

◆ A Bit of Dirt ◆

Volume 8 Issue 4

Winter 2000

The Newsletter of the Gwinnett Master Gardeners



It is with great regret that I must lay down my pen (keyboard?) and turn the newsletter over to another. I have enjoyed very much writing the newsletter, both alone and with Brenda Adams in the early days of our club. Thanks to all for your contributions over the years, and I hope that you will support your new Editor in the way you have supported me. It was a terrific six years.

Gail Martin



*Winter is an etching,
spring a watercolor,
summer an oil painting
and autumn a mosaic
of them all.*

Stanley Horowitz

Winter



★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
★
★ Our New Officers ★
★

- Karen Brandon
President
 - Sharon Matthews
Vice President
 - Bonnie Smolinski
Secretary
 - Kathy Parent
Treasurer
- ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

February Love Auction
Monday, Feb. 19, 2001 6:30 pm
Glen Armstrong -Auctioneer
Please donate new or slightly used items with a value of \$2 up. Anything goes - tools, books, plants, handcrafted items, etc. etc. If you have a friend or neighbor in the restaurant, theater or retail business, ask for donation of free coupons. Cash, checks, IOU's paid by March meeting are accepted.

*Message from our
President*

As I prepare to step down from my presidency, I look back with special memories of the changes the year has brought. We have accomplished a lot but there will be new challenges for 2001.

Steve Brady will be missed, but we look forward to working with Robert Brannon. Our special friend, Kathy Parent, who many of you know from working at the Extension Office, will be our new Treasurer. Bonnie Smolinski will take over as secretary. With Karen Brandon as our new President and Sharon Matthews as our Vice President, we know it will be a fantastic year.

Thanks to everyone for their support and enthusiasm this year. I look forward to seeing all of you at our special February "Auction" meeting as we kick off a new year.

Have a blessed Holiday season.

Judy

*Season's
Greetings
To All*

Timely Tips for Landscape and Garden

Take a walk through your garden as the fall season winds down. Take time to reflect on the successes and failures of your gardens this year. Make notes in your gardening notebook for new things to try, and things to fix, next spring.

When placing plants around the home, remember as a general rule, plants with thick leaves can take lower light levels than those with thin leaves.

A November application of fertilizer is very beneficial to a lawn of cool-season grasses. It promotes root development without excessive top growth. With a strong root system, your lawn will be better able to withstand drought conditions next summer.

After several killing frosts have occurred this fall, cut back dormant perennials to about 3 inches above ground. This step ensures a successful show of plant foliage and color next season.

Dense planting in containers works best for small bulbs. Plant as many bulbs as fit, as long as they do not touch each other or the pot. For a 6-inch pot try 6 tulips or 15 crocus bulbs.

For best growth, plant spring bulbs where they are out of the direct sun during the middle of the day. Bulbs have a chilling requirement that is satisfied by winter soil temperatures, so avoid planting bulbs near heated basements where the soil may not stay adequately cold.

Invert large flowerpots over semi-hardy perennials, such as dusty miller, to protect the plants in winter. Uncover the plants during warm spells.

After chrysanthemums are killed by frost, cut them down in preparation for winter. Apply a 2 to 3 inch layer of loose mulch, such as leaves, after the ground has frozen.

Peonies can be planted now in full sun and fertile, well-drained soil that is rich in organic matter. Dig holes 18 inches and fill halfway with a mixture of soil, compost, and a handful of 5-10-10 fertilizer. Add a few more inches of soil, and set the tubers so the buds are 1 to 2 inches below the soil surface. Backfill, firm the soil, and water thoroughly. Peonies do not grow well after being moved and will not bloom for several years.

Pine cones, sweet gum balls, and seed pods of many plants, such as redbud and milkweed, add a beautiful touch to holiday ornaments. You can still collect many of these, if you take a walk along a hedge row or through a park or weedy field.

Cut away suckers from the base of lilacs, forsythia and crape myrtle.

Clean up rose beds. Be sure all diseased leaves are raked up and destroyed. Spring (before the plants start active growth) is the preferred season for pruning roses. Do not cut off canes in the fall. It is better to stake and tie extra long canes in fall to prevent winter wind damage.

Select accent plants for your landscape that will provide interesting autumn colors. Trees that turn red include dogwood, black gum, red maple, sweet gum, and red or scarlet oak. Shrubs with red fall foliage include viburnum, winged euonymus, and barberry.

Newly planted shade trees, especially those with smooth bark, are often injured by temperature fluctuations and strong winter sunshine.

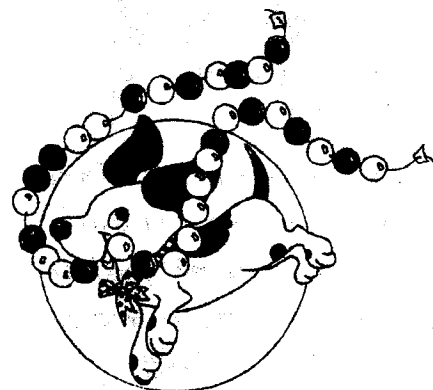
Prevent sunscald by wrapping the tree trunks with commercial tree wrap, 4 inch burlap strips, or simply shading with a board against the south side of the tree.

If there is any evidence of scale on trees and shrubs, spray with dormant oil in late fall and again in early spring.

Bob Westerfield

Dog Property Laws

1. If I like it, it's mine.
2. If it's in my mouth, it's mine.
3. If I can take it from you, it's mine.
4. If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.
5. If it's mine, it must never appear to be yours in any way.
6. If I'm chewing something up, all the pieces are mine.
7. If it just looks like mine, it's mine.
8. If I saw it first, it's mine.
9. If you are playing with something and you put it down, it automatically becomes mine.
10. If it goes into the neighbor's yard, it's yours.





Global Gardening on the Web



Notes from Karen

On a cold winter day, curl up by the computer, hot chocolate by your side, and take a garden tour around the world. It's easy to do with the internet.

Let's start by going east, first stop England. Visit the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. www.rbgekew.org.uk/ The Kew Gardens site includes their site at Wakehurst Place, West Sussex. There are listings of collections, What's New, Visitor Info, Science and Horticulture, and more.

While we're in the British Isles, hop aboard the Flying Scotsman to Inveraray, Argyll, Scotland. There you'll find the Crarae Gardens, a colorful website showing the glory of one of Scotland's greatest gardens. Gardeners and nature lovers everywhere will enjoy this virtual garden tour, the rhododendrons and azaleas. Their home page shows a mass of the unattainable blue poppy, *Meconopsis*.

www.crarae-gardens.org

Next we take the Chunnel to France, and visit Claude Monet's garden in the beautiful Seine Valley. Monet lived in Giverny for 43 years. His house and his garden were his models. The gardens have been replanted as they once were. The website offers lists of plants and flowers in the gardens, a map, photos and an aerial view of the garden. www.giverny.org/gardens/index.htm

As long as we are in Europe, we can take the Orient Express to Innsbruck, Austria and visit the Alpine Garden set high on the side of Mount Patscherkofel at 2000m above sea level. Part of the Botanical Garden of the University, it displays a treasure of alpine plants.

[//bot-garden.uibk.ac.at](http://bot-garden.uibk.ac.at)

From Austria we'll fly across Asia to Australia, where we can visit the

Royal Botanic Garden of Sydney. We all saw this one being cycled and run through during the Olympics. Situated on Darling Harbor, within view of the Sydney Opera House, it contains a treasury of plants.

www.rbgsyd.gov.au

From Sydney we'll fly again, landing in Hawaii. Visiting the Lawai Garden of the National Tropical Botanical Garden is seeing the world's largest collection of native Hawaiian plants, including a Canoe Garden with plant species brought to Hawaii by voyaging Polynesians.

www.ntbg.org

On to North America, first stop Montreal, Canada. Here you'll find the Montreal Botanical Garden, containing 21,000 plant species and cultivars, 10 exhibition greenhouses, 30 thematic gardens and is considered one of the world's largest and most spectacular botanical gardens.

www.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin

Dipping down into the US on our way home, we stop at Longwood Gardens, created by Pierre S. duPont. Longwood offers 1,050 acres of gardens, woodlands, and meadows, 20 outdoor gardens, and 20 indoor gardens. Longwood is open every day of the year and attracts more than 900,000 visitors annually.

www.longwoodgardens.org

And still closer to home we come to the Sarah Duke Gardens, at Duke University in North Carolina. You can take a virtual tour of these lovely gardens, see a calendar of bloom, and read the history of the gardens. hr.duke.edu/dukegardens/dukegardens.html

Now back at home, our hot chocolate finished, we've walked through a lot of gardens, and our feet aren't even sore!

Volunteer Hours

It's time to report your volunteer hours to the extension office. The TALLY forms have been mailed and should be completed and returned by December 15. If you did not receive your form, call Kathy Parent at 678-377-4010. Remember an annual report provides justification for the MG program continuation.

Let's Meet the Challenges!

We've all heard the famous adage, "The only thing sure in life is CHANGE!" and this year is no exception. Our long-time friend and extension agent, Steve Brady, has accepted new responsibilities at the Bamboo Farm & Coastal Gardens. We'll miss Steve and if you're near Savannah, you'll want to tour the gardens and visit with him. We certainly welcome and look forward to working with Robert Brannen as our fearless leader in the role as Agricultural Extension Agent.

Our past President (1998-1999) and life-time MG, Shelia Wilbur and her husband Dirk are in the midst of moving to Charleston. One can only imagine why they'd leave our GA red clay. Shelia is already excited about becoming involved in the MG program in that lovely city. Let's wish them the best and hold them to their promise to visit us often.

Diane DeVore's life is changing also. She and her husband purchased a garden nursery in Mableton, and have decided to move closer to their business. We appreciate Diane for the years she has created our meeting announcement cards.

Thank you all for your confidence in electing officers for next year.

Karen Brandon

You're Invited!

Christmas Bird Count

The Christmas Bird Count is now the ultimate source of information about early-winter birds. Fundamental to the success of the CBC is the strong commitment of the participants. The efforts of the first 27 participants (in 1900) have blossomed to some 50,000 participants covering 1800 count circles across the Western Hemisphere. Whatever it is that motivates each of us - prospect of finding a rare bird, birding with old friends - to take a day out of the holiday season to counts birds, it's key to the CBC.

As of the 101st Christmas Bird Count, the count period will be fixed to calendar dates, instead of varying each year. Beginning in December, 2000, the Official CBC period will always run from December 14th through January 5th. This will ensure that participants always know the dates of the Count period.

You're invited to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count 2000!

Cornell and the Audubon Society want to know where the birds are. Now that winter is here, they need to know where they went as bird populations are dynamic and are constantly in flux. They want a snapshot of North American bird populations and you can help them.

Where are the finches and other irruptive species? Compared to last year, how has this winter's weather influenced bird populations?

Everyone's contribution is important. It doesn't matter whether you identify, count and report the 5 species coming to your backyard feeder or the 75 species you see during a day's outing.

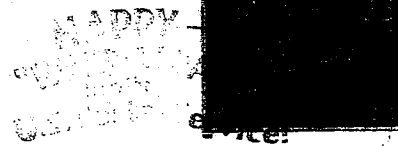
Again this year, they ask you to fill out a survey that tells them a little about yourself beyond what they already know, that you are eager to give something back to the birds you enjoy.

The data that you collect will be combined with Christmas Bird Counts and Project FeederWatch data to give them an immense picture of our winter birds. Each year that these data are collected makes them more important and meaningful.

This year the Great Backyard Bird Count will be held February 18-21, 2001. All you have to do is count the number of birds at your feeders. For detailed information, on the web go to www.birdsource.com and everything you need to know will be there.

A Bit of Dirt

Gail Martin
Gwinnett Master Gardeners
160 Beaverwood Lane
Lawrenceville, GA 30044



Gail Martin 00
160 Beaverwood Lane
Lawrenceville GA 30044

