

St Marys Garden Club Newsletter

December 2015

Dates and Events (events are free unless noted)

Not many extension events in December, but enough holiday events to keep you in the Christmas spirit all month!

Tues., Dec. 1 – St. Marys White Lighting, parade starts at **5:30 pm**.

Tues., Dec. 1 - Christmas 208 E. Dillingham, St. Marys, 70,000 lights synchronized with music on 97.5 on the radio.

Fri. Dec. 4, Sat. Dec. 5 – Candlelight tours of Hofwyl Plantation (Brunswick, near exit 42), **6-9pm**, Adults \$10, Youth \$5. **House tours Dec. 18-20, 5pm-7:30 pm**. Call 912-264-7333 for more information.

Sat., Dec. 5 – 12-8 pm – Christmas in the Park, Gilman Park. Fun for the kids!

Sat. Dec. 5 , 9 am – 2pm– Cassina Garden Club Bake sale and Christmas market at Hamilton Plantation Slave Cabins, Gascoigne Bluff, St Simons. Free. Call 912-399-1152 for more information.

Sat. Dec. 12 – St. Marys Christmas Tour of homes, **5:30pm-9pm**. Advance \$15, day of, \$20. Call 912-882-4000 for more information or get tickets at Welcome Center across from 1st Presbyterian.

Sun. Dec. 13 – Plum Orchard Christmas Tour, Cumberland Island. **11:45am-5:30 pm**. Call Cumberland Island National Seashore for information.

Tues. Dec. 15 – Live Nativity at Orange Hall, **6-8pm**.

Announcements

Our Garden Club Christmas lunch is Tuesday, December 8 at the Jekyll Island Club. If you have signed up, meet at K mart between **10 am and 10:15** to carpool (at the end of the parking lot near the garden center).

Garden to-dos for December

Late December is the time to transplant plants if the weather has turned cold. If it is still warm, wait till they go dormant. Annuals for winter are carnations, digitalis, pansies, petunias, dianthus, and snapdragons. Water plants during dry spells, especially if it is cold and windy. Purchase frost blankets or round up the old sheets and be prepared to mulch and cover tender plants for winter protection. After the holidays, plant poinsettias outside, but protect from freezing.

The Garden Maven's Advice to the "Floralorn"

Dear Garden Maven,

I am interested in growing some amaryllis this year. I have heard they are easy to grow and find that hard to believe. What can you tell me about them?

Incredulous

Dear Incredulous,

The flowers are so big and beautiful they must be difficult... fortunately for us, a chimp could grow amaryllis if you gave him a shovel. You can force your amaryllis for the holidays in a pot, then plant it in the yard afterwards for years of beautiful blooms. If planting in a pot, leave the top third of the bulb out of the planting medium. The main thing with a pot is to make sure it is heavy enough so the huge flowers won't tip the pot over. After it blooms, you can plant it outside, but let the leaves die back naturally first. Like daffodils, they need to store food for next season through the leaves. When planting outside, the top of the bulb should be slightly above the soil line. If planted too deep, they won't bloom. Plant bulbs 12-15 inches apart any time between Sept. and Jan. in light shade or sun, but avoid full afternoon sun. They like good drainage, so they are excellent for our sandy soil. They should be lightly fertilized 3 times (when leaves first emerge, after blooming and another time) between March and September with a slow release fertilizer. Divide every 4-5 years, preferably in fall, but any time is okay. If they don't flower it could be because they were dug up before the leaves died back, had too much shade, or too much nitrogen. For a big splash in the landscape, plant 10 or more in a group of the same color. Grow some and enjoy!

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month: The Turk's Cap (or Sleeping Hibiscus) is putting out lots of bright red "Santa hats" that are perfect for the holiday season.

(Contact Judy Molnar at cjmolnar@tds.net or 882-8887 with newsletter items or questions for the Maven.)