

# **The Garden Maven's Quick and "Dirty" Guide to St Marys Gardening**

## **Gardening is different here**

We are blessed in St Marys to be able to garden year-round, but new residents from other climates need to learn to garden all over because it is so different here. For starters, the growing season is about two months longer at each end. (March 15-Dec.15). So, if you wait until May 15 to plant some things, like tomatoes or petunias, you will be disappointed when the plants shut down 6 or 7 weeks later in the heat. In the summer, a lot of plants that are summer plants up north give up by July, like petunias. There is a winter season when you can plant pansies, snapdragons, petunias, dianthus, etc. Lots of plants bloom all winter long. Some winters are colder and plants will die back, while in milder years they stay green all winter. Sometimes they stay green and bloom most of the winter and then lose their leaves before spring. It can be confusing. Best thing to do is cut things back but don't pull out any roots until June or July, when you are sure something is really dead and not gathering itself together for another season.

Full sun for some plants also can be more like 3-4 hours rather than 6 or more, because the sun is stronger. It is often hard to find plants that can take that screaming hot summer sun all day long without a break. Lots of plants like morning sun and afternoon shade, so check out the conditions in your yard before planting.

Back in zone 6-7, I didn't need to fertilize and usually didn't. Here most things won't grow in the sandy soil without it. Milorganite has become my best friend. It is cheap and won't burn the plants. The leaves fall from the oak trees in the spring, rather than the fall, giving us wonderful free mulch that helps improve the soil. Pine straw is also a good mulch. Because of termites, stay away from wood mulch near the house. And never, never, never mulch with rocks.

Watering is a huge issue when summer temperatures are in the mid-nineties for months at a time. Irrigation is a wonderful thing. If you don't have it, you will need to locate your beds to minimize dragging hoses and sprinklers around. Water in the morning, never in the evening, to discourage mildew.

Up north, huge perennial beds were everywhere. Here, there is such a variety of flowering bushes that bloom all season long and other plants that get really big that I have changed my whole gardening style to big plants like duranta, lantana, plumbago, landscape roses, cannas, shrimp plant, esperanza, bottlebrush. Shady beds can look beautiful with just foliage plants of different colors. Some houseplants can go right in the ground or winter over outside with a cover when it goes below 40. My Christmas cactus has lived its entire life summer and winter on my porch. And the craziest thing of all, many of the plants that grow well here can be started from a clipping just stuck in a pot of dirt and kept watered in the shade. Enjoy experimenting and learning about all the wonderful plants that grow in our beautiful area!

## Zones

Lots of things won't take the heat or need more cold than we can provide. East of I-95, we are officially hardiness zone 9a. West of I-95 officially is zone 8b. But it is much more complicated than that. Hardiness zones (9a and 8b) only mean it will probably not get cold enough to kill the plant. Sometimes they are also used to denote the zones they thrive in (like 3-7 for lilacs, 5-8 for hostas). Even though hostas are said to grow through zone 8, I challenge anyone to find one looking good in Folkston, much less Kingsland. They sell them here, but they will never grow bigger and better each year like up north. The big box stores in our part of Georgia get most of the same plants they get in Atlanta (zone 7b/8a). So a lot of what they sell will not grow here. Better to go to the same big box store in Yulee. Their plants will be more suitable for our climate.

The best advice about zones is to buy only plants that grow **in both zones 8 and 9**. Sometimes the catalogs are overly optimistic (they don't want to limit their market) and say plants will do well in zone 9, so check several catalogs or websites if in doubt. The tags on the plants in the stores don't give the zones they will grow in, so you need to look things up if you are not familiar with the plant. The Southern Living zones are the best indicator of success because they take heat and humidity into account. Our Southern Living zone is "Coastal South". The *Southern Living Garden Book* is an encyclopedia of plants that grow from Kentucky through South Florida, and if you can have only one gardening book, this should be it. It is a wonderful reference.

## Sprucing up the garden in spring.

Evergreen plants trick us into a false sense of security. We expect them to stay looking the same beautiful green always, but unless they are silk plants, this is not going to happen. Liriope should be cut back ideally every early spring, realistically (we are only human) every 2-3 years in this climate. You are probably too late to just whack the whole thing if the new center growth has started. You can go at it with scissors and cut the beat up old leaves off, leaving the new centers untouched, and next year cut back the whole thing earlier. Or just wait till next year and try not to look at it closely.

Evergreens need to have dead areas trimmed up, overgrown growth evened up, and general tidying. Pull up dead annuals. Trim off the beat-up leaves on the porch plants. They will look a lot better and will grow some new leaves. Cutting back unsightly branches, including "cowlick" branches that look out of place, will make the whole garden look better. One rule of thumb to use is "Does it add or detract from the appearance of the plant?" If it detracts, whack it off.

The only exception is dead leaves and stalks on perennials, which should be left on till mid March to help protect the plant from frost. And of course, only trim unsightly branches on azaleas or other plants getting ready to bloom if they are so bad you want to put a bag over the plant's head.

## No Fail plants for our area

**For shade**, **holly fern** is tops. Evergreen, attractive, fairly carefree, drought tolerant once established. It can function as a foundation plant without getting too big or woody. **Gingers, shrimp plant, cast iron, oak leaf hydrangeas, caladiums**, and of course **azaleas** and **camellias** are well suited to our area and grow with little or no care.

**For sun**, **Mexican petunia** and **firecracker plant** are somewhat invasive, but colorful and carefree. (The dwarf Mex. Petunia is not as invasive, just “overly enthusiastic”) **Jasmine, plumbago, duranta, esperanza, landscape roses, lantana, bottlebrush, amaryllis, cannas**, and the **cupheas** do well here. And of course, the old faithful **crinum lily**, which needs to be dug up and put through a wood chipper twice to kill it.

## What won't grow here

Give up your dreams of a Yankee shade garden with **hostas, astilbes, lily of the valley, sweet woodruff**, and charming woodland flowers. Your hosta may live through the summer, but if it comes back the following year it will tug at your heartstrings as it gradually declines, and you finally make the decision to pull the plug on it. **Lilacs** will not make it, most **Japanese maples** will not thrive here, and a good many of the tried and true northern perennials will not survive our hot summers. Forget **daffodils** and **tulips** and **peonies**. Likewise, **apples** and **peaches** unless they are low chill varieties. Fuhgedabout **Asiatic and oriental lilies, German Iris, Alchemilla, potentilla, and delphinium**. And have you ever seen a **butterfly bush** actually blooming in St Marys?

Fortunately, we have so many things that do grow well here that you can usually find a replacement for your former favorites. Farfugium (leopard plant) has a growth habit something like a hosta, as does cardamom. Cast iron plant can also give a similar effect. Chaste trees look like a low rent lilac, but make up for it by being a hummingbird magnet. Erlicheer daffodils do well here, although to me they don't look enough like a regular daffodil to be a real stand in. There are a few daffodil varieties that are reported to grow without spending time in your refrigerator (like “Carlton”), but I haven't tried them yet.

## Reliable Bloomers and Plants for Color and Fragrance

It is easy to have color in all seasons in St Marys. Caladiums, begonias, coleus, and impatiens are the old reliables for shade. There are many shade loving foliage plants that add color all season without sprouting a single flower. Your house plants can also add color to the garden. Begonias with unusual leaves, Persian shield and wandering jew can be put out in their pots and moved around as the garden changes. Many types of wandering jew will survive the winter and can be planted as a ground cover.

For sun, annuals like vinca, pentas, purslane, and Angelonia will bloom all summer, and will sometimes winter over. We are lucky to have perennials that are easy to grow and bloom for

the entire season like plumbago, bush daisies, esperanza, dune sunflower, Mexican petunia (yes, it is invasive, but it blooms a lot, attracts hummingbirds, and is pretty), lantana, canna, and landscape roses. Some of the plants like Sun Coleus and Sunpatiens will probably do better in partial sun. Full sun here is hard on them.

For fragrance, Sweet flowering almond, tea olive, jasmine, nicotiana, purple petunias, citrus blossoms, and night blooming jasmine will have you looking around to see where the fragrance is coming from. Crinum have a fragrance at night, as do some Angel Trumpets. Sometimes it seems like the more unobtrusive the flower, the stronger the fragrance. Unless they are gardenias. Or roses.....

### **Plants that change color, fall and winter bloomers**

Besides the Confederate Rose, which is a hibiscus, not a rose, there are many other flowers that change color while in bloom. Rosa mutabilis, the “Butterfly Rose”, opens yellow, deepens to orange, then to deep pink. Seven Sisters rose has clusters of flowers ranging from white to purple. “Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow” (Brunfelsia) is white, lavender, and purple. Some angels trumpet varieties open white and turn pinker each day for a few days.

Fall and winter blooming plants are plentiful. Golden rain trees delight us in the fall with their pink papery pods. Most of the color changing plants above are fall and winter bloomers. Angel Trumpet blooms on and off all year. Firespike blooms in the fall. Cassia is a showstopping bloomer in November. Cape Honeysuckle blooms in winter, as do Fatsia, hardy gloxinia, and Farfugium (Leopard Plant). Turk’s Cap usually is blooming at Christmas with its red flowers that look like Santa hats. And of course, camellias are the star of the winter garden.

### **Making the Garden attractive to birds and butterflies**

In general, birds look for food, shelter, nesting areas, and water when considering a place to call home. Water can be provided by a small pond, birdbath, or fountain. Trees, shrubs, and vines make good shelters. A variety of trees and shrubs, preferably native species, is best for attracting a variety of birds. There are few birds deep in the woods. They prefer some open area, with sheltering plants nearby, so go for the “edge effect”. This mimics the edge of a wooded area with trees, then some lower shrubs and plants at the edge of an open area of lawn or ground cover. Some shrubs should be producers of berries, like beautyberry or holly. Birds will not nest in food-producing shrubs, so other shrubs should provide cover.

When it comes to birds, laziness pays off. Birds do not like to nest in manicured shrubs, such as sheared hedges. The small interlocking twigs that shearing produces prevent birds from nesting in the shrubs or escaping predators. If a bird does make his way inside the shrub, it can be a death trap for the unlucky little guy. So no Edward Scissorhands. Birds prefer a looser, more natural appearance. Likewise, don’t go crazy cleaning up in the fall. Seed heads (such as coneflower, sunflowers, or rudbeckia) can be left for the birds to eat. Dead trees harbor insects that other birds eat, and provide nesting sites for some birds, and fallen fruit left on the ground

to ferment will attract butterflies. Weedy vines like Virginia creeper, greenbrier, and blackberry provide cover and food for the birds. Don't weed out all the Spanish needles – butterflies love them. Check online to find what species to plant for specific birds or butterflies.

***I Miss Tomatoes, A Love Story  
Or "Ou sont les vegs d'antan?"***

Tomatoes are the one thing I really miss from up north. For the past ten years I have tried and tried to get tomatoes that even begin to approach the size and taste of the bumper crops I once grew with little or no effort. I miss going out in August and picking a dozen or more beautiful beefsteak tomatoes so big that one barely fit in my hand. I miss slicing into the tomato, still warm from the sun, cutting a really thick slice, and slapping it on some white bread (where its hugeness hung over the edges) with just a little salt and pepper and mayonnaise. There is nothing on earth to compare with a simple tomato sandwich if you start with a good tomato.

Unfortunately, people have the most success around here with cherry tomatoes. Which anyone knows are not what could be seriously called a tomato. Everyone seems to know someone with a gimmick for growing real tomatoes, like planting them in 50 gallon drums of wet oak leaves, or slicing open a bag of Black Know and planting it in the bag or only watering with Miracle Gro. A few years back, I bought two \$75 Earth Boxes, and got about a dozen tomatoes which were smaller than a tennis ball. Last year I bought \$32 worth of special dirt and \$14 worth of special tomato fertilizer and was still disappointed. This year I am finally throwing in the tomato towel. I am sure I can get tomatoes at the produce stand for less than the \$15-20 a pound that I have averaged so far.

Tomatoes grow best when the days are 70-80 degrees, and the nights are 60-70 degrees. Once the days get above 90 and the nights above 75, they won't set any fruit. So we need to plant around the middle of March and again at the beginning of August for a fall crop. There are heat tolerant tomatoes like Florida 91, Homestead 24, Phoenix, Picus, Solar Fire, and Solar Set. But in your heart of hearts, you know that they will be a poor substitute and that you will never grow anything remotely approaching the heavenly taste of a Jersey tomato. So find a good farmers market that gets their tomatoes from North Carolina or Tennessee or parts to the North, and if you can't be with the tomato you love, love the tomato you're with.....

**Dollarweed and evil vines**

**Dollarweed** (Hydrocotyle) comes in right behind Sand Gnats and Fire Ants on the "Things I Hate about the South" list. When first you first see this native plant, it looks so pretty, you say "it must be something like a wild nasturtium". After it reveals its evil heart, you vow to eradicate it. Eventually you realize that it isn't ever going away, and if you keep trying to kill it you will wind up like Captain Ahab, spread-eagled in your garden entangled in a web of its Great White Roots. The best you can do is to beat it back as much as possible. If it is in your lawn, there are several sprays you can use that won't hurt the grass. Image is one of them.

Flower beds are another story. Hand digging is the recommended method (if only we could train our armadillos to dig them up for us!) Loosen the dirt with a hoe or garden weasel, and the roots pull out more easily. Cut down on the water as much as possible, as dollarweed loves water. It even floats like a mini water lily! Get the grandkids out there and offer a prize for the longest root. Accept the fact that you will never get them all. Pine straw mulch is recommended to restrain them. Other remedies are sprinkling baking soda on wet dollarweed (will it affect pH and kill your good stuff?), applying 1 lb. sugar per 300 square feet and watering it in (turning your dollarweed farm to an ant farm?), spraying with Roundup (use a cardboard shield to protect your flowers), spraying with white vinegar, or using a water hose feeder to spray with a mixture of 1 can beer, 1 can coke, 1 ½ cups dish soap, 1 ½ cups ammonia. (If nothing else, you will have clean dollarweed!)

**Florida betony, beggarticks** (the little hitchhikers that stick to your socks and don't come off in the wash), **spanish needles**, and **spiderwort** (which is an attractive plant if you can keep it in moderation) are other weeds that can take over. Other plants, like **Boston fern**, can easily become weeds. They even grow up the trunks of trees! **Cypress vine** is beautiful, again in moderation. It can easily smother bushes and cut off light and air from other flowers. One plant to **never never never** let out of a pot is **asparagus fern**. For twenty-five years I had one in my living room up north and never repotted it. I loved it because its leaves would turn brown and fall off, I would water it, and it would come back to life. Those same qualities make it the nightmare plant of the south. If it gets in the ground, it makes itself at home and spreads by seeds and roots and I think just by willing itself to invade your garden. They don't call it artillery fern for nothing. The stems will get 5 feet tall and stick up through your bushes. The plant needs to be dug out and baby plants ruthlessly eradicated. I have had to dig up three large shrubs and throw them out to get at this evil plant. And did I mention it also has thorns?

But ordinary weeds are not our only enemy. Evil vines lurk beneath the surface, ready to sprout up, spread out, climb up, twine around and choke the life out of all the plants we love! We have vines that don't even show up in the weed books, including a charming one with little heart shaped leaves that can cover a bush almost overnight. Locally we have about 6 kinds of "**smilax**" (**greenbrier**), **crossvine**, **skunkvine**, **creeping cucumber**, some kind of **trumpet vine** with gorgeous leaves that never blooms, as well as **blackberries**, **morning glory**, **English ivy** and **woodbine**. **Asiatic jasmine** can become a weed. Even the live oaks grow like a vine underground. Mercifully, poison ivy vine is not common here, so it could be worse. If only there were a magic wand that would rid us of these vile pests.

The bad news is that only persistence and dogged determination will rid your gardens of these murderous thugs that keep our poor plants from getting the light and air that they deserve. Hand pulling or digging out is the first line of defense. Of course, some vines like smilax have tubers the size of a football. Some can resprout from the smallest piece of root. The second method is to spray with herbicide. For herbaceous vines, Roundup is best. Woody vines respond better to Triclopyr (Brush B Gone or other brush killer). You can untangle the vine from your bushes and lay it on a piece of plastic. Make sure that there is no

poison ivy entwined with the vines (if there is, wear protective clothing). Spray with Roundup. After 48 hours, cut off close to the ground. When the vine resprouts and is 6-8 inches tall, spray or paint with herbicide again. You may need to do this several times until the plant says Uncle. You can also dig it out, and spray when it comes back. For very large established vines, cut a few inches above the ground and immediately treat the cut stump with undiluted triclopyr (Green Light Cut Vine and Stump Killer). This is best done in the fall. Another method of doing in unwanted soft vines like bindweed is by pouring boiling water on the roots (only do this if there are no desirable plants around). Good luck keep at it, and never surrender.

### **Ants, armadillos, and other varmints, lizards, snakes, gnats**

Lots of dangers and annoying wildlife lurk in our back yards. **Gnats** often arrive in clouds and can send a person to the emergency room if they are sensitive to their bites. Or they billow up out of the ground when you are digging. Gnat spray is a must, and if you are allergic to gnats, a gnat shirt or hood is a good investment. Gnat season is in winter and spring, since their favorite temperature is 65-75 degrees. (The Gnat Line runs across the state of Georgia through Macon, so we are well south of it.)

**Ants**, particularly the big red and brown bull ants, love to nest in your outdoor potted plants. When disturbed, those ants come swarming out of that pot like a bunch of bloodthirsty Vikings, and they are almost as scary. Ant spray is good for the ones that come out of the pot, just sweep them up about an hour later when they are dead. Dump the dirt with the rest of them and sprinkle ant killing powder on it. Repot the plant in new dirt. You can also submerge the entire pot in water with a little Dawn dish soap in it. Don't do this in sunlight. After the ants are dead, rinse with clear water. Other hints to prevent an ant infestation:

*Diatomaceous earth* --Sprinkle a little on the surface of the pot, and around the bottom.

*Cinnamon* sprinkled on top of the soil. Other people mix *pyrethrum powder* with water and water the plants with it sometimes. *Fish emulsion* was another suggestion. Another method was to wrap the pot in plastic and fill it with water, topped off with a little shampoo (probably baby shampoo). Wait two hours and remove the plastic, and the ants will be dead.

The most ingenious solution was to line the bottom of the pot with *landscape fabric* to prevent the ants from entering through the drain hole. I'm going to try this when I plant next season, and maybe sprinkle some of that diatomaceous earth on the top of the pot.

**Fire ants** are so small they can sneak up on you. Their bites are painful and persist for weeks. Watch out for anthills and get some of that ant powder that smells like rotten cabbage to sprinkle on them. Some people swear by grits, which swell up and explode the ants after they eat them, but that seems a little sadistic.

**Armadillos** can be cute, especially when they have baby armadillos (always 4 of them). However, they can have your lawn looking like a mine field overnight. They poke those big long noses into the dirt looking for insects. Go to the hardware and get a bag of granules to treat the lawn for the insects. (There is even a picture of an armadillo on the bag.) Worse than lawn

damage is their digging near the house. They are constantly trying to tunnel under my slab foundation. When I find a hole, I throw a sock soaked in ammonia down the hole to drive them out if they are down there. When I'm sure the animal is gone, I fill the hole with egg rock, and hope they hurt their toenails digging on that. They also tunnel under trees and bushes, especially in areas not readily visible. Armadillos can carry leprosy, so don't cuddle with them.

**Lizards** are everywhere. The gecko on tv commercials has done a lot for their image (at least for the green anole, which is now in danger of being driven out by the Cuban anole). Skinks are another story. These big red headed earthworm colored lizards move like snakes and are pretty repulsive. They are also a danger to your pets if they eat one. The black lizards with the blue and red stripes are pretty to look at. After a while you get used to the lizards (unless they get into the house!) They drop off their tails when they are frightened, so don't pick them up by the tail. Best way to get them out of the house is a plastic container and a thin piece of cardboard so you can relocate them outside.

**Snakes.** Supposedly if you have harmless snakes, they will keep the poisonous ones out of your yard. Supposedly they are more afraid of you than you are of them. This is debatable. If you are a reptilophobe like me, you can beat on the ground with a shovel before you wade in to trim your ferns or start weeding among the ground cover. There is a snake called a hog nosed snake that will freeze and play dead until you are gone, so if you see a "dead" snake, go somewhere else for a couple of hours and come back. Chances are, it will be gone. Spray on snake repellent and moth balls don't work. The only way to get rid of snakes is to get rid of your bushes and plants. In the old days (as seen at the Chesser homestead at Okefenokee Wildlife Area) yards were kept free of any plants and the dirt was swept with a broom. That way snakes had no place to hide and bite the young'uns. How grim.

### **Pruning Azaleas, Fruit Trees, crape myrtles, and shrubs**

The best time to prune fruit trees is after harvest, before they flower again, and after the threat of frost but before the spring growth flush. March-April is in most cases the right time. **Figs** should be thinned to 3-5 trunks coming out of the ground and pruned by cutting out the center to let in more light and make it easier to protect from birds. Chances are the fig will grow like this naturally and may not need help. In early to midsummer (before Aug 1) pinch off the tip of each branch down to 6 leaves, to encourage more fruit. **Citrus** need very little pruning, except for cutting out dead wood. If they are too big, prune out the tallest branches and shape before the spring growth flush. Prune suckers growing out from the ground. Wait a couple of years to trim or prune new trees, and never prune in a drought. Fertilize after pruning, since pruning stimulates growth. **Crape myrtles** should be pruned in late winter. They should never be cut back to look like caveman clubs. Some people cut off any stems smaller than a pencil. Criscrossing branches, dead or damaged branches, and branches coming off too low on the trunk should be pruned. Prune other shrubs after they have bloomed.

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## Best time to move shrubs

The smaller the shrub, the easier it is to transplant. For really large shrubs, some root pruning several months to a year ahead of the move may be advisable. Root prune in the fall, move the shrub in the spring or even the next fall. Smaller plants should be pruned by spading in a circle around the plant about a foot deep and where you want the root ball to end. For really large plants, dig a trench about 8 inches wide and 12 inches deep and fill it with 2 parts topsoil to 1 part compost. And water, water, water. These methods encourage the formation of small feeder roots, which will reduce transplant shock when they are moved.

The best time to move a deciduous shrub is after it loses its leaves and before the ground freezes in the fall or before new growth starts in the spring. Which is pretty much late fall and all winter around here. Our lives are complicated by the fact that some shrubs like Turks cap, Brunfelsia, and Duranta keep their leaves some years and lose them in others, depending on how cold the winter is. Evergreens (broadleaf and needled) do best being moved in the winter. For the first year, don't fertilize with any high nitrogen fertilizers – only use root boosting fertilizers like bonemeal. It used to be common knowledge to cut back transplanted shrubs by 1/3, but this is now debated. So prune to make it look good and keep an eye on things. At any time of year, daily watering for the first 3 weeks, then every other day for the next 3 weeks is crucial to a successful transplant. You can even transplant in the heat of the summer if you really really need to, as long as you keep the shrub well-watered.

## Protecting plants from the cold

If we are going to get a frost, it will probably be in January or February, so get ready to get out there to protect your precious plants. Old sheets are my favorite winter protection. When the temperature is going below 40 degrees, cover your porch plants, house plants that stay outside, and other tender perennials like shell ginger or bromeliads with the sheets. I have left them on for two weeks if it stays fairly cold. The sheets allow water to flow through to the plants but keep the plants warmer. Make sure the sheets go all the way to the ground. You can weigh down the edges with bricks or logs to keep the wind from getting underneath. Huddling house plants together and covering with sheets or other cloths works well. Just bringing them onto a porch or close to the house or under a tree will help. Spanish moss with all its air pockets works as a good winter mulch, pine straw, leaves, and even paper from the paper shredder (although you might want to cover with leaves or pine straw for appearances). Some people bank citrus trunks with sand, but this is not recommended. I have stapled corrugated cardboard around them instead. Never use plastic sheeting for winter protection, since it conducts cold, and will burn the leaves when the sun hits them. Some people use Christmas lights to help keep their plants a bit warmer.

## Garden Centers

**Donini's** took a real beating during the last two hurricanes, but is still there on Dilworth St. **Ace Hardware** on Rte. 40 in Kingsland doesn't have a lot of plants but will order things for customers within reason. (912-729-4704). **Dixie Acres** has lots of shrubs and extremely good prices. It is at 4788 US 1 North, Folkston. The GPS will not find it. It is 4 miles north of the

301/1 split or 12 miles north of Folkston. (912-496-4442). **Liberty Nursery** is in Yulee on A1A on the left before you get to the bridge to Fernandina. They have lots of big trees and shrubs and a selection of perennials. In Fernandina, **Ace Hardware** is on A1A on the right soon after going over the bridge. The **Fernandina Farmers Market** (9am-1pm Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> and Centre St.) usually has a couple of plant vendors with nice things. **Dave's Nursery** has mostly shade plants. It is at 131 Smith. Rd. in Brunswick, which is off 17 just before the airport. (912-264-3135). St. Simons has the **Ace Garden Center**, 2807 Demere Rd. (912-634-0523). It's not the cheapest, but it has lots and lots of stuff and they will order things for you if they can find it. Drive a little farther to Jacksonville and there are: **Plant Ranch** – 14108 Beach Blvd., Jax Beach, (904-223-4546), **Trad's** – 8178 San Jose Blvd., Jax, (904-733-7488), **Pat's** – 7060 Highway 17, Fleming Island (904-284-2011), and **Gore's**—10357 New Kings Rd. (Route 1) Jax, (904-765-9714). Have lunch at Toby's BarBQue about a mile down the road and get the potato.

### **Enjoy your Garden**

There are so many new plants to enjoy here, that your garden can be colorful all year round. Plant to attract birds and butterflies, and plant for color and fragrance. Experiment by using houseplants in the ground. Grow what you like, and find your own garden style, whether minimalist or lush, cottage garden or regimented. If you get tired of something, donate it to the plant sale and move on to something else. Remember, only buy plants that grow in both zones 8 and 9, or better yet the "Coastal South", and fertilize, fertilize, fertilize. Have fun in your garden!

***P.S. The Garden Maven is in every issue of our garden club newsletter. Newsletters back to 2014 are on the website ([gardenclubsmga.weebly.com](http://gardenclubsmga.weebly.com)) and there is an index of Garden Maven topics and the issues to find them in.***