

St Marys Garden Club Newsletter September 2018

Dates and Events (events are free unless noted)

Nassau Extension Plant Clinics (10am-2pm): Sept.10, 17, Oct. 1 (Mondays), Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd.) Bring your sick plants in a bag for diagnosis.

Weds., Sept. 5, 10-11:00am – “Common Insects on Ornamental Plants”, Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd)

Tues. Sept 11, 7pm – Wild Nite, “Wildflowers”, Peck Center, 516 S. 10th St., Fernandina.

Weds., Sept. 19, 10-11:00am, “Nuisance Wildlife”, Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd., Yulee)

Weds. Oct. 3 – 10-11am, “Salt Tolerant Plants”, Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd., Yulee)

Sat., Sept. 22, 9am – 1pm – Coastal Wildscapes Fall Native Plant Sale, Ashantilly Center, Darien. (from Rte. 17 in Darien, turn east on GA 99 (beside the Courthouse), go 1.5 miles, look for Ashantilly sign.

Farther Away – Saturday, Sept. 22, 9am-3pm --Monarchs Across GA Pollinator Symposium. Monastery of the Holy Spirit, Conyers GA. **\$75 non member.** Call Sharon McCullough (706-474-0353) for more information.

Announcements

The **Earth Angels** are looking for classroom helpers on an occasional basis. Contact Barbara C., or Karen W.

Plant Sale – Keep getting your plants ready and growing for the October sale. If you want me to print out your labels, get information and quantities to me by Sept. 15.

Garden to-dos for September

Prune perennials. Plant bulbs, trees. Fertilize palms with slow release fertilizer. Most palms are deficient in potassium, so add Muriate of Potash to correct the deficiency. Apply organic matter to roses, fertilize, and prune back 1/3. This is the last month to fertilize citrus trees. Plant Marigolds, chrysanthemums, onions, basil, parsley, lettuce, carrots, cabbage, broccoli.

The Garden Maven’s Advice to the “Floralorn”

Dear Garden Maven,

All this rain has my yard full of weeds. Not crazy about buying a vat of Roundup.... What else can I do to rid myself of these vegetative varmints?

If only my tears would kill them

Dear Tears,

I feel your pain! Try to remember that weeds have a purpose – they help heal bare ground after floods, fires, or bulldozers (think Exit 1). When they die back they improve the soil, and some add nutrients as they grow. But, back to the problem of weeds—they are a lot of work! Their seeds can lie in wait for decades and sprout after the ground is disturbed. Slice the roots with a fishtail weeder or sharp knife rather than dig out the plant with a trowel, turning more weed seeds loose. Pull weeds when wet, hoe them when dry. Of course, our weeds are a little different than the relatively well-behaved ones in the gardening magazines. After all, lots of weeds here grow as a vine, either above or below the ground. Dollarweed can be teased out at intervals. It is almost fun to see how long a piece you can pull. (Someday we’ll have a contest.) The worst is the weed grass that grows off a long viney deep tough white root. (Well, asparagus fern ties it for worst, but we’ve covered that in another issue.) I had to get the Roundup for this one. I sprayed as much of it as I could and let it die, then dug out the ones that didn’t. Mulching helps deprive the weeds of sun. My favorite is live oak leaves, next best is pine straw. Try not to use mulch containing weed seeds if you can. Compost is excellent, but it can contain weed seeds if it was not a hot enough pile. A few sections of newspaper under the mulch is preferable to using landscape fabric, which does not decompose and eventually has things growing on top of it and welding it to the ground. And, an instance where “more is more”, plant beds tightly to reduce room for weeds to grow. For most plants you can space at 25% less than recommended spacing. You can also use ground covers that choke out weeds where appropriate, such as around large bushes. Asiatic jasmine (this can bring its own problems, but is useful in some areas), dune sunflower, some types of wandering jew, and even dwarf ruellia can be used to keep weeds from moving in. Good luck and happy weeding!

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month: The firespike is starting its annual show of red.