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| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A picture containing graphical user interface  Description automatically generated | | | |  | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A picture containing flower, plant  Description automatically generated | | Native Azaleas by Lisa Klein | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | In This Issue ... [From the Editor's Desk](#From_the_Editor) Message from the President  2022 Extension Plant Sale 2022 Garden Tour GCMGA 2022 Grants Master Gardeners Challenge at the 2022 Gwinnett County Fair Organic First Aid for Your Garden GCMGA Field Trip to UGA - "Tree Walk" Looking Back - Old-fashioned Daffodils Coming Events  \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*  **From the Editor’s Desk.**  Well, I think it’s maybe, probably, likely that spring is here. You know, those delicate little green leaves just coming out and that sweet, gentle breeze blowing in your face.  I can’t wait. Are you ready to go out and play in the dirt?   Has your vegetable garden gone shady so anything you plant is a little spindly and production is down?  You can still get your gardening fix by leasing a raised bed ($35) at one of the 9 Harvest Gwinnett community gardens.  (**Brad Livesay** gave a nice overview of the program at the March GCMGA meeting.)  There’s a community garden in your neighborhood too.  Check their website for location and an application ([livehealthygwinnett.com/programs-events/harvest-gwinnett/](https://gwinnettmastergardeners.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=714bdefef4a5e5b8e1fb78c0c&id=3a327140a7&e=eb08b8c5f4)).   * Dacula Park Community Garden (Dacula), * E.E. Robinson Park Community Garden (Sugar Hill), * Graves Park Community Garden (Norcross), * J.B. Williams Park Community Garden (Lilburn), * Lawrenceville Community Gardens (Lawrenceville), * Lenora Park Community Garden (Snellville), * Peachtree Ridge Community Garden (Suwanee), * Vines Park Community Garden (Loganville), and * West Gwinnett Park Community Garden (Berkeley Lake).   Here's a little update on Vines Park Community Gardens where I have a bed and work on the share beds where all the produce is donated to the Southeast Co op in Grayson.  (The recipient of the donated produce varies by location of the community gardens.)  We’ve already donated 115 lbs. in 2022, mostly things planted in the fall including cabbage, carrots, radishes and onions but spring spinach and romaine are producing nicely now with lots of other greens coming along.  We’ve added blackberries, strawberries, blueberries and asparagus to the perennial mix too.  It so satisfying to drop off produce at the Coop.   Here's a **CHALLENGE** for you.  Enter some of your fruits, vegetables, herbs or flowers in the Gwinnett County Fair this year.  **Lisa Klein** from the Extension Office has a great “what to do” in this issue.  Plant now and give it a try!    **Shirley**  **Shirley Bohm**, MGEV, Editor, GCMGA, Bit of Dirt  \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Message from the President**  Happy Spring!  I have been a bit busier than usual thanks to getting ready for the garden tour (May 14) and plant sale (April 30) but as it is all out in the garden I can’t complain. I have also had many hands to help get caught up with the weeding. Thank you to all who have volunteered to be Garden Angels in all the tour gardens. You are appreciated so very much!!!  I am also excited about getting back together in person for our meetings. It is still a slightly complicated process, but we are making the transition to at least eating our brown bag meals together. Thank you for your patience in this process. We know this still isn’t comfortable for all but thank you for still joining us for the meetings.  I got talked into doing an article for the Up Close and Personal in Lilburn and Tucker magazine by **Susan** **Hanson** and **Jane Trentin**, our Garden Tour organizers. It was an interesting process, but I got to meet **Valerie Nichols** and visit Kelly Cofer Park in Tucker. A hidden gem with a delightful pollinator garden and orchard.  Be looking for Sign-up opportunities for both the tour and plant sale. It is all happening very soon! Remember only Garden Angels get free tickets and it isn’t too late to help in the gardens. By getting to know the garden ahead of time, these angels will be able to better answer visitor questions on the day of the tour.  We’ve also had two wonderful donations this spring. First **Joe** and **Margaret Molyson** gave GCMGA a refurbished laptop to use at our meetings for presentations and any other GCMGA needs. Secondly, **Ed** and **Kelly Brzozowski** have donated a portable sound system for us to use at outdoor meetings or for other events without a speaker system. You’ll see it in action at the Extension MG Awards ceremony April 26 at J. B. Williams Park. **Ed** is also helping us find a camera so hopefully we’ll be able to record our speakers and get these posted in our members only part of the website. Of course, some of the Zoom meetings are there but getting live video sorted has been a challenge. Thank you for all for your patience as we struggle to access and learn all this new technology.  See you in the garden!  Cheers,  **Lynda**  **Lynda Pollock**, MGEV, President GCMGA    \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **2022 Garden Tour.** A bee on a flower  Description automatically generated     Graphical user interface, text  Description automatically generated  Submitted by **Susan Hanson**, MGEV, Garden Tour Chair                    \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **GCMGA Grants for 2022.**   Nine projects were funded this year. They include a variety of projects that meet the GCMGA Grant Goals of “supporting horticultural activities that beautify and/or improve the ecosystems of Gwinnett or educate citizens of Gwinnett in proper horticultural practices.”  Berkeley Lake Elementary, Berkeley Lake.  Project Leader **Barbara Geier**. This project adds a third Pollinator Garden to a garden being used by the science teachers as an outdoor extension of science classes.  Discovery High School Environmental Club, Norcross. Project Leader **Tabitha Potter**. Creates a more sustainable watering system using buried pipe to replace hoses that are regularly damaged by the grounds crew. Remaining funds will purchase soil and amendments.  Georgia Piedmont Land Trust at the Mary Kistner Center, Snellville. Project Leader **Carol Hassell**. “Fostering Bluebirds”: They will offer a workshop and build 20 pole supports, including protective baffles, for blue bird boxes built with their previous project. The boxes and supports will be installed at Gwinnett School Gardens and GCMGA Grant Projects.  McDaniel Farm Park, Gwinnett County Park in Duluth, Project Leader **Joyce Teel.** Rejuvenation and year-round planting of Archie’s Vegetable Garden, a Demonstration Garden.  This project raises a lot of produce which is donated to local food banks. Various gardens show successful farming techniques for raising food while minimizing animal damage.  Grace New Hope Church, Project Leader **Beth Arechiga**. A fruit growing area is being established using grant funds.  They will purchase and install berry bushes and grape vines along with permanent support posts.  SE Gwinnett Food Co op Garden, Grayson, Project Leader **Jacquelyn Daniell**. Funds will help amend beds and plant vegetables to provide fresh vegetables to the Food Co op. By using intensive planting practices and crop rotation they produce food during 3+ seasons.  Snellville Community Garden Greenhouse, Snellville, Project Leader **Wes Nettleton.** Grant will fund permanent plant labels for the Calendar Garden and Gazebo Garden to make the area more educational.  The pollinator plants in these gardens improve pollination in the community garden beds.  Vines Garden County Park in Loganville, Project Leader **Susan Kosenka**. Grant funds will help refurbish Pappy’s Garden which is a tiered space below the dam.  Blueberry bushes, native shrubs and other perennials will be added.  Vines Garden location of Harvest Gwinnett Community Garden is a new project this year under Project Leader **Becky Wolary**. Funds are being used to purchase bedding plants to ensure timely planting of raised beds which benefit the local food bank.    Submitted by **Martha Whitman**, MGEV, Chair, Grants Committee                                        \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* **Master Gardeners Challenge at the 2022 Gwinnett County Fair.**  We probably all have fond memories of the county fair. Those late summer days and nights that are almost always hot and sticky. Young or old, we ventured to the fairway to ride some rides, eat some fair food, check out the stuff for sale at the booths in the trade hall, and ogle the prize-winning quilts, jams and jellies, 4-H projects and garden vegetables in the exhibition hall. We may have even muttered to ourselves that we could certainly grow peppers that were prettier or pumpkins that were larger than what we saw in first place!  Over the years as Gwinnett County has grown from rural to urban/suburban both in population and demographics, the often-envied home garden exhibit at the county fair has waned in popularity. We don’t have to stand for that though! If there was one good thing that this pesky virus has done, it has re-awakened a love for the great outdoors, specifically gardening at home.  UGA Extension Gwinnett and the Gwinnett County Fair have enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship over the years, and we would love to see this part of the fair grow once again! Many of you have participated in their home garden exhibit in the past or volunteered at the crop intake to process or judge entries. This year I would love for all our master gardeners to pick something from their home garden, either fruit, vegetable, herb or flower, and enter one or several classes at the 2022 Gwinnett County Fair.  Why should you do that? First and foremost, for the glory of seeing your prize-winning entries sitting there on display for all to see! Of course, winning a little money doesn’t hurt as first place wins $10, second wins $7 and third wins $5; and if that doesn’t tempt you, wrangle one of your kids or grandkids into the contest because they have classes just for them! There are plenty of classes for adults and kids with a total of 58 different categories and subcategories including apples, beans, berries, carrots, corn, cucumbers, dried beans, eggplants, gourds, honey, muscadines, nuts, onions, peanuts, pears, peppers, potatoes, pumpkins, squash, sunflowers, tomatoes, watermelons, herbs, and creative vegetable displays. In youth classes (15 years and under), you’ll find decorated fruits and vegetables, garden companions and pictures made with seeds.A picture containing food, indoor, plate, container  Description automatically generated  Many participants enter multiple categories and bring home many ribbons along with the honors of knowing they have won top honors for their produce. As master gardeners I challenge each one of you to rise up and bring back the Home Garden Exhibits of yesteryear! Let’s all enter at least one class and if we can, let’s encourage one child to make a garden companion or decorate a fruit or vegetable and make a masterpiece to share with the fair goers. Who knows, perhaps 2022 is the year we recapture some of those fond memories from so many years ago, so let’s make plans to spread the word and drop those crops off on Saturday, September 17th from 7:30-9:45AM and impress the heck out of the Gwinnett community as they marvel at all that fantastic produce you grew!!!  For more information, go to their website [http://Gwinnettcountyfair.com/p/getconnected/exhibits/field-crops](https://gwinnettmastergardeners.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=714bdefef4a5e5b8e1fb78c0c&id=381af8a1c9&e=eb08b8c5f4).  Submitted by **Lisa Klein**, MGEV, Gwinnett Cooperative Extension Office  \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*  **Organic first aid for your garden.**  Did you ever wish you had a first aid kit for your plants?  Keep these organic products handy to prevent common garden problems.  Take a walk through your garden every day or so to look for insects, chewing on leaves, discoloration or other problems that indicate something is going on.   * Insecticidal soap – gets rid of soft-bodied insects such as aphids, spider mites, whiteflies and mealybugs by washing away the protective cuticle on the surface of the insect’s body then breaking the cell membranes to kill it. * Potassium bicarbonate – (similar to baking soda, sodium bicarbonate) is a contact fungicide which kills powdery mildew spores quickly.  Mix 1 tablespoon potassium bicarbonate with ½ teaspoon liquid soap (not detergent) in 1 gallon of water.  Spray all affected areas liberally every 1-2 weeks. * Neem oil – this broad spectrum, natural insecticide interrupts the life cycle of insects by turning off the insect hormones that make an insect feed and mate.  Small, soft-bodied insects are killed on contact.  It is taken into the plant tissue and becomes systemic, affecting any insects that eat the plant, usually taking 3-4 days before you see results. * Sticky traps – a nontoxic way to trap flying insects such as flea beetles and whiteflies in the garden.  Smear a generous amount of petroleum jelly on both sides of a yellow note card.  Then use a plastic fork, stuck into the ground near the infested plants to hold the card up. * Wood ash – (hardwood ash is best, do not use ask from burning treated lumber) increases soil fertility (contains up to 20% calcium as well as up to 5% potassium and many trace elements) and raises soil pH for plants that like a less acidic, more alkaline pH like spinach and asparagus.  Sprinkle ash around squash seedlings to reduce squash bugs and cucumber beetles. * Bacillus thuriengiensis (Bt) –  soil-borne bacteria naturally found in soil that makes toxins which target insect larvae when eaten.  The toxin breaks down their gut and the insect dies of starvation.  It is non-toxic to humans and other animals and only kills the larvae or immature stages of insects (caterpillars, beetle larvae, fly larvae and mosquito larvae), not adults.  It is available in liquid or dust form. * Compost tea – sprayed on foliage, it adds soil microorganisms (bacteria, fungi, protozoans, nematodes) and nutrients to the plant and soil for generally improved health.  To make compost tea, fill a 5 gallon bucket with chopped up weeds, a handful of compost and a handful of garden soil.  Then cover with water and let it steep for 2-3 weeks.  Dilute this liquid 4:1 with water for use as compost tea when you water your plants.   Submitted by **Shirley Bohm,** MGEV  **\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*** **GCMGA Field Trip to UGA - "Tree Walk"**  On April 8th, Dr. Tim Smalley, our March speaker on Significant Trees of Georgia, led a Tree Walk on the UGA campus for 13 of our members.  Dr. Smalley took us through the North Campus Arboretum and shared fascinating historic anecdotes while pointing out beautiful tree specimens old and new.  Dr. Smalley was a delightful tour guide and promised another tour of the South Campus Arboretum in the future. One of the highlights was seeing the Founders Garden - a beautiful walled garden which commemorates the twelve founders of the American Garden Club movement established in Athens in 1891. The group enjoyed lunch at several Athens restaurants and couldn’t help but visit the UGA Hort Club and State Botanical Garden plant sales held that day.            Submitted by **Virginia Schofield**, GCMGA Vice President Photos by **Lynda Pollock,** GCMGA President  \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Looking Back - Old-fashioned Daffodils.**  Do you remember that time of year when there’s yellow all around in Georgia --- daffodils are blooming like crazy. You can spot the old home sites where daffodils are blooming – Oakland Cemetery is abound with daffodils and I’m sure Gibbs Garden in Canton is a wonder to behold.  I remember when we had **Mr. Daffodil Man** speak to us at a GCMGA meeting years back – but the old fashioned daffodils continue to tug at my heart. Mainly because these come from bulbs first grown from my Mom in Milledgeville – the Von Sion or Telemonius Plenus – occasionally known as Bread and Butter. And they never bloom with consistent form each year as they’re truly weather dependent. I always describe them as daffodils that look like chrysanthemums – and often they do – they can be gnarled and flop-headed and mop-headed and can have a touch of green in the flower… but they’re a wonder to behold when you find them.  A close up of a yellow flower  Description automatically generated  Submitted by **Becky Wolary,** MGEV  \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Coming Events.**  April 15, Bit of Dirt Spring 2022 issue April 18, 6:30 pm, Social and General GCMGA Meeting, with Melanie Furr, "Hummingbirds" April 26, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm, Extension Office Awards Luncheon, J.B. Williams picnic pavilion April 29, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm set up tents and tables, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm, plant delivery, GCMGA Plant Sale Lilburn Library parking lot,  April 30, 8:30 am MG Shop, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm, GCMGA Plant Sale, Lilburn Library parking lot May 9, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon, GCMGA Executive Committee Meeting May 14, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, GCMGA Garden Tour May 16, 6:30 pm, Social and General GCMGA Meeting with Rose Guerra, "Dragonflies 101" May 24, 9:30AM – Noon Bluebird Box Workshop, Snellville Community Garden June 20, 6:30 pm, Social and General Meeting, with Karin Hicks, "Hedgerows" July 11, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon, GCMGA Board Meeting July 11, 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm, GCMGA Executive Committee Meeting July 15, Bit of Dirt Summer issue July 18, 6:30 pm, Social and General GCMGA Meeting, Photo Contest Results August 15, 6:30 pm, Social and General GCMGA Meeting, with Danna Cain, "Garden Design - Color, Form & Texture" August 19-20, Great Georgia Pollinator Census  \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **A yellow sunflower with a face  Description automatically generated with medium confidence**  **Bit of Sunshine**    **Smashed Potatoes.  Did you plant potatoes early this spring and can’t wait to try your new spring potatoes?** Use the smallest potatoes (or get fingerlings from the supermarket) and make “Smashed Potatoes.”  **SMASHED POTATOES** 2-3 small potatoes per person 2-3 T chopped rosemary (or another aromatic herb of your choice) 4 T melted butter Olive oil S & P to taste                                                                                     Boil unpeeled potatoes in water until tender.  Smash each potato flat with a heavy glass or mug and transfer carefully to a baking sheet.  Add chopped rosemary to melted butter and pour over the potatoes.  Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper.  Bake in the oven for 45 minutes at 3500 F for a crispy, savory addition to any meal.  **Helpful Hints!**   * Add color to your shade garden with both foliage and flowers.  These plants thrive in the shade or tolerate a little early sun.  Try Persian shield (purple leaves), coleus (multi-colored leaves), wax begonia (pink flowers), coral bells (many colored leaf choices), hostas (shades of green, often variegated), and impatiens (jewel colors). * Try planting these flowers to attract ruby-throated hummingbirds.  They include nectar-rich flowers with different bloom times for a constant food supply for these tiny birds.   + Trumpet honeysuckle   + Day lilies   + Summersweet   + Butterfly weed   + Nasturtium   + Penstemon   + Red hot poker   + Beebalm * If you have a nest of aggressive yellow jackets, a type of wasp that nests in the ground, you can get rid of them without chemicals.  Carefully locate the entrance using binoculars from a distance.  Once you locate it, invert a glass bowl over the hole and pour soil around the rim to make sure it’s sealed.  Surprisingly, these pests won’t dig a new exit so eventually, they’ll starve.  Wait at least a week after seeing any movement then remove the bowl and fill in the entrance hole so another group of insects don’t move in. * There aren’t many chemical free controls for Japanese beetles (Polillia japonica).  And while hand picking works, planting annual geraniums (Pelargonium hybrids) in nearby beds or containers can help too.  That’s because Japanese beetles that eat its foliage or blooms become paralyzed.  The effect last long enough to leave the pests vulnerable to eager insects and other predators. * Make your own seed tapes. If you make your own seed tape, you cut out the time and waste of seeds thinning small seedlings such as radishes and carrots.  It’s easier on the back too!  Using 2-ply paper towels, cut enough 1” strips of toweling for the furrow being planted.  Separate the two plies.  Measure and mark off the distance between seeds.  Make a paste of 1 tablespoon of flour and 1 tablespoon of water and stir well.  Using tweezers, place a seed in the center of the strip at each mark.  Then using a toothpick, drop a bit of flour paste on each seed.  Cover with the other half of the toweling and press the two together.  Let dry and store in an envelope until needed for planting. * Are slugs eating your favorite hostas and other plants?  Here are some non-poison control tips that have a low impact on beneficial insects, pets and people.  Set out orange or grapefruit halves after juicing near your vulnerable plants (slugs love citrus!). Collect the slugs daily or lay a board on the ground in a shady area of your garden and check under the board at the end of a hot, sunny afternoon for slugs.  You can also stretch out a copper pot scrubber (Chore Boy, for example) around susceptible plants and tack down with landscape pins.  Slugs get a shock when they contact copper.  Good luck hunting! * Here are some helpful hints for growing your tomato crop this year.   + Plant them deep – at least 6 – 8 inches deep.  Roots grow from the stems and help anchor the plant.   + For indeterminate tomatoes, remove the suckers that grow between leaf and stem.  That makes it easier to pick and gives greater air flow to prevent disease.  Don’t remove suckers from dwarf and determinate tomatoes.   + Remove the lower set or two of leaves to prevent soil diseases from splashing up onto the plant.   + To prevent blossom end rot on your tomatoes, provide consistent soil moisture to the plant.   + Yellow leaves with purple veins indicate a phosphorus deficiency.   + Letters after the plant name indicate it has been bred to be resistant to certain diseases such as Verticillium wilt (V), Fusarium wilt (F), Tobacco mosaic (T) and nematodes (N).   + Harvest your tomatoes at the “breaker stage” when they are showing 30 – 50% of final color.  If you wait too long, a bird or insect will take a bite.  They will still fully ripen in color and flavor and have a longer shelf life.   **Did you know?**   * What makes cucumbers taste bitter?  It comes from cucurbitacin, a compound usually found in the stems, roots and leaves of the plant.  Occasionally, it spreads into the fruit, starting at the stem end.  It’s likely that stress such as lack of water or nutrients or a cool growing season may be factors.  Keep plants watered and feed them regularly to discourage the bitterness. * Underground feeders, including mites, pillbugs, centipedes, worms and other crawlers are eating machines!  They chew and digest leaves and other debris, breaking it down into small particles that end up as humus.  They are constantly opening tunnels so air, water and organic matter can go deep underground.  In 1 cubic foot of soil, you should find about 10 worms.  If you don’t, the soil needs more compost and plant debris worked into it so worms have more to eat. * Use a UV flashlight at night on tomato plants to easily spot hornworms.  They will shine under the UV light and be easy to pick off.  You can tell you probably have hornworms by bare stems and big black pieces of frass (poop). * If you use horticultural vinegar (30% acetic acid) to kill weeds, wear a respirator and protective eye wear.  Read the instructions carefully.  It is labeled “Danger!”, the highest level of warning for chemicals.  Note that it is not a systemic herbicide; roots will survive. * If you are a bird watcher, Cornell University has a website (Birdnet.Cornell.edu) where you can download an app to help you identify birds by the sounds they make. * If you have tiny fruits of squash or cucumber that shrivel up and die on the vine, this is likely the result of inadequate pollination.  Watch to see if bees and other pollinators are flying in and out of the flowers.  If not, there are likely not enough nectar bearing flowers around to bring in the bee traffic.  Plant more pollinators nearby like catmint, salvia and lavender.  Don’t use pesticides, not even organic ones (they kill pollinators too).  Meanwhile, you can hand-pollinate each blossom by stroking the anthers of a male flower with a tiny paint brush or cotton swab, then stroke the top of the female’s pistil to transfer the pollen. Female flowers have a bulge on the stem just under the flower and male flowers do not. * Can you tell the difference between azaleas and rhododendrons?  Azaleas are part of the Rhododendron genus and one way to tell them apart is the number of flower stamens.  Usually, azaleas have 5 stamens; rhododendrons have 10 or more.  Somewhere in between? It’s a hybrid of the two. * Are you going “organic” in your garden?  Don’t throw away wood ashes from your fireplace or firepit.  If a soil test in your garden shows you need to increase soil pH (garden vegetables like a pH of 6.0 – 6.8), you can add dolomitic limestone or wood ash.  If the soil test results indicate low phosphorus and potassium, then you can add wood ash to increase these nutrients.  Other natural fertilizers include bonemeal, cottonseed meal, fish meal, sawdust, urea and many more.   **Keep us laughing!**   * What do you call a stolen yam? (A hot potato) * What did the grape say when it got trodden on? (Nothing.  It just gave a little wine.) * Why did the gardener decline the job offer?  (Because the celery was too low.) * What is a gardener’s favorite novel?  (War and Peas) * What would you get if you crossed a dog with a vegetable?  (A broc-collie) * Why did the potato go to the doctor?  (Because he was not peeling well.) * What do you call a plant nursery?  (Plant Parenthood) * However bare the lawn, grass will appear in the cracks between the patio paving stones. * Common sense is a flower that does not grow in everyone’s garden. * Sign carried by a man along side of the road, “Need money, Not homeless.  Wife keeps buying plants.” * Everyone is like “If I was rich, I’d buy designer clothes and diamonds” and I’m over here like “I’d buy a greenhouse.” * Gardening is cheaper than therapy, until your spouse adds up the receipts. * The sign of a good gardener is not a green thumb.  It is brown knees.   Text, whiteboard  Description automatically generated  **Botanical Terms Challenge.**  Provide the term which is defined by each of the following 10 items.  The answers are at the bottom of the Botanical Challenge.   1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a pointed hand tool used to make holes in the ground for seeds or transplants. 2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a conservation and ecological approach that is designed to return wilderness to its original state before real estate developers and other human intervention created disturbances. 3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a composite organism of a fungus and an algae. 4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ describes a seed whose germination is influenced by light.  Seeds that are stimulated to germinate by light are positively \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and seeds whose germination is inhibited by light are negatively \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. 5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ form white, rice-like cocoons on the backs of tomato hornworms. 6. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ year is when trees produce far more seeds than average. 7. The roots of trees don’t connect every tree in a forest to each other, but a network of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ does. 8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a flowering, nongrassy, herbaceous plant that produces seeds and has stems and leaves that dies back at the end of each growing season. 9. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the sticky, sugary secretion from aphids which attracts other insects, especially ants. 10. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is when the leaf blade is attached directly to the stem, that is, when there is no petiole.   **Answers.**  1. Dibble, 2. Rewilding, 3. Lichen, 4. Photoblastic, 5. Parasitic wasps, 6. Mast, 7. Fungal mycelium, 8. Forb, 9. Honey dew, 10. Sessile | | | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Deadlines for Future Articles in  A Bit of Dirt**  **Summer 2022 Issue - June 30th Fall 2022 Issue - September 30th Winter 2023 Issue - December 31st** **Spring 2023 Issue - March 31st**  **Upcoming Meetings & More**  GCMGA normally meets on the third Monday of each month at Bethesda Senior Center, 225 Bethesda Church Road, Lawrenceville, GA 30044. Face-to-face meetings will depend on pandemic conditions. Notices will be sent out letting you know if the meeting will be held in person or on Zoom.  The event is free and open to the public. Social  (and potluck dinner if appropriate) at 6:30, or just arrive in time for the program which begins promptly at 7 p.m. | | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Copyright © \*2021\* Gwinnett County Master Gardeners Association, All rights reserved. | | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |