

# St Marys Garden Club Newsletter

## August 2014

### **Dates and Events** (events are free unless noted)

**Nassau Extension Plant Clinics (10am): August 4 and August 18** (Mondays), Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd.) Bring your sick plants in a bag for diagnosis.

**Wed., August 6, 10-11am** – *“Fall Vegetables”*, Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd, Yulee)

**Wed., Sept. 3, 10-11am**- *“Wildflowers”*, Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd., Yulee)

**Thurs., August 14, 1 pm**, Christ Episcopal – Fairy House/craft workshop for plant sale.

### **Announcements**

The **Earth Angels** are looking for classroom helpers.

**Plant Sale** – Keep getting your plants ready and growing for the sale.

### **Garden to-dos for August**

Plant asters, begonias, blue daze, cats whiskers, coleus, dianthus, gaillardia, melampodium, pentas, porterweed, purslane, zinnias. Bulbs like agapanthus, amaryllis, cannas, crinum, gladiolus, society garlic, and rain lilies can be divided and planted. Plant herbs like Mexican tarragon, mint, parsley, oregano, rosemary, and thyme. Plant another crop of tomatoes and other warm season crops early in the month so they will have time to mature. Later in the month plant cool season vegetables like broccoli, collards, bunching onions.

Fertilize heavy blooming flowers. Remove seed heads from vitex and crape myrtles to keep them blooming. Fertilize fig trees after harvesting. Prune dead branches on trees.

### **The Garden Maven’s Advice to the “Floralorn”**

***Dear Garden Maven,***

Tomatoes are the one thing I really miss from up north. For the past several seasons I have tried and tried to get tomatoes that even approach the size and taste of the bumper crops I once grew with little or no effort. I’ve planted early, and still get very few tomatoes and the sizes are pathetically small. The last straw was when my Rutgers tomatoes planted in mid-March produced a total yield of two cherry tomato sized fruits. Yes, we gardeners are optimistic and always planning to go get ‘em next season, but, alas, I am beginning to lose hope.....

***Shakin’ my fist at the sky***

***Dear Shakin’,***

I feel your pain. Even with a couple of \$75 Earth Boxes, I only got about a dozen tomatoes a season, and they were smaller than the varieties were supposed to be.... After two years, I have got my tomato crop cost down to about \$5 per lb. But hope springs eternal. There were some people at the community garden that grew some good looking tomatoes. They had pushed water bottles with the bottoms cut out into the ground around the roots of the tomato plant. They would water them with Miracle Grow every few days. I’ve heard of a man on St. Simons who grows tomatoes in 50 gallon drums full of oak leaves. He fills up the drums with leaves and covers them with water, then lets them sit a few weeks. Then he plants the tomatoes in the wet leaves. Some folks will plant the tomatoes in a bag of Black Kow.

Next season I’m going to try some of the heat tolerant tomatoes, if I can find the seeds. 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 at the beginning of August for a fall crop. The heat tolerant varieties are called Florida 91, Homestead 24, Phoenix, Picus, Solar Fire, and Solar Set. And if anyone has any secrets to tomato success, please send them in!

**Plant Hero of the Month:** The Coleus have all filled out, and are looking beautiful. There is still time to root cuttings from the biggest ones and plant out to enjoy for the rest of the season.