

St Marys Garden Club Newsletter

June 2019

Dates and Events (events are free unless noted)

Mon. June 3, 10 am – National Garden Week observance, Bring flower arrangements to City Hall for photo op with the mayor. Then we will deliver to various sites. Lunch afterwards!

Nassau Extension Plant Clinics (Mondays, all at 10am): June 3, June 17 -- Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd.) Bring your sick plants in a plastic bag.

Weds., June 5, 10-11am – “Wildflowers”, Yulee Satellite Office (86026 Pages Dairy Rd).

Weds., June 19, 10-11am – “Pumpkins, Seeds, and Gourds”, Yulee Satellite Office (86026 Pages Dairy Rd.)

Coastal Wildscapes event -- Lunch and learn “Birds of Prey”, Sat. June 29, 11am-1pm, Unitarian Church, 1710 Gloucester St., Brunswick, \$35. Register on Coastal Wildscapes website: www.coastalwildscapes.org

Announcements

Christmas in July – Bring your items to the June meeting and give them to Joan. Suggested items include body wash, shampoo, bath soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, talcum powder, hand cream, face cream, deodorant, combs and brushes, nail polish/remover, cotton balls, tissues, either purse size or regular size, mouthwash, lip balm.

Plant Sale – Start growing plants for the plant sale in October. Lots of plants can be started by taking cuttings now and sticking them in a pot of dirt. Keep watered and in the shade. Even though they may look like they have died, wait a few weeks to throw them out. Often new growth will start after you think they are dead.

Garden to-dos for June

Plant melampodium, pentas, portulaca, purslane, salvia, zinnia, lantana, buddleia, daylily, verbena, coneflower, plumbago, sun coleus. Plant bulbs like agapanthus, blackberry lily, clivia, achimenes, crinum, iris. Plant eggplant, okra, southern peas, and sweet potatoes. Watch for pests like grasshoppers or slugs who chew holes in the plants, aphids, other pests. Laugh maniacally as you handpick and execute the giant grasshoppers. If ants are running wild on your trees or shrubs, they may be farming aphids. Malathion will take care of both the farmers and the livestock. Some things like gingers, clerodendrum, and caladiums have still not come back. Keep watching for the latecomers. Deadhead, deadhead, deadhead. Fertilize most plants monthly. Keep mulch at least 1-2 inches away from the crowns of plants. It should be 2 inches deep, no more.

The Garden Maven’s Advice to the “Floralorn”

Dear Garden Maven,

My gardenia is over 20 years old and until this year was the star of my garden. The leaves have been turning yellow, it has been losing leaves, and some of the really old thick branches in the center have lots of lichens on them and a few small new leaves coming out. Some of the leaves are green with yellow veins (exactly the opposite of an iron deficiency). What can I do to bring her back to her former glory? Or do I resign myself to a last closeup for Norma Desmond?

Sad in St Marys

Dear Sad,

Cheer up! Your faded star can be rejuvenated with some pruning and fertilizing. I have consulted our Pruning Oracle, who favors drastic pruning for your shrub. After it is finished blooming, use a pruning saw to cut out the oldest thick branches with the lichens on them as low as you can. Then prune the rest of the shrub for dead, diseased, and crisscrossing branches. Cut the remaining branches to 12 inches from the ground. Yes, it is drastic, but it will come back quicker than doing it over a three year period. Use sharp shears for pruning, and cut at a 45 degree angle. If pruning diseased branches, clean shears between cuts with alcohol. It will set buds for next year in the fall, so don’t prune too late. Gardenias need good drainage and a pH between 5.0 and 6.5 (slightly acid), so check the pH. Alkaline soils will lock up the iron so the plant can’t use it. Yellow leaves means that the plant has chlorosis, not enough chlorophyll. A magnesium deficiency will manifest itself with leaves that are yellow at the base, with green tips. Iron deficiency will have yellow leaves with green veins. It is normal for the oldest leaves to turn yellow and fall off, but new leaves that are yellow all over could use an all over fertilizer, plus magnesium (Epsom salts, 1 tsp. to 1 gal. water every 2-4 weeks, or just sprinkle some around the plant). The green leaves with yellow veins were probably on the way to turning all yellow. Get fertilizer for acid loving plants. You can also acidify your soil by watering with 1 cup vinegar in 1 gallon of water once a month (or pouring pickle juice around it once a month). Or sprinkle your used coffee grounds around the plant. Fertilize after pruning and 2-3 times a year. Add nutrients to the soil within 3-5 feet from the trunk. Hopefully pruning and religiously fertilizing your star will help her be glorious next season!

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month: Daylilies are in full bloom!