

St Marys Garden Club Newsletter

October 2017

Dates and Events (events are free unless noted)

Nassau Extension Plant Clinics (Monday, 10am): Oct. 2, Oct. 16, Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd.) Bring your sick plants in a bag for diagnosis.

Weds. Oct. 18 – 10-11:00am – “Composting”, Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd., Yulee)

Saturday, Oct. 21, 9am-noon– Master Gardener Plant Sale, Yulee Govt. Complex, 96135 Nassau Place.

Weds., Nov. 1, 10-11am – “The Frugal Gardener”, Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd., Yulee)

Wild Amelia Wild Nite – Tues. Oct. 10, 7 pm – “Amelia Island Sea Turtle Nesting”, Peck Center, 516 S. 10th St., Fernandina.

Coastal Wildscapes Fall Native Plant Sale (rescheduled)—Sat., Oct. 21, 9am-1pm. Ashantilly Center, Darien.

Announcements

October 10 (Tuesday), 5-7 pm– Scarecrow Stroll, Osborne St. We are usually between Weed St. and Stable Alley.

October 10 – Oleander District Annual Meeting, Jesup.

Fig Leaf – Start collecting personal care items and underwear, sweatpants, t-shirts, nonskid socks or slippers for Christmas distribution at the local senior care facilities. Larger sizes are needed, unused greeting cards welcome. Bring to November meeting.

Garden to-dos for October

Plant winter vegetables like beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, Chinese cabbage, kohlrabi, bulbing onions, radishes, spinach, turnips, and strawberries. Plant flowers like digitalis, pansies, petunias, snapdragons, viola, million bells, flowering kale, and Shasta daisies. Plant bulbs like agapanthus, society garlic, spider lily, gladiola, star of Bethlehem, and pineapple lily. Of course, fall is a great time to plant those perennials you have purchased at the plant sale! Don't prune spring flowering trees or bushes. Prune fall flowering shrubs just after bloom. Check grafted trees and plants and remove growth below the graft. If planting new trees, water well, don't fertilize till spring. Start keeping Christmas cactus in the dark at night to have them bloom for Christmas.

The Garden Maven's Advice to the “Floralorn”

Dear Garden Maven,

I have a weed that is making itself at home all over my yard. It is a rough looking daisy type white flower with a yellow center and squared off petal ends. Every time I go to pull one up, I notice that it has a butterfly on it. So I hold off, but this never seems to be without a butterfly. I am in a quandary – what should I do with this weed?

Tenderhearted Butterfly Lover

Dear Tenderhearted,

I feel your pain. Your weed is Spanish needles, *Bidens pilosa*. It is easy to have a love-hate relationship with this wildflower. On the plus side, it attracts butterflies of many kinds like a magnet. It is the best nectar plant to have for a variety of butterflies, and it is a host plant for some. It attracts honeybees, dragonflies, and other pollinators. It helps the monarch butterflies in their migration. It has medicinal uses. The flowers are attractive. Amazon even sells seeds! On the negative side, it wants to colonize your yard, and the seeds stick to your socks.

I am allowing a patch of Spanish needles grow in an area separated from the rest of my garden, and pulling up most of the others (when I catch them free of butterflies) in the rest of my yard. The patch I allow is around the base of a large live oak, and I can see them from my kitchen window. I have never seen this small group of them without at least 2 butterflies. Usually there are 5 or more of several different varieties. The flowers blooming against the large tree trunk remind me a little bit of an Andrew Wyeth painting. So for me, it is a charming wildflower, unless it is in the wrong part of the yard. Then it becomes a weed. I'd vote to keep a few in your yard and enjoy your butterflies!

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month: Cassia is blooming bright yellow, and firespikes are blooming red!