

A Bit of Dirt

Volume 9, Issue 5

Winter, 2001

The Newsletter of the Gwinnett Master Gardeners



A Special Offering For Master Gardeners from the American Horticultural Society

Recently our County Extension Agent, Robert Brannen received a letter from the American Horticultural Society. He has asked that we pass along this information to you. Below are highlights of this letter.

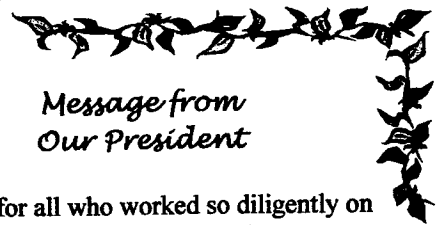
Along with the benefit of receiving *The American Gardener* magazine when you become an American Horticultural Society member, there is a **new benefit designed just for Master Gardeners**. An E-mail discussion group just for Master Gardeners has been established. When you visit the website, you will find instructions on how to join. The website link is <http://www.ahs.org/mastergardener/master.htm>.

Once you are on the list, you can E-mail all the other Master Gardeners who have "subscribed" and they can respond. "If you've never participated in such a discussion group (commonly called a listserv), it's much like a lively dinner party."

There are two other benefits that the AHS is offering. First, the "Gardeners Information Service (GIS) is a toll-free call or an E-mail away and ready to research any gardening question. The volunteers who staff GIS have many resources at their disposal..." Secondly, in January there will be the *Directory of Member Benefits* that lists all the free seeds that you can order from the Seed Exchange. It is not necessary to donate seed in order to participate, but they would appreciate it if you did. "If you are interested in donating seeds, you'll find information in the September/October *The American Gardener* on an insert between pages 8 and 9 or call the Gardeners Information Service at 1-800-777-7931."



The staff and editor of *A Bit of Dirt* wish to extend our sincere wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a joyous New Year. May this time be filled with the blessings of happy family gatherings, strengthening of cherished friendships, time for self-renewal, and the wonderful feeling that comes from *receiving* a thankful smile, warm hug or a joyous tear for your generosity to those in need.
Happy Holidays!!!



Message from Our President

Thanks for all who worked so diligently on the many projects this year. We've met challenges and had a lot of success as gardeners, educators and just generally had a great time. The Spring conference at the Bamboo Farm & Coastal Gardens in Savannah was a fond experience for those who attended. It was cold on Tybee Island for the evening picnic, but so nice and warm at the Coastal Farms for the low-country boil and tours, and there were wonderful speakers at the conference. Now Gwinnett is hosting the 2002 winter conference. Thanks to all who are involved in scheduling and planning for this event. Thanks especially to Sharon Matthews who has certainly lead the volunteers and I know the results will be a conference to remember!

We've enjoyed informative and creative speakers and tours this year. Sharon, thank you for coordinating such wonderful programs.

We welcomed Robert Brannen as our leader in the role as Agricultural Extension Agent. Kathy Parent and Marlene Gillman have been extremely supportive of the GMG. Marlene stepped up to the challenges as our ABOD editor and will remain editor in 2002. Thanks to all who keep this publication a success by contributing articles and ideas.

Diane DeVore has continued to create our meeting announcement postcards. Thanks, Diane, and keep up the wonderful job. Also thanks to Beverly Howerton for her role as Hospitality Chair. Whew! As always we had lots of goodies and everything was presented so well. Thanks for all who brought treats.

Our annual plant sale earned a record \$1600, the auction brought in \$610 and MG class 2001 refreshments earned profits of \$112.

Please offer your support to the 2002 officers.

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Gwinnett Master Gardeners Supporting Habitat

by: Ed Saulvester

Gwinnett Master Gardeners are supporting Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity by presenting a two-hour continuing education session to all newly selected future homeowners. These presentations stress the importance of "how-to's" and value of having a nice landscape. In addition to this continuing education, Master Gardener volunteers assist in the initial landscaping of Gwinnett Habitat homes. At the dedication ceremony for each home, GMG presents the new homeowner with a copy of *The Southern Living Garden Book*. This book augments what has been presented in the continuing education session and provides an excellent reference source as they begin to care for and add plants to their landscape. Habitat and Habitat homeowners sincerely appreciate our efforts and a great big THANKS goes to all Master Gardeners who have volunteered their support.

If you haven't volunteered to help our efforts with Habitat, you would find it a most rewarding experience. In addition to assisting with on-site work, you can help by donating plants. Perennials, border grasses and small shrubs are always needed. To volunteer your time or in the donation of plants you should contact Ed Saulvester. Ed's phone number is (770) 466-2962. You may also reach him via E-mail at elsvester@aol.com.



Carrots

Crunchy, root vegetable the consumption of which is alleged to improve eyesight.

The veracity of the folk belief is challenged to some degree by the large number of bunny cadavers on streets and highways.



Message from Our Vice President

This year has been exceedingly enjoyable and rewarding as the many wonderful members of our Gwinnett Master Gardeners selflessly offered their free time to numerous volunteer opportunities. Each of you showed your genuine love for our common cause and the joy of being with each other. The many contributions we made as a united group helped to enhance our community.

As good as this year has been, I am so looking forward to next year. Michele Templeton, Gayle Hayes and Bobbie Higginbotham will all be the key to next year's successes. Thank-you so much for this year's memories, friendships and our good times.

Not to be forgotten are the "Thank you's" to the following Master Gardeners for their efforts:

Glen Armstrong - our good-natured and always ready photographer.

Ed Saulvester for heading the Habitat for Humanity Committee.

Pat Longo for his work on the Collins Hill Committee.

Diane DeVore for sending invitations and making Karen's beautiful plaque.

Congratulations are to be given to Judy Anderson for winning a Blue Ribbon for her floral design at the Gwinnett Council of Garden Clubs meeting. Nice job, Judy!

Sharon Matthews

Cold Frame



Elaborate display case for showing off a gardener's collection of freeze-dried specimens.

Lilburn Woman's Club and Master Gardeners Team Up at Historic Wynne-Russell House

by Michele Templeton

Gwinnett Master Gardeners recently had the opportunity to assist the Lilburn Woman's Club to design and plant a large flower bed at the entrance sign for the circa 1826 Wynne-Russell house in Lilburn.

The Wynne-Russell is located off Highway 29 near the intersection of Indian Trail. It's "reported to be the oldest pioneer home in Lilburn with important historical significance" and is listed in the National Registry of Historical Homes.

Virginia-born Thomas Wynne volunteered for the War of 1812 in Greenville, South Carolina and while there, met and married Mary Prince Benson. By 1826, the couple had 7 children (under the age of 9) and moved to Gwinnett by covered wagon. Here they built their house on some 400-600 acres and had 7 more children. "Wynne died at 50 in 1839, and his wife, 9 children (under the age of 18) and 10 slaves farmed the area until Mary died a year after the Civil War."

One of their sons, Robert, and wife Martha Ann (Russell) inherited the house and raised a family of 12. In 1878 they sold the house to Martha Ann's younger brother, Nathan Russell. The house stayed in the Russell family until 1971 and is now owned by the City of Lilburn.

Today's Lilburn Woman's Club's Conservation Committee helps maintain the house. The bed we designed is the beginning of an on-going project to bring some color back to this wonderful 175-year-old farmhouse and its cemetery.

Thanks to plant donations from Marlene and Cathy Hedges, Bobbie Higginbotham, Sharon Matthews and to our ace photographer, Glen Armstrong. Many thanks to all of our new Woman's Club friends and their spouses for their support, elbow grease and laughter - and our guys, Rob and Jack, who helped us all the way.

For more on this story, check out Gwinnett's project board at the winter conference.

(See pictures on page 9)



Recipe from the Kitchen of Kathy Parent

SOUR CREAM DROP COOKIES

1 Cup Shortening - 2 Cups Sugar - 1 Tsp. Vanilla
3 Eggs - 1 Cup Dairy Sour Cream - 5 Cups Flour
1/2 Tsp. Baking Soda - 3 Tsp. Baking Powder
1 Tsp. Salt - 2 Tsp. Ground Cinnamon for Topping
1 1/2 Cups Chopped Walnuts or Pecans - optional

Beat shortening until light. Add 2 cups sugar and beat until fluffy. Beat in vanilla and eggs to mix thoroughly, then beat in sour cream.



Sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Add to creamed mixture. Fold in chopped nuts. Chill 1 hour or until dough is easy to handle. Drop by teaspoonfuls 2 inches apart onto baking sheet.

Combine 2 teaspoons sugar and the cinnamon. Lightly grease the bottom of a drinking glass (2 1/2" diameter) and dip into sugar and cinnamon mixture. Press cookies flat. Bake in a 350 degree oven for 12 minutes. Remove and cool. Makes about 6 dozen cookies.

Silverleaf

The gardens at Silverleaf Personal Care Home will be beautiful next spring, and in the following years.

I want to thank those Master Gardeners who donated plants and/or came out to help with the planting. Brenda Adams, Maria Turk, Marlene Hedges, Cathy Hedges, and Terri Russell gave enough plants to pretty much fill the beds, and made the planting job quick and easy. Again, thanks for helping. Your generosity is much appreciated.



Gail Martin

ELEVATE YOUR LANDSCAPE

Robert Brannen, Gwinnett Extension Agent

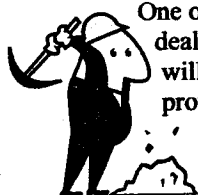
The use of berms or raised areas in the landscape can add wonderful visual interest to an otherwise dull, flat yard. Even raising areas a foot in elevation can help to define a flower bed or turf area.

Small scale elevated beds can be used to frame landscape features, such as driveways and walkways. Having berms around these areas can help create a feeling that these passageways were carved into the landscape. Visitors are guided down a walkway or drive by the contour of the land instead of being led only by the hard pavement. The idea is to lead your guests through the landscape around the home.



Raising the soil level can be a great way to beat the poor drainage areas in many of our landscapes. Installing berms in low-lying areas is an excellent way to keep water from ponding and drowning our favorite plants. Which looks better to you for diverting water, a ditch or a berm covered with plants or ground covers?

Before installing berms to be used to divert drainage, be sure to inspect the property to determine exactly which way the water runs off the property. If we ever have another rainstorm again, grab an umbrella and walk around to see where the water naturally wants to go. Drainage berms should be the first ones laid out in the landscape plan. Additional berms can then be added to compliment them and create a more attractive landscape design.



One other big advantage to installing and planting on berms is that it allows you to create your own soil. After dealing with hard red clay, it is a welcome pleasure to be planting on a berm of nice unpacked top soil. This soil will also create a more friendly environment for our plants as drainage, air flow and tilth will be greatly improved.

Berms and raised beds can add interest, functionality and improved growing conditions to our landscape. The work involved in creating them will pay back rich dividends in the appearance of our property.



'Tis the Season

Once again, Master Gardeners have been invited to a live wreath-making gathering at Gail Hollimon's home. This has proved to be an enjoyable experience in years past and Gail hopes new Master Gardeners will find their way to her home this year.

Time:
December 10 at 10:00 AM

Supplies:
Bring materials for making your wreath.

Phone Number for Directions:
770-945-4252

Gail will supply the beverages, but bring a sandwich and a snack for lunch.



Message from Our President

Continued from Page 1

Please offer your support to the 2002 officers. Welcome Sharon Matthews as President, Michele Templeton as Vice President, Bobbie Higginbotham in her second term as Treasurer and Gayle Hayes in her second term as Secretary.

Happy holidays and happy volunteering!

Karen Brandon

Gardening Quips

Pinching: Pruning method developed in Italian Gardens.

Rot: Gardening advice.

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

A doctor can bury his mistakes but an architect can only advise his clients to plant vines. -- Frank Lloyd Wright

Southeastern Flower Show

The Southeastern Flower Show would like to recruit Master Gardeners to help in areas where their expertise would be invaluable. Volunteer hours at the show usually can be counted in your Master Gardener Log Book, so check with your local Extension Agent.

The following is a list of Committees that need help and the contact person to call for details:

Horticultural Division -
Advisors for Herbaceous and Woody Cut Specimens
Candy Johnson
404-250-8972

Special Events -
Garden Gala
The Native Plant & Trip Auction
Vera Wells 770-396-4586

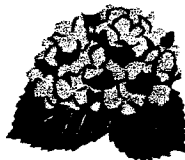
Computer Committee -
Minnie Bob Campbell 770-955-8763

Show Committee Outreach -
The Legacy Garden
Cappa Woodward 404-841-6446

Volunteer Staffing -
Horticulture Set-up or Supervise Horticulture areas
Virginia Lane
770-394-0480

Be an exhibitor in the Horticulture Division. There are 29 competitive classes you can enter. Call the SFS Office to request an Exhibitor's Guide at 404-888-5638 and check out their website at www.flowershow.org.

The Southeastern Flower Show dates are February 20th to 24th, 2002.



BURNING VERSUS COMPOSTING LEAVES

Robert Brannen, Gwinnett Extension Agent

Smoke generated by burning leaves can cause significant health problems. Leaf smoke irritates the eyes, nose and throat of healthy adults, but can be even more harmful to small children, the elderly and people with



breathing disorders. The visible smoke from leaf fires is made almost entirely of tiny particles that can reach deep into lung tissue and cause coughing, wheezing, chest pain and shortness of breath, symptoms that might not occur until several days after exposure to leaf smoke. What are you left with when the fire dies down? Ashes.

Composting can be done simply with a pile somewhere in the back of the landscape, or aggressively with bins or cages to accelerate the process. Leaves are mostly carbon, so mixing in lawn clippings, a little fertilizer or some other source of nitrogen, along with a few shovels full of woods dirt will make the whole thing work well. Again, what are you left with? Clean lungs and a wonderful organic matter that can be used to improve clay soils and nourish practically everything we love to grow.



(You know you are a real gardener when you think compost is a fascinating subject.)

2002 Upcoming Events

January - Plant Sale Forms mailed
1/14 thru 1/17 - Mow & Grow
1/21 - Master Gardener Meeting
1/31 thru 2/3 - Atlanta Patio Show



2/2 - MG's Gardener shifts - Patio Show
2/18 - Master Gardener Meeting
2/20 - Deadline for Plant Sale Orders
2/21 - 2/24 - Southeastern Flower Show
2/22 - MG's shifts at Flower Show
2/27 - Plant Delivery at Fairgrounds
2/28 - Plant Pickup

Meet Your Master Gardeners

by Marlene Gillman



Wanda Wilburn

"I was born and reared in North Georgia. After high school, I moved to Atlanta to work and attend DeKalb Junior College. Except for 10 years in D.C. working for the Federal Government, my entire life has been spent living in Georgia."

What led her to gardening? "I have enjoyed gardening as long as I can remember. As a small child, I enjoyed being with my mother and listening to her tell me about the zinnias, dahlias, and all the other flowers she grew." Even though Wanda had a long business career, she had always found time "to play in the dirt."



The decision to become a Master Gardener came after she retired. "I joined a local garden club and became more interested in gardening. The house I purchased had "bare bones" landscaping and I felt there was much that could be done to create the landscaping I wanted. After a while, I found that I had many successes but also made some mistakes. I learned about the Master Gardener program through a garden club friend. I did some research and felt that the Master Gardener program would give me some of the technical knowledge I needed. The program has been wonderful for me."

Do you enjoy working on any Master Gardener projects or tasks? "I have enjoyed working at the State Botanical Garden on the Bloodroot Project. Working at the Gwinnett Fine Arts Center to topiary the rabbit form was also a "highlight." Recently, I had the pleasure to work with the residents at the



Golden Age Retirement Home in Monroe, demonstrating to them how best to pot pansies and assisting them in potting pansies into their individual pots. Other highlights of the Master Gardener program is working at the plant sales at SBG, and the Gwinnett Extension sale of blueberries and crape myrtle. Also, I have

enjoyed working at the Crape Myrtle Festival for the past two years and responding to questions from the public about the planting and care of Crape Myrtles. I am a "people person" and like to talk!" Always ready for a new experience, Wanda keeps her ears open for any news about upcoming projects.

When asked about her favorite planting area in her garden, she responded in this manner. "I enjoy many areas in my garden, but I believe if I can choose two - I would say my shade garden (where I have ferns and hellebores) and my daylily garden. I enjoy the shade garden because I feel serene and calmed when I am viewing my ferns and hellebores. I also enjoy my daylily garden because it is colorful and bright and gives me a feeling of "being uplifted and in good spirits."

Continued on Page 6

Bill Dickey

As a native of DeKalb County, Bill attended Decatur High School and later went to Florida State University. "I was a captain in the United States Air Force. Later, my wife and I returned to Atlanta where we have lived for the past thirty years."

Was gardening an interest as a child or did you acquire the "addiction" as an adult? Bill's reply was "My mother used to have me dig her flower garden for her when I was a young boy. So I got "dirt in my blood" and have been gardening and landscaping ever since."

There are many reasons a person becomes a Master Gardener. Here is Bill's side of this story. "We have lived in three or four different houses since returning to Atlanta. All needed landscaping work. I spent my leisure time improving the "curb appeal" of the yard which greatly improved the value of these homes when we sold them. Most of my gardening hints were acquired by listening to Walter Reeves on the radio on Saturday mornings. That is where I learned about the Master Gardener Program!"



"I enjoy coming to the Extension Office and helping the callers and walk-ins solve their gardening problems. *I didn't know I knew so much!!!*"

As the Vice President of landscaping and maintenance for his neighborhood civic association, Bill has "done much to improve the appearance of clubhouse grounds and entrances to the subdivision." He enjoys working in his rock garden that runs alongside his driveway. "I have annuals, perennials, and bulbs planted for year-round color. In the backyard, there is a water garden with goldfish and water lilies. It is very soothing to hear the water trickle down the waterfall."



While Bill doesn't have any particular areas of interest at this time, he states, "You should never stop learning. If you do, you will be like a flower without water - you will wither away. The Master Gardener program has opened more doors to allow me to help others. I enjoy learning more and more about our natural world."

Favorite Gardening Tools	Favorite Gardening Books
"My pruning snips and my shovel which I use for transplanting."	"I find myself using the Georgia Master Gardeners Handbook more than the 50 other gardening books that I own."



Jewelweed...A Gem of a Plant for Poison Ivy

by Shannon Pable



First a bit of history...

Impatiens capensis & *Impatiens pallida* (Balsaminaceae family): from the Latin "impatiens", referring to their explosive little seed pods. My kids fondly refer to these pods as "poppers". *Impatiens capensis* is also referred to as "Spotted Touch-Me-Not." It is commonly referred to as "Jewelweed" because the leaf, when placed underwater, reflects a beautiful jewel-like sheen. This plant is usually found in very wet, shady, sandy, loamy soil and can be verrrry invasive.



<<< *Impatiens capensis*

Impatiens pallida >>>



Here's the scoop on the meds...

First and foremost, be sure that the area you are harvesting in is free of chemicals, pesticides, or any other contaminants. The leaves and the juice from the stem of Jewelweed are used to cure poison ivy and other plant-induced rashes. Jewelweed works by counter-reacting with the chemicals in other plants that cause irritation, such as urushiol (pronounced oo-roo-shee-oh!), the oil contained in poison ivy. When you are out in the field and find you have been exposed to poison ivy, oak, sumac or stinging nettle, you can reach for the Jewelweed plant, slice the stem, and rub its juicy inside on exposed parts. This will promptly ease irritation and usually prevent skin breakout. A poultice from the plant is also a remedy for bruises, burns, cuts, eczema, insect bites, sores, sprains, warts, and ringworm. Jewelweed tea can be made from boiling leaves for 20 minutes. Then strain the liquid and pour into ice cube trays for freezing. When you have a skin rash, rub it with a jewelweed cube and you will be amazed with its healing properties. It will keep in the freezer for up to a year. Jewelweed does not dry well due to its high moisture and oil content. Do not make alcoholic tinctures from Jewelweed because some people have had a bad reaction using Jewelweed with alcohol.

And just in case you're hungry...

Jewelweed sprouts also make a delicious cooked green, but only with proper preparation due to its high level of calcium oxalate. It can be harmful if ingested raw, but is destroyed by thoroughly cooking or drying the plant. The sprouts should be gathered before they reach six inches tall and boiled from ten to fifteen minutes in two changes of water. Do not use the water for drinking. People with a tendency to rheumatism, arthritis, gout, kidney stones and hyperacidity should take special caution if including this plant in their diet. So the next time you bump into poison ivy, rub on the Jewelweed.

Meet Your Master Gardeners - Wanda Wilburn (continued from page 5)

What recent horticultural events or seminars has impressed her? "The tree identification class for advanced Master Gardeners was truly inspiring. Nature has given us so many beautiful trees that are so different - different in growth habits, bark, leaves, etc. I would never have believed that I knew so little about tree identification. I have made a commitment to learn more about trees! The information I learned about many of the trees was truly fascinating - i.e., one leaf looks like a cross, in another one can see a rabbit's head, etc."

Wanda says she has "not developed a special area of interest, but I have a special interest in the Gwinnett Children's Museum garden and believe that the "surface has only been scratched" in landscaping that garden. Such a wonderful opportunity to acquaint children with the beauty of nature! Being a Master Gardener has meant that "there are more volunteer opportunities available and the monthly meetings provide a great forum for learning about 1000+ interesting gardening subjects."

Favorite Gardening Book

"I have so many gardening books I can't pick a favorite. Well, maybe the herb book is my favorite."

Favorite Gardening Tool

"My favorite tool is my trowel. It's just the right tool for planting so many types of plants..."

Gardens of Greece

by Marjorie Claybrook

The Greeks were never gardeners in the horticultural sense. The rocky terrain and lack of rain did not encourage gardening, as a past-time. All physical work, other than war or athletics, was considered degrading to the Greek upper crust. The work of gardening would have been left to slaves. Their interest in gardens was limited to admiration of the grandeur of nature and all of Greece is a natural garden. Greeks loved their urban settings and planted groves of trees for pleasure and religious purposes and gave their buildings magnificent natural settings.



Only two gardens are described in all of Greek epic literature. They are the gardens of Laertes, father of Odysseus, and that of King Alcinoos of Phaeacia. The Minoans used extensive floral and plant decoration between 2100 BC and 1600 BC but there are no written records regarding garden plants or gardens. Again archaeologists were able to identify plants from remains of root systems in terracotta planters surrounding the Minoan palace. Similar container gardens were found at the temple of Hephaistos in Athens. Perhaps the Greeks invented container gardening. Single and cabbage roses were favored by the Minoans. On the island of Rhodes, roses were intensively cultivated for their fragrant petals, but it was not until Alexander's soldiers brought back stories of Persian gardens, that the aristocrats of Athens began to establish gardens for personal enjoyment.

The Planetree (*Plantanus*) was introduced from Asia Minor and was widely planted for its shade. Other trees were the black and white poplars, various oaks, cypress, willow, bay, arbutus, and myrtle. The small garden of Epicurus was mainly devoted to vegetables and gave expression to his philosophical principals. Theophrastus (c. 370-c. 286 BC) made an attempt to systematically classify all known plants and their uses in "An Enquiry into Plants". His plants included cotton (introduced by Sennacherib to Khorsabad in 700 BC) and the Banyan tree, already described by Alexander's admiral who saw it growing on the plains of India, as well as spiny euphorbias in Baluchistan. Only extensive references to this work survive. Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica* written in the first century AD drew heavily on this work.

As the Greek Empire expanded to include Egypt and Persia, they began to incorporate garden concepts from other countries. Perhaps the greatest contributor to Greek gardening was Alexander. Alexander collected seeds of exotic trees and flowers during his travels, which he sent to Aristotle's students at the Lyceum. Among the trees introduced at this time were the lemon and peach. Greek expatriates brought their concept of the pleasure garden to their colonies. The great prototype of the ornamental garden was the peristyle villa and garden at Delos, which became the model for the Romans at Pompeii a hundred years later. They also gave us the most popular garden motif of all time — the Acanthus spinosus with its distinctively fretted leaves.

The Fall Webworm - Friend or Foe

Robert Brannen, Gwinnett Extension Agent

The fall webworm is a common pest of local hardwood trees. It attacks more than 88 different kinds of plants, including many fruit, nut and ornamental trees and shrubs. They are known for the large, unsightly webs produced in tree branches at this time of year. The fall webworm is first seen as a white moth, but soon develops into a one inch long, pale green to yellow caterpillar, covered with tufts of long white and black hairs.



Fall webworms can often be controlled by removing and destroying any leaves that contain egg masses. Webs may be knocked out of low-hanging branches with a stick or broom and put into a box or garbage bag for disposal.

Many birds and beneficial insects attack the egg and larval stages of fall webworm. You can help these predators get to their fall webworm prey by tearing open the webs.

If webs are too numerous or too high in a tree to deal with individually, insecticides can be used to prevent damage. Because webworm larvae remain inside their webbing, insecticidal sprays must penetrate the web to be effective. For best control, apply insecticides after eggs hatch and before larvae develop dense webs.

The fall webworm is not necessarily a pest to be feared. A single nest or two is not going to cause enough damage to harm a tree. The leaves are going to fall off in a couple of weeks anyway, so sit back and appreciate that there are going to be fewer leaves to rake this fall.



A Perfect Fall Day

Article by Delores Wyland

Photos by Glen Armstrong

Twenty Master Gardeners, friends and spouses of Gwinnett County Master Gardeners went on a field trip to Wilkerson Mill Gardens. We departed from the Extension Office at 9:00 AM. Every seat in the van was full and Extension Agent, Robert Brannen, was our driver. A full Suburban was driven by Terry Russell. Sharon Matthews, "The Hostess with the Mostest" and our trip coordinator, had a surprise for us. For the hour and a half drive, everyone was given a snack bag with a personal name tag and tied with a ribbon. The bag was filled with an apple, muffin, candy, cheese, crackers, and vegetables. Conversation all the way there was fun and lively. Thanks to Robert's expert driving through Atlanta traffic, we arrived safely and on time.

Elizabeth Dean greeted us with a big smile saying, "It's a perfect fall day". It was perfect! The sun was shining and the crisp air was filled with the aroma of fallen leaves. Elizabeth asked if we would like to see the grist mill first. As we walked down the trail to the mill, leaves fell about us in the slight breeze. Overhead was a canopy of huge trees. She said the main reason for the purchase of the thirty acres was the very old White Oaks. She pointed out that she noticed the oaks usually had the taller Tulip Poplars growing near them. Elizabeth believes the taller poplars act like lightning rods, protecting the oaks so the oaks can form a natural canopy for the shade loving natives below.



Then she showed us the nursery stock sections. At that point, we headed in different directions to pick our heart's desire. The nursery plants at Wilkerson Mill Gardens are exceptionally healthy and reasonably priced. You would not believe the amount of plants we could not live without! Remember, I said the van and Suburban were full? We joked about there not being enough room for people and plants in the vehicles. However, we figured when the time came we would fit all the plants in somewhere, somehow. We then picked out our favorite spot in the garden to eat our packed lunch. There was a picnic table by the mill, a cozy table on the porch of the house, a secret garden under an old Mulberry tree with an old mill stone for a table, rock wall and sunny places all about.

Finally, it was time to leave. We had fun filling the vehicles with our plants until there wasn't an empty nook or cranny. Just as Sharon had promised, we arrived at the Extension Office with fifteen minutes to spare at 2:15 PM. We said our "goodbyes" and each headed for home with our plants. Tommy Hollimon said, "This is what Master Gardeners are all about; taking trips, learning about Nature and getting to know each other." A great big **THANK YOU** and **CONGRATULATIONS** to **SHARON MATTHEWS** for a well-planned field trip on a perfect fall day.



Gwinnett Master Gardeners - Doing What Comes Naturally

The event was the River Place subdivision (off Bush Road in Peachtree Corners) first Neighborhood Pride Weekend on October 13 -14, 2001. MG Susan Hanson spent almost three hours making site visits.

Photos submitted by Pat Bruschini

When the need arose requesting horticultural assistance to create a flower bed at the Wynne-Russell House in Lilburn, several Master Gardeners were quick to volunteer their expertise.

Photos by Glen Armstrong



Giving advice to Karen Stewart on a variety of plant problems, landscaping suggestions, and identifying insects and plant diseases.



Master Gardeners and Lilburn Woman's Club members and spouses before the hard work began.



In the Backyard of Wes Meyers



Layout done, planting begins.



Homeowner Lorrie Backer, daughter Emily, and Susan enjoying cookies and milk while pouring over landscape and gardening books.



Project near completion, Volunteers discuss last minute changes before installing soaker hoses and mulch.

A Bit of Dirt is published quarterly. Please send your news articles to:

Editor: Marlene Gillman
E-mail: gardensgreen@mindspring.com
Phone: 770-867-6310



I have enjoyed publishing *A Bit of Dirt*, but wish to stress that it is the team work of the staff reporters, Shamon Pable and Marjorie Claybrook, Robert Brannen, and submitted articles from Master Gardeners that truly make this publication possible.

Thank you one and all. You have been there for me and are greatly appreciated.

Seasons Greetings!

Marlene

Name this plant



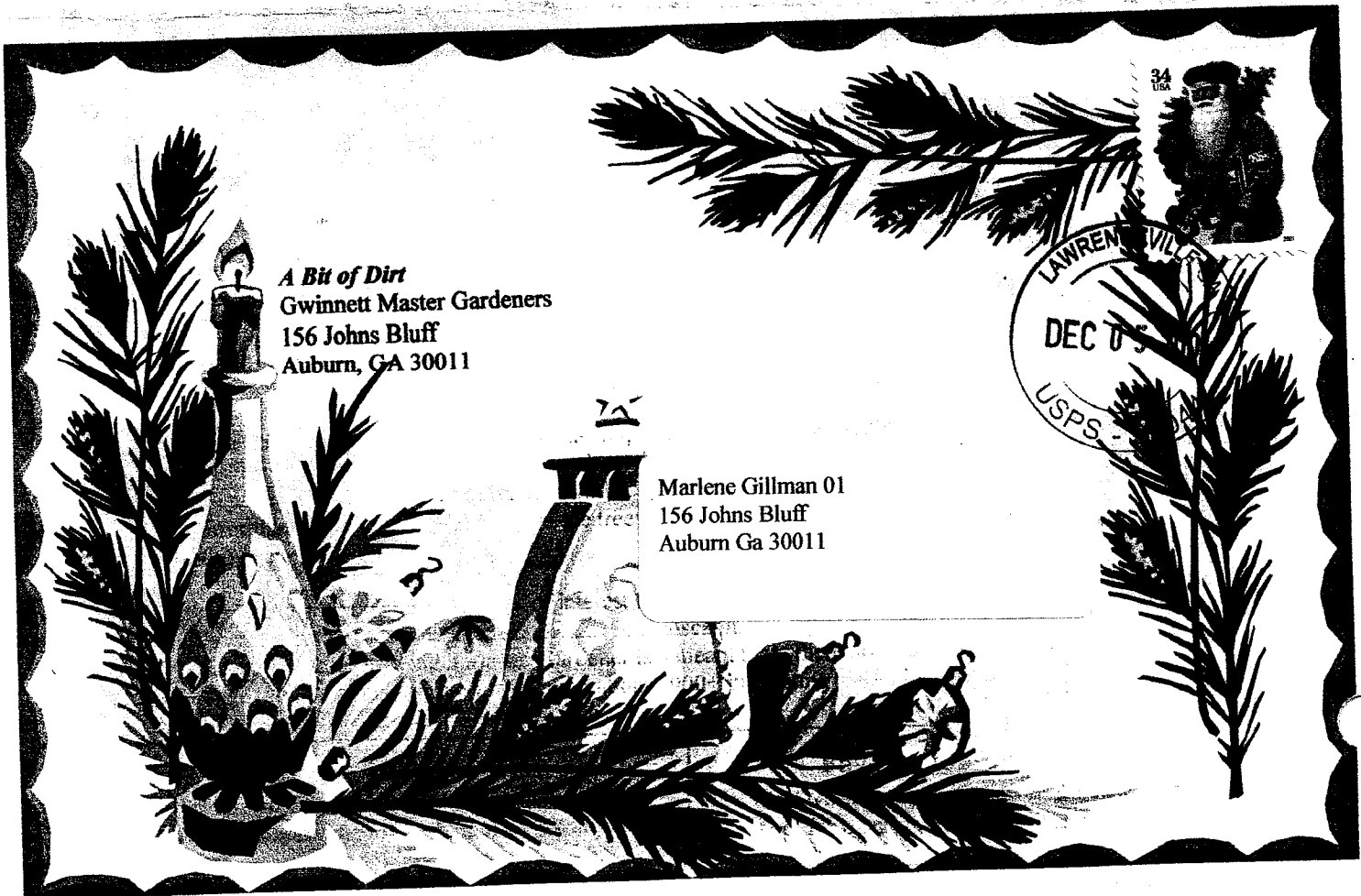
Foliage: Deciduous broadleaf Height: 6-12 feet
Spread: 10-15 feet Exposure: Sun or partial shade

Dark green summer foliage turns yellow-bronze in fall. Large, fragrant white flowers appear before foliage in spring. Easy to maintain. Generally pest free.

Be the first to identify this woody ornamental by both its Latin and common names. Fax, mail, E-mail or call in your answer. You must attend the January, 2002 meeting 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 the Extension Service: 678-377-4010
E-mail: gardensgreen@mindspring.com
Fax: 678-377-4030

Cathy Hedges correctly identified the last plant as Bellwort - *Uvularia perfoliata*. Congratulations, Cathy!



A Bit of Dirt
Gwinnett Master Gardeners
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