

Can You Dig It



Newsletter of the Piney Hills Master Gardeners of Louisiana

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Spring 2011

Trails & Trellises



Weeks and months of hectic preparation for the 2011 Trails and Trellises gave way to a day of sheer garden bliss as Mother Nature provided cool fresh air and the serenade of nesting birds. The gardens transported hundreds of people to outdoor havens of beautiful flowers, trickling fountains, and restful benches.

*The perfect way to celebrate
the arrival of Spring!*



As Master Gardeners, one of our goals is to share our passion by educating and inspiring others. I know that I came away with design ideas and new plant varieties that I want to try in my garden---

I hope you did, too.

Thanks go to those who shared their gardens:

Gina & Van Almond
Saundra & Ken Pixley

Connie & Rodney Mason
Marjorie & Jerry Thomas

For more garden inspiration, plan on attending the NW Master Gardener's tour of gardens...*Les Tour des Jardins*, May 7-8.

The Bearded Iris *and the* Fleur-de-lis



The fleur-de-lis is a flower symbol widely thought to be based on the bearded iris. From the French, "fleur" means flower, and "lis" means lily.

Iris germanica is believed to be the parent of all bearded irises. This flower has six petals---three outer petals called "falls", that alternate with three inner petals called "standards". Each petal is decorated with tufts of hair, usually white with yellow tips, called the "beard".

The fleur-de-lis is rich in history and legend...it is one of the most recognized symbols across the world. Surrounded by mystery, the origin of the fleur-de-lis symbol is unknown, however, it is a common denominator in most civilizations.

It seems that today, everywhere you look you can see this symbol---especially in Louisiana with its French heritage. In 2008, Governor Bobby Jindal signed a bill into law making the fleur-de-lis an official symbol of our state. You can see this symbol in architecture and on a whole host of decorative items. And...as I sat down in church Sunday and looked up at the beautiful stained glass window behind the pulpit--there it was, a *fleur-de-lis* !! I guess I had never noticed it at the very top of the window. The three petals of the design have been associated with the Holy Trinity, with the band on the bottom symbolizing Mary.

Garden Trivia

What flower has ruffled petals, a clove-like scent, and is both delicate and durable?... *The Carnation*, scientifically known as *dianthus caryophyllus*, is both rich in history and a meaningful flower choice. In fact, the carnation is the official flower of *Mother's Day*. It was selected by Anna Marie Jarvis, who founded Mother's Day as a tribute to her own mother.

In a celebration of a different sort, white carnations are used to create the winner's blanket for the horse that wins the Belmont Stakes. Seven hundred carnations are glued on seven yards of green velvet cloth. When draped over the horse, it looks like a bed of carnations.

The carnation also appears in Leonardo da Vinci's painting, *"Madonna of the Carnation"*

According to legend, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, wept at the sight of her son bearing the cross, and her tears turned into the first carnations. da Vinci immortalized the association of the carnation with Mary and Jesus when he painted this picture of her holding a red carnation in her left hand and baby Jesus, who is sitting on her lap, is reaching for the flower.

There are over 300 species of carnations. They bloom happily in full sunlight and well-drained soil, and come in most of the colors of the rainbow except blue.

Pets In The Garden...

A story of friendship



It is amazing how dogs have a knack of finding their way into our homes and then even deeper into our hearts.

I bet you know a dog that was lucky enough to find a kind soul with arms wide open. I do, his name is **Barkley**.

While many dogs find luck once... Barkley found it twice. Whether it was his good looks, kind eyes, or protective bark, *for which he was named*, I would say that **Lady Luck** has definitely been on his side. You see, Barkley and I are somewhat related. He was rescued by my Aunt Peggy. *(I guess that would make us cousins- you can tell that I'm a*

dog lover, too). Peggy and Barkley enjoyed many years of companionship and in the end he provided that wonderful comfort that only the *touch* of a pet can give as she slipped away after a long battle with Parkinson's. Barkley now lives with friend and fellow Master Gardener...

Melba Love

Melba's promise to Aunt Peggy has instead turned out to be a blessing of a kind that only a dog can deliver. And for that promise and your arms wide open, I say...

"Thank You, Melba."

--Lynn Ritchie

