow me to explain why I love this plant. Castor Bean is a tropical plant that adds drama like no other plant to the back of a border or serves equally well as an impressive specimen plant. It hails from the Ethiopian region of Africa, and is not a true bean but a member of the Spurge family, along with poinsettias, crotons, and other cousins too numerous to list. The seeds are the source of castor oil and diverse industrial applications, and some of castor bean's plant parts have been used medicinally for centuries.

A warm weather annual here in South Carolina, it easily grows 8 to 10 feet tall by 4 feet wide. Castor bean sprouts one or two smooth red central stalks adorned in very large palmate shaped leaves. My favorite cultivar, 'Impala', has striking reddish purple foliage, especially on the new growth that seems iridescent in soft morning light, demanding my attention.

As the plants mature in early summer, they begin producing foot long upright clusters of small flowers, light pink female on the top half and pale greenish white male on the bottom. The female flowers mature into grape sized red fruits covered in soft spines. As the fruits age on the plant, they transition to a brown color, and each fruit contains 3 shiny brown mottled seed about one half inch. These seeds, which resemble swollen ticks, are the origin of the botanical name ricin, which is Latin for tick. (see picture below)



Flowers and then fruits and finally..... mature seed pods by Barbara Wells

If you want to avoid seeds, simply cut the flower stalks off before they have a chance to form seeds. Left to its own devices, castor bean will quite happily reseed, giving you enough babies for yourself and plenty of friends next spring. Or you can collect the seeds after they mature and direct sew or germinate them indoors next year.

As I mentioned earlier, castor bean plants require minimal care. They prefer full sun and supposedly the "moist, well- drained soil" you commonly encounter in gardening literature. (Really, how many of us have that?) Mine seem perfectly content in my somewhat amended clay and receive little, if any, supplemental water. And I honestly can't remember ever fertilizing them. Because they grow so fast, their height can be controlled if you wish by ruthlessly whacking them back to about three feet at the point above a leaf node in July. They will quickly recover. This also encourages lateral branching and makes the plants less susceptible to tipping in windy conditions.

Because castor bean has such bold foliage on statuesque plants, it contrasts nicely with finer textured companion plants. I have it scattered along the back of my hot colored mixed bed.

I especially like the combination of castor bean behind Lady in Red Salvias that reseed each year, and orange Tusawilla Tigress daylilies. The contrast of the red castor bean foliage alongside yellow flowering Rudbeckia maxima, followed by Rudbeckia 'Herbstonne' brings tears of joy to my eyes. And, this wonderful plant plays equally well alongside Lantana 'Miss Huff', another beautiful plus size girl in the



back of the border.

Strategically planted, castor bean quickly grows large enough to supply afternoon shade for any overly sensitive semi-shade lovers you may have. If you're shade-challenged like I am, this can be a definite plus. Because it grows so quickly it also provides a nice summer screen, blocking any unwanted views or allowing a little privacy.

Did I mention that castor bean seems to be deer resistant? However, the same large leaves that provide shade for smaller plants also offer a shady hiding spot for that pesky rabbit I can't seem to convince to voluntarily relocate. Oh, well, I guess no plant is perfect, and castor bean is still at the top of my list this month.

GARDEN OF THE MONTH - Looks good even in late August/early September!





Pictures by Barbara Wells

Schedule for 2015 Master Gardener Classes

September 1	Pathology & Diseases	Vince P. Hodges	Chapter 7	
September 8 Short session--	Annuals & Perennials, soil mixes, growing	Gil Sampson & Hodges	Chapter 14	Field trip Light snack Provided
Sept 15	Irrigation & Water Management	Bryan Smith	Chapter 11	
Sept 22	Composting & Soils	D. Boozer Hodges	Chapter 1&2	
Sept 29	Vegetable Garden	S. Odom Hodges	Chapter 16	
October 6	Lawn Grass & Weeds	Lemond Hodges	Chapter 15 Some 8	
October 13	Plant Propagation	Hodges	Chapter 5	
October 20	Landscape Design	Kathryn White	Chapter 10	
October 27	Urban Forestry Tree Selection & Pruning	Jimmy Walters	Chapter 12 Some 13	
November 3	Pest Mgmt. – Organic methods Problems analysis	Ann Barklow	Some Chapt. 9 8 and 19	
Nov 10	Fruit Gardening	Odom Hodges	Chapter 17	
November 17	<u>Final Exam</u> , committee signups, short program pruning	MG Assoc. Hodges	Some pruning examples Chpt 12 plus	
*Outside Trip	Doris' Greenhouse	Highway34 toward 96	Carpool Shorter session	Light refreshments

** 2 class members sign up for refresh.s				
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CITY GREENHOUSE OPPORTUNITIES-Ann Barklow, Sue Monaghan, Jimmy Mc Inville

Starting Sept. 1, LMG'ers can work every Thursday from 9-11. There is a lot to do.

Topiaries: Trimming, Botrytis removal, Green Moss removal, Pest Scouting (every week)

Growing greenhouse: Ornamental kale and cabbage, fall/winter veggies for farmer's market, Potting up 8,000 pansies, Pest scouting, Topiary propagation.

If you want to come on another day or would like to be a regular weekly volunteer any other day of the week, just let Ann know. You can text, call, or email. (Information below)

The new students will be coming too and will get on the email list soon. Currently they have Ann's number and are calling to come help. One come yesterday to work! It's good for us to help them learn how to get and track their hours and impart our vast knowledge. (Ann's words).

We always have plants or cuttings or seeds to give away to volunteers.

Thanks everyone! Looking forward to another beautiful year with flowers and topiaries and good friends of like minds. With your help last year, it was the best year ever in Uptown!

Ann

annbarklow@embarqmail.com

[864-344-0120](tel:864-344-0120)

Abbeville's Extension Office Farm City program will be held on September 16th from 8:00am until 12:30 pm this year. If there are any Lakelands Master Gardeners that need volunteer hours they would love to have us help with the event. Please have them contact myself or anyone else here at the Abbeville office if they are interested or have any questions.- Cindy Hall at 446-2276

2015 ARBORETUM ADVENTURES



Exploring the World & Your Own Backyard

This year's Arboretum Adventures event is open to the community and features presentations by Andrew Bunting, assistant director of the garden and director of plant collections at Chicago Botanic Garden and Scott McMahan, owner of Garden*Hood Nursery in Atlanta. The presentations are followed by a delicious casual dinner and conversation.



Scott McMahan



Scott McMahan and Andrew Bunting



Andrew Bunting

Andrew Bunting recently became Assistant Director of the Garden and Director of Plant Collections at the Chicago Botanic Garden. For the past 25 years he was Curator of the Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College. He has served as President of the Magnolia Society International and chaired the North American Plant Collections Consortium. He has written over 100 articles for the American Gardener, Fine Gardening Magazine, Horticulture, Public Garden and Arnoldia. He is a passionate gardener, avid birder, and traveler. His presentation will focus his travels, the value of public gardens, and the development of his home garden, Belvidere, featured in This Old House Magazine and the Wall Street Journal.

Scott McMahan is from Decatur, Georgia with ties to Spartanburg. He has a Bachelor's degree from Wofford College and an Associate Degree in Horticulture from Spartanburg Community College. His SCC internship experience led him to become propagator for a large wholesale grower, and then nursery manager at the Atlanta Botanical Garden. In 2003, Scott opened McMahan's Nursery, which specializes in rare plants for the southeast. Scott has explored in China, Japan, Taiwan, India, Bhutan, Vietnam and U.S. In 2009, Scott opened Garden*Hood, a plant boutique in downtown Atlanta. Garden*Hood has won several awards as a community favorite. In his presentation he will take us along on his plant expeditions, where we will learn the thrills, and pitfalls of a modern plant explorer.

Thursday, October 1, 2015

SCC Central Campus

107 Community College Dr., Spartanburg

5:30 pm - Arboretum Adventures

Exploring the World & Your Own Backyard

Presentation & Dinner

Tracy J. Gaines Building, Auditorium

\$30 for a single ticket  \$50 for two tickets

Ticket includes presentation, dinner and a family membership to the *SCC Friends of the Arboretum*

Please order tickets by September 25, 2015

Save the date for our annual Plant Sale October 2!

You won't want to miss this wonderful annual event at the central campus Horticulture Greenhouses



(864) 592-4624 | sccfoundation@sccsc.edu
[facebook.com/SCChorticulture](https://www.facebook.com/SCChorticulture) | www.sccsc.edu/arboretum

Thanks to all who helped in the City Garden to rejuvenate it for the fall – Sandy Orr

Lakelands Master Gardener Board

Voting Members

Executive Committee

President: Donna Feldmaier
Vice President: Barbara Wells
Treasurer: Melody McInville
Secretary: Chris Moon
Past President: Sandy Orr

General Board Members

Community Projects: Jimmy McInville and Sue Monaghan
Education: Linda Halsey
Membership: Betsy Russ
Plant Sale/Fund Raising: Sandy Orr
Programs/Speakers: Bill Aaron
Public Relations: Olivia Reynolds and Chris Cornetto
Website/By-Laws: Chuck Bender

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