

# A BIT OF DIRT

Fall 2018

A Newsletter of the  
Gwinnett County Master Gardeners Association  
*Promoting Gardening Through Education & Volunteering*



*Glorious Orange* by Becky Wolary - 2018 Honorable Mention Plants Category

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### **From the Editor ...**

Finally! Fall has arrived and with it the Fall 2018 issue of *A Bit of Dirt*.

Fall is my favorite time of year. I love the cooler, drier weather, wearing sweaters, jeans and boots, the leaves changing color and the start of school, although it has been many years since I've attended. So, I've taken this protracted summer personally.

Believe it or not, the record highs for the month of October were not broken this year. Apparently, 1954 was the last time we had a warm October. That year still holds many of the daily record highs. This explains why I don't remember such a warm October. I was born in 1955.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy this issue. We have a couple of recipes to try, information on a murder mystery at Vines Botanical Gardens, great articles on controlling erosion, sustainable

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gardening practices for fall, and winter landscaping ideas.

By the way, please feel free to forward *A Bit of Dirt* to your friends who may find it interesting.

Until January, Happy Gardening!  
Ann Langley

## Where were you Saturday, August 11, 2018, between the hours of 9 AM and noon?

I will never forget where I was. Perhaps you were there as well. I spent the morning creeping through the parking lots of Gwinnett County's Department of Water Resources and Department of Transportation. That was the morning of the County's first free Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Recycling Day.

Back in 2015 I inherited quite a number of hazardous lawn care products. I remember taking my list to the Master Gardeners training in 2017 and asking anyone where I could safely dispose of them. Sadly, there wasn't a viable option. Certain counties held recycling programs from time-to-time but nothing on a regular basis. So when Gwinnett County announced it's first HHW Recycling Day, I was relieved to be rid of some of these chemicals. As there was a 5-item limit, I asked my mother to ride with me. Hopefully, we could represent two households and get rid of twice as much. As it turned out, they did take all 19 lawn care products and a battery.

The recycling took place at Gwinnett's Department of Water Resources on Winder Hwy. When I turned onto Winder Hwy. and discovered a parking lot, I was both dismayed and pleased. Dismayed because we were going to be here a while. Pleased because so many Gwinnett citizens realized the importance of disposing of HHW responsibly to benefit our environment and ultimately our health. Materials accepted at the event included cleaners, batteries, fluorescent light bulbs and ballasts, lawn care products, oils, paints, and pesticides.

Mom and I finally made it into the parking lot and could see the station where the crew was frantically unloading and organizing the waste. It was at this point that I struck up a conversation with a man coming in the opposite direction. (He had a device on his truck that I wondered if it were an exhaust pipe or a stereo speaker. Turns out it was a snorkel. I laughed, but he was serious. He could drive through 3.5 feet of water with it engaged. Anyway ...) He informed me that from where I was to where he was would take another hour and a half. (*What?!*) Mom and I discussed it and decided we would hang in there and chalk it up to mother/daughter bonding time. Once we got to the recycling station, the crew acted very quickly and efficiently.





Afterwards I spoke to Melanie Miller with the County's Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Division. Ms. Miller says the County was indeed overwhelmed by the response. They serviced 881 vehicles and, unfortunately, many more vehicles still on the Winder Parking Lot ... I mean ... Highway had to be turned away as the event closed at noon.

The County took in 4.2 tons of flammables including oil-based paints, stains, thinners, paint strippers, solvents, varnishes, and wood preservatives. These hazardous products will be reformulated into fuel used in the production of cement. Lawn care products were the next largest group to be recycled. Gwinnett County citizens also recycled 1.9 tons of automotive products including used oil, antifreeze and batteries. Another half-ton of mercury including elemental mercury, thermostats, thermometers, and fluorescent bulbs and lamps were sent for retort, a method to capture invisible mercury vapors and turn them back into liquid mercury. This mercury can be reactivated and reused, or it can be safely stored or disposed of according to proper protocol.

Ms. Miller says there is some discussion on the next HHW Recycling Day, but nothing has been set yet. I am confident that the County will take the lessons learned from their first event and improve the next one greatly.

In the meantime, Gwinnett's [America Recycles Day will be held Saturday, November 17, 2018, from 9:00 am until noon at Coolray Field \(2500 Buford Drive in Lawrenceville\).](#) This free event offers paper shredding, plus electronics, tire, toner/printer cartridge, and paint recycling. In addition, bring your old sneakers and gently used clothing to donate to those in need or to be recycled into new products. There will be free kids' activities, including a bounce house, touch-a-truck, and meet your haulers. Refreshments and giveaways available while supplies last.



Here are some things to remember before you come.

- Paper shredding is limited to five copier paper boxes.
- Paint is limited to ten gallons.
- Tire recycling is limited to eight per vehicle; no dealer tires.
- Electronics recycling is free with the exception of TVs, monitors, and printers. There is a \$10 cash fee per TV or computer monitor and a \$5 cash fee per printer.

For more information, you can call the Solid Waste Call Center at 770.822.7141.

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## **“Murder” at Vines**

Gwinnett County Master Gardeners and Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation invite you to help solve a “murder” at Vines Park. Clues provided on the Trail of Terror will provide valuable information for the investigation. This scary walk at night will get you in the mood for Halloween. The event is open to the public, ages 8 and above. The registration fee is \$3. It starts at 6:30 pm, Saturday, October 27, at Vines Park, 3500 Oak Grove Road, Loganville, GA 30052. (Rain date is Sunday, October 28.) Call 678-277-0902 for registration.



Jackie Kujawa, MGEV

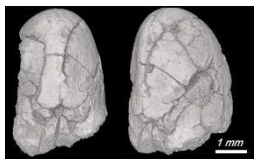
## **Beans, Beans the Musical Fruit!**

### **Fava Bean (*Vicia fava*)**

#### **Fava History**

Millennia ago people living in the northern Galilee region of prehistoric Israel really loved their beans—fava beans, specifically.

Archaeo-botanists from the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) studied the seeds recovered during excavations of Neolithic sites throughout the Galilee. The researchers discovered that the Neolithic diet favored fava beans, but also included other types of legumes, such as lentils, peas and chickpeas.



Despite the importance of cereals in nutrition that continues to this day, it seems that in the region we examined (west of the Jordan River), it was the legumes—full of flavor and protein—that were actually the first species to be domesticated.

The fava seeds under investigation are the oldest domesticated seeds of this bean species thus far discovered.

There are many different kinds of beans and it is not certain which bean is meant in II Samuel 17: 27-28 and Ezekiel 4: 9. However, based on archaeological data as well as current usage, it is likely that these are broad beans or Fava; *Vicia fava*.

The Book of Ezekiel is one of the most detailed and well-known references to grains in the Bible, but we also learn, that Israelites dried and crushed legumes (bean and lentils) into bread flour or a mush gruel.



The reference in Ezekiel (4:9) substantiates the widespread use of these beans in the Middle East as they must have been readily available for "Ezekiel's bread."

It seems clear that Ezekiel's bean was the *Vicia faba*\*, also known *Vicia vulgaris*. As we learned earlier beans were one of the oldest cultivated plants, perhaps predating the domestication of grains like emmer wheat; their origin is North Africa or the Middle East.

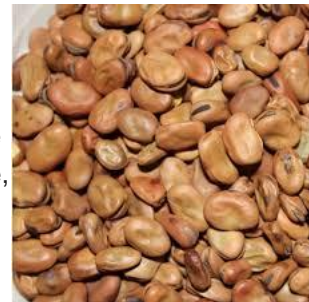
Beans were likely one of the vegetables that Daniel requested during his captivity in Babylon. They are a good source of protein so Daniel could "keep kosher" and stay healthy (see Daniel 1:12-16) in a pagan land.

### **Fava, the Healthy Legume**

Fava or Broad beans (sometimes called Horse beans) were and remain a staple in the Nile Valley where they are the traditional breakfast food and are also widely cultivated throughout the Middle East. Perhaps because we have a number of legumes - peas, green beans, black-eyes, etc. - broad beans are seldom sold in the United States except in stores specializing in Middle East foods.

Like other legumes, they are very nutritious and contain important proteins as well as fiber and carbohydrates. After soaking to soften the hard seed coat, broad beans are boiled and eaten plain or mashed to form a kind of gruel. They can also be used to make a coarse bread; Ezekiel's bread. More on that in a moment.

Fava bean plants are a cool season, frost-tolerant legume. In Georgia, it is best to plant in the fall or winter for a late spring/early summer harvest. Pods are purple streaked and have a sweet, rich flavor. They are high yielders in hot, humid conditions and sandy soil. The plants are large, bush-like with white flowers; it grows as tall as 40 inches. If eaten young, the pod is edible as well.



The bean grows in all types of soil as long as the soil is well-drained. Although not drought-resistant, beans are hearty enough to live through mild frosts.

Broad beans can grow in semi-shade as well as strong sunlight. Young green seeds are relished in the spring and are prepared like we would butter beans or green peas. Mature beans are brown and flat in shape and like other legumes can be stored for a long time. It was no doubt from a store of dried beans that King David was supplied.

A hearty variety for Georgia gardeners is the broad 'Windsor' Fava Bean.

### **How to Cultivate Fava Beans**

Fava beans need approximately four to five months between planting and harvest. Before producing seed pods, the plant displays small white flowers with brown specks. Sow the seeds at least 1 inch deep in fertile, loose, well-draining soil, in an area of full sun, and space the plants four to five inches apart.

For thick-skinned seeds like peas, soak for 8 to 10 hours (or overnight, assuming you soak them before bed and sow them in the morning). For thin-skinned seeds like snap beans, soak for 2 to 4 hours. For all other seeds in between, the appropriate length of time to soak is more an art than a science.

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## Enjoying Fava Beans

Fava beans may not have been eaten as bread (Ezekiel 4), as the Hebrew word for bread can also mean 'hearty stew'.

Here is a 'heavy' but tasty Fava stew for you to try. Note: both my father (96 yrs. old) and father-in-law found the Fava beans tasty but they used a pressure cooker to get them tender enough for their liking.

This "porridge" dish bears a striking similarity to a Middle Eastern dish known as Ful Mudammas (pronounced Fool Mu-dah-mahs). A popular vegetarian entrée, Ful Mudammas is made from a few basic ingredients: fava beans, garlic, olive oil and lemon juice. While lemon wasn't cultivated in Israel at the time of the Bible, there was a similar citrus fruit called a "citron" that was often used in cooking. Based on clues in the Talmud and the Tosefta, another text from this time period, Ful Mudammas is likely similar to the Biblical-era method of preparing fava beans.

### Fava Stew

1 can (16 oz.) cooked fava beans  
Extra virgin olive oil  
½ onion, diced  
2 roasted garlic cloves  
1 tsp cumin  
½ cup water  
Salt and black pepper to taste  
Juice from 2 fresh lemons



- Prep the canned fava beans by pouring them into a colander to drain. Rinse the beans in cold water. Set aside.
- In a large skillet, heat 1 tbsp. olive oil over medium heat. Fry the diced onion till it turns golden brown. Add roasted garlic and cumin, sauté for 1 minute. Add the fava beans to the pan, then add about ½ cup of water to the skillet. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to medium low, season with salt and pepper to taste (I usually add about ½ tsp salt and a dash of pepper). Cover the skillet.
- Let mixture simmer for about 10 minutes on medium low heat until the beans are soft, and the liquid has reduced by about 75 percent. If beans seem too firm, add water and simmer for a few more minutes until they are tender. Uncover the skillet and remove from heat.
- Pour the fava bean mixture into a mixing bowl. Squeeze in the fresh lemon juice. Mash the mixture to a semi-smooth consistency; it should be a little chunkier than hummus. For a mashing tool, use a spice pestle, potato masher or the back of a large metal spoon.
- Serve each portion on a plate. Create a shallow basin in the center of the Ful Muddamas. Drizzle olive oil lightly inside the basin, then garnish with the ingredients of your choice.

By Dr. Ed Bez  
President of the Biblical Botanical Gardens Society  
Jacksonville, Florida

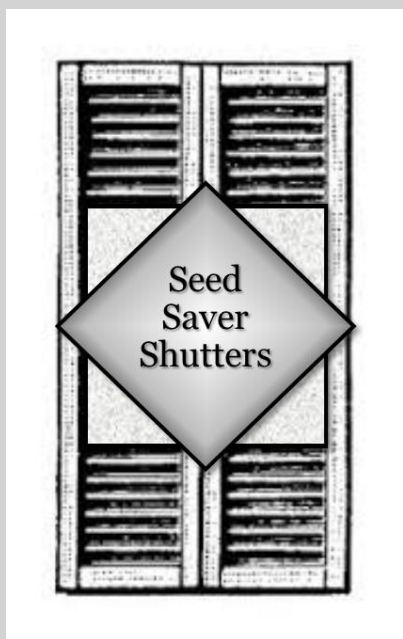
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\*Fava or Faba are acceptable spellings.

## GCMGA Seed Saver Shutters

Free Seed Exchange for GCMGA Members

Need some seeds or have some  
seeds to share?



You can find the  
Seed Saver Shutter at  
Gwinnett County Extension Office  
750 S. Perry St., Ste.400  
Lawrenceville, GA 30046





### **Annuals**

Cosmos – 3  
Castor bean – 1  
Money plant, Lavender – 4  
Popcorn, Lavender – 1  
Sweet peas – 2

### **Herbs**

Arugula – 2  
Catnip – 2  
Marjoram – 2  
Oregano – 4  
Wild quinoa – 1

### **Perennials**

Coneflower, Grayhead – 9  
Hellebore- 3  
Jewels of Opar – 2

### **Vegetables**

Cucumber – 1  
Gourd, Luffa – 4  
Kale, Dwarf blue – 1  
Melon, Honeydew – 6  
Peas, Coco – 2  
Pepper, Chile – 4  
Pepper, Mini sweet – 1  
Pepper, Sweet – 9  
Squash, Blue Hubbard– 1  
Tomato, Beefsteak – 2  
Tomato, Black Krim – 3  
Tomato, Cherry – 15  
Tomato, Paste – 3

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## Landscaping to Reduce Erosion

Erosion is an issue facing many homeowners. Signs of it include exposed roots, gutted out areas on the lawn, or puddles or swampy sections. In North Georgia our terrain tends to be hilly and mountainous, thus increasing the problem. The loss of soil is detrimental to the home landscape and the eroded material, known as sediment, can pollute water bodies. Various techniques exist to reduce erosion.

Bare soil is at high risk of erosion. Our area receives a fair amount of rainfall during the year, and the raindrops dislodge soil particles that are washed away. In the past, when cotton was king in the south, farmers lacked understanding about the soil, and large amounts were lost to erosion. In more recent times, commercial agriculture has taken steps to keep the problem to a minimum. Urban areas are also troubled by erosion due to the loss of vegetation from construction and neglect. Additionally, surfaces that are impervious to water infiltration, such as concrete and asphalt, concentrate flows of water and runoff across exposed soil thus increasing the problem. The eroded material, sediment, is a source of water pollution.

The most important aspect of controlling erosion is to keep the soil covered. Vegetation will go a long way decreasing the problem. It acts as a shield reducing the impact of rainfall that wears away the soil, and the roots will hold the soil particles in place. Grass areas are effective at retaining the soil and are relatively easy to establish and maintain. Sod will provide an 'instant lawn' though it costs more to establish. Make sure the soil is adequately prepared before installation. On slopes, use 'sod staples' to hold it in place until the sod becomes rooted. When seeding steep slopes, jute mesh, which is a fibrous netting that can be purchased at garden centers such as Home Depot and Lowes. Install the material by rolling it up and down the grade. Staple the netting to hold it in place. Apply the seed.



Some areas may be too shaded to plant grass. As an alternative, several types of ground covers can be utilized. Liriope, Japanese pachysandra, Confederate and Asiatic jasmine, and wintercreeper euonymus thrive with minimal sunlight. On slopes, use jute mesh and cover with pine straw.

Plain mulch applications are helpful. Pine straw, pine bark, cypress mulch, landscape fabrics or other similar material will reduce the loss of soil. Pine straw is among the best since it will not wash away as quickly as the other material. Mulch also will minimize moisture loss from the soil, inhibit weed germination and improves the aesthetics of the

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landscape.

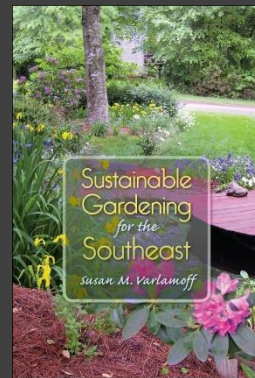
Erosion can be a challenge in the home landscape but can be controlled by implementing proper landscape practices. Ensuring the soil is covered and vegetated will reduce the loss of soil and improve the quality of your landscape.

By Tim Daly

*Timothy Daly is an Agricultural and Natural Resource Extension Agent with UGA Extension Gwinnett. He can be contacted at 678-377-4011 or [tdaly@uga.edu](mailto:tdaly@uga.edu).*

## Sustainable Gardening Practices for Fall

As fall approaches, the earth reminds us winter is drawing near. Daylight shortens and temperatures cool. Trees shed their leaves and annual and perennial plants die back. For ecologically-minded gardeners, nature gives us plenty of chores. So, haul out the rake, clippers, loppers and wheel barrow for fall clean-up and consider these suggestions.



- **Leave the leaves.** If there is a light layer of leaves on the lawn, chop them up as you mow the grass. The leaf pieces will migrate into soil and enrich it. If there is a heavier leaf layer, rake them and use them to mulch the beds (3 inches). The rest heap on the compost pile and turn under. Leaves will break down into nutrients for plants.
- **Aerate and over seed fescue lawns.** Before you do this, brush a thin layer (1/2 inch) of compost onto the grass to feed the soil. Then aerate and seed the grass. During the next drought you will be the envy of the neighborhood since your lawn will stay greener longer because the fertile soil will retain moisture while the others will dry out.
- **Attract finches with native plant seed heads.** When purple coneflower and black eyed Susans stop blooming, they develop seed heads. Finches love to eat the seeds for breakfast. So, before you dead head these flowers, allow the finches to swoop in for a meal.
- **Protect perennials.** Clip back spent perennial plant stems and flowers (except those that develop seed heads) and pull out annuals to feed the compost pile. Mulch perennials with leaves or other organic mulch such as pine straw or wood chips to keep the weeds down and the soil warm.



- **Plant fall vegetables.** For the ultimate fast food generating no greenhouse gases in transportation, grow fall and winter vegetables in your yard. Lettuce, radishes, spinach, carrots, and broccoli are just a few that flourish in north Georgia. Imagine having a pot of lettuce on your deck ready to be picked for salad! For more information, [click here](#) to consult UGA's vegetable garden calendar publication.
- **Bring in the bulbs.** In addition to creating ecologically-correct gardens, Master Gardeners should think ahead to spring color. Bulbs give joy in the spring as they poke through the ground with a splash of color. Be aware that squirrels adore tulips, and whatever they don't eat, the deer will finish off. So, if you plant tulips, do so in a protected area or put a net over them. Daffodils fare better and come in yellow, white, and salmon. Rather than putting them in rows, toss them onto the area to be planted and then dig them in. Nature tends to be random rather than rigid. Be sure to amend the soil if it is hard packed clay before you plant.



by Susan Varlamoff, MGEV

Adapted from [Sustainable Gardening for the Southeast](#)

## Winter is Coming!

Even if you are not a fan of the popular television fantasy drama Game of Thrones, you still have to know that as we move from fall into winter, there are a lot of changes that are going to occur in your efforts in the landscape over the next few months.

We can all stay busy dividing perennials that have done well, planting woodys, and, of course, collecting all the leaves and pine straw for our compost bins. But usually from December through March there is not much going on out there. I personally think this is part of the Lord's "Dee-vine" plan to keep us inside to watch the Bulldogs beat Tech, Auburn, and Ala-dam-bama.

The bottom line is that for nine months or so, we work and fret over the plants in our gardens, but we don't usually think so much about the overall effect and functionality of our landscape design. I would suggest that we spend a little of this down time to identify and solve problems and look for creative ways to make small changes that will have large impacts on the collective appearance of our landscape.

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We usually see more rain in the fall and winter months, so it is a good time to find those areas where too much moisture is a problem. All those years in the Extension Office have convinced me that ninety percent of landscape plants that die or never really grow well are due to soggy roots. During periods of dry weather, we can add water, but there is not really a good way to make soggy soil go away. I suggest that you pull on your boots, grab an umbrella and walk around the landscape during a steady downpour. Yes, the neighbors will think you are weird but occasionally bake some cookies for them and instead they will enjoy the cookies and think you are 'interestingly eccentric'. Use berms, pipes, or other diversions to change the way water flows through these areas to avoid having to replace root rotted plants every couple of years. Consider ground covers, mulches, or maybe a truckload of topsoil to solve the problem area once and for all.

It's time to prune aggressively. (You all know how I feel about creating square plants or meatballs in the landscape.) I think you should go out and prune when you are a little angry. Take out that spousal angst on your woody ornamentals. The plants will recover much more quickly and not 'remind you' of your mistakes for the next thirty years. We southerners love our jungles, but overgrown plants frequently detract from your landscape's appearance. When pruning an overgrown shrub, first drop to your knees and remove several of the stems at about ten inches from the ground. Then move half way up the plant and make several more cuts. Finally trim the top and sides for the shape you desire. The plant will respond with growth at all three places and give you the natural appearance that you desire. I have pruned camellias from twelve feet down to eighteen inches and they all grew back beautifully. There are a few exceptions, however. Boxwoods, junipers, and other 'needled' plants do not respond well to angry pruning.

I am frequently asked, "What is the easiest, cheapest, and quickest way to dramatically improve the appearance of a landscape?" I always respond with – "sharpen up your bed lines". Recently a house in my neighborhood sat vacant for nine months while the owners relocated to another state. Nothing was done except the regular cutting of the grass. When they were ready to sell, the owners straightened up the squiggly bed lines with big sweeping curves and heavily mulched the non-turf areas. Nothing was pruned, fertilized, planted, or watered but the change in appearance was astonishing. The cost of the 'landscape renovation' was a half day's labor and a pick-up load of good mulch. The new 'curb appeal' helped sell the house in two days. I am now trying to convince the new neighbors that I am 'interestingly eccentric'.







Even in the winter a splash of color is a good thing. When your summer annuals begin to fade, it's pretty easy to replace them with things like pansies, violas which seem to grow more vigorously, Acorus 'Ogon' or 'Variegatus', or ornamental cabbage or kale. They are widely available in a host of different colors and are pretty much problem free. Shrub wise, it's hard to go wrong with camellias, winter jasmine, sasanquas, and beautyberry which is a favorite of mine. I also really like incorporating plants with colorful foliage into the landscape. I particularly like the varieties of Abelia grandiflora including 'Mardi Gras', 'Kaleidoscope', and 'Sunrise' which provide great year-round foliage color so significant that I don't care that they also bloom. I also like the foliage color of the Nandina domestica – the NANA which produces NO BERRIES. (I know that Carol Hassell will smack me if I recommend the common nandina.) The dwarf has beautiful foliage and did I mention that it has NO BERRIES. Don't forget about your deciduous plants. There is also great color in the stems and twigs of Cornus alba. Once the leaves fall from these dogwoods, the stems can be bright red or yellow and look great in front of a wall or fence.

Winter is also a good time to evaluate your turf grass. First, do you need all of that grass? While dormant, all of the warm season grasses are pretty brown and dull. Look for areas where the shade has expanded, and the grass is thin and weak. Also, check the sloped areas where the grass is not as vigorous due to tiny amounts of erosion. Re-cutting that bed line and replacing areas of poor-quality grass with creative uses of mulch or ground covers can certainly improve your overall landscape appearance.

The winter months provide us with time to step back and observe the strengths and weaknesses of our gardens and landscapes. It's great for fantasizing what our landscapes could be and beginning a plan to make it happen.

By Robert Brannen  
Retired Gwinnett County Extension Agent

*Editor's Note: Common nandina produces colorful red berries which last from Christmas time to March. The problem is the berries contain cyanide and other alkaloids that produce a highly toxic hydrogen cyanide (HCN) which is extremely poisonous to all animals, but particularly to voracious cedar waxwings. ([Click here](#) to read a report from UGA's College of Veterinary Medicine.) This is why Carol Hassell and many Gwinnett MGEVs are anti-nandina!*

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## Plant Sale Musings

*Save the Date April 27, 2019!*

It's Fall planting season – or soon will be when the temperatures drop a bit which could happen sooner than later as far as I am concerned. Most of you are, at the least, wandering around your yards and planning what to do next. What needs to be moved (it got way to big for that spot), what needs to be thinned (why didn't someone tell me that thing spread that fast), or just where can I slip in one more plant (It's OK Bob – I have a place for that new plant)?

As I was outside this morning watering to keep my spring planted azalea alive through this heat, I discovered baby euphorbias along the front path. I soaked the ground a bit and popped them up and had them potted in about five minutes. I potted all three together for the time being, but I have found a few more seedlings popping up so there are more to come.

We've also been lucky enough to have received donations from GNPS members Rick and Sandy Krause, of several varieties of native plants. These have been potted up and will hopefully survive for next year's sale. Kim Fritz lucked into some night blooming cereus cuttings which are quickly rooting. {Does anyone have a green house these guys could live in this winter?} Do you know non-MG members with plants to contribute? This is a great time to check in with them and see if they have some plants to share.



By Lynda Pollock and Susan Kosenka  
Happy Fall Gardening!





Call or text Lynda Pollock [404-944-7345] or email [robert9811@att.net] if you need pots or help potting up plants. We have many dozens of pots thanks to MG Gayle Hayes. Lynda can bring these to MG meetings or to your house. Let her know what you need. We have multiple sizes you can choose.

As you sort your fall garden, we hope you can pot up a few plants to donate next spring. Having six months to settle into their pots will make these plants great choices for our customers next year. Be sure to label with the Name (Common and scientific), Sun or Shade, Flower color, water needs, etc.

Need help potting up plants? Let us know. We're hoping to get in a few fall plant digs/potting events this fall.

## **Plant Sale Committee Chairs - Now Recruiting!**

*Save the date for our next Master Gardener Plant Sale April 27, 2019!*

Susan Kosenka and I are looking for folks to step up and sign on as committee chairs. It would be wonderful if last year's chairs would repeat their efforts for 2019 but also find someone to shadow them for 2019 and then assume the chair for 2020. We'd like to start a tradition of a two-year commitment with a person in line to learn the ropes the first year and to take over during the second year. Of course, if someone wants to continue more than two years, that would be fabulous. It is often good to have a co-chair – to have a back-up – if something happens.

The following committees need leadership for 2019 or consider signing on as the committee chair-in-waiting. If you were a committee chair in 2018, we've listed your name and hope you'll consider repeating your job for 2019. If you are a current chair and feel you cannot continue, let us know. A few folks have stepped back but have

volunteered to advise the new chair with their experience.

Susan and I would really like to get this team in place and be ready to get things started in the new year. Please consider helping. It is a great way to earn volunteer hours while having a good time with other MGs.

The biggest time crunch is in April for most chairs though the Plant Dig Committee gets going in February and March. We'd still love to have some plant digs this fall as well as people put their gardens to bed. Let us know!!!

**Committee Co-Chairs:** *Lynda Pollock and Susan Kosenka*  
Oversee all aspects of plant sale and track plant donations

**Garden Art:** *Linda Bolton*  
Organize the making and selling of fun garden art items

**Advertising/Communication:** *Jessica Miller*  
Organize announcements to news and information sources around Gwinnett County

**Plant Digs:** \_\_\_\_\_ [Advisor: *Shirley Bohm*]  
Coordinate plant dig volunteers and recording donations – may need to organize “plant-sitting” sites

**Signs:** *Becky Wolary and Jackie Kujawa*  
Plan and Coordinate signage for plant sale areas and directional signs

**Hanging Baskets/Annuals:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Coordinate MG members to grow and pot annuals to sell

**Flowers & Veggies:** *Bonnie Fox*  
Coordinate MG members to grow and pot vegetables to sell

**Education:** *Kathy Parent*  
Organize the Extension Tent

**Book Nook:** *Robert Schofield*  
Collect, price, and organize used Book/Magazine sale tent

**Check Out Team:** *Virginia Schofield*

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Pre-pricing teams before checking out with cashiers

**Volunteers:** *Sonia Freidus*

Organize Set-up, Sales, and Clean up Volunteers so all time slots are covered

**Set Up/Tear Down Committee:** \_\_\_\_\_

Organize Volunteer helpers to set up and tear down of the sale tents/tables

**Plant Intake/Pricing:** *Susan Kosenka and Jessica Miller*

Track plant donations and check in donations on Friday of sale weekend

**Check Out Team:** *Jessica Miller*

Organize cashiers and check out area

**Plant Pick Up:** *Robert Brannen*

Organize MGs with trucks/vans to pick up and deliver plant donations to the sale as needed by members

**Donations:** *Martha Whitman*

Organize donations of potting soil and supplies and other items from local businesses

**Wagon Wrangler:** *Freda Steward*

Find wagons/carts to borrow. Organize wagon for shoppers. Check out/check in procedures

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## Edible Weeds: Stinging Nettle

Stinging nettle is one of my favorite plants in my garden, but unfortunately it is also the meanest. It looks like catnip or mint as it is in the same family, but the tiny hairs covering the plant can cause serious pain. Just the slightest brush against it will create an immediate, burning, stinging sensation and can cause blisters to develop. So, it is one plant you treat with respect.



Stinging nettle has been used for hundreds of years to treat painful muscles and joints, eczema, arthritis, gout, and anemia. Today, many people use it to treat urinary problems during the early stages of an enlarged prostate. It is also used for urinary tract infections, hay fever, or in

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compresses or creams for treating joint pain, sprains and strains, tendonitis, and insect bites.



Nettles are the exclusive food for several butterfly larva and some varieties of moths. They are known to be good companion plants that may increase the volatile oils in surrounding plants. Nettle seems to stimulate growth in nearby plants and helps reduce bug infestations. It makes good mulch and helps in the compost pile.

Nettle can also be used as a dye. For a light green dye, the leaves and the stems are used together. For yellow, the roots are used and for a sage green, the leaves, stems and roots are used. All create beautiful muted colors.

Before flax, fiber from the stems of nettle was woven into linen and acclaimed as one of the most durable fabrics. It was also used to make strong ropes and superior fishing nets.

Edible parts: Leaves, stems and roots. Young leaves are preferable, however, no matter how far into the growing season be sure to remember that until dried or cooked, stinging nettle leaves will have those stinging hairs – never eat them raw.

The leaves can be cooked, used as a pot herb or made into soup. Nettles make an excellent spinach substitute. It can be used in dozens of recipes which call for spinach. Nettle beer is brewed from the young shoots. Nettle Chai and Nettle Soup remain my favorites, as well as a daily dose of nettle tincture for my arthritis.

### Garlicky Nettle Pesto

- 1/2 pound nettles
- 4 large garlic cloves, smashed
- 1/2 cup toasted pine nuts
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 1/4 cups extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese



- Bring a large pot of salted water to a simmer for the nettles. Add the nettles directly from their bag and cook, stirring continuously, for 2 minutes. (This denatures their sting.) Dump into a colander to drain. When the nettles are cool enough to handle, wrap them in a clean dishtowel and wring out as much moisture as possible, like you would for spinach. You'll have about a cup of cooked, squished nettles.

- In the work bowl of a food processor fitted with the paddle attachment, whirl the garlic, pine nuts,

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salt, and pepper to taste until finely chopped. Add the nettles, breaking them up as you drop them in, and the lemon juice and whirl until finely chopped. With the machine running, add the oil in a slow, steady stream, and process until smooth. Add the cheese, pulse briefly, and season to taste with additional salt, pepper, or lemon juice.

By Ann Thompson, MGEV

## **The Cherokee Garden**

If you did not attend our August meeting, you missed a real treat. Tony Harris is an ethnobotanist, a Cherokee Nation citizen, a member of the Cobb County Master Gardeners, Vice President of the Georgia Chapter of the Trail of Tears Association and our guest speaker at our August meeting.

As an ethnobotanist, Tony studies and documents the plants in our region - particularly in Cobb County - and how the Cherokee used and continue to use them in various aspects of their lives. Not only has he studied and documented the plants, he and his wife, Carra, have spearheaded The Cherokee Garden at Green Meadows Preserve.

The garden features plants and trees that the Cherokee used for medicine, food, tools, weapons, shelter and ceremonial purposes prior to the Trail of Tears. The Cherokee Garden is a certified interpretive site on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. The plants are marked with their Cherokee and English names. Volunteers from the Cobb County Master Gardeners and members of the Georgia Native Plant Society maintain the property. Tony also assists with a similar garden at the end of the Trail of Tears in Oklahoma, sharing many of the plants he has collected.

Green Meadows Preserve is part of the Cobb County Parks System. It is located at 3780 Dallas Highway, Powder Springs, Georgia. The park is free and open to the public.

Tony also maintains a blog at [MyCherokeeGarden.com](http://MyCherokeeGarden.com) where he has described countless native plants and how the Cherokee used them in their everyday life whether it was for food, medicine, dye or spiritual practices.

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## Deadlines for *A Bit of Dirt*

Winter 2019 - January 11

Spring 2019 - March 20 (spring equinox)

Summer 2019 - June 21 (summer solstice)

Winter 2020 - January 10

## Upcoming Meetings

### **October 15 Deb Douchon "Forgotten Foods in Your Yard"**

Many plants we consider "weeds" are actually tasty and nutritious foods that have been forgotten over time. An MGEV from DeKalb County, Deb is a nutritional anthropologist and ethnobotanist, recently retired from Georgia State, who speaks and lectures nationally and has appeared on Food Network's "Good Eats".

### **November 19 GCMGA Holiday Party**

Please join us for our final meeting of 2018 at Bethesda Senior Center. The evening will begin with a covered dish supper at 6:30 PM.

## Upcoming Workshops

### **November 6 PHOTO WORKSHOP with ERIC BOWLES**

*Tuesday, November 6, 2018 – 9 AM to 12 noon*

Vines Botanical Gardens – Koi Room

3500 Oak Grove Rd SW, Loganville, GA 30052

**Only 9 spots left! There is a \$10 fee.**

**Deadline to guarantee your reservation – October 15!**

A Photo Workshop will take place in the Koi Room at Vines Botanical Garden. For the first 30 minutes, Eric will share tips and techniques with us. The next 2 hours we'll go on a photo walk so everyone can practice, ask questions, and put suggestions to use. The final 30 minutes we will meet back in the Koi Room for a wrap-up session.

Eric Bowles needs no introduction to those who have attended our Photo Contest for the past two years. Eric is an Atlanta-based nature photographer specializing in the southeast US. His work has been published in magazines, newspapers, and commercial publications. He is a regular speaker at camera clubs and other organizations with presentations on a wide range of photographic and nature topics. Eric leads workshops

for photographers of all levels both locally and at select southeastern destinations including the Great Smoky Mountains, Okefenokee, and Coastal Georgia. Eric is a member and on the Board of NANPA (North American Nature Photographers Association) and GNPA (Georgia Nature Photography Association). Enjoy some of his work by visiting his website: [www.bowlesimages.com](http://www.bowlesimages.com).

**Questions?** Contact Ann Langley: [ann.langley@comcast.net](mailto:ann.langley@comcast.net)

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