

OF



Quarterly Newsletter of THE GWINNETT MASTER GARDENERS

FALL 1994
Issue #4

FALL MEETINGS OF
GWINNETT MASTER GARDENERS

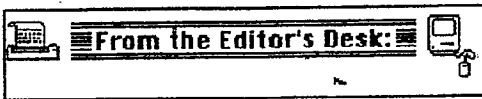
Sept. 12 - Chuck Zdeb of the Ame. Hosta Society will talk to us about hostas. The nominating committee will announce officer noms. for 1995.

Oct. 10 - GMG meeting - Elect new officers, Plant Swap, refreshments.

Nov. 14 - A holiday social; Kathy Henderson will be there to talk to us.

GMG meets the second Monday of each month, except December.

Meetings are held at 7:30 PM at Gwinnett Justice & Admin. Center, 2nd. Floor.



AUTUMN is about to befall us. As I sit here writing this on August 20, I have already noticed several nights when there was a crispness in the air; the night creatures sounds were a little more fervent, as though they feel that fall is fast approaching.

Out in the garden, some plants are looking a little tattered & time-worn. This has been a harsh summer for some--others relished the extra rain water and the cooler temperatures. Overall, the Earth looks greener this August. It doesn't have the burned out look of past years. There is a good and bad side to most things. So let's enjoy the richness of autumn, the glorious leaves, the harvest moon, and may your bly harvest be rich in what you desire.

Brenda Adams

A BIT OF DIRT is published quarterly by Gwinnett Master Gardeners. The editors are Brenda Adams (466-4665) and Gail Martin (381-2513). This is your newsletter. Let us know if you want something published.

MORNING IN THE WOODS

Are you ever inclined to doubt your maker,
Think life's all pain and worldly goods
Beating a path to the undertaker?
You've never seen morning in the woods!

You've never breathed that virgin essence
Of leaves and pine first kissed by the sun.
You've never savoured life's quintessence
When you and the air and the earth seem one!

Leonora O. Herman



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



At the regular monthly meeting of Gwinnett Master Gardeners on August 8, we were pleased to meet the new Extension Agent for Gwinnett County, Mr. Robert Brannen. Robert discussed projects he has been involved in with Fulton County Master Gardeners. He also suggested projects in which he would like to see us involved. For the benefit of those who did not make the meeting, here is an outline of those projects. If you would like to know more, call the extension office.

1. Calendar of flowers bloom times.
2. School gardens: butterfly gardens, vegetable gardens, Memorial courtyard at Glen Oaks Elem. to be designed; flowerbeds at schools.
3. New Slides for programs and master gardener training classes. Master gardeners to go out and take photos of 'good' & 'bad' examples of landscape, etc. Pictures of vegetable gardens from plowing, planting to harvest.
4. Technology Week at Peachtree Elem. in Norcross. Go out & show kids how to plant, have an exhibit. In January, need volunteers.
5. Exhibits: Create educational exhibits on different topics--need ideas.
6. AT Youth: For kids who need special attention. Need ideas for projects.
7. Master Gardener training: Gwinnett will provide refreshments once or twice.
8. Vines Bot. Gardens: Needs help in garden.
9. Environmental exhibits; work with kids.
10. Gwinnett County Fair.

Robert left an agenda for 1995 MG classes at ABG. Master Gardeners can sit in on these meetings.

Brenda Adams

- Sept 10 - National Fern Day 10 to 4 PM at South Dekalb College
- Sept 12 - GMG meeting, 7:30 at GJAC. Chuck Zdeb, Ame. Hosta Society, guest speaker.
- Sept 24-25 - "Refining the Garden" Symposium, \$40-\$70. Atlanta History Center 814-4000
- Sept 30, Oct 1 & 2 - Fall Plant Sale, South Dekalb College 244-5077
- Oct 1 - GPPA Fall Picnic at Wilkerson Mill Gardens \$6 - reservation needed
- Oct 8 - Georgia Master Gardeners Fall Tour - visit 3 ongoing projects in Cobb County. Bring lunch.
- Oct 10 - GMG meeting, 7:30 at GJAC. We will elect new officers and approve by-laws & constitution. Snacks provided, bring plant to exchange.
- Oct 20 - GPPA meeting, Atl. History Ctr., Dick Weaver from WeDu Nursery
- Nov 14 - GMG Social at GJAC. Kathy Henderson will be there to talk to us.
- Nov 17 - GPPA - Sarah Groves & Bud Heist
- Dec 2 & 3 - Southern Gardening Symposium at Gwinnett Tech. \$45. 995-9697 or 962-7580 Ext. 194
- NO DECEMBER MEETING OF GWINNETT MASTER GARDENERS
- Jan 20 - 22 - Southern Gardening Symposium at Callaway Gardens 1-706-663-5153
- Plantmobile; a children's outreach program of the Atlanta Botanical Garden. Call 881-LEAF (5323) to schedule a visit.

"Gardening is not just
another day at the plant."

Native Plants, Ecosystems and Restoring the Land---
 "What's That Got To Do With Me?"



Well, I'm gonna try to tell you briefly what is involved. If only one person acts on what he/she reads, I will consider this endeavor a success.

On July 20-23, Dolores and I attended the annual Native Plants Conference at Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina. This is highly recommended if you love native plants and Mother Earth. There were Horticulture professors, nursery trade, landscape designers, authors and regular folks like us, all rubbing elbows in beautiful surroundings.

The main thing I learned from my experience is that we can all do our part to restore the ecological balance of the Earth. All the pavement, cement and yes, all that grass that is kept mown down is not natural. Just think of all the time, money, water and exhaust fumes that go into keeping your grass acceptable to others. First, think of your property as being divided into three zones:

A.- Inner, high traffic area B.- In-between area and C.- Wild, outer area.

A. The Inner Area contains the hardscape areas like terraces, decks, walks, planter boxes, defined beds. This is a good place for those exotics that we feel are necessary or desirable; such as begonias, impatiens and geraniums. Try to think natural. For instance, instead of a concrete slab for a terrace, how about stone pavers with little plants growing in between?

B. In Between Area could be where you have a small amount of grass to define areas, as a walking space and for recreation needs.

C. Wild, Outer Area -- This is where you develop a natural habitat that will cater to the entire food chain. This is where the ecological balance is maintained by supplying native plants which will invite all the birds, butterflies, insects, bees and all the little creatures that you never even see which are critical for maintaining balance. For instance, did you know how much life is contained in a decaying tree stump? Don't be so quick to "clean up"; give nature a chance--provide a home.

Doing Some Detective Work

There are a lot of different habitats in the world. Ken Druse, in his book "The Natural Habitat Garden" divides them into four categories: Grasslands, Drylands, Wetlands and Woodlands.

Should you accept this challenge, your mission will be to first determine what the habitat of your yard was previously to your house being put there. Then, try to duplicate that while at the same time enhancing it. In the Atlanta area, I would say that we have woodlands, grasslands (ex: meadows & prairies) and wetland (such as bogs, lowlands). These habitats can vary--for instance, you can have a wet meadow or a dry meadow. Some meadow plantings such as *Filipendula rubra* Queen-of-the-Prairie and Swamp Milkweed prefer moist soil; others like *Liatris*, *Helianthus* and Butterfly Weed will grow in a relatively dry meadow. Also, there is overlap in the plantings you can use. There can be several different habitats around your homesite. There are tiny subsystems called niches within these habitats. For instance, a wet area that would lend itself to bog plants. When given lemons, make lemonade!

Once you have identified the type of habitat(s) you are striving for, research to see which native plants would grow well in that environment. Perhaps the most important ingredient to growing a plant successfully (and this goes double for natives) is LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.

Start thinking in terms of plant communities. Each thing that you plant and everything existing on your property doesn't exist solely on its own. Everything is interdependent on other living things---ant to aphid, earthworm and plant, bee and vegetable, bird to bug and so on. Certain plants are found in community together. Consider the fern, trillium, foamflower and galax growing under the oak and hickory. The ladyslipper and trailing arbutus growing near the hemlock--they are dependent on each other.

"Why Should I?"

If you could train yourself to start thinking in terms of natural habitats, I think it would "come natural" to want to throw out those bad old poisons and start using safer ways to deal with unwanted things in the garden. There are so many products on the market now to help you and other things you can make yourself at home. Maybe the damage that worm did to your plant isn't so awful, after all. (If a plant is grown properly, it's strong enough to fight off an attack. If it isn't healthy, maybe you are better off without it.) Is it worth breaking the ecological balance in your garden? I think you would be happier with yourself and with your garden knowing you are working with Nature, not against it. You can pat yourself on the back for doing your small part to help the environment in your community and on your Earth.

By the way, you don't have to throw out all your exotics--who could give up their butterfly bushes? As long as they do not have an overly aggressive attitude (honeysuckle) or impact the environment negatively (kudzu).

As for me, I vow to give this new (really old) way of thinking a try. It;s a matter of attitude. Besides, you don't like spending your time in the summer, watering (native plants can withstand our weird climate better than exotics) or mowing that great, big yard--do you?

Brenda Adams

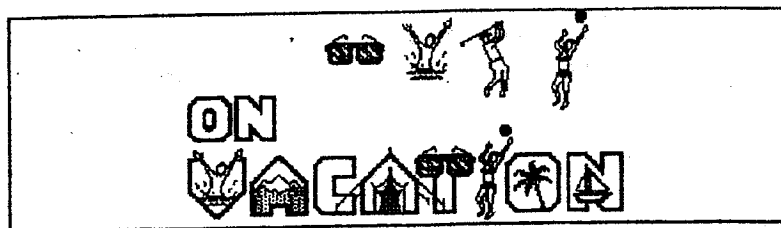
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Suggested Reading:

- 'The Natural Habitat Garden' by Ken Druse
- 'Gardening with Native Wild Flowers' by Sam Jones & L. Foote
- 'Native Shrubs and Woody Vines of the southeast' by Jones & Foote
- 'Noah's Garden: Restoring Ecology of our Own Back Yards' by Sara Stein.

"Old Gardeners never die;
they just go to seed."





On a recent trip to the British Isles, my first items for packing were a well-marked map and information concerning the location, visiting hours, and key features of several noted English gardens. Gail Martin provided this royal send-off!

We headed into the Cotswolds to visit Hidcote Manor, one of Britain's most famous gardens. We drove and drove, and my husband Bob remarked that few people would drive to such an isolated location just to visit a garden! Upon arriving with numerous tour buses and being issued timed entrance tickets, he pleaded ignorance. Hidcote, developed in 1905 by Lawrence Johnson, only covers 10 acres. With the site divided into enchanting plots by spacious hedges, it is awe-inspiring. Though the roses were only beginning to bud, the shrubs and abundant perennials were a mass of color. Ten acres is a lot of walking.

While visiting the ancient Castle Douglas, we toured Threave Garden. Major Alan Gordon arranged for the Scottish Trust to accept the estate following his death to ensure that a School of Gardening could be perpetuated on the 1,250 acres. A student exchange program is established for horticultural opportunities at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania. Threave is an instructive garden, with the design focused on spacious peat, woodland and rock garden island beds. The seasonal feature is in April when over 200 varieties of daffodils are blooming.

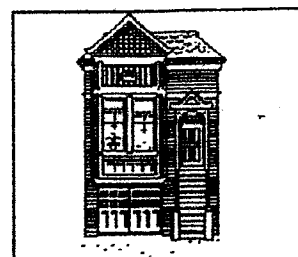
Branklyn Garden in Tayside was begun in 1922 by John and Dorothy Renton. The two acre site is overflowing with alpenes, heathers, and rhododendron varieties. Many rare and interesting plants were acquired in eastern Asia. Branklyn is "a true rock gardener's paradise". It is impossible to describe the array of alpenes in the acid and limestone beds, terraced troughs and peat garden in this Scottish Trust property.

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh was begun in 1670 and today hosts over 15,000 plants employed in scientific and horticultural research, conservation and education. With only a brief visit, I focused on the outstanding "rookery" and heath garden. Imagine missing the rhododendron collection, Scottish plants area and the 600 foot perennial border! I'm going again!

Sissinghurst, in the heart of Kent, is a totally fascinating garden; developed in the 1930's by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson. One meanders through winding paths, or more formal walks into the small plots of exploding color. Monochromatic color schemes are used; as in the purple border, the orange and yellow cottage garden, and the spectacular white garden. Like Hidcote, there is a wonderful balance between the severe hedge lines and the lively flowing informal plantings. It is a truly magnificent example of "Englishness".

Equally charming were the quaint entranceway gardens gracing the village cottages we viewed on evening strolls near our B & B's. They beckon wistfully to us all--take time to smell the flowers.

Ginny Douglass



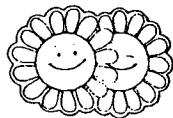


SPECIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The "lazy days of summer" don't exactly describe the Extension Service' activities during the month of August. Although it is true that the number of calls received was less than the seemingly "hundreds" earlier on, the concerns about hornets and mosquitos as well as concerns for vegetable crops and trees from county residents has been continuing at a fairly steady rate.

In addition to attending to these concerns, we have begun to delve into several other activities. One such annual activity is the Gwinnett County Fair. Steve, Robert, and Sharon have been working very hard on the preparations for the ag/hort events. The fair is scheduled to begin September 15, and continue through September 24. If any of you would like to participate in any of these activities, the help would be greatly appreciated. Contact Pam at the Extension Office at 822-7717 for details.

Several other projects which are now in progress and up-coming are Joan Glancy Rehabilitation "Out-patient" as well as the "In-patient" programs. The success of the In-patient program (outdoor vegetable and flower gardens) is greatly due to Pat Longo and Tammy Zeigler. Their help in planning as well as instruction and follow-up was indispensable. The Out-patient program is now in the planning stages. The focus with these patients is Container Gardening. It was noted by one of the Master Gardeners that a survey of the patients at Glancy revealed that over 90% of the patients listed "gardening" as one of their favorite pastimes.



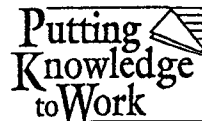
Other projects which may interest some of you include memorial gardens, raised bed gardens, wildlife sanctuaries, after-school garden clubs, and environmental programs at many of our area schools. Two of the schools where some of these programs are just beginning are Gwin Oaks Elementary and Richards Middle School. Sugar Hill Elementary would also like volunteer Master Gardeners to speak to all of their classes about gardening as well as environmental issues. This program will be beginning sometime in late fall.

Another project which we have just started is a color chart for Georgia. This will actually be a "series" of charts indicating bloom times for local trees, shrubs, perennials, wildflowers and vines. This is a very industrious and long-term project but one which we feel will be worthwhile to area residents.

There is a great deal to be accomplished this year as well as a lot of fun ahead of us! Let us know your interests and ideas or suggestions about any or all of these programs.

One goal we can have as Master Gardeners is to pass down to our children - the "love" of gardening. It may not change the world, but it could change a life!

by Pam Folks



The University of Georgia
Cooperative Extension Service
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences / Athens, Georgia 30602

ON THE ROAD WITH RHOADES

The 1993 Cullowhee Native Plant Conference

I skipped a year and didn't go to Cullowhee in 1992 after I'd stayed up till 5:00 a.m. partying in 1991. I wanted my reputation as a guitar picking, partying gardener to die down. And did it work? No!

Gloria Rogers told me a new route which avoids I-285 and spaghetti junction and I drove through some of the most beautiful mountains I'd ever seen. I saw lots of clear streams and roadside wildflowers. The only thing I didn't see on this route was traffic, which was fine with me.

When I arrived in Cullowhee, I felt like I had stepped back in time. The atmosphere was so relaxing, yet at the same time it was exciting to be around all these people gathered for the common cause of native plants. It was a Who's Who of gardeners and an army of delegates from Georgia was there.

Cullowhee is not just the place to see and be seen, but it is THE Native Plant Conference of all time. There are a lot of spinoff conferences now in other states, but Cullowhee started it all and they are now in their tenth consecutive year. There is lots of networking and fellowship going on here. Several times during conversations, I thought of a cartoon I'd seen where a large old tree had been cut down and the caption above the tree said, "Help. I've fallen and I can't get up." It's funny, but it's serious, this business of protecting our native plants.

The Cullowhee conference is limited to the first 400 people who return their reservations. It is very inexpensive and the cost includes meals in the cafeteria, dorm rooms, and refreshments at breaks. There is an exhibit hall with plant sales, book sales, and tee shirt sales going on almost all the time. There were six concurrent speakers on Thursday and six more on Friday, besides the general session which featured such notable speakers as Steve Bender, Dick Bir, and J.C. Raulston. On the spur of the moment I volunteered to do a spot called "Plants of Promise" since, on a whim, I had brought along Carolina moonseed, Ogeechee lime, pawpaw, and American persimmon plants. Lucky me, I got to follow J.C. Raulston.

Friday night we took shuttle busses to a local motel with a swimming pool for our Regional Networking Session. The band was made up of members of the conference. I tried to dance myself to death, but they made us leave at 12:15 a.m. so we went back to the dorms and I got out my guitar. We played and sang until 3:00 a.m. at the traditional party after the party. Everyone has lots of fun, but they always learn something new at these events.

The general underlying theme of this year's conference was that propagating, promoting, and planting native plants was a moral issue. As nurserymen, garden communicators, and landscapers, we all have an ethical responsibility to make the public aware of the many native plants available and their virtues. These virtues include their beauty and the fact that they are adapted to our soil and climate. No one is saying to use native plants exclusively, but simply to become more acquainted with them and seek them out. I agree with what Sam Jones says in Native Shrubs and Woody Vines of the Southeast, "Due to increasing population growth and development some species may survive only in a garden environment. At one point the native flora was best left untouched but with increased encroachment of highways, housing, and commercial development the nurseryman and gardener may actually help perpetuate a species by rescuing it from the path of progress."

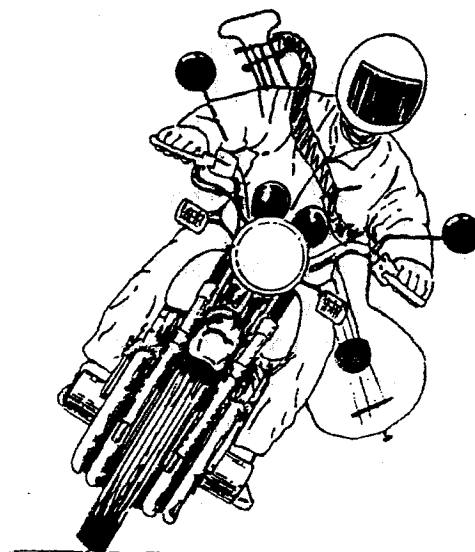
Just one word of explanation before I conclude. Please don't get the idea that "native" means untended or weedy. There are plenty of these plants that will fit into even the most formal of landscapes. Each of us needs to bring these plants into our yards and gardens so that they can be protected and perpetuated.

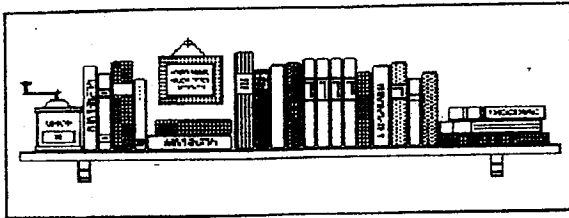
Towards the end of the program we were told there would be a tee shirt contest for next year. Oh boy, I thought, a tee shirt contest! That sounds like great fun. Come to find out it has nothing to do with women or water. It is only a contest to see who can come up with the best silk screen design to go on next year's tee shirts. Shucks!

Truly, I had one of the best times of my life. The 1993 Cullowhee Native Plant Conference will stand out in my memory for combining my two great loves—plants and music.

*Eddie Rhoades is the award-winning editor of The Gardener's Corner. It is the monthly newsletter of the Marietta Men's Garden Club.

Editor's Note: For information on the 1994 Cullowhee Native Plant Conference contact: Sue Debord; Office of Continuing Education; Western Carolina University; Cullowhee, NC 28723. Phone # (704) 227-7397.





THE GARDENER'S BOOKSHELF

THE ULTIMATE ROSE BOOK
Stirling Macoboy
Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1993
In the Library 635.9333

New rose books are thick on the ground now, and this is a really big one. It covers 1500 roses, with photographs and descriptions of all of them. The book is gorgeous but physically too big to fit on the average bookshelf, and very pricey. If you're going to buy one comprehensive rose book, I'd go for the Beales book reviewed last time.

THE ART OF PLANTING
Rosemary Verey
Little, Brown & Co., 1990
In the Library 716.

Those of you who attended Mrs. Verey's lecture last February at the Atlanta Flower Show know how charming she can be, and this book is equally charming and totally wonderful. She discusses plant combinations, both color echoes and color contrasts. She puts things together in ways that make your mouth water, placing blues with yellows or lavender with chartreuse. This is a book you'll return to again and again, both for her design ideas and her luscious photographs.

COLOR ECHOES
Pamela J. Harper
McMillan Publishing Co., 1994
Too new for the Library

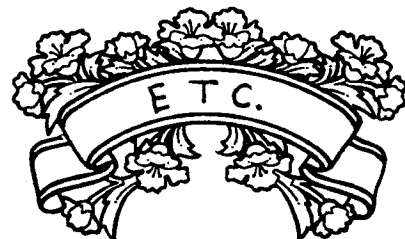
Ms. Harper gardens in Virginia, and her garden relates easily to what we can do in Atlanta. This book deals simply with color echoes, planting flowers to copy adjacent colors in one way or another. One example is white Casa Blanca lilies backed by the white striped blades of Miscanthus

sinensis 'Cosmopolitan'; another is a Sisyrinchium picking up the color of the falls in a Pacific hybrid Iris. Both this book and the Verey book, although quite different in content, cause you to think about plant neighbors, and to work toward a more refined garden.

THE ART OF GARDENING WITH ROSES
Graham Stuart Thomas
Henry Holt 1991
In the Library. 635.9333

A simply beautiful book, written by probably the greatest gardener in the world today. The photographs are of the rose garden at Montisfont Abbey, the British national Collection of old roses, which Thomas planned. This is not just another book about roses, but about old roses in the garden; and companion perennials to plant with them. He is an ardent believer in the pack-it-full-of-plants method of gardening. A joy. Again, English, of course.

Gail Martin



Addendum to the MG Phone List:

- Sheila Wilbur. 921-9246
- Maria Turk. 339-6767
- Dolores Wyland 822-1472

IF YOU HAVE A FAVORITE BOOK, MAGAZINE ARTICLE, or anything you would like to share with the rest of us during the meeting, please bring to the meeting and let us know and we will give you about 5 minutes before a program to tell us about it.

Chemical fertilizer
BURNS Earthworms.
OUCH!

