

# A Bit of Dirt

Volume 9, Issue 4

Fall, 2001

## The Newsletter of the Gwinnett Master Gardeners



### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY Gwinnett Council of Garden Clubs 2001-2002 Project

The five Garden Clubs of Gwinnett County joined together at the Council level in 2000 to do a fundraising cookbook project. Now we are ready to spend that money on a worthy project. The Council has voted to work together at the Gwinnett Children's Shelter to create gardening interest and education by developing gardens and natural environments for attracting wildlife for the youth residents there. We helped plant a vegetable garden in June which has been yielding produce for their kitchen, an enjoyable experience for first-time gardeners.

Now we are ready to really get started  
in September for Fall Planting!!!



**Needed:** We are looking for people in the community to join in this effort with us to work over the next 2 years to make this a successful project. We need several good planners, hands-on workers, phoners, givers and positive thinkers to contribute their time to help the youth of



Gwinnett County. We are also looking for plant donations from any source.

We are applying to the National Garden Club for matching funds through the Shell Oil Company P.E.T.A.L.S. Grant (Protecting the Environment Through Actions, Learning & Service!) This is the very worthwhile type of project to which Shell Oil wants to contribute so we should be accepted.

We want this to be a community awareness project!

Please call Gwinnett Council President, Fran Sanders at (770) 242-2756 to volunteer or contact your Gwinnett Master Gardener Association President, Karen Brandon, at 770-925-4512 if you have questions about this project.

### Message from Our President

Summer without extreme drought? Our "Rain Prayers" are being answered.

Thanks to all who recently opened their homes and gardens to us for tours. Our Vice President, Sharon Matthews, received several requests for garden tours ... and WOW, did she ever come through!

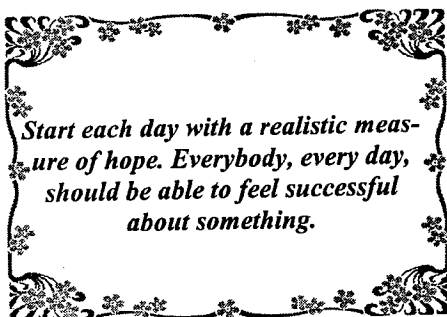
Mary Booth Cabot's art studio tour, along with her husband Robert's garden tour, were quite a treat. We enjoyed pot luck dishes on the deck overlooking the lake and gardens. Mary Ann gave us quite an education on her artist techniques and explained all her paintings are originals.

Speaking of artists, we certainly enjoyed Shannon Pable's home tour with the wonderful trompe l'oeil and faux paintings. It seems there was a new view around every corner. We also loved her colorful gardens, a walk through the woods and relished a super brunch.

Michele and Jack Templeton opened their beautiful daylily gardens and shade gardens for us. We had a crash course from two of our *Hemerocallis* experts. Michele demonstrated dividing daylilies and Bobbie Higginbotham explained propagation by proliferation.

Thanks to Andy Hall, landscape architect from the Gwinnett Civic Center expansion, for affording us the opportunity to carry out a native plant rescue. Andy stalled bulldozers for two days allowing us to plan and conduct the dig. We ran from yellow jackets, avoided poison ivy, watched closely for snakes, dug, carried and toted, but it was all worth it. We rescued several species of native ferns, wild ginger, trilliums and native azaleas.

- continued on page 2



**Advanced Notice:**

The Gwinnett County Extension Service will be taking orders for their Annual Plant Sale beginning in January. Plants may be picked up at the Gwinnett County Fair Grounds near the end of February. Call the Extension Service at 678-377-4010 to get on the Plant Order Form mailing list.

**Thanks...and Come Again**

Jack and I would like to thank everyone that came to visit our garden to learn more about daylilies. (It was our first time to have any MG's over and I was a bit concerned that we might not have enough variety in our yard to hold your interest.) You were all so kind and fun - we had a great time sharing it with you.

We'd especially like to thank our daylily pal and Master Gardener, Bobbie Higginbotham, for her informative talk and demonstration about proliferations.

Our hope was that you would come away with a little more knowledge about one of our favorites, Hemerocallis, while you had a good time. Jack, the cats and I look forward to having you back again next June!

Michele Templeton

P.S. In response to the question at the past MG meeting about when to plant potted proliferations outside - do as our speaker, Robert Keller, told us regarding foxgloves - when they have a decent root system going, plant them in a well-prepared bed and they should do fine.

**Planting a Fall or Winter Garden?**

Take advantage of mild weather during September/October to plant or transplant the following veggies to your garden: beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, collards, lettuce, mustard, onions, radishes, spinach and turnips. Plant your second planting of fall crops such as collards, turnips, cabbage, mustard and kale.

**Message from Our Vice President**

The clock is ticking and our Winter Conference is approaching. The maps, menus and hotels are all lined up. Now we get to the fun part, *decorating!* I need volunteers to help set up on January 11th from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, and to help serve on January 12th. We are also looking for ideas for our goodie bags that will be given out at registration. Any ideas??? This is a chance for Gwinnett to SHINE so let's make them need the sunglasses. If you sign up to volunteer, you will get into the conference for free! I'm sure it will be a great success with our wonderful volunteers. Call me at (770) 736-3928, sign-up at any of our meetings, or e-mail me at SCLULL@HotMail.com.

Sharon Matthews

**Notice:**

Shelia Wilbur is moving to North Carolina and has an abundance of plants "For Sale". If interested, please call Shelia at 770-921-0190.

**Advanced Master Gardener Training**

**Organic Gardening**  
Tuesday, Oct. 2, 2001  
Agriculture Education Center  
Carrollton, GA  
Carroll County Extension Office

**American Herbalist Guild Symposium 2001**  
From Plants to Medicines: Exploring Our Relationship to Nature's Pharmacy

November 9-11, 2001

For information contact:  
American Herbalist Guild  
at 770-751-6021 or  
e-mail: ahgoffice@earthlink.net

**Message from Our President**

*continued from page 1*

Thanks to Gwinnett Master Gardener, LaDonna Benedict, (certified Ga. Native Plant Society rescue facilitator) for helping me word our "liability" forms and thanks to Gail Hollimon and the telephone committee for quickly notifying members.

The Atlanta Botanical Garden has invited the Gwinnett Master Gardeners Association's involvement for planning and setting up of the 165 acre Smithgall Arboretum in Gainesville. This is an exciting proposition and volunteer opportunities are forthcoming! Please give your input to our representative, Shannon Pable.

Thanks to our Editor, Marlene Gillman, for her determination in continuing the success of *A Bit of Dirt*. She is doing a super job and I am very proud of her accomplishments. Thanks also to the members whose teamwork and dedication has contributed so much to this Publication.

Let's remember to give to those less fortunate. Our donations to the Gwinnett Battered Woman's shelter are appreciated. Remember, these families often flee with nothing but their safety. Personal size toiletries, school supplies and small games will be collected at our next meeting. Thanks to those who have donated vegetables for distribution through the Latin American Association. Our not having a community growing site has not kept us from giving.

Keep praying for rain!

Karen Brandon

**Next Master Gardener Meetings Highlights**

**September:** Mark Warren of Medicine Bow will speak about the medicinal effects of native plants.

**October:** Rose Capps is a specialist in ivy, native gingers, and hostas.

**November:** Annual Christmas Party

# Meet Your Master Gardeners

by Marlene Gillman



## Pat Longo

Originally from Philadelphia, PA, Pat enlisted into the Air Force shortly after high school. When retiring from the military, Pat "did an awful lot of reading and selected Atlanta as my future home."

"I've always loved gardening, but never received any formal training until my son, Wayne, talked me into signing up for the Master Gardener classes. From that first day of training, I couldn't have enjoyed people more than those I met in all my meetings with gardeners. I fulfilled my volunteer hours so that I could become a part of the group"

When asked about his volunteer activities, Pat states "I'm currently associated with the Collins Hill Library project in trying to establish a garden for them. My only drawback is the fact that this project has to rely on 'donations' from other people and groups to build the garden. I wish, somehow, we could allocate money, either from the County or State, to build their garden to a more respectable status."

"I'm wanting to 'copy' the work of the Cobb County Master Gardeners group. They have an area set aside where the club maintains a garden to show novice Master Gardeners and visitors the way an ideal garden should look."

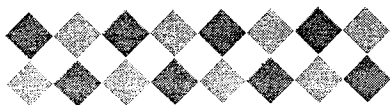
What are Pat's favorite plants? "Two bushes in my garden are special to me. One is *Daphne odora* which grows near the entrance to my garage. When blooming, you can't help but smell the fragrance of it as you enter. The other bush I truly admire is the *Fothergilla*. I especially like this one because it has something to offer in winter, spring, summer and fall. The kids in the neighborhood call it my 'cottonball bush.' Presently I'm working on my backyard to establish a 'rest' area where I can enjoy the sounds of nature while relaxing."

Pat enjoyed the recent Master Gardener visit to Mary Booth Cabot's home. "Her husband seemed to be extremely knowledgeable in plant life. They did much to improve their land where a normal person would have given up. This is the type of outing our club should do more often. I received a plant from them which is flourishing in my wooded area near my rest area."

Another of the MG projects that Pat worked on was a house in Norcross. "Although I spent far more time there than I should have done, it really heightened my interest in helping others."

What has being a Master Gardener meant to Pat? "Wow, what a question! It has given me a special lease on life. I always want to remain active till the time my toes are pointed upward permanently. I see the benefit from my work when our daughter comes to the house and walks away with a plant for her home. She has been bitten by the lovebug of gardening. The more people I can convince to return to working our earth, the better. Ain't nuttin like it!"

Some of Pat's favorite things are a tool known in the trade as a 'duck' that's used to clean grass and weeds from cracks in driveways/walkways and Walter Reeves and Erica Glasener book entitled "Georgia Gardener's Guide".



## Carol Kilroy

Carol is a quite, petite woman who moved to Tucker in 1973 with her husband, Tom, and their children, Corinne and Tom, Jr. The Kilroys came to Georgia from a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio called Maple Heights.

"Gardening is the best therapy for me for stress (or any other adverse condition I can think about). I've always enjoyed working in my yard and trying to determine which flowers would be happiest where. Sometimes I'm successful, and sometimes I do a lot of transplanting! We moved to Buford in 1995 and renovated the house we bought. Along with the renovation, we hired a professional landscaper in 1996 to help us design a yard that was pleasing to look at and not too difficult to maintain. After the landscaping was completed, I spent my mornings in the perennial garden deadheading, weeding, introducing new plants and watching the butterflies and hummingbirds go from flower to flower. There is very little room left in the garden at this point for any new plants, but you can believe I still keep trying."

"After I retired from Emory University in 1998 and had more time to do the things I enjoy, Kathy Parent encouraged me to apply for the Master Gardener course. I am a member of the Class of '99. After completing the course, I realized that the 'professional' landscaper we hired probably did not ever take the course. We had shade plants in sunny areas and vice versa, as well as a very expensive sprinkler system that drowned the lawn but didn't sufficiently water the perennial garden! I've been relocating plants in my yard ever since."

One of Carol's favorite Master Gardener projects is working at plant clinics in the local nurseries. "I enjoy sharing what I've learned working in the Extension Office and through the Master Gardener program with people who are so appreciative of any information you have for them."

When asked about her favorite plant and why, she said, "Hydrangeas have always been one of my favorite flowers. As a 'Friend of a Master Gardener', I attended a Gwinnett Master Gardener meeting in the fall several years ago at

*Meet Your Master Gardeners (Continued)*  
by Marlene Gillman



### *Glen Armstrong*

Club photographer, Glen Armstrong hails from Delaware 12 miles south of the Mason-Dixon with his formal training in plant pathology. His first post-college job in research was the evaluation efficacy of fungicides in controlling wheat rust. This involved setting up test plots in the major wheat growing states, starting in old Mexico in the winter and ending up in Canada in the fall. Glen says it was "good fun for a bachelor . . . the best of all seasons. This project was so successful with 1 million dollars+ in sales, I was immediately transferred to sales management until retirement 20 years later from Novartis. I sold DDT by the carload and truckload, and not feed the birds every day in reparation."

Glen's interest in gardening was passed on to him from his family. "My people are city folks, but always had small vegetable and flower gardens. My mother sent me to the 1st grade with a small vase of zinnias which won a blue ribbon. I've grown zinnias ever since. They're a great flower - if only they had fragrance." One of Glen's tips for having great-looking zinnia beds throughout the season is that he plants several rows of zinnias the first week of every month amongst his established ones. He does during the growing season, so when some of the older ones look mildewy he can weed them out knowing he has new ones coming up to replace them.

Tomatoes have also been one of Glen's specialties, the highlight which happened 10 years ago. "I pampered a single tomato which was growing in my compost pile. When I heard that a local radio station was conducting a contest for the largest home-grown tomato in Atlanta, I took my 7 lb. 7 oz. specimen to the station, found out my tomato was the winner and would be on TV. My being 'king of tomatoes' was short-lived, however, when three days later an 11-year old showed up at the station with her grandpa and a tomato that outweighed mine by 3 pounds!" *Celebrity* is one of Glen's favorites to grow.

When Glen was in DeKalb County, he met monthly with county agent Gary Pfeiffer, Walter Reeves and fellow master gardeners to collate their publications. For several years he was also DeKalb's "authority" on composting, making presentations to hundreds who were happy to receive the information, but just didn't get into composting the way Glen had hoped they would.

As a Gwinnett Master Gardener, he's always an active participant in our plant sales, from directing traffic to taking photos and his hidden talent as a huckster emerged when he was auctioneer for our "Love Auction" this past February. "The spirit and general enthusiasm of gardeners, along with their possible approach and willingness to share problems and successes, is refreshing," says Glen and is one of the reasons he became a Master Gardener. "And my compliments to she (Sharon Matthews) who schedules speakers for our meetings. Sharon does a dynamite job. I learn something interesting at every meeting."

Experimenting with plants is another area Glen likes to dabble in, such as using passion flowers as vines on trellises to determine their desirability on walls and mailboxes. This enthusiasm for learning and be involved must be infectious because last year Glen received his "Lifetime Georgia Master Gardener Certificate" for having completed 10 years as a Master Gardener.

If all that's not enough, Glen is also very active in the *Southern Wings* bird club. He builds some of the nicest bluebird houses around and has even donated them for our auction and as gifts!



### *Carol Kilroy (continued from pg. 3)*

which Penny McHenry spoke. At the end of the meeting, she passed out hydrangea cuttings from her garden and I was delighted to get one of them! I came home and stuck it in the ground just like she told me to, and guess what — the following spring it sprouted and my 'Penny Mac' now has a special place in my backyard shade garden, surrounded by other mopheads, lacecaps, Oakleaves, Annabelles and other panicles." Carol loves anything and everything concerning hydrangeas and sharing what she has learned about them with other gardeners.

Her favorite tool is her mini shovel. "Because I'm barely five feet tall, I would be lost in my garden without my mini shovel. The handle is only about two feet long at most. I can't manage the shovel my husband uses, but my 'mini' suits me just fine!"

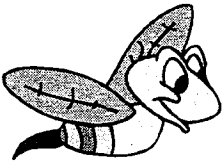
"Being a Master Gardener has meant to me being able to share what I have learned since becoming a Master Gardener. Not only by working the phones at the Extension Office or being a part of a plant clinic, but also by helping friends and family with horticultural questions. It not only gives me a sense of accomplishment, but also makes me realize how very much more I need to learn."

As Carol says  
"Take time to  
smell the flowers."



### Now Is The Time . . .

- To apply herbicides to your lawn for winter annual or perennial weeds that germinate or form rosettes in turf during the fall.
- When selecting flowering bulbs to plant this fall, keep in mind that larger caliber bulbs give big, showy displays, but cost more. Smaller caliber bulbs usually cost less, with a smaller show, but are great for brightening nooks and crannies in the yard.
- Collect okra seed pods, gourds, sumac seed heads, rose hips and other suitable material for dried flower arrangements. Air dry the in a dark, cool location.
- Plant peonies, but make sure the crowns are buried on 1½-2" below ground level. Deeper planting keeps them from blooming.



## *Plantain... Takes the "Ouch!"*

### *Out of the Outside*

by Shannon Pable



#### ***First a bit of history...***

Plantago spp: Latin name of the plant from "planta", sole of the foot, referring to the shape of the leaves of some species. Native Americans also referred to it as "white man's foot print"; who thought it had been introduced by the Europeans. The plant was grown in European gardens from the 16th to the 19th century as a salad plant on account of its crisp, succulent leaves and pleasant taste.

#### ***Here's the scoop on the meds...***

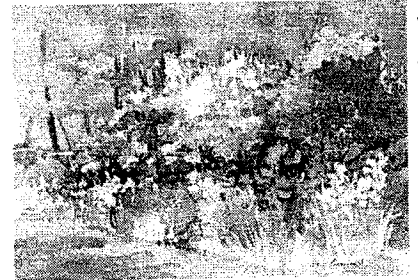
With all of the yellow jackets busily buzzing around, this is one "weed" I am happy to see in my yard! Yes, it soothes the pain of insect bites and stings (including wasp), as well as nettle stings! The plant is an astringent, demulcent, emollient, expectorant, just to name a few! For a quick poultice (to apply to a sting/bite), simply take a couple of leaves, gently chewed, and apply to the sting/bite. Change every two to three hours until the pain and swelling is gone. I also swallow a small bit of the leaf, which helps my body internally fight the affected area. Be sure that the area you are harvesting from is free of chemicals, fertilizers or any contaminants.

#### ***And just in case you're hungry...***

Plantain is also edible. Its young tasty leaves are great in salads and very high in vitamin C. Its older leaves make a great cooked green. The young flower spikes, when still tender, can be eaten raw or cooked (sautéed in butter). Plantain seeds can be finely ground, sifted and mixed with flour for making bread and adding to soups.

### **UGA Horticulture Tour Set for September 28**

From the UGA website



The University of Georgia Horticulture Department and State Botanical Garden of Georgia will offer a tour of research plots, ornamental plant evaluations and gardens Friday, September 28 in Athens, GA.

At the horticulture farm, see the latest research on landscape amendments. These include poultry-litter compost and products called stalite and zeolite.

UGA Professor, Michael Dirr, will discuss the woody ornamentals in his plant evaluation program. At the new College Station Road shade garden, you'll see Dirr's collection of Calycanthus, Camellia, Cephalotaxus, Fothergilla, Gardenia, and more than 80 Hydrangea cultivars.

The annual and perennial trial garden on campus is always a favorite tour stop. Viewing an extensive evaluation of the newest annuals and perennials, you will want to make notes of those doing well in the late-summer heat.

The tour will offer time to talk with UGA faculty from the Athens, Griffin and Tifton campuses. Lunch will be in the new Heritage Garden at the State Botanical Garden. The garden staff will be on hand to answer questions.

Busses leave promptly at 9:00 AM from the upper parking lot of the State Botanical Garden at 2450 South Milledge Avenue. (It's about 1 mile outside the Athens Bypass.) The tour will end at 4:00 PM.

The \$20.00 fee covers the lunch and bus ride. The deadline to sign up is September 21.

Mail a check to:  
 "Georgia 4-H Foundation"  
 Extension Horticulture  
 Attn: Open House  
 205 Hoke Smith Bldg.



## TOOTHPICK TREES!!!

*Robert Brannen, Gwinnett Extension Agent*

Every few years we are visited by a strange insect that does unusual things to one of our favorite plants, the Crape Myrtle. Almost no one ever sees the actual critter, but many people see the one sign that always lets you know exactly what the insect is. "You ain't gonna believe this, but there's some toothpicks done started growin' out my crape myrtle tree."

Only one thing fits that description so perfectly—the Asian Ambrosia Beetle, i.e. *Xylosandrus crassiusculus* (Motschulsky). This is especially significant in Gwinnett County because the city of Lawrenceville has been known for decades as the "Crape Myrtle Capital." This insect is quite common in crape myrtles but also can infect pecan, peach, plum, cherry, persimmon, oak, elm, fig and magnolia.

Adult females are very tiny, about 2 to 3 mm, are dark reddish-brown and have a hunched back appearance. Adult males are even smaller. The larvae are white, legless and C-shaped. They bore into limbs and trunks of woody host plants, excavate a system of tunnels in the wood and begin the family process.

Hey, it gets worse! While the boring is not that pleasant for the plant, the real damage is caused by a symbiotic fungus introduced by the insect to aid in its feeding, which clogs the xylem and ultimately kills the plant. What we get to see are the toothpick-like protrusions made of sawdust and are pushed out of the plant. They will sometimes stick out 2 or 3 inches and will crumble in your hand if touched.

So what can you spray? Residual insecticides are recommended for spraying trees surrounding the infested one. Insecticides are not effective on the infested plant for two reasons. One the little critters are deep inside the wood and have plugged their bore holes with sawdust so you can't get at them. Second, the fungus they introduce is probably going to kill the tree anyway. So what about the infested tree? You should immediately cut it down and either burn or remove it from your landscape. One caution about burning. If someone sees you burning, they might think you are an arsonist and call the fire police. If someone sees you with a garden hose trying to put out the fire, they may think you are watering at the wrong time of day and call the water police. Either way, you are in trouble.



There is good news. By sawing the trunk off a few inches from the ground, you can usually remove the pest and still have a plant that will grow back to its recent splendor. Select a few sprouts to grow into new trunks or pinch the sprout tips to encourage branching and grow a magnificent crape myrtle shrub. The shrub will grow three or four feet in every direction and produce dozens of blooms, down here with people, where you can enjoy them.



Happy are those who see beauty in modest spots where others see nothing. Everything is beautiful, the whole secret lies in knowing how to interpret it. - *Camille Pissarro*



### *For Your Information:*

The University of Georgia offers Master Gardener slide sets for your use during presentations. This is the link to access a few of the slide sets that have been converted to PowerPoint presentations that can be downloaded off the web - <http://oit.caes.uga.edu/presentations/>

These are just a few of the slides offered:

|                   |                           |                  |                      |
|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Xeriscape         | Vegetable Gardening       | Plant Physiology | Growing House Plants |
| Plant Propagation | Backyard Fruit Production | Weed Science     |                      |

## *A Horticultural Mania Quiz*

Are you a horticultural high-achiever or one of the gardening-impaired? Check off the following statements that are true for you. Give yourself three bonus points if you had to remove your gardening gloves before starting.

### You know you are a hard-core gardener if:

"The spirit and general enthusiasm of gardeners, along with their possible approach and willingness to share problems and successes, is refreshing," says Glen and is one of the reasons he became a Master Gardener.

- Your bumper sticker reads: "I brake for worms," "I'd rather be weeding," or "Have you hugged our cactus today?"
- You photograph your flowers more often than your family or friends.
- You'd rather cut the grass than vacuum the carpet.
- You draw more garden plans than floor plans.
- You're disappointed to learn that you can't order vegetable seeds from L.L. Bean.
- After a terrific out-of-town vacation, you still regret missing the peonies in bloom.
- You would turn down a job transfer to a city with a shorter growing season.
- You rank *The Secret Garden* above *Citizen Kane*.
- You'd choose a fish pond over a swimming pool.
- You'd prefer a leaf shredder to a food processor.
- You'd rather water your garden than wash your car.
- Your hedge-clipper blades are sharper than your kitchen knives.
- You say "garden soil", never "dirt".
- You deadhead flowers in other people's gardens.
- When playing soccer, you check for crab grass.
- You enjoy rain, but go ballistic over hail.
- You garden in the rain and only stop when it thunders.
- After a thunderstorm, you check for tree damage before shoveling the walk.
- You can state your Hardiness Zone faster than your zip code.
- A greenhouse is higher on your wish list than a hot tub.
- You sport trowel earrings or a wheelbarrow belt buckle.
- You actually appreciate cow manure as a birthday present.
- You dream of compost.
- You buy beer for slugs.



### How you scored:

**Under 5:** No headaches for you if there's a frost.

**5 -10:** You spend more time in the hammock than in the humus.

**11-20:** You know which end of a corm is up.

**Over 20:** You need some horticultural withdrawal. Time to close the garden gate.

-from Fine Gardening, August 1997, by Toronto journalist, Sue Careless (submitted by Michele Templeton)

## New Southeast Tall Fescue

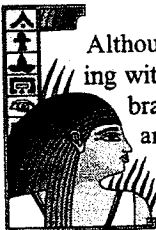
In 1992, Ronny Duncan and Bob Carrow decided to develop turf-type tall fescues that would thrive in Georgia. For initial specimens, Duncan collected any tall fescue plants he could find growing within 6" of a paved highway. At the Griffin campus of the University of Georgia, scientists subjected the plants to severe stress and water deprivation during a "plant boot camp" that killed more than 95% of them. They then took the survivors and started crossbreeding them with other fescues, subjecting them to even more rigorous conditions. The eventual result was **Southeast Tall fescue**.

Observers note that the texture of Southeast is a little coarser than current turf-type tall fescues like Rebel, Tribute, etc. On the other hand, the grass is less likely to die from scalping, drought stress and high temperatures.

The seed is in very limited availability this fall. Check with your local garden centers and home improvement stores. Keep in mind, too, that any fescue will suffer unless it's given a well-prepared seed bed in which to grow. Unless clay soil is rototilled to a depth of 6", the roots simply can't expand enough to get the nutrients and moisture they need.

- from *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 30, 2001

## GARDENS OF EGYPT



Although the Egyptians did not invent the concept of a garden or that of plant collection, they embraced gardens and gardening with relish. They were the first to leave extensive medicinal herbals, garden journals, models and plans and the first to brag shamelessly about their gardens. They portrayed their gardens on the walls of their houses, temples and tombs. The artwork frequently showed the owner, his family, friends, servants and even pets frolicking in the midst of flowers and trees. Wall reliefs and paintings show tools in use as well as techniques and events from planting to harvest. No other ancient culture left so many detailed pictorial records of everyday life in the garden.

Their gardens frequently included water features so fish and fowl as well as cats and dogs are landscape with their masters. Plant material provided the inspiration for not only decorative also monumental buildings. The enormous columns of the temple of Amun at Luxor are stylized stems. The appearance of these motifs provides us with clues to the time of introduction of horticulture. The lily for instance was not native to Egypt.



depicted as enjoying the painting and jewelry but ized lotus flowers and these materials into Egyptian

The first recorded expedition to specifically gather plant material was launched by Queen Hatsepsut. Reliefs on the walls of her magnificent mortuary temple at Deir-el-Bahari show the bounty of plant material gathered from the expedition to the legendary Land of Punt. Excavations of the temple terraces have revealed the root systems of the trees once planted there. The list of plant materials includes myrrh and frankincense as well as other trees, shrubs and flowers.

The Egyptians left seeds and foodstuffs in tombs as offerings and even floral funeral wreaths. We know that King Tut's funeral wreath contained blue cornflowers and lilies and we can date the time year of the burial from these flowers. A single 3000-year-old lotus seed found in a solar boat discovered in a pit beside the Great Pyramid in the Giza complex in the early fifties was planted and bloomed—the Egyptians understood the power of life contained in seeds.

The extremely fertile soil of the Nile Valley supported not only the native plants but also many introductions in spite of a nearly rainless climate. The annual flood of the Nile was carefully recorded with an instrument called the Nileometer. With this soil moisture information collected over thousands of years the Egyptians could manage their irrigation projects and predict the size of the crops to be planted and their yield. These records included drought periods—which in this case was related to the flood level.

As they entered the age of empire many plants from the east and southeast Mediterranean were successfully introduced through trade and conquest. Among the introductions from the Middle Kingdom (1500 BC) were the pomegranate (from the Caspian Sea), mandrake, blue cornflowers, lilies (Crete) and scarlet poppies (mainland Greece). Other introductions included the horseradish tree, carob, sycamore, and fig all from Asia Minor.

The great Library of Alexandria, which was enlarged under the last Egyptian dynasty, the Greek Ptolomys, must have held most of the existent literature on agriculture, herbal medicine, gardens, and plants when Julius Caesar's troops put it to the torch. The Roman interest in Egypt was economic—Egypt was the major supplier of grain to the Mediterranean world and Rome during this period was experiencing a severe grain shortage.



### A Note of Appreciation

Mr. Brendan Brennan would like to express his appreciation to the Master Gardeners who participated in Planting a Row for the Hungry. Produce has been distributed to needy families who are greatly appreciative of the vegetables that were donated.

Remember, now that your summer harvests are waning, an extra row of greens or other fall vegetables will help them make it through the winter months.

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods, there is a rapture on the lonely shore, there is society, where none intrudes,  
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar: I love not Man the less, but Nature more.

Lord Byron



## ***Don't Plant That Plant!***

by Theresa Schrum

One of the most disconcerting things I see in the world of horticulture today is the continued promotion and use of exotic invasive plants. Exotic invasives are non-native plants which have escaped cultivation, thrive and reproduce without any assistance from man. These plants crowd out native plants and upset the delicate balance of natural ecosystems.

Yet landscapers, garden centers, professionals and even professors of horticulture continue to recommend and promote the use of these plants. Often the average gardener, and even Master Gardeners, are unaware of the harm these plants can cause.

The most glaring example of this is kudzu. Promoted by the Federal Government in the early 1900's, this plant now covers millions of acres in the U.S. and continues to spread. Less publicized thugs that are still used and recommended are Privet (*Ligustrum*), Japanese honeysuckle, English ivy, bamboo, etc., etc. This list goes on and one and, unfortunately, continues to grow. Other plants that have been observed in the wild include *Eleagnus*, *Mahonia* and *Nandina*. Some plants still under investigation are *Miscanthus* and the butterfly bush.

Gardeners become attached to plants that thrive and provide beauty and herein lies the problem: how to resist using these plants that grow too well in our area.

### ***What Can You Do -***

Educate yourself. Become familiar with those plants known or suspected to be exotic invasives. Educate others as to their potential harm. Be able to recommend alternative plants that are not invasive, or better yet, native.

For more information on exotic invasive plants, visit the web sites of the Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council ([www.gaeppc.org](http://www.gaeppc.org)), the Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council ([www.se-eppc.org](http://www.se-eppc.org)) or the USDA's plant database (<http://plants.usda.gov>) which has a separate database for invasive and noxious plants.

For more information on native plants, visit the web site of the Georgia Native Plant Society ([www.gnps.org](http://www.gnps.org)).

## **A Bit of Dirt's Photo Corner**



Master Gardeners & Eager Customers at May Plant Sale  
In Front of the Gwinnett Justice & Administrative Center



Scarecrow & Compost Bin at  
Robert & Mary Booth Cabot's Garden - July Field Trip



**Plant or Seed Swap List**

If you have plants or seeds to share, send your name, address or phone number along with your plant or seed information and we will print it in *A Bit of Dirt*.

*A Bit of Dirt* is published quarterly. Send your news articles to:  
Editor: Marlene Gillman  
gardensgreen@mindspring.com  
770-867-0426

Thanks to all who contributed to this issue!!! You are greatly appreciated.

*Can you name this plant?*



A shade and moisture-loving native of eastern North America.

Small pale yellow flowers hanging from nodes of upper leaves. Blooms in the spring.

Rapidly spreading plant whose stems and leaves are perfoliate.

Good in a woodland setting.

Be the first to identify this perennial by both its Latin and common names. Fax, mail, e-mail or call in your answer.

You must attend the meeting in September to receive a nice prize.

**In case of a tie,**

a winner will be chosen at random at the meeting.

Contact Marlene Gillman or Kathy Parent

Phone Number: 678-377-4010 Fax Number: 678-377-4030

E-mail: gardensgreen@mindspring.com



Dolores Wyland correctly identified the Mystery Plant in the June Newsletter.

**A Bit of Dirt**

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