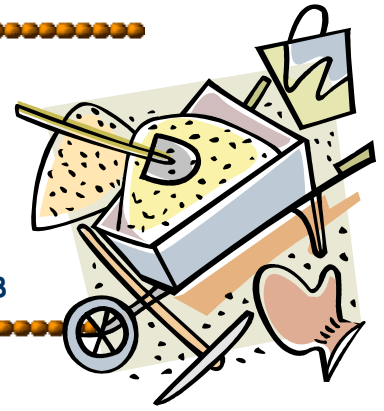

The Garden Scoop

La-Terre Chapter

Master Gardener Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 1

Summer, 2008



Message from the President ...

Thank you for having me as President for another year. Last year we recorded the highest amount of volunteer and education hours being completed. I feel confident that we can beat that record this year—we can certainly try!

We have so many project opportunities presenting themselves, that I hope we will have a good bit of participation. I will definitely try to curtail scheduling work days in the late summer heat.

The Bonne Terre Garden Fair was a huge success this year even with the weather. Earline Theriot, the

committee chairpersons, and all of the workers did a wonderful job of pulling it all together. I hope we can do as well next year.

Tomato Field Day was a success also. It's gratifying to see all of us work together to make a successful project. Thanks to Rudy and Sandra for doing most of the grunge work by tying up, picking, and selling the tomatoes.

I look forward to working with everyone again for another year on the many projects on our horizon. Feel free to contact me by phone or email as needed.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Skinner, President



“I perhaps owe having become a painter to flowers.”
Claude Monet





My Neighbor's Garden...

The eighth annual Tomato Field Day was held on Wednesday, June 11, 2008 at Waterproof Ridge Farm in Houma. This year, 205 individuals attended this educational event sponsored by the LSU AgCenter and La-Terre Master Gardener's. Thank you to all volunteers for making this educational program happen! This program is a great networking opportunity for the LSU AgCenter as well as your volunteer group, plus commercial and home gardeners.

In my opinion, this is what we should be doing in regard to the Louisiana Master Gardener (LMG) program supporting the educational outreach efforts of the LSU AgCenter. Lots of hard work and educational efforts are put forward to educate the general public about vegetable gardening while increasing awareness of the LSU AgCenter and LMG program.

Special thanks to Lynn and Arthur Ostheimer of Waterproof Ridge Farm for hosting this educational program. In addition, thanks to all our sponsors and supporters. Read the article that appeared in the Houma Courier on the field day events: <http://www.houmatoday.com/article/20080612/ARTICLES/806120329>

Plans have been made for the 2008 LMG class for our area. I am planning on involving more volunteer support during the selection and interview process all the way through graduation. This will give more volunteer hour opportunities plus help mesh the new candidates with current membership. Please let me know if you are interested in being a part of the 2008 class. I hope to have the program going by early August with graduation in early to mid-October.

2007 LMG graduates are encouraged to complete their initial 40 hours of volunteer service. You have 12 months from

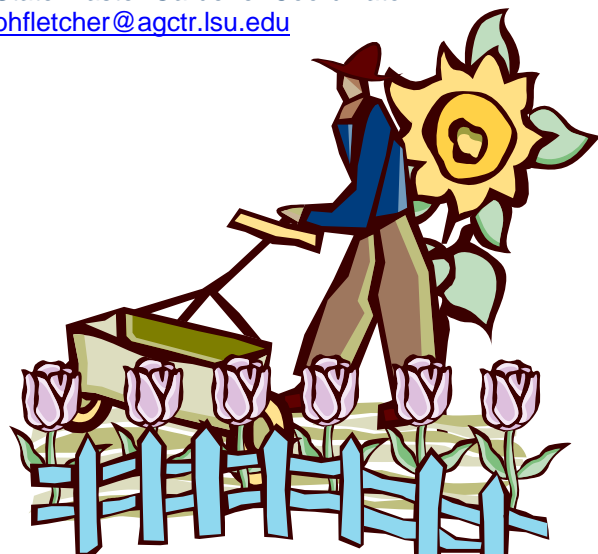
graduation to complete this commitment. If you have not already done so, please let me or Cheryl know so we can make sure you have adequate opportunities to complete this!!

Congratulations to Cheryl, John, Debbie and Rudy for being elected as the slate of officers for 2008-2009! I know they will do a great job in moving the La-Terre Master Gardener program forward.

Effective August 15, I will become Assistant Director of the LSU Ag Center with dual responsibilities for the Extension Service and the state Master Gardeners Program. I hope to continue to maintain strong contacts with you in the LA-Terre Master Gardener Chapter. I value your friendship and commitment to volunteerism in the community to support the mission of the LSU Ag Center.



Bobby Fletcher, Jr., Ph.D.
Assistant to the Director
State Master Gardener Coordinator
bhfletcher@agctr.lsu.edu



Travel Destination for the Master Gardener: Day Trip to New Orleans ...

Audubon Insectarium, a Facility of the Audubon Nature Institute

If you are looking for an interesting day trip and want to venture into New Orleans, no further than the recently opened Audubon Insectarium located in the U.S. Customs House Building on Canal Street downtown. Since opening in mid July, the Insectarium has been an instant visitor attraction with crowds greatly exceeding original estimates.

On a recent Wednesday morning we encountered long lines and lots of people both young and old waiting to get in to see wondrous creatures. Since school is now in session the crowds during the week should decrease significantly. Doors open at 10:00 am and close at 6:00pm, Tuesday through Saturday. You may want to register on-line, print your ticket, and avoid waiting in line. The tickets have a particular time slot for entry. This should give you more time to see the exhibits.

You will be pleasantly surprised at the Insectarium. Be prepared to see dragonfly light fixtures swirling around, giant bugs and flowers stuck to the walls and coming out of the woodwork! Everything is colorful and a delight to the eye. In the Underground Gallery go underground in your backyard into the world of earthworms and spiders. Watch out for that spider coming out of his "hidey hole".

Enter the Field Camp to see and touch live insects. Observe the damage Formosan termites can do to wooden building materials in New Orleans. Walk through a Louisiana swamp and look for native insects and plants. Sample some insects at the Bug Appétit; stroll through a butterfly garden complete with a Koi pond; and see magnificent specimens of butterflies and beetles artfully displayed in wooden cases. Throw in a short cartoon film, a snack area, and a gift shop and you are in for great adventure.

Plan to spend at least two hours or more taking your time to enjoy this exhibition. Complete your day trip with a pleasant lunch at one of the many restaurants in the French Quarter and a stroll down to the Aquarium at the foot of Canal Street to see one of the IMAX movies. If you haven't seen "Hurricane on the Bayou" then put this on your "must" list.

Members of the Audubon Institute and people 65 years or older receive ticket discounts. The price of admission is \$15[Adults]; \$10[Child: [2-12], and \$12[Senior]. You can access ticket information on the website through: www.auduboninstitute.org.

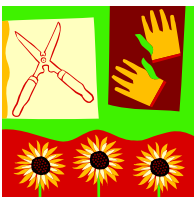


...Shep Templet



Garden Tip: As you cut back and prune that luscious summer plant growth remember to use Clorox disinfectant wipes or a similar product to clean pruners and loppers between plants. This practice is an important way to keep your plants healthy and disease-free and a lot easier than that messy jar of Clorox liquid.

... Donna Bucci





A Very Special Person, One of Our Master Gardeners...

A member of La-Terre Master Gardeners Association, Mary DeLaune, is a very special person. In October 2007 Mary donated a kidney to her friend of 16 years and former co-worker at Nicholls State University, Gayle Richard, after learning from a blood test that she would be a perfect match. To find out more about this heroic event, please click on the following link to see a brief video: <http://www.ochsner.org/page.cfm?id=1266> . When the page appears, click on the last photo of the series of photos.

"Mary, we are proud of you and glad to have you as a member of our organization!"

...Carol Naquin



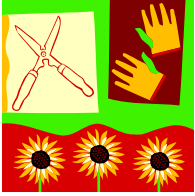
The painting "Wheel Barrow Blooming" by Delores H. Legendre was the winning entry at the La-Terre Garden Fair in spring, 2008.

The LA-Terre Chapter of the Master Gardeners landscaped the Elks Lodge to enhance the curb appeal of the building in the community.



Garden Tip: When planting a container garden, use a 'Lazy Susan'. Place the planter on the turntable and turn it around as you plant. This is especially helpful if you are planting several containers at the same time.

...Donna Bucci



Herbs for the Season... Sage [*Salvia officinalis*]



Sage by any other name is still *Salvia*. Culinary sage belongs to the Genus *Salvia*. Over time the landscape plants of this Genus have been known as *Salvia* while the culinary herb has been called sage.

Sage can be used fresh, dried, or ground. Fresh, dried sage leaves can be stored in the freezer in an air tight bag for three to four months. Some gardeners make jars of sage flavored vinegar for neighbor gifts.

Sage plants grow 2-3 feet tall and produce mountains of purple blossoms during the spring and early summer. In late summer it is possible to take cuttings to root and extend the growing season into fall in the Deep South. It is hardy to Zone 5. This Garden Sage [*S. officinalis*] is probably the sage that most people are familiar with. Gardeners like to grow it in a border or a mass planting and have a magnificent display all summer. Container planting is also popular. Here in south Louisiana it can be a perennial. However you may have to replant when the plants get Leggy after several years.

This herb is a standard used to season pork, other meats, sausages, cheeses and fruits. The flowers may be used to garnish salads, fruit desserts, ice cubes, and cheeses.

Grow *Salvias* in alkaline soil that is well drained. IF the soil is too acid, it may require a lime application to grow these plants well. The plants need at least six hours of sunlight per day. This allows for maximum development of the flavor in the leaves.

It may be interesting to note that the bottled, dried grocery store herb is not *S. officinalis* but *S. fructosa*, This sage is really Greek Sage which is hardy to Zone 8 and is grown for the leaves that have an exceptionally strong flavor.

Salvia has many medicinal uses. The Chinese make a sage tea and value its' healing properties. It can be used as a throat gargle and an aid to digestion. Sage has been found to have some antioxidant properties. Before using this herb consult your doctor if you have special medical problems or are taking very specific medications..

Source:www.mountainvalleygrowers.com/salviaarticle.htm



Flower Power..... Flamingo Feather Celosia



FLAMINGO FEATHER CELOSIA (*Celosia spicata*)

This is an annual favorite that produces plumes of feathery pink flowering spikes. Flowers can be picked and used in floral displays because they last a very long time when dried.

The plants typically grow to an average height of 3– 4 feet with multiple blooms. The butterflies and hummingbirds go crazy for this plant. They are beautiful plants with soft, dense feathery spikes, produced in profusion. The flowers have a wonderful straw-like texture when they are dried.

These plants offer the gardener a fresh shape and color for cut flower or everlasting flower arrangements. The slender, cylindrical pink or rose flower heads have a metallic sheen because the individual flowers are silvery-white at their bases. Excellent as a flowering pot plant. Grow these as ANNUALS in all ZONES. Readily reseeds.

A wonderful addition to any garden!

...Shirley Huggins



Questions for Lulu the Ladybug...

Question: My backyard looks like a jungle at this time of year. When the weather gets cooler I need to prune and trim my trees and shrubs. Do you have some suggestions for working smarter while I'm in my yard this fall?

Answer: Yes, think **PAWS**: **P** [poison ivy], **A** [fire ants], **W** [wasps], and **S** [spiders]. This is my watch word for the fall gardener. When you work in the yard pruning trees and shrubs, moving branches and removing dried vegetation wear heavy garden gloves, a long sleeved shirt, long pants, and sturdy work shoes. These will give you a layer of protection from cuts, scrapes, insects, and plant exudates.

Poison Ivy can grow quite large during the hot summer month here in south Louisiana. It can vine around shrubbery and trees. Be on the lookout for this vine. Many people are allergic to this plant and get a red blistering skin rash after handling the plant. If you aren't allergic to this plant, count yourself lucky. Just be observant and be aware that the plant may have twisted around a tree branch or grown up around the base of that shrub during the summer.

Fire Ants build nests part of which are above ground. These are easy to spot in your lawn. You may have used an insecticide to control these pests at the beginning of the season. However after the recent rains ant mounds may begin to pop up on your lawn in unexpected places. Check the soil in some of your large container plantings. It's not unusual for fire ants to have built a nest in the soil in the pot during the late summer. You will need to apply some insecticide to the soil before you can replant your container for the fall.

Wasps can be aggressive at this time of year. They may have build nests in trees, shrubs, or even underground during the spring and summer. When their nests are threatened or they are out foraging for food you may get stung by one of these pests. Be on the lookout especially in dark, secluded corners your garden shed or garage and the eaves of your house for papery nests made



Poison Ivy Plant

by the wasps. Most people usually experience an uncomfortable burning sensation from a wasp sting. Others have a more severe and painful reaction.

In south Louisiana are two poisonous spiders that we need to be aware of around our house. These are the **Black Widow Spider** and the **Brown Recluse Spider**. Interestingly there is a three spider, the **Brown Widow Spider** that is becoming more common in the south. These spiders are found locally and you can expect to see them at some time while you garden. Usually these spiders are quite timid and prefer dark, dry, isolated places to live. They don't like to be disturbed. Spiders can live in your house, your garage, trees, brush, and piles of old brick and stacked lumber. When you move some of these materials or threaten their home the spiders will come out of their holes and become aggressive.

Be aware of **PAWS** in your local environment. Gardeners generally have a healthy respect for all living things. Educating yourself about your environment is an important part of being a good steward of the land. Be observant and your yard work will be a rewarding experience.



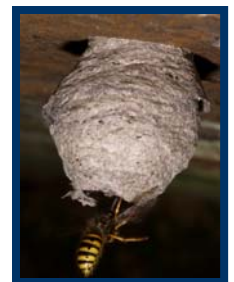
Poison Ivy Skin Rash



Brown Recluse Spider



Black Widow Spider



Wasp

...Shep Templet





Amis de Jardin “Garden Friends”

La-Terre Master Gardener Marian Patterson

Marian Patterson lives with her cat, Purdy Tat, in the city in which she was born and later raised her three children. Her home and garden were

welcoming and warm, much like Marian. She walked through her garden pointing out her favorite plants, shrubs, and trees and giving the history of each plant. Three blooms hung from the orchid at her back patio entrance. “Judy gave this to me five years ago. It’s never bloomed until now,” she said lifting a bloom in her hand. Her face beamed like she’d received a gift and appreciated the blessing. Marian also took pride in her many native plants such as yellow passion vine, green dragon, and polk weed. Another prominent feature of her garden was the twenty camellias she had collected over the years, some of which were inherited from family members.

Though she considers herself a lifelong resident of Houma, as a newlywed she left the bayous of Terrebonne Parish shortly after WWII and traveled halfway around the world to be with her husband, “Pat”, in South America. Her son, Tommy was born in Guam. When asked about her experiences in South America she said, “Honey, there isn’t enough paper on that tablet to tell it all.” Though she speaks fondly about her adventures in South America she became seriously ill during her time there. She and her husband decided it would be best for her and their children if she remained stateside to raise the family while he worked out of the country. They built the home in which Marian lives today.

As a small home improvement project Marian and her husband purchased 500 bricks to build a patio. They laid brick until they ran out, which yielded a very small patio. In 1973, Marian was widowed but she continued to improve her garden and home. Years later, Marian decided to expand the patio but had difficulty finding the same type of brick. She put out the word that she was looking for those bricks and friends started dropping by with a few bricks at a time and the patio grew brick by brick and friend by friend. Marian pointed out a stack of bricks

against the wall and said “Whenever I feel like it, I just lay a row or two of bricks.” Marian didn’t say it but looking at the patio one couldn’t help but see a lifetime of abundant friendship.

Marian’s love of gardening budded when she was invited to join the Terrebonne Garden Club in 1961. Later she served as president twice. She was also a member of the Mulberry Garden Club. She was motivated to garden, because she loved to arrange flowers. She and her husband planted all the trees in her yard. She shrugged and said, “We thought it would be so nice to sit under a shade.” Once when the children were young she sent them outside to sit under the shade of a live oak they’d planted. It had about a two inch trunk at the time. Marian looked out the window and saw her children huddled against the tree with their knees pulled to their chests in the tiny shade of the young oak. Now, the tree shades over half of her front yard and is still considered young for a live oak at fifty plus years. In the back yard, a stump with a girth of about three feet pushes out of the ground where a water oak once stood. The water oak was a volunteer that tagged along with an aloe plant. She and her husband planted it and Marian had it cut down weeks before Katrina hit. As a well informed gardener she knew water oaks had a life expectancy of about fifty years. She’d also noticed it had dropped an unusual amount of branches. Katrina blew down other water oaks of the same age in her neighborhood, causing serious damage. Her daughter said she was psychic but Marian said she knew it was time to cut the tree down.

As Marian’s interest in gardening deepened her focus expanded to include native plants and wildlife. She’s also a member of the Terrebonne Bird Club. Marian said, “Birds drop gifts then I nurture the gift and it grows.” She pointed out a bush. “They gave me French Mulberry.” At her back window, two pairs of binoculars rest on a table. She has listed 125 birds that have come to her yard to eat or drink. Marian also grows plants to attract butterflies and birds.

When asked why she gardens she said, “My stock answer is, I don’t golf, play tennis, or swim. I get a bit of exercise gardening and as a

result I'm in pretty good shape. My back is strong. The results work for me. Besides, exchanging plants is fun and you meet some of the best people in the world."

When asked if there was anything she wanted to share about the master gardeners she said, "What I've noticed in observing the people who become master gardeners is that they all bring something different to the organization and no one has everything to give but as a group we have it all to give."

In addition to her gardening activities Marian worked as a Hospice volunteer for ten years



and is a member of the D.A.R. She continues to serve her community and nurture friendships through gardening and birding. Her family including her four grandchildren and one great granddaughter are also an important part of her life.

When asked what plant she'd be if she could be a plant she said couldn't decide because they were all favorites.

...Pamela Kopfler



Tomato Field Day at Waterproof was a great success this year. The crowd of interested gardeners was the largest in recent memory. The tasting table is always a favorite for local participants.



Photographs by Carlotta Matherne

Bonne Terre Garden Fair, Spring, 2008.



From a Gardener's Kitchen...

Eggplant Dirty Rice

2-3 T. of olive oil

½ large red onion, chopped finely

½ red bell pepper, chopped finely

½ yellow bell pepper, chopped finely

3 fresh garlic cloves [if desired]

1 medium eggplant, peeled and chopped into small cubes; no need to soak in salted water before using; peel and chop the eggplant just before putting it in the pan to cook

½ lb. very lean [93:7] ground meat

Chicken/vegetable or beef broth, if needed, to help the vegetables cook without sticking

2 c. instant rice [amount of rice depends on how much rice to meat mixture you like]

Water or stock for rice

Seasoning to taste



Directions:

1. Place the olive oil in a large sauce pan and heat.
2. Add the onions and bell peppers and sauté' until translucent and limp.
3. Add the garlic and chopped eggplant and sauté until very wilted and soft.
4. Add the ground meat and cook until all the meat mixture is no longer red/pink.
5. May need to add a small amount of chicken broth/vegetable or beef stock to the vegetable mixture to help them cook evenly without sticking to the bottom of the pan.
6. Cook the mixture on a low heat for 20-30 minutes.
7. Add seasoning.
8. To the sauce pan add the correct amount of water or stock per the amount of rice according to the directions on the instant rice box. Bring the water/broth to a rolling boil.
9. Add the rice; boil for 3-5 minutes, cover the pan and turn the heat off.
10. Wait 15-20 minutes for the rice to absorb the liquid.
11. Fluff the dirty rice mixture and adjust the seasoning. Enjoy!

Note: Since using "a medium eggplant" is an inexact measure, you may want to cook the vegetable/meat mixture and the rice separately adding them together at the end. If you do this then let the mixture "sit" for awhile before serving so that the flavors combine well.

My mother-in-law always had a dish of eggplant dirty rice and a dish of smothered okra and tomatoes on the table for Sunday dinner during the summer months. The eggplant, okra and tomatoes were always fresh and plentiful from their backyard garden. Try this recipe if you have an extra eggplant or two to experiment with. Enjoy!!!!

Recipe... Mama Rosa Templet





Co-Editors: Carol Naquin and Dr. Shep Templet

Staff: Pamela Kopfler, Donna Bucci, Shirley Huggins

Contributors: Dr. Bobby Fletcher, Cheryl Skinner,

Photographers: Carlotta Matherne, Cheryl Skinner



Members of the LA-Terre Master Gardeners Chapter presented programs again this year to enthusiastic crowds of participants attending the Nicholls State University Home and Garden Trends Day in August, 2008.

