

St Marys Garden Club Newsletter January 2019

Dates and Events (events are free unless noted)

Register early for this first item! The fall class filled up fast! It is really worthwhile.

Rebecca Jordi, the Nassau County Extension Agent, will be again offering the Crash Course in North Florida Gardening. The course is given over 3 Saturdays (Feb 9, 16, and 23) from 8am-noon at the 86026 Pages Dairy Rd. location in Yulee. Cost is \$50 per person or \$75 per couple (one book per couple). Register on the Nassau County Extension website or call 904-530-6351 for more information. Registration deadline is Feb. 1.

Nassau Extension Plant Clinics (10am-2pm): Jan 14 and Jan 28 (Monday), Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd.) Bring your sick plants in a bag for diagnosis.

Weds. Jan. 9– 10-11:00am – “Citrus”, Yulee County Bldg., 86026 Pages Dairy Rd., Yulee. Bring pruning shears and gloves.

Weds. Jan. 23– 10am-11:00 – “Fruit Trees for NE Fla.”, 86026 Pages Dairy Rd., Yulee.

Tues. Jan. 8, 7 pm, Wild Amelia Wild Nite — “Microplastics in the Environment”, Peck Center, 516 S. 10th St., Fernandina.

Garden to-dos for January

Plant flowers such as carnations, pansies, petunias, snapdragons, dianthus, foxglove. Vegetables - peas, beets, broccoli, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, radishes, turnips, and cauliflower can be planted, as well as fennel, garlic, borage, lavender, parsley, rosemary, and thyme. Don't fertilize flowers this month. Plants need less water in winter, but if a hard freeze is predicted watering 24-48 hours in advance will help protect your at risk plants, especially citrus. Don't do any major pruning, especially on flowering trees, but you can prune dead limbs, suckers, and crisscrossing branches. You can also transplant dormant plants, but be sure to water.

If you had a real Christmas tree, consider using it in the garden. Sink the trunk into the ground (you may need to stake it to have it stand up straight). The birds will enjoy using it for cover and in the spring you can use it as a support for vines such as morning glory, moonflower, and cypress vine. Or peas and cucumbers. Protect plants that are marginally hardy with mulch, sheets, or even cardboard stapled around the trunks of grafted trees to prevent dieback. Even just putting them on the porch will help. Spanish moss is a great (and free) insulator. You can use Christmas lights under a cover to help keep very delicate plants warm.

The Garden Maven's Advice to the “Floralorn”

Dear Garden Maven,

My poinsettia started looking sad soon after I received it. What can I do to keep my gift plants (Valentines day and Easter are in the headlights) looking good for at least a few weeks?

I feel like typhoid Mary

Dear “Mary”,

Did you leave the foil sleeve on the poinsettia? Those things are death traps (and the green plastic ones they put on other holiday plants as well). Nobody likes to stand with their feet in water, and gift plants are no exception. Take off the foil and put the pot in a saucer or inside a decorative pot. If you put it inside a pot with no drainage, don't forget to empty out the excess after watering. If you want the holiday look of golden foil, slip the foil off, cut the bottom off, and replace the bottomless foil pot cover, making both you and your plant happy. Poinsettias will sometimes live for a few years planted in the ground in our climate. Pick an area away from street lights and other lights. This year I am going to try to fertilize mine more often. The blooms (well not really blooms, bracts) have been a lot smaller than when I first got them. It is worth a try. The whole rigamarole of putting them in and out of the closet, not so much.

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month: Every year I forget how showy fatsia is in bloom. Camellias are continuing to make the winter bright. Enjoy floating those beautiful camellia blossoms in a shallow dish of water!