



**Master
Gardener™**

An educational program of the LSU AgCenter

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. TAMMANY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

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May, 2010

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The Bobby Fletcher, Sr. Scholarship Committee has evaluated the applications and chosen the scholarship winners for 2010. Be sure to come to the May meeting to meet the winners and show your support. Seated: Diane Walker, Brenda Caston, Christy Paulsell. Standing: Isabelle Moore, Dianne Ramirez, Debora Litzenberger, Glenda Nanz, Barbara Blaga, Donna Brown and Suzanne Crow.

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research-based
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www.lsuagcenter.com

President's Message

Some members have expressed their displeasure that we are funding a free field trip. Others want those of us who go on the trip to at least pay a portion of the expenses.

I have heard from many others who feel that the trip is a well-earned reward for hard work and helps nurture a sense of camaraderie. In a volunteer organization such as ours, the fun factor is very important in light of all our dirty fingernails and ant bites.

The trips are educational and increase our horticultural knowledge, enabling us to share it with other residents of St Tammany. After all, the main mission of our organization is education.

But if you oppose the trip, rest assured that the points you bring up in opposition will be considered. We will vote the trip as a go or no-go at our May meeting.

On another topic, two members spoke to me at the end of the Plant Swap after everyone else had gone. They were concerned that the business portion of our meeting was taking too much time and attendance would drop unless something was done. Their suggestion.....let the board make the decisions so we could get on with the scheduled program.

I don't agree. Keep in mind that we recently had to leave the AgCenter meeting room because our attendance had increased to the point where the room could no longer hold us all.

We don't have so much going on that we have to form an Executive Committee to meet and hash out all the details. Plus, I like the idea of complete transparency. Everyone's opinion can be heard by all of us. Then we can make a more informed decision.

In addition, the discussions will allow those who need volunteer hours a chance to see all of our ongoing projects and decide where they might enjoy helping, especially our newer members.

Our bylaws state that our Board of Directors (which consists of our officers) shall manage the business affairs of the association. I feel that decisions on the direction and activities of our organization should be made by the general membership. Not the board. Not the advisor. But by the ones who get the job done. Our bylaws direct and empower us to do this.

I do think there may come a time when we will want to form an Executive Committee (Officers plus Committee and Project Chairs) who will handle much of the business. They will then come to the general meetings with their recommendations, and we can approve or disapprove of any actions.

However, if you feel the time is now, make a motion and we can change the bylaws.

Disagreement is a healthy part of our organization. We all deserve to have our views heard. If you choose not to bring your concerns up before the general membership, tell me. I promise to listen to your opinions and give them serious consideration. I may even bring them up in the President's Message.

Art
folsomart@bellsouth.net



Top Ten Tomato Tips

By
Rusty Batty

Tomatoes are the most common vegetable grown in our gardens. There are home grown tomatoes, hydroponic tomatoes, green house tomatoes, container grown tomatoes, and even tomatoes grown upside down. After deciding on the right place (full sun), right time (after danger of frost) and right varieties (so many to choose) you'll still need to consider many of these tips when growing the prized vegetables.

Planting- 1) Rotate your planting area within your garden. Don't plant more than twice in the same spot.

2) Plant deep. Put the transplants in the ground so the stem is covered up to the first leaves.

Watering- 3) Consistent soil moisture is a big step toward having healthy tomatoes. Too much can suffocate the plant, too little can stress the plant allowing other problems to show up.

4) Avoid overhead watering, if possible. Soaker hoses put water where it's needed. One or two inches of water per week are about right.

Mulching- 5) Use of organic mulch help prevent weeds, insulate the soil temperature, conserves moisture, and helps the soil as it breaks down.

6) Dark plastic mulch help heat up the soil, an advantage in early planting. Reflective plastic mulch help with some insect damage prevention.

Fertilizing- 7) Ideally, you should add fertilizer to your soil 2 weeks before planting. Apply 6-8 pounds of 8-24-24 per 100 ft of row. Too much nitrogen will cause deep green leaves, but no tomatoes.

8) After the first fruit sets, add calcium nitrate at 3 pounds per 100 ft of row as a side dressing. A tomato spike, as a slow release, is another alternative.

Staking - 9) Use a trellis system for tomatoes in a row. Support the tomatoes at planting or before they reach 12 inches in height.

10) For individual plants, consider cages or stakes. Use metal stakes with loose ties.

Growing tomatoes is one of the true joys of the vegetable gardener. Following these tips can provide some tasty rewards.

“Master Gardeners go to Pontchartrain Elementary School for Tree Talks”

January through March Master Gardeners, Pattie McGinnis, Kathy Magee, Patricia Hedges, Ann Durel, Julie Deus, Rodney Cross, Pam Twardzik, and Nancie Munn, gave “Tree Talks” to all kindergarten thru third grade classes supporting the life sciences’ Arbor Day activities. Working with Teacher of the Year, Jenny Ronquillo, who won a *“Town and Country Garden Club Grant: Keeping Mandeville Beautiful One Tree at a Time”*, Arbor Day was celebrated in January with the planting of two bald cypress trees on the school grounds and the gift of cypress seedlings to all third graders for community plantings. Once the students received their Master Gardener “Tree Talks” about the types of trees, contributions and importance of trees, the students walked to the school grounds, for their class tree planting lead by parent volunteers. “Building bridges between community and schools is a priceless gift to our future.” stated Mrs. Ronquillo.

Master Gardeners shared many classroom stories but none so memorable as Ann Durel’s experience with tree cookies (cross section). As several samples of tree cookies were being shared with the class, Ann tried to determine the prior knowledge of the students about the parts of the tree. She asked about the outer most part, “What does your dog do?” A second grade boy quickly responded, “P—P!!” The roar of laughter was contagious but was contained by another students shout of “Bark!”

“Special thanks to the LSU Ag Center Master Gardeners Program for providing the volunteers to be our Tree-Scientist for the day! They were given a few grade level expectations, a blank, unscripted canvas and they painted an inspiring Tree Talk experience for our students. Many thanks!” Submitted by: Christy Paulsell (MG 2009) Elementary Science Curriculum Specialist, St. Tammany Parish Public Schools.

The best thing about trees....

"...like our students there are wonderful varieties, colors, shapes, and sizes!" Jennifer Ronquillo (Computer Lab Teacher)

"...is they give us lots of oxygen." Stephanie (1st grade student)

"... is how beautiful they are." Emin (Kindergarten student)



Boys & Girls Club of Covington – A Growing Place

Serendipity – Making a beneficial discovery when you are not seeking it.

Perhaps it was serendipity, or just plain luck, but a chance conversation with LSU AgCenter County Agent, J. B. Anders, has resulted in an enriching gardening program in cooperation with the Boys & Girls Club of Covington.



Bo Elzy, J.B. Anders, Donna
Howland and Eric

Truthfully, this was not totally by accident. Last summer, I asked Mr. “Bo” Elzy, Director of the Club, if I could be of help to the club as a math and literacy tutor. With his blessing, I spent one afternoon per week teaching math and reading to several students. We also did lots of science and the children loved it. At the end of the summer, I asked them if they would be interested in growing vegetables. The answer was clear – Oh Yes!

So, naturally, when I graduated as a member of the 2009 Master Gardener’s class, my first thought was of the Boys & Girls Club. I contacted Mr. Elzy and he was thrilled by the idea of creating a vegetable garden and teaching the children gardening skills. I already had some lesson plans from my many years of teaching at the Mass. Audubon Society, both those were O.K. for the far northeast. What I needed were some plans for St. Tammany.

My first thought was the St. Tammany LSU AgCenter office. This is where serendipity comes in. Mr. Anders was in the office and I asked him if he could direct me to some teaching materials to use at the Club. Let’s just say that I hit “pay dirt.” Not only did he have lesson plans, he had all of the tools, containers, soils and plants we would need to launch the pro-

gram. Best of all, he would be willing and able to share his wealth of experience with the children to get the garden growing. Oh JOY!



Boys fill the containers with soil.

After a few organizational meetings attended by Mr. Elzy, Mr. Anders, myself, and a representative of the host school, we obtained permission to grow vegetables in containers in the yard used by both Pathways School and the Boys & Girls Club.

I am happy to report that the program has been a huge success. Over 55 children have planted vegetables (carrots, potatoes, beets, corn, lettuce, snap & butter beans), learned about soil composition, created “baggy gardens”, dissected bean seeds and learned about the different types of vegetables and the plant parts we eat. Over the past 3 months, the children have carefully watered the vegetables and taken great pride in watching them grow. Every week, additional children want to join the group with “the garden lady.” Soon we will begin harvesting our crops and distributing them to all who participate. I anticipate lots of interest then.

If any other Master Gardener is interested in joining the fun, I would deeply appreciate the help and you will earn volunteer hours. The children are very well behaved and are enthusiastic gardeners. Most importantly, you would be helping a child learn how to grow healthy foods and become a caretaker of their community. Please contact me, Donna Howland, at donna.howland@mac.com of 985-898-0162 if you would like to know more about the program.



Girls learn how to plant seeds.

Written by Donna Howland

Spring Herb Festival at the Slidell Library April 13



Denise Stearns was docent for the herb garden.



Linda Franzo from "The Passionate Platter" made couscous.



Donna Dicharry, Janey Lively, Ruthanne Johnson at the herbal tea table.



Betty Rose made cookies with herbs .



Judy Wood, Nancy Berulis, Cecelia Drennan at the registration table.



June Taffaro at the herbal dips table.



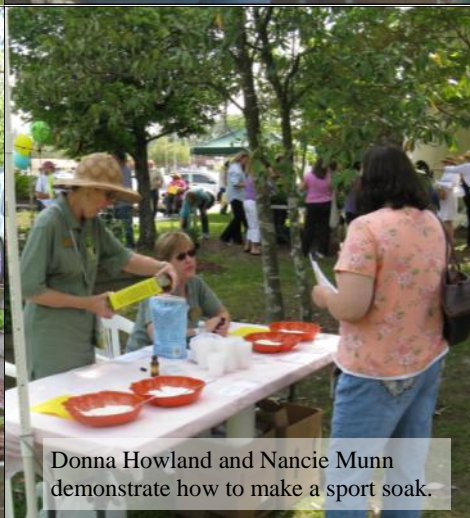
There was a huge crowd for the speakers! We ran out of chairs.



Michell Hall from Ruby's Natural Foods



The Herb Garden never looked better than it did for the Herb Festival.



Donna Howland and Nancie Munn demonstrate how to make a sport soak.



The herb tasting tables were a hit!



Barbara Blaga at the Children's Table

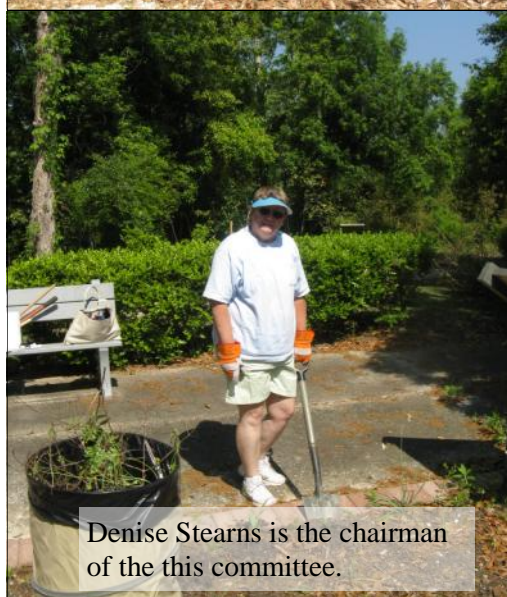
Bayou Lacombe Butterfly Garden



The "Before" Shot. Twelve Master Gardeners transformed this neglected, weedy garden into a beautiful butterfly garden at the Big Branch National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters in Lacombe. What looked like a daunting task turned out to be short work with so many hands!



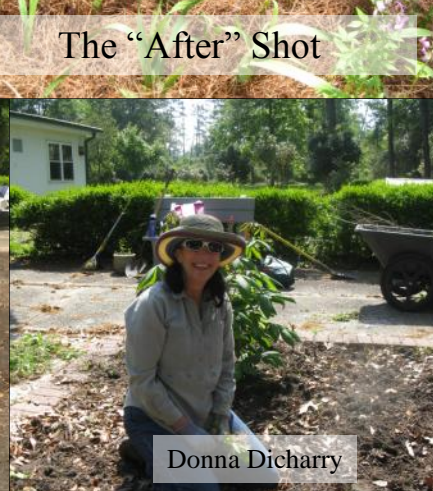
The "After" Shot



Denise Stearns is the chairman of the this committee.



Don Lefevre brought his tiller which was a tremendous help!



Donna Dicharry



Art Scott



Keith Knight



Nancie Munn



Byron Fortier, Supervisory Park Ranger, US Fish and Wildlife Service, gives Judy Wood and Pat Hedges a tour of the beautiful azaleas that were in full bloom.



Sandy Arnoult



Deborah Schell



Pat Hedges



Donna Dicharry, Debora Litzenberger, Judy Wood and Pat Hedges

Otis House

Many thanks to all who helped with the Butterfly garden at Otis House/Fairview State Park. Mother Nature helped with showers just after the planting on Thursday 4/22. For MG's in need of hours, we hope to offer tours during the summer.

The garden includes native plants and we plan to add more herbs and Passion Vine. Several varieties of antique roses will be planted adjacent to the garden. Five Duchesse de Babrant(1857)rose bushes planted in 2004 are glorious! The bushes survived hard freezes and hurricanes during the past five years. Cuttings take readily and the plants need minimal care.

Ann Durel



Community Garden Planned in Folsom

Magnolia Park in Folsom is planning a community garden. The goal is to have the beds ready for the participants to plant a fall crop.

We were asked to send some representatives to a planning meeting on Thursday, April 29 by Jennifer Goings, the park director. Master gardeners attending the meeting were Chere Currault, Jerry Bellanco, Pete Pericone, Alvin Roussel, Janice Roussel and Art Scott. Unable to attend but expressing a willingness to help were Don Hames and Keith Knight.

We would help with the design as well as provide a little muscle power to set up the beds (planting boxes). Our main function will be to provide horticultural instruction and guidance. The AgCenter will be asked to provide the soil testing.



Seated: Gerard Bellanco, Jennifer Goings, Magnolia Park Director, Tim Bartholomew, Board Chairman. Standing: Alvin Roussel, Chere Currault, Janice Roussel, and Sherwood Loyd. Not shown: Art Scott.

Park officials will decide on the number of 4 foot X 8 foot boxes depending on the community response. Their initial goal is to put up no more than 15 boxes.



Continued next page

The park will pay for the materials including soil, ground cover, lumber and site preparation. The participants would be responsible for planting, weeding, fertilizing, watering and providing their own garden tools and a hose for watering their area. Water outlets will be installed by the park near the beds.

Advertising the garden and assisting in the formation of a community garden club or organization will also be handled by the park. We will be invited to attend this first meeting probably in late May or early June.

The man behind the concept is Sherwood Loyd, who works at the park. He has a farm a short distance away that includes 15 acres of satsumas.

We will vote on our participation at our May 19th meeting.



Pete Pericone, Alvin Roussel, Gerard Bellanco, Chere Currault and Janice Roussel at Magnolia Park in Folsom.



Janice Roussel, Chere Currault and Jennifer Goings, Magnolia Park Director



Hammond Research Station
invites

Louisiana Master Gardeners
to a

Private Garden Stroll

Friday, May 7th 9 a.m. – noon

*Come see the largest herbaceous ornamental
plant trial in Louisiana!*

Over 400-500 different blooming plants in one location!

LSU AgCenter experts on hand to answer your questions!

Guest Speaker - Dan Gill

*Introducing the
"Louisiana Super Plants" program
10 a.m. and 11 a.m.*

Complimentary lunch served at noon

Hammond Research Station
21549 Old Covington Hwy. Hammond, LA 985-543-4125
www.lsuagcenter.com/Hammond

This is an event for Master Gardeners ONLY! NO guests. Wear your name tag. Call or email Rusty by May 1 to make your reservation. They need to know how many are attending to plan for lunch.

Bring your diseased, bug-eaten plants and pesky weeds. The following experts will be there to answer your questions:

Dale Pollet - Insects

Don Ferrin - Diseases

Ron Strahan - Weeds

Kathryn Fontenot - School and Community Gardens

AGENDA for May 19, 2010 General Meeting

Bobby Fletcher, Sr. Memorial Scholarships will be awarded beginning at 10 a.m. followed by the reception PRIOR to our business meeting.

1-Call to order & report quorum present

2-Opening ceremonies

3-Award Door Prize(s)

4-Minutes from previous meeting

5-Officer's reports

-Vice President – Glenda Nanz

-Treasurer – Dianne Ramirez

6-Committee Reports

-Honor committee – Sandy Arnoult

7-Project Coordinator Reports

8- Comments by Rusty (County Agent/ MG Adviser)

9- Unfinished business

-Spring Trip – Merle Mulkey

MOTION: The STPMG will fund a bus trip to the Audubon Zoo for a behind the scenes horticultural tour and a box lunch. The Zoo experience will be followed by a tour of the gardens at Longue Vue. The bus will leave Covington and stop in Slidell for a second pick-up. Spouses and significant others will be invited. The cost will be \$10 for each person.

10- New Business

-Folsom Community Garden –Chere Currault & Janice Roussel

MOTION: That the STPMG assist Magnolia Park in Folsom in its planned Community Garden.

11- Announcements

-Jerry Ballanco's tomato study

12- Program – replaced with scholarship portion of meeting

13- Adjournment

If you want to place an item on the agenda, please let Nancy Berulis, our recording secretary, know (phone: 643-8813 or email: nberulis@bellsouth.net) by the Thursday before the meeting.

April Meeting/Plant Swap



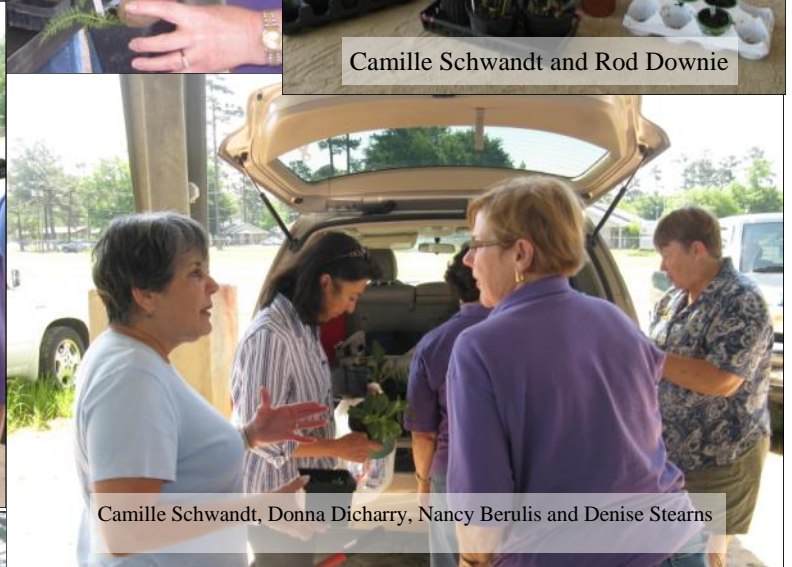
Pete Pericone, Barbara Blaga, Art Scott, Denise Stearns, Janey Lively peruse the plant selection.



Camille Schwandt and Rod Downie



Marie Porche and Glenda Nanz



Camille Schwandt, Donna Dicharry, Nancy Berulis and Denise Stearns



Debi Bowman, Pattie McGinnis and Isabelle Moore



Another great selection of free plants!



Art Scott, Denise Stearns, Janey Lively, and Ann Jenkins decide which plants they want out of a truckload to choose from.



Brenda Caston, Scholarship Committee Chairman; Terry Keating in the background.



A.J. Heinsz-Bailey, Judy Wood and Terry Keating



Chris McNeely



Frances Thigpen



Donna Dicharry, Pam Keating and Ann Jenkins

Hospitality Committee News

HELP US TO CELEBRATE OUR SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The Bobby Fletcher, Sr. Scholarships sponsored by the proceeds of our Plant and Garden show will be awarded at the regular Master Gardener Meeting on Wednesday, May 19. Please help us to celebrate with a reception immediately following the presentation of the scholarships. Please bring a dish or tray of your favorite “finger foods”, either appetizer-type or dessert-type, for the table. The organization will provide mini-muffulettas, cake and punch. Let’s celebrate!!



Barbara Moore, Chris McNeely, Mary Ann Brannan and Deborah Schell

May, 2010

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 7 | Open House exclusively for all Louisiana Master Gardeners at the LSU AgCenter Experiment Station, Hammond Research Station, 21549 Old Covington Hwy, Hammond, LA 9 a.m. until 12 noon. Reservations only for Master Gardeners. RSVP to Rusty. Wear Name Tags! Lunch provided. <i>See page 14.</i> |
| 19 | 9 a.m. Hospitality committee setup for scholarship reception. |
| 19 | 10 a.m. Monthly meeting at the National Guard Bldg. Presentation of the Bobby Fletcher, Sr. Scholarships and reception. <i>See pg 18.</i> The business portion of the meeting will follow the scholarship presentation and reception. Please stay for the business portion as several important issues will be discussed. |

June, 2010

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 16 | 10 a.m. Monthly meeting at the National Guard Bldg. Tomato tasting. |
|-----------|---|

Possible field trip?

July, 2010

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 21 | 10:00 a.m. Monthly meeting at the National Guard Bldg. |
|-----------|--|

STMGA Directory

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Notes from the Editor:

The Master Gardeners have been very busy this month! I hope I have covered all of the activities that have been going on. If a project is not mentioned in the GARDENGOER, it means I didn't know about it. Please let me know about your projects. Send me an article with a photo or two. Thanks to Donna Howland, Christy Paulsell and Ann Durel for submitting articles about their projects. I want all of the many projects our group is involved in to get proper recognition. This would also help your projects get more volunteers in the future!

Please remember the Garden Stroll at the Hammond Research Station on Friday, May 7. At last count, over 50 people from our organization had registered. I hope to see you there!

Debora Litzenberger

dklitz@charter.net



THE GARDENGOER

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
ST. TAMMANY MASTER
GARDENERS ASSOCIATION**

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