

St Marys Garden Club Newsletter

October 2021

Dates and Events (events are free unless noted)

Tues. Oct. 12, 7pm. *"Black Skimmers"*, Wild Amelia Wild Nite. Virtual presentation, get code by visiting Wildamelia.org website and the Wild Nite tab closer to the time of the presentation.

Nassau County Extension Webinars – Register for each event on Nassau County Extension facebook page.

Weds. Oct 13, 3:30 pm. *"Strawberries"*

Weds. Oct 27, 3:30 pm. *"Wild Florida Friendly Landscape"*

Announcements

Fig Leaf – Start collecting personal care items , diapers, soap, detergent, etc. for Christmas distribution to local nonprofits (Camden House, Food pantry).

Garden to-dos for October

Plant winter vegetables like beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, Chinese cabbage, kohlrabi, bulbing onions, radishes, spinach, turnips, and strawberries. Plant flowers like digitalis, pansies, petunias, snapdragons, viola, million bells, flowering kale, and Shasta daisies. Plant bulbs like agapanthus, society garlic, spider lily, gladiola, star of Bethlehem, and pineapple lily. Of course, fall is a great time to plant those perennials you have purchased at the plant sale! Don't prune spring flowering trees or bushes. Prune fall flowering shrubs just after bloom. Check grafted trees and plants and remove growth below the graft. If planting new trees, water well, don't fertilize till spring. Start keeping Christmas cactus in the dark at night to have them bloom for Christmas.

The Garden Maven's Advice to the "Floralorn"

Dear Garden Maven,

My Confederate rose has been a whitefly victim almost since I planted it ten years ago. I have been treating it with something that would get me kicked out of garden club if others knew.... Even that is not working any more, and I am wondering if I should put it out of its misery, and by extension, me out of mine?

I Hate those Dingy Gray Leaves

Dear Dingy,

I feel your pain. I too have poured the vile chemical (which apparently violates the Geneva Convention for plants) on my confederate rose, only to have it be reinfested in a month or two. When should we give up on a plant? If I love a plant, it has been given to me by someone special, it is a plant from Grandma's garden, I spent way too much money on it, or I have started it from a seed, babied it, and gave it lots of love, then I am inclined to try to save its life. Likewise if it is plant number 4 in a row of 6 and will leave a gaping hole if you take it out. That being said, as gardeners we don't take a Hippocratic oath, so we are not obligated to treat plants if they are ailing.

If you want to try to save the plant, first see if it is still alive. Scratch the bark, and if it is green underneath, it is still alive. Cut back dead stems to green areas. Check the roots for rot and nematodes. Take off any dead leaves. If it is a potted plant, treat it to some new (maybe upscale) soil. Potted plants can be moved around to try a different exposure and see if that helps. If overwatering is the problem, the leaves will be brown or yellow. Let the soil dry out before watering again. Underwatering produces wilted leaves that turn brown from the tips down. Shrubs and large plants may benefit from cutting back to a foot off the ground to rejuvenate them. Prune out any dead or old branches (especially if they are covered with lichens, etc.) to give better air circulation. Give the plant a dose of compost and fertilizer during the growing season. Wait and see for a month to get a result.

When to give up? If you are spending more on chemicals and treatments than the plant cost originally, if the same bugs keep coming back again and again, or the plant keeps suffering with the same disease, especially if it can infect others in your garden, if it detracts from your garden's appearance for more time than it enhances it, or if it is keeping you awake at night, by all means pull the plug. I have resolved to get my husband and his Sawzall to take my pitiful confederate rose to the ground this weekend! If it comes back (as it did once before), I will cut those shoots off until it hollers "Uncle"!

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month: My cassia is starting to bloom and will soon be stopping traffic. Passionflowers have been attracting a lot of Zebra longwings lately, and the caterpillars are happily munching on it.