



The Magnolia Chronicle

Pulaski County Master Gardener Newsletter

President's Report

**July/August
2020**

While still sticking pretty close to home, I find myself watching the wildlife around me. I have a little book given to me by past President Suzanne Potts. I have gone to it many times for inspiration as I have done today. Here are a few interesting facts regarding garden wildlife from "The Curious Gardener's Almanac".

*A snail can sleep for 3 years. Ants don't sleep at all.

*Birds save the US timber industry tens of millions of dollars ever year by feasting on wood-boring insects that attack the trees.

*It is something of an urban myth that a worm will be perfectly happy if you cut it in half. It may continue to wriggle for a while but it will die not long afterward. Only if you nip off just a little of its tail end does it have the capacity to repair itself.

*A ladybug can eat up to 150 aphids in a day.

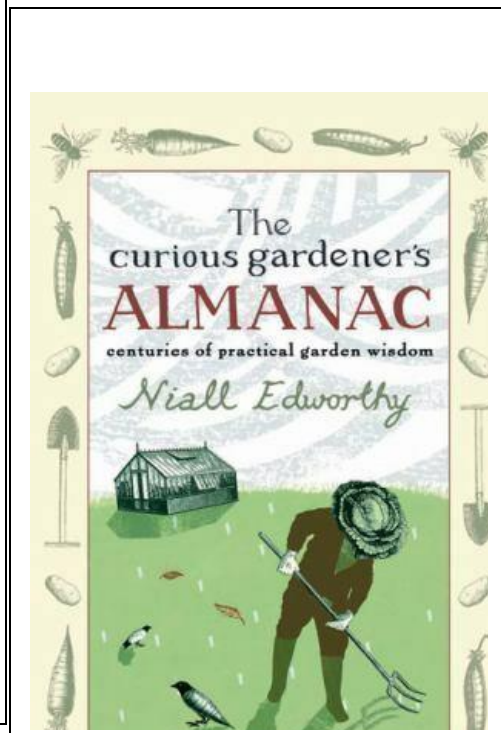
*Birds operate at different levels in the garden. Wrens and blackbirds enjoy vegetation on or close to the ground, finches prefer shrubs and hedges while the thrush surveys all below from the treetops.

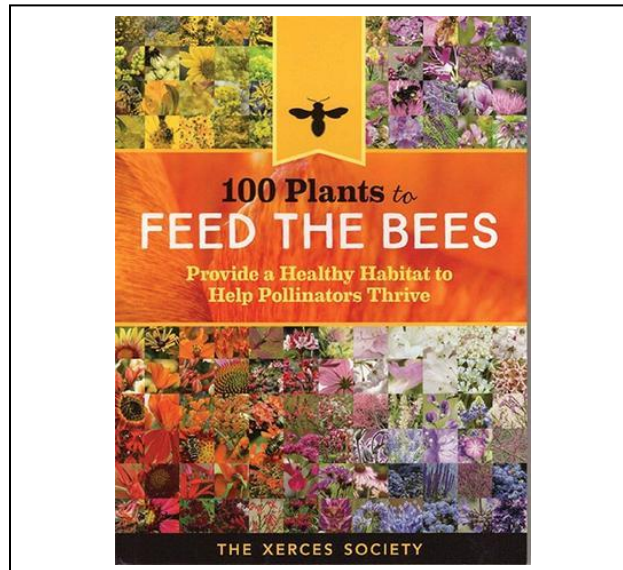
Hopefully you have found these interesting. Until next time, continue following the guidelines to protect your health. You are responsible for your own health. Happy Gardening!

Sharon Priest, PCMG President

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100 Plants to Feed the Bees
Provide a Healthy Habitat to Help Pollinators Thrive

Author: The Xerces Society

Book Review: Debra Redding

The international bee crisis is threatening our global food supply, but this user-friendly field guide shows what you can do to help protect our pollinators.

The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation offers browsable profiles of 100 common flowers, herbs, shrubs, and trees that support bees, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds. Recommendations are simple: pick the right plants for pollinators, protect them from pesticides, and provide abundant blooms throughout the growing season by mixing perennials with herbs and annuals! ***100 Plants to Feed the Bees*** will empower homeowners, landscapers, apartment dwellers — anyone with a scrap of yard or a window box — to protect our pollinators.

GARDENING CHECKLIST FOR JULY/AUGUST

By Carol Randle

JULY CHECKLIST

It's that time of year again. We can expect hot, dry days. It is very important that we remember that water is a most important thing during this time. Make sure that you avoid watering during the peak hours of the day. Watering in the early daytime hours is better because the foliage dries quicker, the moisture can work its way into the roots before the heat stresses the plants and we lose less moisture due to evaporation. Mulching will help to keep out weeds and pests and will preserve moisture so that you don't have to water as often. Avoid wet foliage when the sun sets, so that you can cut down on disease issues. Every garden should have a rain gauge in it so you know how much rain you receive in the garden.

VEGETABLES

If you are going on vacation, ask a friend to check on the garden, pick vegetables when they are ripe, water and scout for problems. Letting your garden go unharvested can not only slow down production, but can also lead to rotten fruit, which will attract insects and animals to the garden. Tomatoes have begun to slow down in production. When temperatures exceed 95 during the day or stay above 75 degrees at night, they quit ripening and setting fruit. Keep the plants watered and mulched and they should rebound and begin to set fruit once the temperatures settle down. Blossom End Rot is a calcium deficiency that is controlled by Stop Rot. Mothballs around the base of cucurbits control vine borers. You can plant all of the Summer Crops again starting in mid-July through early August for a Fall harvest. Monitor your garden frequently and catch problems as they arise. NOTHING is better than biting into a home grown, juicy tomato (purple hull peas might run a close second!).

FLOWERS

Perennials and annuals give us an abundance of color. Most of our gardens did not have much color during the winter, so we are ready for beautiful color. (My Orienpet Lilies are absolutely gorgeous right now!) Deadheading- removing the spent flowers after they bloom, pruning back leggy plants, fertilizing and watering can keep these plants lush and full of flowers. Keep flower beds well weeded. Remove faded blooms. Make sure you keep the soil moist, but not soggy, around ferns. They may become dormant if they get too dry. Salt deposits can build up in the soil of container plants. This will cause the foliage to burn. Flush out these deposits with water at least once during the summer. If you are growing flowers in containers, they need even more fertilizer than if planted in the ground, because you water more. You can use either a water-soluble or granular fertilizer, but make sure that the plants aren't water stressed before applying. Summer annuals need regular fertilizer to keep blooming all season. If you have annuals that have stopped blooming, a little extra care now can give them renewed life and keep them going through fall.



Yellow and white
Orienpet lily

SHRUBS AND TREES

Spring blooming trees and shrubs are setting their flower buds now for next year's blooms. Don't let them get too dry now, or it could impact your flowers next spring. To have great blooms next year, do not prune on these plants any more this season. For most trees and shrubs, all you should be doing now is making sure they have water when dry. Fertilization should have occurred in the spring and we are good to go until next spring. If your gardenias and hydrangeas need pruning because they are big and overgrown, now is the time to do it as they finish blooming. They set buds in the fall. Shear back gardenias by selectively thinning branches and growth. Hydrangeas need older canes to be removed down to the ground line. Lightly fertilize after pruning. If your garden needs some color, consider shrubs and perennials that bloom now. Crape myrtles are a standard bearer for summer color and they come in all sizes.

LAWNS

The main thing we are concerned with, in our lawns now, is mowing and watering. If you have an automatic sprinkler system, you are probably watering the lawn more than it actually needs to keep up with flower and shrub irrigations. While we may all want a lush, bright green lawn, lawn grasses can get a bit dry in between watering and still survive. Deep water trees and shrubs to encourage deep rooting and to avoid heat stress. Watch out for yellow patches, leaf curl or poor growth. Increase watering if you notice any of these signs. Set your lawnmower at a higher level. Longer grass will shade the roots from heat. If you want to control any weeds, now is the time to do it before they get too large. You will find that some weeds are easier to kill than others. Nut sedge is tough. A sledgehammer is probably your best bet, in this case! Always read and follow label directions. If you want one final application of fertilizer, mid to late August is the time to do it. Pay attention to the weather conditions.

AUGUST CHECKLIST

VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

If your cucumbers are bitter, they are getting stressed by water, harvesting in the cooler times of the day improves flavor on many herbs and vegetables. Keep picking your cucumbers as they mature because letting old fruit stay on the vines will slow down the future production. Knowing what to look for in your vegetable garden can ensure that you get the most from your garden. Sweet corn is ripe when the silks begin to turn brown and dry. Look at one or two of the ears by pulling back the shuck and pressing into a kernel or two. If it gives off a milky liquid and the ear is fully formed, it is time to harvest. The quicker you can go from garden to table, the sweeter the corn will be. Fresh okra is best if picked when they are small, no longer than two or three inches. The bigger they get, the tougher the pods are. Even if it isn't ideal gardening weather, this is the time to start replanting for a Fall garden. Mulch well and water and you will be harvesting well into fall. Cantaloupes and watermelons tend to be at their sweetest if it is a bit on the dry side during harvest. Too much rain could dilute the sugars. When cantaloupes are ripe, the stems should easily separate from the vine. The fruit should develop a light tan webbing pattern and the blossom end should be slightly soft and smell like cantaloupe. Ripe watermelons will have a dry, curly brown tendril at stem end, a dull sheen on the fruit and a white to yellow underbelly.

ROSES

If blackspot has reared its ugly head on your roses or if you have blackspot susceptible plants, continue to spray with fungicides. If your roses are looking a little leggy, try giving them a light pruning now and fertilize. Pruning may reduce some flowers in the short term, but most roses could use a bit of a nap right now, to regroup, fill out and be able to give you a great fall display. Of course, water is always important.

ANNUALS

There are so many outstanding summer annuals that we often have trouble picking the ones we want to plant. When we see new annuals in the stores, we want to try some of them in our own flower beds. Look at your flower beds and make notes on which ones are taking the heat. Lantana loves heat and seems to explode when it gets hot. If they have stopped blooming, give them a haircut, fertilize and water and they should rebound with flowers through frost. Angelonia, and sweet potato vine are outstanding. Remember that annuals are usually around for only one season, so keep up with watering and fertilizing. If they look bad, pinch them back or start over. Most nurseries today keep annuals in stock almost year around, so replanting may be a possibility. The nurseries this year have had trouble getting and keeping annuals, so we may have trouble finding them, now. Deadheading . . . removing the spent flowers after they bloom, pruning back leggy plants, fertilizing and watering can keep these plants lush and full of flowers. If you have annuals that are not doing anything and seem to not recover from the heat, pull them and replace them with plants that add to your fall color. Ornamental peppers can take the heat and give you colorful fruit up until frost. Zinnias come in a range of colors, many have shades of orange and white, which blend well with fall.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Trees and shrubs are setting their flower buds now for next year's blooms. Don't let them get too dry now, or it could impact your flowers next spring. To have great blooms next year, do not prune these plants anymore this season. For most trees and shrubs, all you should be doing now is making sure they have water when it is dry. Fertilizations should have occurred in the spring and we will be good to go until next spring. We have now entered into the period of watering as maintenance for our shrubs. The exception are gardenias and bigleaf and oakleaf hydrangeas (*Hydrangea Macrophylla* and *Hydrangea Quercifolia*, respectfully). These three summer bloomers set flower buds in late August and September. If they have overgrown their location or need some general shaping, early July is the LAST time to do it, as soon after flowering is best. Avoid any pruning on spring blooming shrubs. Deadhead spent flowers to ensure more blooms.

LAWNS

At this time of year mowing the lawn is a chore that we don't enjoy. Keeping the lawn healthy with regular watering is important. You can often tell who is and isn't watering by the look of the lawn. Daily watering is never good, but do make sure that an inch to an inch and a half are put down weekly. In late August to September one last application of fertilizer can be applied to bermuda, St. Augustine and zoysia lawns. Don't fertilize tall fescue or centipede at this time. The main thing we are concerned with in our lawns is mowing and watering.

PLEASE BE CAREFUL AND STAY SAFE!

Tubers & the BLM

By: Mary Russell- Evans

All things are relevant, or not, in relation to what we know, be it conscious or sub-conscious. In our daily lives & daily careers we have objects & terminology that have specific meaning to our individual selves. Our brains become tied to our work language, those little things that make our wheels turn on a daily basis. We go along in our busy work schedules surrounded by terminology or slang, giving little thought to it. On occasion our trained brains are confronted with something from “outside” the norm or every -day, but perhaps alien to us within our own sub-conscious every-day “thinking bubble.” Or maybe... we just didn’t see it coming. Sometimes we have to say, “Duh!” out loud! Normal, right? For me, as a horticulturist, the world is seen through horticulture & horticulture terms- I speak English, Latin & Flower language daily. I am fluent in “Flower.” For myself, I can think of lots of examples, but this one instance always comes to mind.

About 1994 my old flower shop boss (who was my primary hiking buddy) retired, sold his flower shop & joined a “work-camper” program with KOA Campgrounds. I was his inspiration for the job and the first job assignment choice. We went to visit at their first “job” in Cherokee, North Carolina. One of Bud’s daily jobs was driving a busload of “tubers” to the river upstream to the “put-in” place, then picking them up later downstream at the “get-out” place. One morning before going up into Smoky Mountain National Park to look for bears, he had to go work for awhile. He had to go “throw his tubers in the river.” Me, with my horticulture wired brain was perplexed, all day, with why Bud had to go upstream & throw in tubers. I finally had to ask about it. He has never let me live that “Duh!” down!

Recently I had another big one of those “Duh!” moments that lasted for almost a week! To put this one in perspective, I am a lifelong genealogist of Cherokee descent. I have spent my adult life traveling over the US & Canada to: pow wows of every kind, studying Indian history, sacred sites & rituals of American Indians, Indian genealogy research, family history, ethnobotany, etc. Fast forward to the recent “Black Lives Matter” movement. When these recent marches first started, I began seeing these big signs on tv & spray paint on buildings downtown “B L M.” What? What does BLM have to do with any of this? I had all kinds of wild thoughts swirling around in my head about the possibilities & implications of what it could mean... but why was it here- now in these marches? Wow! I kept watching. Finally one day I heard the term “Black Lives Matter.” Aww..... B L M! Oh! There was the “Duh!” To “us Indians” or anyone who has ever done research, studied western history, Indian history, etc.... - I’m gonna leave you here with this single thought originating from my “Indian brain” & maybe a different perspective altogether.... B L M stands for the “Bureau of Land Management!”

Blueberry, Basil and Goat Cheese Pie

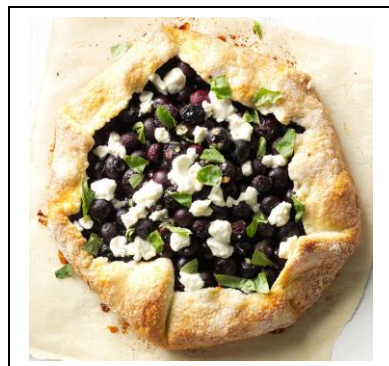
Recipe by Debra Redding

- Pastry for single-crust pie (9 inches)
 - 2 cups fresh blueberries
 - 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons sugar, divided
 - 1 tablespoon cornstarch
 - 1 tablespoon minced fresh basil
 - 1 large egg
 - 1 teaspoon water
 - 1/4 cup crumbled goat cheese
 - Fresh basil leaves, torn
-
- Preheat oven to 375°. On a floured sheet of parchment, roll dough into a 10-in. circle. Transfer to a baking sheet.
 - Mix blueberries, 2 tablespoons sugar, cornstarch and basil. Spoon blueberry mixture over pastry to within 2 in. of edge. Fold pastry edge over filling, pleating as you go and leaving the center uncovered.
 - Whisk egg and water; brush over pastry. Sprinkle with remaining sugar. Bake 30 minutes. Sprinkle with goat cheese; bake until crust is golden and filling is bubbly, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Top with torn basil leaves before serving.

Pastry for single-crust pie (9 inches): Combine 1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour and 1/4 tsp. salt; cut in 1/2 cup cold butter until crumbly. Gradually add 3-5 Tbsp. ice water, tossing with a fork until dough holds together when pressed. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate 1 hour.

Nutrition Facts

1 piece: 308 calories, 18g fat (11g saturated fat), 77mg cholesterol, 241mg sodium, 34g carbohydrate (11g sugars, 2g fiber), 5g protein.



Four Months of Lilies By Susan Rose

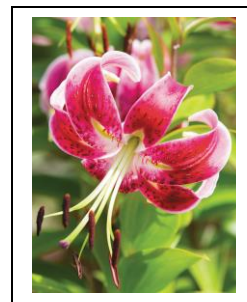
Lily bulbs are probably the best investment of time and money for gardeners. They cost a small amount considering the many years of enjoyment they bring. I relish the first bloom of the Asiatics in early May with as much excitement as I do the first bloom of the Orienpet and Orientals to follow. The Asiatic lilies kick off the show with their bright colors of many shades of orange followed by maroon and reds as well as yellow, pink and white. Most blooms are 4 to 5 inches wide and height varies from 1 to 5 feet tall. Some actually have color patterns that add to the overall show. My favorite is a smaller Asiatic lily with an orange and black pattern called 'Forever Susan'. It is one of the first to bloom and is a bright beacon in the garden for pollinators. Asiatics can also be found with semi-double blooms. A more compact and smaller Asiatic lily selection called 'Tiger babies' boasts salmon-peach flowers and a chocolate pink reverse. They have a "martagon" design as they grow.

Chinese trumpet lilies bloom next in late May to early June. They have a spicy fragrant bloom and range from 4 to 6 feet tall. Most need staking although planted up against a fence with support from a stretchy material sometimes works. 'African Queen' is most likely my favorite trumpet variety. It is a 1958 heirloom in apricot-melon with a deeper color on the reverse of the bloom. 'Pink Perfection' is also a good choice with varying shades of warm pink and a narrow yellow starburst pattern in the center. Trumpet lilies require more sun than the others mentioned. Our common Easter lily will also be blooming at this time. The blooms of trumpet lilies last about 2 weeks in the garden.

Orienpet lilies begin opening their fragrant blossoms on taller 3 to 5 feet stems in late May to early June. They embody the best attributes of both parents: the stature and trumpet-shaped flowers of the Chinese trumpet lily, and the exotic beauty and fragrance of the Oriental lily. They are also known as OT's and advertised as "tree lilies" in some catalogs. They increase in height and produce more blooms each year. My favorite OT is 'Anastasia'. The description from John Scheepers catalog says it all. "She has huge, glistening white flowers with deep rose-pink blush marks overlaid with a pale pink flush, dark rose speckles and narrow lime-green nectary furrows". Who could not love having this in their garden every year! She definitely has a sweet and intoxicating bloom as well. The petals are about 7-8 inches across. OT's can be found in many shades of pink, as flowered blooms or a combination of colors of white/purple, yellow/orange and pink/red. Most flowers are 8 inches across and produce strong stems that may not need staking.

Martagon, or heirloom species lilies, are a little harder for us to enjoy in Arkansas. They have Turk's cap flowers with prominent stamens and require at least 2 inches of leaf mulch after the ground has frozen. The flowers are smaller but tend to have more blooms per stem. I have been growing 'Black Beauty' for 3 years now and it is a crimson-red with white margins.

Oriental lilies begin blooming in early July. 'Stargazer' is a popular florist flower that we can enjoy in our own gardens. They typically have large reflexing flower petals and a sweet fragrance. Height is usually 3 to 4 feet. They are also available in pink, yellow, purple, and white and some are bi-tones. They are very fragrant and have huge flowers that attract bees and butterflies.



Far left –
'Anastasia'

Center –
'Forever
Susan'

Left – 'Black
Beauty'

The old-fashioned tiger lily was the first lily bulb I remember from childhood. It is a native of the Orient and grown for over 2,000 years in China as a major food crop. Scales from its egg-shaped bulbs were peeled, seasoned, cooked and eaten by the millions. By the 1830's, the tiger lily found its way to the New World via sleek clipper ships. People distributed the plant so widely that in many places it naturalized and is now considered an American wildflower. It produces black bulblets along its stem. As it grows the bulblets drop off to the ground and will germinate to produce flowers in about 3 years.

Formosa lily or Philippine lily is the last to bloom in our garden. When most gardens have very little blooming a Formosa lily will spring up in late July or August. It has long white trumpet blooms on a 5 to 7 feet tall stem. Many stems will produce up to 20 blooms. They resemble a downward hanging Easter lily but slightly longer trumpet shape. Many of our seasoned gardeners were lucky enough to obtain seeds from Carl Hunter. Carl was an amazing gardener and PCMG who wrote many books on Arkansas wildflowers, trees, and shrubs. He was an avid grower of the Formosa lily and shared many seeds in his lifetime with fellow gardeners.

Bulb lilies require well-draining soil with consistent moisture. They perennialize easier if fertilized at least 2 times per year. Once as they begin to grow in early spring and then again after blooming. A good balanced fertilizer of 20-20-20 is recommended. They also prefer cool soil conditions so spreading mulch around the base helps them in summer. Although you might find small bulbs at a reduced price they will eventually grow larger with proper care and produce an abundance of blooms as the larger bulbs. It is recommended to dig and divide at least every 4 years.

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Beauty from Bulbs, John Scheeper's Fall 2020 catalog

Bender S, Rushing F. Passalong Plants. Univ. Of North Carolina Press, 1993.

Martin S. "Thrilling Lilies for Summer Gardens". Garden Gate, June 2020.

Welch B. "Trumpets for Summer". Southern Living,

WEBSITES for Ordering lilies:

www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com

www.thelilygarden.com

www.oldhousegardens.com

www.johnscheepers.com



Left – Tiger lily
Top - Formosa lily

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