

St Marys Garden Club Newsletter

March 2020

Dates and Events (events are free unless noted)

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

Weds. March 4, 10am-11am, *"Hummingbirds"*, Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd.)

Weds. March 18, 10am-11am, *"Bluebirds"*. Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd.) Class is free, will have bluebird birdhouses for sale for \$25, cash or check only.

Weds. April 1, 10am-11am, *"Propagation"*, Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd.) Class is free, will have hands on propagation project for sale for \$5, cash or check only.

Tues. Mar. 10, 7 pm, Wild Amelia Wild Nite — *"Shorebird Breeding Season"*, Peck Center, 516 S. 10th St., Fernandina Beach.

Sat. March 14, 10am-6pm - Jazz 'n Art, Woodbine Riverwalk. Bring bug spray.

Sat. April 4, 9am-1pm— Spring Native Plant Sale, Ashantilly, 15591 Hwy 99, Darien.

Garden to-dos for March

Frost date is March 15. After that day, clean up dead vegetation and prune and cut back to your heart's content. (Except for things that will be blooming in spring or early summer). Fertilize citrus and loquats with citrus fertilizer. Fertilize tea olive with acid loving plant fertilizer. Prune and fertilize azaleas after blooming. You can prune azaleas until the middle of July. Plant tomatoes and most anything else you can find. Don't yank out things that look dead, cut back, but give them a chance. **THEY WANT TO LIVE!!!**

Announcements

Start growing your plants for the plant sale. When cleaning up your yard, clip 4- 6 inch tips from the newly sprouting branches and stick in a pot with dirt in it. Keep in the shade where it will get watered. Don't give up if they drop their leaves. Sometimes they do this before sprouting new growth.

The Garden Maven's Advice to the "Floralorn"

Dear Garden Maven,

I have a Natchez crape myrtle which has a lot of Spanish moss on it. It wants to be 20 feet tall and is already too tall for me to reach most of the moss. What can I do?

My bearded crape is not doing a lot for me....

Dear Bearded,

While Spanish moss is not a parasite, it blocks the sun from leaves and smothers the tree. It also keeps moisture around the leaves and encourages mildew and other bad stuff. Just look at the big crape myrtle to the left of Orange Hall to see what happens when Spanish moss has its way with a tree. If the tree is short enough to use a pole or long rake, try to get off as much moss as you can. If only we could find some little monkeys to climb around and pull it off the trees, what a wonderful world it would be! If the moss is too high up, pruning the tree is the best solution. Late winter is the time to do this, so the timing is perfect now to get out the pruning equipment.

Resist the urge to "crape murder" the tree. This leaves you with something that looks like caveman clubs. with lots of little skinny branches that flower, but you never get an attractive branch structure. You can cut back branches to a height that you can reach, keeping a treelike structure as much as possible. Some people cut off all branches smaller than a pencil, but you will probably have to cut back more than that. Just try to keep it looking like a small tree. Crape myrtles are pretty forgiving. In fact they are hard to kill. I cut one back to the ground and it came back and got 15 feet tall again. Then we needed to cut it down and get rid of it. My husband cut it to the ground, covered it with something to rot out the stump and a rubber cloth, and it sprouted all around the cover. So get out there and whack within reason! It will grow back!

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month: Azaleas are looking good all over town.