

St Marys Garden Club Newsletter

December 2021

Dates and Events (events are free unless noted)

Savannah Botanical Garden – Saturdays (except Dec. 25, Jan 1, and Feb 12) **now through February, 10:30 am**, guided tours of the camellia garden. Meet at the camellia garden at the green bridge. Donations appreciated. **1388 Eisenhower Dr. , Savannah. *This is not the Coastal GA Botanical Garden that we visited a few years ago.***

Saturday, Dec. 4 – noon-7:30pm. *Christmas in the Park*, fun for the kids, Santa, cocoa, cookies, movie. Free at waterfront.

Tues. Dec. 7. 9:30-noon? We will be decorating our Tinsel Tree beginning at Christ Episcopal on Wheeler St., then at the waterfront park. Benefits Camden House.

Sat., Dec. 11 – 5:30-9:00 pm. Holiday tour of homes in St. Marys. Tickets at the Welcome Center, \$20 advance, \$25 day of.

Wild Amelia Virtual Wild Nite—Tuesday, Dec. 14, 7 pm. Topic is Big Talbot Island Grand Site Study. Go to the Wild Amelia website and click on Wild Nites to get the Zoom codes.

Announcements

Tuesday, Dec. 14—December meeting at the waterfront park. Bring a lunch to socialize. **Please bring any items for the Fig Leaf collection.** Personal care items (soap, shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, things not covered by food stamps), nonperishable food, disposable diapers. This year it benefits Helping Hands Food Pantry and Camden House.

Garden to-dos for December

Late December is the time to transplant plants if the weather has turned cold. Keep them well watered for the next few months. If it is still warm, wait till they go dormant before moving them. Annuals for winter are carnations, digitalis, pansies, petunias, dianthus, and snapdragons. Plant vegetables such as broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, green peas, onions, and radishes. Water plants during dry spells, especially if it is cold and windy. Purchase frost blankets or round up the old sheets and be prepared to mulch and cover tender plants for winter protection. Spanish moss makes a good protective mulch for plants. After the holidays, plant poinsettias outside, but protect from freezing.

The Garden Maven's Advice to the "Floralorn"

Dear Garden Maven,

Why didn't my hydrangeas bloom last year? And when should I prune them?

Disappointed in St. Marys

Dear Disappointed,

Well, there are several reasons that they might not be blooming. Sometimes it takes 2-3 years for the shrub to produce blooms. It may not be getting enough sun. They like 3 hours a day, preferably in the morning. Sometimes they are too crowded. They like to be 4 to 5 feet apart. You can try giving them some liquid fertilizer in the spring and it may help. But the #1 reason hydrangeas don't bloom is pruning them at the wrong time.

Macrophylla (bigleaf) hydrangea blooms blue or pink in summer on old wood. So prune this right after blooming, before August if possible. This old wood group includes Oak Leaf hydrangea (quercifolia), mophead, and lacecap hydrangea. If you prune it in March, you won't have any bloom that summer.

Arborescens (smooth hydrangea, like Annabelle) and Paniculata (like Limelight and PeeGee, which only grows to zone 8) bloom on new wood. You can cut Annabelle almost to the ground in late winter. These types should be pruned in late winter to early spring.

Endless summer and Blushing Bride are exceptions to the rule that blue and pink hydrangeas bloom on old wood. They bloom on both old and new wood. Prune in summer. Hope next year's hydrangeas behave better for you!

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month:

My sleeping hibiscus is in full bloom like bright red Santa hats just in time for the holidays. Yesterday, today and tomorrow is starting to bloom, and the shrimp plant is continuing to put out the flowers. The sasanquas are starting to bloom. Start sniffing around for those shy tea olives. What a beautiful smell!