

# St Marys Garden Club Newsletter

## February 2020

### **Dates and Events** (events are free unless noted)

**Nassau Extension Plant Clinics (10am-2pm): Feb. 3, Feb. 24** (Monday), Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd.) Bring your sick plants in a plastic bag for diagnosis.

**Weds., Feb. 5, 10am-11:30** – “*Roses*”, Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd.)

**Thurs. Feb. 6, Feb. 13, 20 – 8 am - 12** – “*Crash Course in Florida Gardening*”, Yulee County Bldg. (86026 Pages Dairy Rd., Yulee). **Late Registration \$75/person, \$100/couple.** Phone 904-530-6350 (or 6351) to see if there is still room.

**Weds. Feb. 19, 10am-11am**- “*Pruning Trees and Shrubs*”, Demonstration Garden, 96135 Nassau Place, Yulee.

**Sat. Feb. 8, 10 am – 11 am**, Crooked River State Park. **Guided Plant ID and history hike.** \$5 plus \$5 parking.

**Tues. Feb. 11, 7 pm, Wild Amelia Wild Nite** — “*Bats in my Florida Backyard*”, Peck Center, 516 S. 10<sup>th</sup> St., Fernandina Beach.

**Tues. Feb. 18 or Sat. Feb. 23**– **Oyster Reef Community Science Monitoring** – Register online at Nassau County Extension website. Email Justina at [jdacey@ufl.edu](mailto:jdacey@ufl.edu) with questions. They have installed oyster balls in Fernandina and want to monitor them. You need boots and bug spray for this.

**Thurs. Feb. 27, all day, Statesboro** – **Oleander Appreciation Day.** \$10, register by Feb. 15. What a bargain! Lunch and 3 speakers, including Joe Washington, the original Ground Breakers host on HGTV. Great vendors too! We are the first district in the state to do this, so let’s take advantage of this great event. You got the form in your email recently, or contact Joyce if you can’t find it.

### **Garden to-dos for February**

Resist the temptation to cut back dead looking perennials until March 15. The dead foliage will help protect them from cold damage and if new growth is stimulated it can be killed by a late frost. The exception is dead foliage like cannas or gingers that have died completely back to the ground and can be removed without cutting anything green. Prune roses by Feb. 14. Fertilize after pruning. Apply organic fertilizer around each plant – 1 cup Black Kow, 1 cup fish meal (or use some fish emulsion instead) and ½ cup Epsom salts. Cut ornamental grass back to 6-12 inches and fertilize. Clean out dead annuals. Prune out water sprouts, suckers, and rubbing branches from citrus. Plant calendula, dianthus, dusty miller, marguerites, pansies, petunias, and snapdragons. Plant vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, parsley, turnips. Keep those sheets handy for covering plants when temperatures below 35 degrees are forecast.

### **The Garden Maven’s Advice to the “Floralorn”**

**Dear Garden maven,**

I recently had some bushes removed and have a large holly tree remaining. The branches start about 5 feet from the ground. It gets morning sun and afternoon shade. What can I plant for a “skirt” for my holly? I love camellias, and I believe they love acid soil like holly. I would like some color, but am open to all ideas, unless it is something would attract snakes.

**Ms. Acid Reflux**

**Dear Ms. Reflux,**

Sasanqua camellias usually stay smaller than the japonicas, so one of them might be a good choice. Shi Shi Gashiri is a sasanqua that stays on the small side (3-4 ft. tall and wide). It has deep rose colored flowers and Gore’s usually has a lot of them this time of year at a good price. They will only bloom once a year (in fall), like all camellias, but the leaves are attractive year round. A smaller azalea (3-4 ft.) like Encore azaleas, Red Ruffles, or Fashion might be something you would like under your holly and they are easy to find. They also like acid fertilizer and the Encores and Fashion bloom more than once. Robin Hill azaleas (like Hilda Niblett) stay about 2 feet tall and wide and have really big flowers for such a small plant. They are hard to find in the stores, so you may have to get them mail order. Little John has burgundy foliage and not many flowers, but adds color year round with the leaves. Ferns and ground covers sometimes attract snakes, so stick with small bushes that show some ground around them.

**The Maven**

**Plant Hero of the Month:** Camellias are all around us.