

◆ A BIT OF DIRT ◆

Volume 5 Issue 15

SUMMER, 1997

The Newsletter of Gwinnett Master Gardeners



A BIT OF DIRT is published quarterly. Editors are Brenda Adams and Gail Martin. If you wish something published, please contact us at 466-4665 and 381-2513.

FUTURE MEETINGS

June 9, 7:00 PM at GJAC in Lawrenceville, second floor. Our guest speaker will be Denise Smith of Gardensmith. Subject is Topiary, Living Wreath Workshop. Contact Barbara Fisher for details.

June 14, TRIP TO BARNESLEY GARDENS. Details later or contact Fran Robbins.

July 14, 7:00 PM at GJAC in Lawrenceville, second floor. Our guest speaker is Dr. Kim Coder from U of GA, Forest Resources specialist will speak. Remember he talked with us briefly at our March meeting about the State Arboretum. I feel another pruning workshop coming on!

August 11, 7:00 PM at GJAC, second floor. Our own Judy Pitts will speak about gourds.

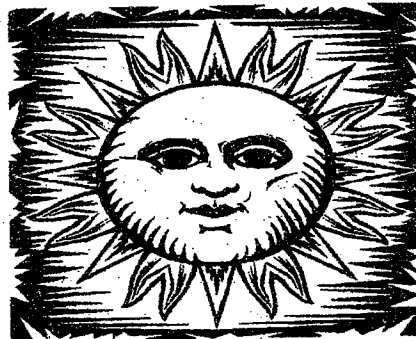
September Meeting: Jackie Heyda, "Gardening for Birds"

October Meeting: Becky Baxter

November Meeting: George Sanko & Thelma Glover on native plants.

DON'T MISS IT!

*Winter is cold-hearted,
Spring is yea and nay,
Autumn is a weather cock,
Blown every way.
Summer days for me
When every leaf is on its tree.*
—Christina Rossetti



This has been a great year for GMG's so far. The meetings have been informative and fun. More people than ever have been attending. We have had very good speakers. Some new folks are getting involved. See page two to see what has been happening at Creative Enterprises. We need to help more in this worthy cause.

CREATIVE ENTERPRISES

FLEA MARKET AND PLANT SALE

Friday, May 30 and Sat. May 31
10 TO 5

UPCOMING ATTRACTIONS

Coop. Ext. Service. Food preservation home-study course. Six lessons. Course begins June 1, \$9. Call Gwinnett office, 822-7700.

Stone Mtn. Womens Club Garden Tour. Eight gardens to benefit club's projects for children & senior citizens, 10-5, May 31 and 1-5, June 1. \$8. 469-3762.

Ga. Chrysanthemum Society. Annual plant sale. June 3, 1 to 5 PM in the workshop of ABG. 463-3829.

Habersham Gardens. A Hydrangea Festival features Penny McHenry at 11 AM and Elizabeth Dean at 1 PM. June 7. Jimmy Stewart at 2 PM June 8 on a variety of topics. Free 2067 Manchester St. NE 404-873-4702.

Atlanta Koi Club. Seventh annual pond tour, featuring 20 area ponds, is 10 AM-6 PM and 8 PM to midnight, June 7 and 10 AM to 6 PM June 8. 936-4747.

"The World in a Garden", Thursday, June 12 at 7:30 PM. FREE lecture at ABG by Roy Lancaster noted horticulturist; about his plant expeditions.

Ga. Perennial Plant Assoc. Monthly meeting will feature Peter Gentling, speaking on "Garden Aesthetics: How to Honor a Plant" at 7:30 PM June 19 at the Atl. History Center. 955-1303.

A weed is...any plant having to deal with an unhappy human" —JC Raulston

CREATIVE ENTERPRISES: UPDATE

A flourishing adventure, Creative Enterprises is expanding its boundaries. New boundaries will allow clients to explore nature by means of a nature trail along a ravine.

Master Gardeners in Gwinnett have been part of a wonderful program assisting individuals with disabilities. As you are aware, a 5000 sq. ft. greenhouse was built on the premises of Creative Enterprises last year. The clients are growing annuals, perennials, ground covers and next, shrubs. It has been a tremendous success.

Recently, a pond was created in front of the greenhouse with about a dozen goldfish now calling it home. It has been a resting place for everyone.

Soon, a fence will be installed around the perimeter of the property at CE and it will open up more opportunity to grow and know more plants.

The opportunities are endless in gardening at CE. Each of you are truly appreciated at this place. The staff has expressed their thanks many times. They want all of you to know how valuable you are to the success of this program.

So, **STOP & SHOP, or WEED & FEED,** your love to garden is needed at Creative Enterprises.

Every day plant sale: M - F 8:30 - 4:00

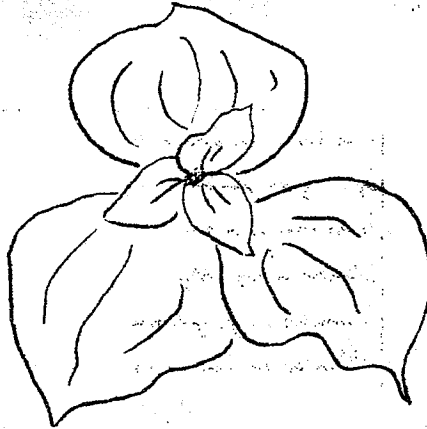
Garage Sale and Plant Sale:
May 30 and 31, 10 to 5

Staff Contacts: Joanna Cox and Eric Douglas, 701 Hi Hope Lane, Lawrenceville, GA 30243. 770-962-3908.

Directions to CE: 316 East, left at Hi-Hope Road. Pass Gwinnett Animal Shelter, Gwinnett County Police Station, then the Red Cross office and take an immediate left on Hi Hope Lane. Greenhouse is on the left.

Share your perennials and pond plants—live on!

Sharon Bahre, 760-0936



*IF YOU REALLY LOVE
WILDFLOWERS, YOU MUST
SEE THE SMOKIES IN APRIL*

On April 25, my daughter, Kim and I took off for the Great Smoky Mtns. National Park and Gatlinburg, Tenn. Our expectations were high and we were very excited at the thought of seeing lots of beautiful wildflowers in the most flora-endowed part of the United States AND the chance to meet new friends. We accomplished both and had a great time.

I had signed up for a Dekalb College Field Trip with George Sanko as leader and teacher. We would explore several places where there were lots of wildflowers blooming and learn some botany for identification purposes.

At the same time, the annual Wildflower Pilgrimage was going on in Gatlinburg. Here they have a native plant sale, books, crafts and art in the Conference Center on Main Street. Also, a native plant show which is judged. This is a chance to see species

brought by plantspeople from all over the SE US. The most fun part, though is to sign up for day trips to various parts of the park, led by different knowledgeable people, to see which species grows in that particular area. Some of the places included waterfalls, scenic views, creeks and trails.

We shared our room at Bearland Lodge with Jackie Heyda, noted nature lover in Atlanta whose love of plants seems only to be surpassed by her deep love of birds. (She will speak to us in September about birds.)

Since George's class was full, Kim took the trip to Ramsay Cascades, a strenuous walk in Greenbrier Cove area. This was Saturday. She came home with glowing reports of all she had seen and heard.

I really enjoyed the fellowship of George's group who were mostly from the Atlanta area. On Sunday morning, there was a threat of rain and Kim came along with us to the Elkmont area.

Some of the plants we saw, some of which I had never seen in their natural habitat, were Hepatica, Doll's Eyes, Large-flowered trillium, Nodding Mandarin, Rosy twisted stalk, Waterleaf, a lot of different ferns, the rare Frasers sedge, Jacks, Yellow flowered trilliums, (some saw the Painted Trillium), Yellow Ladyslipper, Uvularia and Disporum and the incomparable Showy Orchis was growing like weeds along the trails.

If you are interested in attending the Smoky Mountain Wildflower Pilgrimage next April, contact the Chamber of Commerce in Gatlinburg, Tenn.

You can find out more about George Sanko's classes and outings by calling South Dekalb College.

The Pilgrimage focuses more on outings and the Cullowhee Conference in has more seminars but has some outings. Both are GREAT!

Brenda Adams

The Plight of the Problem Gardener

There are people who don't garden, just as there are people who don't gamble or drink. There are abstainers who never keep so much as an aspidistra and can identify no greenery except iceberg lettuce.

There are those who content themselves with keeping up appearances. Every spring they remind their husbands to clip the evergreens in front of the house and mow the lawn, or they give up and hire a neighbor's kid to do it.

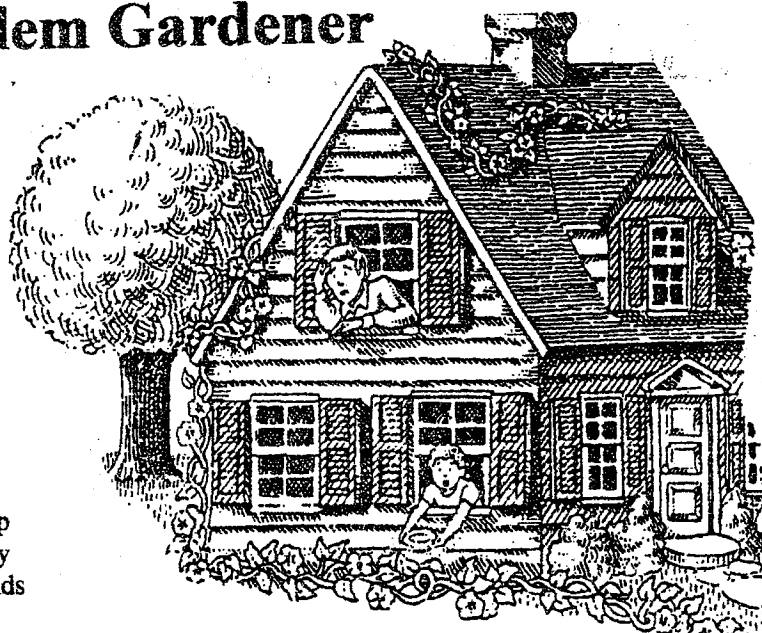
There are also moderate, or social, gardeners. They keep a strip of dirt in front of the evergreens, and in May they stop off somewhere and buy a flat of petunias or marigolds and poke them into it. That is that.

And then there are the problem gardeners. People for whom the cultivation of domestic plant life has become an uncontrollable obsession threatening to destroy their lives and families. People whose fingernails are never entirely clean from March till October, and who spend the remaining months pawing through seed catalogs and making lists and drawing plans on graph paper while their children, unwashed and unfed, whine for attention in vain.

Reasons still not clearly understood, in England the problem is more prevalent among men, while in America it is women who appear to be at highest risk, and obviously the disruption to life is greater for women. When a man comes home from work and goes straight out to pick Japanese beetles off his roses until it gets too dark to see them, the family suffers less. Dinner will still be served, with or without him, and the children read to and put to bed. The problem is little greater than, say, television addiction. But a woman who refuses to come in out of the garden for nine months of the year can cause untold anguish to her loved ones.

Obsessive gardening is one of the most neglected of social problems. There are no clinics, no public funds for rehab. and few mentions in medical literature. Authorities still disagree as to whether there are inherited predisposing tendencies, perhaps a chemical imbalance in the brain; and whether it is curable or will always remain a dormant possibility when the rehabilitated sufferer is exposed again to a spade and a piece of ground.

(cont'd pg.7)



Obsessive gardening is one of the most neglected of social problems. How does one recognize the early signs?



Garden Definitions

Dolores Wyland

Annual - Any plant that dies before blooming.

Aphid - Insect pest that infests gardens and causes gardeners to foam at the mouth, stomp their feet in protest, and utter profane words.

Catalogs and Brochures - Forms of entertaining fiction published by nurseries, seedsmen and tool manufacturers.

Fence - A barrier erected to protect garden produce against animal pests that lack wings, paws, teeth or brains, and cannot leap, climb, tunnel or fly.

Furrow - Horizontal line on the forehead of a gardener.

Garden - One of a vast number of free outdoor restaurants operated by warm-hearted amateurs to provide healthful, balanced meals for insects, birds and animals.

Green Thumb - Common condition suffered by gardeners in which the skin of the thumb develops a greenish hue from handling large amounts of currency at nurseries.

Hose - Crude but effective and totally safe type of scythe, pulled through gardens to flatten flower beds.

Mulch - Material placed around the base of a plant to keep it moist and warm. Wood chips, leaf matter, and even shredded copies

of old Master Gardener newsletters may be used.

Nursery - The only known place where money grows on trees.

Perennial - Any plant which, had it lived, would have bloomed year after year.

Pest - Any creature that eats green vegetables voluntarily.

Root - 1. Subsurface part of a weed inadvertently left in the ground when the upper portion is removed, thus resulting in the weed's speedy regrowth. 2. Subsurface part of an ornamental plant, shrub or tree, a small portion of which is inadvertently left in the ground when the specimen is transplanted, thus resulting in the plant's rapid death.

Rot - Gardening advice.

Stake - Hard, tasteless garden product that generally constitutes the bulk of the harvest after visits by raccoon, rabbits, birds and squirrels.

Weed - Any plant that will survive without being watered, fertilized, pruned, sprayed, staked, mulched, dusted or wrapped in burlap, paper or plastic.



New Armitage Book

Dr. Allan Armitage has finished the revision of his book published in 1989, **Herbaceous Perennial Plants**. It has been published by Stipes Press, and is available or may be ordered at any bookstore.

This new edition is twice as large, and contains descriptions of many more genera, species and cultivars, many of which were just gleams in the breeder's eye when the first book was published. He discusses cultural needs, and the wide range of areas in which the plant will grow.

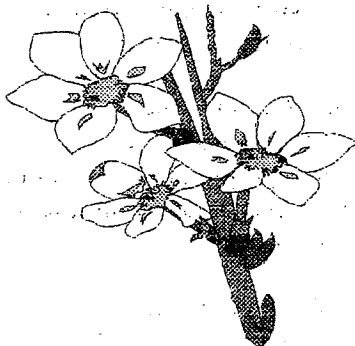
Dr. Armitage's wit and ebullience shine forth from every page, and make looking up any plant a real pleasure. This book is a must for all Zone 7 gardeners, as well as being an extremely useful book for gardeners all across our country.

If you don't buy the book yourself, be sure to list it on your birthday or Christmas wish list, or give the book to someone else. It will be a gift much used and gratefully remembered.

Gail Martin



CLEMS FOR SHADE



Shade tolerant clematis vines
(from CompuServe).

Barbara Jackman
Bees Jubilee

Comtesse de Bouchaud
Dawn

Dr. Ruppel
Fairy Queen

General Sikorski
Guernsey Cream

Hagley Hybrid
F.F. Young

C. integrifolia
Jackmanii (not J. Rubra or
Alba)

Lanuginosa Candida
Lincoln Star

Margaret Hunt
Miss Bateman

C. montana rubens
Moonlight

Mrs. Cholmondeley
Nelly Moser

Niobe
Perle d'Azur

Silver Moon
Snow Queen

The President
Twilight

Victoria
Wada's Primrose

Will Goodwin
William Kennett

A TRIP TO CHARLESTON

Early in May my husband and I met with a group of friends in Charleston for a weekend of nurseries, gardens and camaraderie. We were all assembled by late Thursday afternoon and ready to hit the road.

Our first stop was Abide-awhile-Nursery, and since it was the first nursery we visited we all bought entirely too much!

We then visited Seaside Farms, a large private estate on the water. The farm manager (read Head Gardener) walked us through the extensive gardens. The avenues of live oaks were stunning, as were all the formally designed garden spaces.

Friday morning began with a caravan of cars leaving our motel for the Historic District. There we met one of our host's friends who is a licensed Charleston tour guide. They had arranged for us to visit a number of private gardens. We first went to the garden of Emily Whaley, one of the best known gardens in the city. Her garden is long and narrow, includes a number of small water features, a secret garden and wonderful use of small statuary, trellises. It was charming.

Across the street was the doorway and lightpole pictured on page 102 of the April '97 issue of Southern Living (the one with Belinda rose and confederate jasmine).

confederate jasmine.

Next we visited a small courtyard garden all in white and green, a great use of brick and plants.

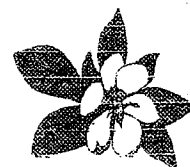
Next was an L-shaped garden containing "the largest shrimp plant in Charleston" and an enormous Mermaid rose climbing up a tree.

Then came the public garden at the Nathaniel Russell house where we all fell in love with the deep blue flowers of Salvia 'Anthony Parker'.

In the afternoon we visited the wonderful garden of Patti McGee. This was my favorite of all the gardens we visited. Mrs. McGee has included several water features, a secluded secret pathway, a lovely large patio and many many interesting and unusual plants.

On Saturday we first went to Virgil Wilson's Japanese garden. I felt a little "ho-hum" until I got there, and boy, was I wrong! Inside the bamboo gate of the back garden was an enchanted space, with large ponds full of koi, waterfalls, impeccably pruned shrubs used to create a number of small rooms, each with their own feel and view.

We went to many nurseries, bought and exchanged too many plants, visited other gardens, ate too much food, and had a great time. Now I'm on horticultural overload.



Gail Martin

JAPANESE MAPLES

Few trees say "Japanese Garden" like the maple. While Japanese Black pine has one of the dominant male places in the garden, the graceful, feminine maple provides the counterpoint to the strident male power. In its species form *Acer palmatum* is a wonderful small tree rarely exceeding 25'.

Its varieties number in the hundreds. During the Edo period, a time of peace in Japan, varieties totalled over 200.

During WWII, generations of maples were destroyed by bombing, and the survivors were used as wood in stoves.

Acer palmatum, the species, is the mother of the 400 or so varieties we love today. Easily grown from seed, collected in late summer and stratified, gives rise to a genetically stable plant with small green leaves. My large ones from seed collected from Atlanta Botanical Garden in 1973, turn color only after the first frost. Five years may be needed to see the true leaves of a seedling.

We will look at a few of the outstanding garden trees in *A. palmatum*, and a few other spectacular species.

THE PALMATE GROUP

A.p. atropurpureum is the most common form of red ungrafted maple. Inexpensive and durable.

A.p. 'Oshio Beni' is an orange colored fall wonder.

A.p. 'Butterfly' is a 3 tones variegated wonder featuring pink overtones in sun.

A.p. 'Beni Komachi' is a semi dwarf with unusual leaves of very bright red.

A.p. 'Sango Kaku' has coral colored twigs, and spectacular yellow fall color. Growth is upright.

A.p. 'Sharp's Pygmy' is a very dwarf, good in the rock garden where it may be seen without competition.

A.p. 'Shishigashira' has tiny leaves resembling miniature ivy, bright green and crinkled. Very unusual.

THE DISSECTUM GROUP

One of the favorite and readily recognizable, this group is very popular in the landscape. It's feathery outline is a soft dome in the landscape.

A.p.d. 'Filigree' is the only upright green dissectum. Worth having for contrasting form. Gold fall color.

A.p.d. 'Crimson Queen' is the old red standard. Still a fine plant.

A.p.d. 'Red Dragon' is the heir apparent to the 'Queen'. Better red throughout the summer. Choice.

A.p.d. 'Red Filigree Lace' is worth tracking down. The finest leaf texture of all dissectums, holding its red color all summer, even in the shade. Most refined.

A.p.d. 'Inaba Shidare' is an almost black leaf form. Leaves are large and purple/black forming an imposing mound in the middle distance.

OTHER SPECIES

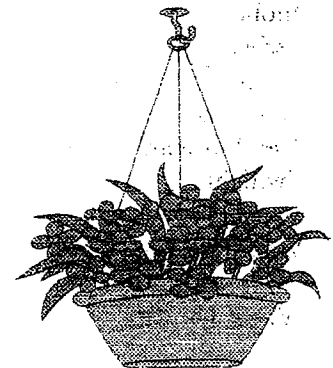
Growing also in Japan, China and Korea are other wonderful maples, which although harder to find, are well worth the trouble.

A. shiwasawanum aureum is the 'Yellow Full Moon' maple. Leaves are very rounded, yellow green thru the summer. Some shade mandatory. Very unusual.

A. japonicum 'Maiku Jaku' and species are the most incredible fall colored plants in my collection. A showstopper.

I hope this article gets you started with Japanese maples. For further reading I suggest *Japanese Maples* by J. D. Vertrees.

Harry L. Abel, Jr.
Master Gardener
Cobb County



A BIT OF DIRT

Indeed, some people refuse to recognize the problem at all and consider gardening a harmless, even wholesome occupation.

Which it can be, of course, in moderation. But even the most moderate petunia-planter is exposing herself to the danger of addiction.

How, you ask, does one recognize the early warning signs? In most cases they appear as a switch from annuals, the petunias and marigolds purchased each spring, to perennials that, with care, will rise and bloom again every year.

At first, it seems like an innocent thing. You get on a mailing list, a catalog arrives and you leaf through it admiring all the pretty pictures. (Which are probably altered to entice you.) Daylilies, iris, daisies. They cost more, but they come up every year, and you're sick of marigolds and pansies. Surely it won't hurt to try just a few. Just a few.

So you order them, and they come, and plant them, anxiously following directions, and lo! they flourish and bloom. You're flattered. Drunk with power. Besides, you're now on dozens of mailing lists. Maybe next year you'll put in a row of hostas or a daphne in the shady area. How about a rhododendron on the corner? Some tulips along the driveway. In the meantime, you hover over your new daylilies, watering and weeding and taking their pulse. Maybe next year you'll move them to the other side of the house, where they'd get more sun and plant some hellebores where they are now.

The compulsive or problem gardener begins to lose all grip on the present and live entirely for the future. She spends the spring planting and arranging the summer's garden, and by summer she's bored with it. She can scarcely focus on it, her mind already on next year and the roses she plans to plant.

There is no stopping point. Nothing is enough. There is always more to do, always another weed. Exposing her-

self heedlessly to pneumonia in March and sunstroke in August, she digs and plants and drags large shrubs from place to place with the blind, mindless concentration of a colony of ants. When asked "What's for dinner?", if she answers at all, she will frown, murmur, "Dinner?".

Unlike obsessive gambling, gardening rarely leads to financial disaster. As the habit becomes stronger, the gardener may stop buying from nurseries entirely. There's something not altogether sporting about paying money for a ready-made plant. She divides the plants she has, or propagates more from seeds or cuttings, and trades with other addicts. Lost by now to all moral sense, she may even steal. A relative of mine, to all outward appearances a pillar of the community, goes to flower shows, botanical gardens and public gardens with a supply of paper napkins and sandwich bags to steal "cuttings" and seeds.

The problem gardener's family life deteriorates as she loses the ability to concentrate on it or sometimes, in June or July, may even recognize those once familiar faces. If she still retains some conscience, some sense of duty, she may try to silence it by growing vegetables. This is a ploy of the true addict.

Who could criticize the one providing her family with wholesome, fresh, homegrown foods? She ties up the tomatoes, trenches the onions, and thins the lettuce from dawn till dark while the mail piles up unopened and the household, without lightbulbs or toilet paper, tumbles toward decay. She stands exhausted at sunset and says "Next year I'll spade up the rest of the lawn and put in potatoes and corn."

CAN THE PROBLEM GARDENER BE CURED??

Most studies indicate that there is no such thing as a true cure, only control. The rate of "falling off the wagon" is high. In one study, the subjects had their entire yards covered with 4 inches

of concrete, but 6 months later, 87% of them had plants growing in potting soil in old washtubs, garbage cans and abandoned rowboats.

In a more successful study, the subjects were removed to basement apartments in major cities. Nearly all of them began growing bean and alfalfa sprouts on wet paper towels. However, there isn't much you can do with sprouts besides eat them.

If you have a compulsive gardener in your family, approach the problem with patience and understanding. Try to distract her, especially in cold months. Try creative outlets like finger painting or amateur theatricals. Arrange for vacations in large cities or at sea.

During the summer months all you can do is try to prevent total exhaustion and even starvation. If she has been out there digging for more than eight hours, you may have to create a diversion by setting fire to the house or shooting the cat. But above all, remember that this is an illness, not a vice, and that in most areas the ground will freeze solid in January and send her back inside.

(from an old magazine article)



Love's Greenhouse

Many of us remember Gary Love from the early days of Vines. Now he and Christie are operating a nursery in Alpharetta. They carry a varied inventory of perennials, annuals, wildflowers, herbs, etc. They are located at 3835 Francis Circle. Take Ga.400 to exit 13, turn left and left again on Ga. 9. The nursery is just a few miles on. There is a large sign on Francis Circle.