

Diggin' Dirt

Lowcountry Master Gardener Association



Summer 2013

Upcoming Events

October 7th-ish

Shitake Log Class and Workshop at Waddell Mariculture Center. Participants will be given a presentation on Mushrooms by Dave des Jardin and then will actually create a Shitake Log that will produce Shitake Mushrooms for them for several years. All materials will be provided for the participants. The event will start at 10AM and be done by 12:30PM. This event sold out in several hours the last time we ran it. The event will be limited to 20 people on a first to sign up basis., and then we will start a waiting list. Firm date to be announced soon.

October 24th

Coosaw Island Kayak Trip. The purpose of the trip is to observe shoreline

native plants, buffer plantings and to enjoy the Fall foliage. Laura Lee will give a presentation on native plants during a box lunch picnic that we will have on a beach next to a very old oyster midden. We will leave from the Marina on Dataw Island at 11:30AM and return to the same place at 3PM. The tour will be led by Beaufort Kayak and will cost \$40. if you need a kayak and \$20. if you bring your own. Both Single and Tandem Kayaks will be available. The tour will be limited to 20 people on a first to sign up basis and then we will start a waiting list. Our last kayak trip sold out in a day.

Events that are still in the planning stage (but highly probable):

Penn Center on St. Helena Island- a presentation on Gullah Gardens and then to go to Gullah Grub Restaurant for lunch. This will start at 10:30AM and be done by noon when we would got to lunch. There will be a charge for this and the lunch. Details to follow.

Ebeneezer Creek Kayak Trip in the Savannah Wildlife Refuge sometime after Thanksgiving. Of all of the kayak trip options in our area this one is the most spectacular as you kayak through a maze of gigantic Swamp Tupelo and Bald Cypress Trees. Rainfall leading to sufficient levels will determine if this trip is possible.

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President's Corner

Although the Low Country slows down for summer and many leave for cooler climates, for Master Gardeners, the work and learning never end! For those who spend the summer here, volunteers are needed for the MG tables at the Port

Royal and Bluffton farmers markets. The Lunch and Learn program at the Port Royal farmers market continues to be the place to be on Saturdays to learn about gardening in the Low Country. We also have educational programs on

selected Thursday afternoons at the Bluffton farmers market and Wednesday mornings in June at the Hilton Head library. Thanks to our volunteer coordinators who make this happen!

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What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have never been discovered.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Rent a Master Gardener (RMG): Beaufort



Project Leader Martha Jamison taking a soil sample

On a sunny April day, a group of Beaufort area Master Gardeners and Master Gardener Interns gathered at the home of the Robarts on Lady's Island. Their goal was to help the homeowners understand horticultural best practices and to guide the homeowners' thinking when making landscaping decisions. The Master Gardeners/Interns listened to the homeowners,

took notes and shared information they had or they recommended resources. A soil sample was taken and the homeowners were told that they would receive a written report on the visit.

The Rent a Master Gardener project is available to homeowners in three locations: Beaufort, Bluffton and Hilton Head Island. The success of the project is evidenced by

homeowner satisfaction and the referrals they provide. The Master Gardeners and Interns, too, express a high degree of satisfaction; the most common comment from them is, "I learned so much." If you'd like to join this happy Beaufort area group, contact Martha Jamison at hmjamison@embarqmail.com

In the Bluffton and Hilton Head areas, please contact your area coordinator.



Waddell Mariculture Center



Al Stokes, Manager of the Waddell Mariculture Center and Rick Kurz, Project Leader, discuss the project.

Waddell Mariculture Center serves as a prime location for the LMGA to educate others about buffer gardens. On this beautiful day, a group of Master Gardeners/Interns, under the leadership of Master Gardener Rick Kurz, gathered to add and label plants and to install an irrigation system. The goal is to educate others on matching plants with location. As

groups tour this facility, they will better understand what plants would thrive in this environment and also understand the how a buffer garden protects the waterway from pollution and erosion. The LMGA has worked to make this a reality. After an hour and a half, the group looked over and appreciated their work and then enjoyed lunch together. You,

too, can be a part of this most important project! There will be periodic LMGA emails requesting help on a particular phase of the project; this will be your chance to participate and make a valuable contribution to the health of our environment! We hope to see you at the next phase of the project!

Plant Clinic: Hilton Head Island

On Wednesday mornings at the Government Office Building (539 William Hilton Parkway) from 9:30 until noon, you'll find a group of Master Gardeners and Interns responding to questions and concerns from the gardening public. They may be processing soil samples or parts of a plant that the visitor has brought in to determine the solution to a problem; these samples are sent to Clemson for an analysis. You may also find them discussing horticultural issues with the visitor, informing them of best practices. Between these visits from the

public, they might be discussing timely horticultural issues important to them.

Wouldn't you like to be a part of this interaction with the public and your fellow Master Gardeners and Interns? Not only would you be helping others, but you would also be learning from the experience. Contact Project Leader Trudie Johnson at 843-342-5222 or at dalejohnson@hargray.com.



Project Leader Trudie Johnson (seated), MG Diana Nichols and Intern Donna Lynch analyze an azalea to determine why it is dying

Hard at Work at Waddell



The hardworking group of Master Gardeners and Interns:

Row 1: Rick Kurz, Sandra Educate, Holly Moen, Bob Collins, Jenny Kingery, Fran Symes, Jack Greenshields

Row 2: Pat Cooke, Barb Fagan, John Housley, Michelle Baldwin, Anne Tupper, Gary DiSalvo, Jim Nangle, Tom Rech

Row 3: Joe Allard

LMGA Membership Meeting- May 23rd

After a short business meeting, the audience of about 60 people sat fascinated by an informative talk by Chemist Dr. Randy James. He challenged the audience to think differently and deeper about soils, plant nutrients, fertilizers and other agricultural issues. The audience responded with questions and comments. Dr. James closed his presentation with a thought from a past agriculturalist Jethro Tull, who suggested that everything we think we know in science is wrong but we don't know which parts are wrong.



June in the Hilton Head Library

Lecture Series. All programs will begin at 11:00 AM, and will last approximately a half hour, with time after for questions.

- June 5 - Native Plants
Presenter - Betsy Jukofsky
- June 12 - Deer Resistant Flora
Presenter - Ronnie from Lowe's
- June 19 - Gardening in the Shade
Presenter- Chris Rosenbach
- June 26 - Water-Wise Gardening

Read the full article, "*Cutting Thru The Jungle - Native Plants Myths and Realities*" at www.plantdelights.com

What is a Native Plant? By Tony Avent

As you delve deeper into the world of native plant enthusiasts, there is a surprising lack of consensus as to what is a native plant. The broadest of definitions, define native plants, as those plants which occur and reproduce in an area without cultivation by man.

The problem, of course with this definition, is that it includes plants such as Queen Anne's Lace, ox-eye daisy, and that southern favorite kudzu, that were brought in by European settlers (and in kudzu's case, by the US Government), and have made themselves right at home.

Similarly, while Japanese honeysuckle is well naturalized in the US, it is by no means a native. According to Cole Burrell, a recognized native plant expert from Minnesota, over 20% of the plants listed in Peterson's Field Guide to North American Wildflowers, are introductions from Europe.

Other problems with setting

parameters for what qualifies as a native plant are the state borders. These borders, devised by our forefathers, were done with no regard to which side of the line these native plants grew. It seems that plants only recognize environmental lines such as rainfall amounts, soil types, and temperature extremes.

There are some ecologists who really get uptight, and decry that when the same plant is native from North Carolina to Maine, a plant from a Maine population is a non native plant when taken to North Carolina.

We have other groups of folks who want to qualify native plants as those that grow in a particular region of the country, while others qualify native plants as those that grew before english settlers arrived...I guess the plants that were introduced to areas by the politically correct Native Americans don't count.

The native plant issue is further clouded, when fossils

such as Ginkgo are located in North Carolina. How can this asian tree be an American native? Remember back when all of the continents were joined?

Could it be that the continental split occurred irrespective of where similar plants were growing. It is sort of strange that many nearly identical asian counterparts of our native plants are found in regions of Japan and Korea. Could some plants that were formally "native" to North Carolina, just not in a scale of time to which most folks can relate.

Despite the confusion over native plants, radical and vocal groups (especially in the midwest) have lobbied for and passed laws making it illegal to grow any plants that were not growing in the state, or in some cases within a 50 mile radius, prior to the 1800's. I wonder where the burden of proof of what is a native plant rests in this debate...guilty until proven innocent?

Kayaking the ACE Basin— May 1st

Our fearless leaders were Kim and David of Beaufort Kayak Tours and there were about 17 of us. We only saw one spider lily. We passed old rice field dikes, a huge alligator, and drove past amazing old plantations to get to the landing.

(Sue Roderus pictured to the right, Joe Allard coming in for a landing below left, and Natalie Bowie below right.)



Volunteer Opportunities

Bluffton Farmers Market

Thursdays, 2:00-7:00

Michelle Baldwin

michellejbaldwin@yahoo.com
843-757-8669

Port Royal Farmers Market

Saturdays, 8:30-noon

Sandra Educate

silkroad@embarqmail.com
843-524-1916

Rent a Master Gardener Teams

Beaufort

Martha Jamison

hmjamison@embarqmail.com
843-986-5965

Bluffton

Gail Havens

gailhavens@hargray.com
843-368-4851

Hilton Head

Corinne Roe

corinners50@yahoo.com
650-400-7231

President's Corner (continued)

Speaking of coordinators, Sheila Drouin is our new Northern Beaufort coordinator. Those of you "North of the Broad" will be hearing from her in the future, and I'm sure she'd welcome your project ideas.

Our Rent a Master Gardener teams have been busy visiting yards – to date, over 70 – throughout the County. While new requests have

slowed to a trickle, we expect that publicity and client referrals will generate demand in the fall. Won't you consider volunteering for this program? It's a great way to meet fellow MG's and learn more about plants and gardening.

Please remember to enter your volunteer hours on the Clemson MG website. If you need a password or are

unsure how to do so, contact Laura Lee. As of June 1, we have logged 2370 hours, making us fourth in the State!

VP Rick Kurz is putting together some terrific programs for the fall. If you haven't been to an LMGA event lately, we hope to see you at one very soon. Our next meeting is September 19 at the Bluffton Library. In the meantime, stay cool!



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Area Project Coordinators:

Hilton Head
Chris Rosenbach

Bluffton
Gail Havens

Beaufort
Sheila Drouin

Book Review

Founding Gardeners

by Andrea Wulf

We all have a vague idea of the political impact our first four presidents had on our country and future, but few know that the horticultural interest of these men was directly responsible for creating and preserving much of the plant diversity we enjoy today.

"For the Founding Fathers, gardening, agriculture and botany were elemental passions, as deeply ingrained in their characters as their belief in liberty for the nation they were creating".

Before any of these men had political aspirations, they were first and foremost, farmers and gardeners. Ben Franklin stated that there were only three ways to grow a nation: "War, Robbery, and the only honest way, Agriculture". Without exception, these men felt that the Presidency was a burdensome duty they were glad to relinquish for the joy of coming home to their gardens.

George Washington's Mount Vernon, Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, James Madison's Montpelier, and John Adams' Peacefield were our nation's first experimental farms. They scoured our country and Europe for seeds, plants, trees and shrubs. Their meticulous records form the basis of this book. Such was their dedication that, as George Washington lay dying; he dictated a 17 page letter of instructions to his farm manager.

The amount of research this author did is impressive. The source index was almost as long as the book itself. The book is a fascinating insight into the birth of our nation from the benign viewpoint of gardening.

The Educated Fire Ant

