

# The Seedling

*Newsletter of the Northwest Louisiana Master Gardeners Association*  
*An Affiliate of LSU Ag Center*  
[www.lsuagcenter.com/nwlamg](http://www.lsuagcenter.com/nwlamg)

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## MG ACTIVITIES

### NEEDED – THOUSANDS OF PLANTS

Only five weeks are left until the Spring Plant Sale on April 9, and the greenhouse is full. Last year we supplemented our sale with something new – purchased plants that we matured in our own greenhouse. These were a hit, and we again have purchased plants. Some are very similar to last year's, and some are quite different. But these purchased plants are less than 300 of the 1,500 to 2,000 plants that will cover the front lawn of Randle T. Moore that Saturday. It's the plants provided by our membership that are the backbone of a successful sale. And it's our great membership that comes through year after year in providing the plants.

Five weeks left...is it too late if you don't already have something ready? No. Somewhere in your yard is a plant that someone else would love to have. Is it something that even now could be divided? Is it a flower or shrub that filled a bare spot when planted, but now seems out of place? Look and see.

Let us know now what plants you'll be bringing, so we can have the pot labels and table signage ready before the sale. If you have a photo of the plant in bloom or full foliage (including fall foliage if the leaves change color), please provide that too. These may be sent to me at [northen@yahoo.com](mailto:northen@yahoo.com) or dropped off at the Carriage House. Please bring your plants to RTM on Friday, April 8, between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. If you are unable to bring them, please get another member to bring them or contact one of the plant sale committee members to make arrangements. Committee membership will be announced via email in March.

There are plenty of volunteer opportunities. On Friday there are table set up, receiving plants, making labels, labeling plants, transporting plants and loading them on tables. On Saturday it's welcoming our customers, answering questions, helping with selections, checking out, and showing the public what a great group of folks Master Gardeners are.

Thanks to all of you – I'm looking forward to a great sale April 9!

- **Gary Northen**

We have started several plants from cuttings this year. We have some old favorites – angel trumpets and Confederate roses – and some new varieties for the plant sale – white shrimp plant, pink Turks caps, dwarf Mexican petunias, black and blue salvia, hummingbird sage and several varieties of sun coleus. These plants are doing so well we have already moved them up to gallon pots.

The new Master Gardener class had a lot of fun making cuttings of celeste figs and angel trumpets and potting them. We have several more plant varieties that we are just starting to grow. We will have our plants ready for the Plant Sale on April 9 – will you?

March is a good time to lift and divide summer blooming bulbs. You can propagate your bulbs at this time by cutting an X through the basal plate and re-potting. Finish up transplanting and diving perennials. Not only will you rejuvenate your established plants, but you will have plenty of extras to stick in pots now for the plant sale. If your memory is like mine, be sure to label the plants as you pot.

- **Debby Evans**

## GET YOUR TOUR GUIDE ASSIGNMENTS NOW

Jane Drake and her Le Tour des Jardins committee have announced the six gardens that will be on the May 7-8 event, and assignment of garden guide shifts is going on now. Ticket packets will be distributed at the March meeting.

Cookie Duet, guide chairman, asks that anyone who does not have an assignment email her at [rcduet@bellsouth.net](mailto:rcduet@bellsouth.net) or call her at 797-4759 to request a garden and shift. Shifts are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. Saturday and 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. Sunday. She needs 24 guides and 12 ticket-takers per shift (in addition to the head guides).

Here's what our guests will see in May:

The South Highlands garden of **Julia and Will Andress** is a paradox: it's a shade garden with a tropical theme. Julia's parents built the house more than 70 years ago, and it is the Andresses' 17<sup>th</sup> home. Camellias, sasanquas and azaleas frame the curved drive in front. A flagstone-and-pebble path on the east leads to the shady back yard, where two areas invite visitors to sit down. The patio by the back entrance has container plants – cabbages, split-leaf philodendron, kumquat and lemon – that Julia brings in when it freezes.

Most striking are the trees: yaupons, sweet olives, river birch and pines. On the Creswell side of the house is a pin oak planted by Julia's father, Fred Hamiter. A courtyard provides an entrance to the back yard from Creswell. Near the kitchen door is her herb garden, which has lavender, basil, tarragon, oregano and parsley.

Around the lawn are shade-tolerant plants, such as ferns, geraniums, holly, caladiums, begonias and several kinds of ginger. In one corner is a huge banana tree. The hidden ginger lily is a passalong plant from Shadows on the Teche plantation. A wild fern that Hamiter dug up in north Caddo Parish is under a camellia bush, and his yaupon trees still give shade. He planted 150 to 200 camellias in the garden; the Andresses are down to fewer than a hundred.

Look for the frog figures (one crouches near a St. Francis statue), a concrete column from South Carolina topped by a sundial from Hodges Gardens, and an antique light pole that came from Boston.

**Syble Hines** has been in her Broadmoor home more than four decades but started serious gardening only after her Labrador retriever died in the late 1990s (he dug holes). Today she and her bichon frise, Sassy, look after a small yard packed with azaleas, roses, sasanquas and a variety of annuals.

In the front yard are lily of the Nile, amaryllis, Texas spider lily and a hedge of Indian hawthorn bushes. A path bordered by impatiens and geraniums leads to the back yard, which is divided into two parts. Near the house are Gerber daisies, Encore azaleas and mums; along the fence are pentas, hidden ginger, lantana, hibiscus and lacecap hydrangea.

The fenced section of the back is a showpiece: flower beds line the perimeter, and in the center is an island of patio stones that Mrs. Hines laid. Two tall Italian cypress trees mark its corners, and potted flowers keep it green – hibiscus, dianthus,



**Hines' Italian cypresses**

climbing rose. The plants on the perimeter include Mexican petunia, purple verbena, zinnias, Turk's cap, bridal wreath, a yew bush, a Lady Banks rose, pink phlox, a butterfly bush, salvia, gaura, pink bearded iris, cosmos and snapdragon.

Mrs. Hines has acquired her plants and yard art locally; wrought-iron figures on her Grover Street fence are from Big Lots, a plaster piece is from Walmart, a small statue came from a friend, the cypress trees are from Lowe's. At 88, she plans her garden and tends it by herself.



### A Moritz birdhouse

pond, benches and a bronze sculpture of playful otters by Texas wildlife artist Christopher Smith. An entrance area has another Smith work. More than 40 varieties of roses grow in several beds.

The garden was started by Mrs. E. Weldon Jones, a musician and gardener, and the Odoms have kept some of her camellias and a large photinia. They have been in the house since 1973, but most of the garden work has been done since 1998, when a deck was added to the west side and the pond to the back. The deck has container plants, seating and cooking equipment, making it a good place to entertain guests. An iron arch leads the visitor from the deck to the front yard and its 'George Tabor' azaleas.

The back yard is small but seems to acquire space with its vertical plants, including four Italian cypresses in the yard and two more on the side street, plus columnar sweetgum trees and Natchez crape myrtles. Lower are two lovely laceleaf Japanese maple trees, whose foliage contrasts with the greenery around them.

The Long Lake garden of **Debbie and Mike Schofield** begins at the street, where Knock-Out roses welcome visitors. Container plants frame the front door, with a river birch, a fig tree and an enormous elephant ear plant in beds. Vincas, daylilies and spider lilies give color, and there's a bay tree, the leaves of which Mike uses in his cooking.

Despite the newness of the Long Lake neighborhood, the back yard seems dominated by trees: a magnolia, a pine, an oak and a Ruston peach. The cooking area, which includes a fireplace, shows off Debbie's satsumas, pineapple guava, navel oranges, Meyer lemons, rosemary, Italian parsley, thyme and basil. Behind the fireplace is a hot tub. Just off the cooking area is a large water feature, a fountain with two metal cranes.

Lorapetalum bushes provide year-round color, and flowers abound: sasanquas, gardenias, hibiscus, vinca, impatiens, azaleas, iris, forsythia, quince, begonia and bridal wreath. It's hard to believe that when the Schofields moved in four years ago, "there was nothing here," according to Debbie.

Aged crepe myrtles, a pecan tree and some hollies were the only plants on the lot when **Sherri and Mike Moritz** started on their Broadmoor yard five years ago. "There was barely grass," she says. They moved one huge holly tree to the front yard and continue to change the plantings. They have added hydrangeas, sweet olives, azaleas, Confederate jasmine, clematis, roses and lorapetalum, among others, and created curving beds in the back yard. Everything seems to grow well -- "Broadmoor has fabulous soil," Sherri says. Creeping fig helps to conceal a cinderblock fence that affords privacy. There's a fountain with two benches nearby.

Mike Moritz collects birdhouses, which are scattered throughout the yard. Sherri adds annuals every year: snapdragons, pansies and dianthus. She plants them around her "gobs of hostas," which should be blooming for the tour. By that time the Indian hawthorn in front may be gone, in favor of camellias; she thinks there is too much shade there.

Imaginative use of ironwork is the hallmark of the South Highlands garden of **Gale and John Odom**, designed by Newton/Taylor Landscape Architects. On the east side, a drive ends with a huge piece that seems to extend into the distance (though it is mounted on a garage wall), and two iron umbrella trellises support roses. Local artist Shawn Durbin did the ironwork. The enclosed garden area is divided into "rooms," made necessary by a downward slope to the south. In the second is a fountain,

When **Mary and Mike Wark** moved onto their Greenwood property more than 40 years ago, it was “bad pasture,” she says. Together they created a “garden in the woods,” one that was on Le Tour des Jardins in 2002 and this year will be revisited. Mike Wark died in early 2010, but his hand is everywhere present.

Visitors are met by a row of ‘Old Blush’ antique roses and a grove of eight vitex trees. Straight ahead is Mike’s Garden: espaliered apple trees, blueberry and blackberry bushes, muscadines, onions, rosemary, spinach, broccoli, lettuce and fig and loquat trees. Next to it is Mary’s garden kitchen, where she makes pickles and jellies of the produce (and where she handpainted the floor).

A new area is called the Park, an open area that has pillar roses, two mayhaws, a plum tree, a Chinese empress tree, ‘Natchez White’ crape myrtles, six Okami cherry trees, two yellow Japanese magnolias and a huge wild Cherokee rose bush. Two benches invite you to stay awhile. A third area is the butterfly garden, small, visible from the porch, and packed with flowering plants: climbing buck rose, azaleas, lantana, flowering almond, daylilies, pussywillow and phlox. A birdbath and birdhouse lure other flying creatures.

## COMMUNITY GARDENS

### VALENCIA YOUTH HARVEST VEGETABLES

The afterschool gardening program at Valencia began its new year in early January. The youth have harvested spinach, carrots, cilantro, mustard greens, radishes and onion. They have made quiches from their freshly harvested and chopped veggies twice already this month. They even experimented with small veggie tapenades and sampled veggie melon salsa made by a visiting gardener.

A new community garden opened in October. The MLK Serenity Community Garden planners invited local garden friends and community members to join them in creating this new garden space. The garden coordinator, Millie Billups, helped at several gardens, including Highland and Valencia, while planning this new garden in collaboration with her church, Willow Chute MBC. The new garden is at 3022 Montana St. near the 1500 block of Martin Luther King Drive.

Another new community garden is starting this spring. Warren Saucier, principal of the Charlotte Ann Mitchell Educational Center in Bossier, is planning a garden at his school. This will be another great opportunity to volunteer and help create a positive lasting learning experience with our community youth.

The Red River Community Garden Coalition is one year old. It has nurtured a sustainable network for sharing information and building strong partnerships among community gardeners, it has helped establish new gardens throughout the area, and it has hosted the first ever Community Garden tour.

The gardens have continued to flourish and to demonstrate the bounty of our region. Each garden has generated fresh produce throughout the year and even during the winter months. The community of gardens as a whole continues to inspire others and to expand as new gardens spring up in our region.

- **Mary Dumars**

## WORLD OF GARDENING

“There are other things besides people,” Steven Chamblee cautioned his audience in mid-February, “so don’t poison stuff.” He dispensed that kind of common-sense advice to a packed room in Klima Hall at the first World of Gardening presentation of 2011. Another bit – when people complain to him that lantanas are stinky, he responds, “Don’t smell them!”

Chamblee, chief horticulturist of Chandor Gardens in Weatherford, Texas, is responsible for 3.5 acres and leans toward tough and low-maintenance plants. Here are a few of the more than 50 native and well-adapted species of various kinds that he showed photos of:

**Annuals** – ‘Coconut Cream’ viola, ‘Profusion’ zinnia, ‘Plum Parfait’ and ‘Burgundy Sun’ coleus

**Perennials** – Russian sage, ‘Powis Castle’ artemisia, ox-eye and Shasta daisies, purpleheart

**Groundcovers** – mountain pea (also called Sampson’s snakeroot), mondo grass, Japanese holly fern

**Ornamental grasses** – Lindheimer’s muhly, hardy sugarcane, maidengrass

**Shrubs** – Chinese fringeflower (‘Purple Pixie’ and ‘Purple Diamond’), abelia (‘Edward Goucher’), nandina, cherry sage

**Trees** – bald cypress, Japanese maple, Texas redbud (‘Oklahoma’), Lacey oak, goldenball leadtree

**Roses** – Knock-Out, ‘Belinda’s Dream,’ ‘Carefree Beauty’

**Vines** – creeping fig, Virginia creeper, trumpet vine (‘Madame Galen’), crossvine

**Accent plants** – red yucca, beaked yucca, sago palm, Japanese aralia, hojo santa (also called root beer plant)

## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

This winter has been harsh, and I am eager to get outside and start on my spring gardening. I want all those great dreams of a fabulous garden this year to come to fruition.

Speaking of fabulous gardens, I can’t wait to tour the gardens this year at the Le Tour de Jardins. Jane Drake and her committee have chosen some incredible homes this year for the Tour, which will be May 7-8. Cookie Duet and the head garden guides have worked tirelessly preparing for the upcoming Tour. I know it is going to be another successful year. And with the addition of the billboards pulled together by Suzy Ryan and her committee, I am hoping we have the largest attendance ever.

Don’t forget to put the annual Plant Sale on your calendar. This year it will be from 8 a.m. until noon Saturday, April 9, at the Randle T. Moore Center.

Thank goodness spring has finally sprung and I can get back to work on all those great ideas. Actually, if only get a few of them done I will be happy.

- Michele Wiener

# POTPOURRI

## HOMEMADE EGG DYE

**Molly Rankin** sent these directions for entertaining grandchildren and messing up your kitchen.

### Materials:

glass, ceramic or stainless steel pans (iron or tin will alter the color)  
6 white eggs  
4 cups vegetables OR 2 tablespoons of spices (see color list below)  
1 quart water  
2 tablespoons vinegar for each color  
empty egg carton for holding dyed eggs as they dry

### Colors:

Orange – 2 tablespoons paprika  
Blue: 4 cups of chopped red cabbage  
Red: 4 cups of red onion skins  
Pink: 4 cups of chopped beets  
Green: 4 cups of spinach  
Yellow: 4 cups of orange or lemon peels OR 2 tablespoons cumin  
Light Brown: 1 quart of strongly brewed coffee in place of water

### Steps:

Boil eggs for about 10 minutes and set aside to cool. Boil a quart of water in a glass, ceramic or stainless steel saucepan. You will need a separate pan of water for each dye color. Add the dye ingredients of your choice to the pan of boiling water. Reduce the heat and simmer until water changes color (15 to 30 minutes). Strain the colored water into a bowl. Vinegar helps the eggs absorb the color, so add 2 tablespoons of vinegar to the colored water.

Place the boiled eggs in the colored water. Leave them to soak until the shells become the desired color. Remember to turn them occasionally for even coating. Remove the eggs from the dye and place in an egg carton to air dry. If you would like to eat the eggs, store them in the refrigerator.

# OUT AND ABOUT

## COME SEE THE ORCHIDS

The American Orchid Society will hold its annual meeting at the Shreveport Convention Center April 28-May 1, and visitors are welcome to check vendors' offerings and see the flowers. Orchids will be judged on Thursday, and the show is open to visitors the next three days.

Vendors will have orchids and potting supplies for sale each day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Admission to the orchid show is \$3 but is free if you pick up a ticket at an area nursery or at the Randle T. Moore Center in April. For information on registering for lectures and events, please contact Wendy Kelly, Judy Toth, Nancy Rosenblath or Helen Herzog (865-3848).

- **Helen Herzog**

## **NORTHEAST MGS HOLD GARDEN SYMPOSIUM**

The Northeast Louisiana Master Gardeners held what I was told was their first garden symposium in mid-January. Co-hosted by the North Louisiana Agri-Business Council, it was a huge success with a larger-than-expected turnout and great presentations. My favorites were Barbara Pleasant, who hails from Virginia, author of several books and contributing editor for *Mother Earth News* and *The Herb Companion* and Dr. Allen Owings, an LSU professor who oversees the plant testing program in Hammond.

Barbara's presentations, delivered with a delightfully quirky sense of humor, were on the subjects of two of her books, vegetable gardening and composting. *Starter Vegetable Gardens* includes among the 24 "no-fail plans" the simplest: cutting open bags of soil and planting in them to produce the home-grown veggies we all covet. She suggested plans for the garden's first three years. Her *Complete Composting Gardening Guide* contains every detail imaginable from composting basics to manure and bin comparisons, pest controls, her "catch-and-release" vermi-composting methods, details on the best vegetable varieties and instructions on rotating them.

Dr. Owings' presentation was about ornamental plant varieties that succeed in Louisiana, including the Louisiana "Super Plants" identified during trials conducted at Hammond. Among the "Super Plants" are the Amazon Series Dianthus, Camelot Series Foxgloves, ShiShi Gashira Camellia, Serena Series Angelonia, and a variety of pentas we must add to our butterfly garden, the Butterfly Series Pentas (named "for the abundance of butterflies that always surrounds them").

- **Jeannette Hotard**