

St Marys Garden Club Newsletter September 2022

Dates and Events (events are free unless noted)

Wild Amelia Wild Nites will start up again in October.

Sat. Sept. 24, 9am-1pm – Fall Native Plant Sale at 1712 Bond Rd., Darien. Pre-ordering suggested. Register at admin@coastalwildscapes.org

Thurs. Sept. 8, 12 noon-1pm. Camden County Extension Lunch and Learn. **“Composting at Home”**. Register at uge3039@uga.edu or on website.

Sat. Sept 17, 8:30-10:30 am – International Coastal Cleanup. Collect and document trash on several Amelia Island beaches. Sign up to volunteer on Wild Amelia Website.

Announcements

Nothing this month.

Garden to-dos for September

Prune perennials. Plant bulbs, trees. Fertilize palms with slow release fertilizer. Most palms are deficient in potassium, so add Muriate of Potash to correct the deficiency. Apply organic matter to roses, fertilize, and prune back 1/3. This is the last month to fertilize citrus trees. Plant Marigolds, chrysanthemums, onions, basil, parsley, lettuce, carrots, cabbage, broccoli.

The Garden Maven’s Advice to the “Floralorn”

Dear Garden Maven,

My dogwood has stubbornly refused to bloom. What can I do to goose it along? And another question – What is the best way to grow and prune geraniums?

The Playful Gardener

Dear Playful,

If only there were a dogwood obedience school! Let’s go through the list of the dogwood’s favorite things. It likes partial to full shade. In our zone 9 it does not like direct sunlight and too much sun will keep it from blooming. It wants acidic soil with lots of organic matter, 6-7 ph. Not enough water can be a reason for not blooming, so water it with a hose to the edge of the canopy when it starts waking up in the spring. Too much nitrogen is another reason (if it sucks up lawn fertilizer, for example). Use a fertilizer high in phosphorus to see if that helps. Prune only after blooming. Signs of disease are spots on leaves, dropping leaves, and weak stems. I have never personally seen a dogwood blooming here (and have it on good authority that pink dogwood will not grow here) so it may be that the particular plant would prefer to be in New Jersey. Give it a good talking to, some organic mulch, and in the spring try the fertilizer and a deep watering every week or so. Good luck getting some blooms next season.

Geraniums pose a problem – they don’t like the summer heat and humidity here, but they will not take a freeze. They can do very well in a mild winter here, but need protection if there is a frost coming. So you probably don’t want to winterize them like you do up north (cutting way back and hanging them upside down in the basement). So keep an eye on the weather. Prune in late fall, cut back 1/3 to ½ of the plant. Pay special attention to woody or leggy stems. Stick the cuttings in the pot and they may root. In the spring when the stems get 3 or 4 inches long pinch off ¼ to ½ of the ends of all the stems. This will force them to be bushier. Feed every 2 weeks and keep deadheading.

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month: The butterfly gingers are in their full glory and the passion flowers are really putting on a show.