

**LPMGA
GENERAL MEETING**

**6PM WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 5TH**

2012 LPMGA Winter Social
Cajun Dome Mardi Gras Ballroom A

PLEASE NOTE:
THE JANUARY GENERAL MEETING WILL
BE HELD AT NOON ON JANUARY 9TH
(DUE TO THE NEW YEAR HOLIDAY)
CLIFTON CHENIER CENTER
220 W. WILLOW, LAFAYETTE

LPMGA BOARD MEETING

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17TH
Convention Center
2012 Board Handoff to 2013 Board
Contact LPMGA President Linda
Broussard for more information.

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**DON'T FORGET
TO RECORD ALL
VOLUNTEER AND
CONTINUING
EDUCATION HOURS BY
MIDNIGHT
DECEMBER 31ST**

See you at the
**2012 LPMGA
WINTER SOCIAL**

*Featuring the 2012 Master Gardener
Class Graduation and Reception*

Enjoy a fun and festive evening at the Cajun Dome at 6pm, Wednesday, December 5, 2012 celebrating the holiday season and welcoming our newest members from the Master Gardener Class of 2012.

From 6pm to 7pm, we will join together in Mardi Gras Ballroom A to celebrate the Class of 2012 Graduation and honor class members. The Outstanding Master Gardener of the Year Award recipient will be announced, and the 2013 Board will be installed.

At 7pm, the group will move to the Mardi Gras Ball Room Part B to enjoy a delicious meal, music, and time to socialize with old friends and new.

Holiday Dress is suggested

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"DON'T GET CAUGHT WITH YOUR PLANTS DOWN!"

It is hard to believe a year has gone by since I was elected President of the Lafayette Parish Master Gardeners Association and chaired the Horse Farm Taskforce. As with any obligation, I felt like there were days when it would never end and days when it was going too fast. After I heard the goals of the candidates for President for 2013, I could not help but think about my goals going into 2012. They were:

1. Establish a presence for the organization at the Horse Farm with approval to have a future home at the Urban Park
2. Continue the mission of our organization following our bylaws and good business practices;
3. Promote the retention of members thru recognition of the new class
4. Encourage the membership to have more opportunities to enjoy each other in fun activities. I feel confident that the organization has moved forward in all of these goals.

What do I hope for the future of our organization?

1. Our organization does not get caught with "its plants down"! As the past Dean of the College of Applied life Sciences which included the Horticulture Center, my professional opinion is that the horticulture center will not survive in the future, since it no longer houses an academic degree program. Good business sense tells you the existing facilities will not be sustained by a university or its state administration system to house non-profit organizations that do not contribute financially to its existence. Plan ahead for your home.
 2. Retention of members, especially new members.
 3. A membership that is open to change, with leaders that "think big" with a vision for the future and accept new leadership.
- Linda Broussard

GERALD'S CORNER



There is no doubt that many gardeners have heard the term “Crape Murder”, a term referring to the improper pruning practice of topping crape myrtles. The crape myrtle is one of our most beloved landscape trees, yet every year, usually around the winter months, we see the results of this gardening crime.

This is seen as a poor horticulture practice not only in Louisiana, but across the entire South. One of the ten commandments of gardening should be “thou shalt not top crape myrtles”.

Typically the dormant time of the year, such as December, January, and February, is when we see numerous instances of improper pruning techniques. The most disturbing issue related to this problem is that it involves both home gardeners and landscape professionals. Topping crape myrtle trees results in the crape myrtle looking like it has had a crew cut. The lush new growth that emerges from the site of these improper cuts appears vigorous but is actually structurally weak, and is more susceptible to fungus diseases such as powdery mildew. If this type of improper pruning is repeated for several seasons it results in unsightly, large, swollen knobs at the point where the pruning is done. Crape myrtles need only occasional pruning, in most cases to obtain the desired landscape effect. But too many times these plants are butchered for no good reason.

Some gardeners have been told that crape myrtles need to be pruned severely to bloom well. This is not true. The flower clusters may grow bigger on topped trees, but the added weight on the ends of these long herbaceous branches causes them to bend over, especially after a rain. Since the tree is smaller it actually produces fewer flower clusters.

Sometimes crape myrtles are pruned improperly to create a different shape. There is a wide selection of crape myrtles that are available today, including those that grow tall and upright like a vase, or those that are shorter and spreading more like a mushroom. You cannot make an upright growing crape myrtle grow into the shape of a mushroom by cutting it back. Over time, the new growth will simply grow upright again. So, if you want a crape myrtle that will mature in the shape you desire, make sure you choose one that naturally grows and matures that way.

Sometimes gardeners cut back crape myrtles that have grown too large for the location where they were planted in the landscape. This is fairly common with crape myrtles that were planted too close to a house which in time begin to grow into the gutter and onto the roof. Ideally it would have been much better to just choose a smaller growing type in the first place. For example if you want a white – flowering crape myrtle planted near the corner of your house, it would be more appropriate to select a cultivar such as Acoma, which matures at 10 – 12 feet, rather than the cultivar Natchez which matures at 25 – 30 feet.

Examples of appropriate reasons for pruning crape myrtles include eliminating crossed and rubbing branches, removing low – growing branches, removing weak thin branches from the inner part of the tree, trimming off old seed pods, and keeping suckers removed from the base of the trunk. Avoid cutting back or shortening branches large than your finger. However, cutting larger branches back to a side branch or the trunk when needed is okay.



Let's consider some of the special landscape qualities that crape myrtles bring to our landscapes such as smooth muscular trunks, peeling or exfoliating bark, leafless branches in winter and an exceptionally long blooming season in summer; these are really what makes crape myrtles so popular.

As a Master Gardener you can do your part to keep your crape myrtles looking its best, but you can also make an effort to inform or educate someone who may not know any better.

Finally, let me say that in my opinion, no Master Gardeners should ever be guilty of “CRAPE MURDER”.

Wishing you and yours only the best during this holiday season,
HAPPY GARDENING!

Gerald P. Roberts

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What Plant Am I?

I'm an evergreen succulent native of South Africa and quite drought-resistant once established. I'll tolerate moist soil if it is well-drained. If not, I may develop rot. My mature size is about 1 to 2 feet wide and tall. My most striking features are my thick jade green leaves, 4 to 6 inches across, which resemble the paddles of a duck-billed platypus. These leaves are stemless and stacked on each other to form a rosette. They are upright to reduce exposure to the sun. Given some sun, I develop “red lips” on the edges of my leaves.

After 3 to 4 years of growth, I send up erect panicles which produce sweet-smelling bright yellow flowers. But actually, I'm grown for my foliage. I am monocarpic, so my main plant dies after flowering. But by then, I've produced pups or offsets at my base and on my flower

stalk. Either may be used for propagation. Remove an offset and leave them in a warm, sunless place for 3 days, until the ends dry and callous over. Fill a well-draining container, which is at least 5 inches deep, with a sandy rooting mix such as cactus soil. Moisten the soil but don't saturate it. Plant offsets and keep them in a warm area shaded from the sun. Water consistently but moderately. In 8 to 10 weeks, my offsets should have produced roots. Tug gently on the offsets. If you meet resistance, roots have formed.

Zones 9 to 11 are best for me. I am damaged by frost, but can be overwintered indoors. Pests don't usually bother me. In short, I am a striking addition to your garden or a sunny window indoors.

Do you know what plant I am? For the answer, see Page 5

EVENTS, COMMITTEE REPORTS, AND BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

2012 GENERAL MEETINGS**WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 5TH, 6-10PM**

MASTER GARDENER CLASS GRADUATION AND LPMGA SOCIAL

From 6pm to 7pm, we will join together at the Cajun Dome, in Mardi Gras Ballroom A, to celebrate the Class of 2012 Graduation and honor class members. The Outstanding Master Gardener of the Year Award will be presented.

PLEASE NOTE:

THE JANUARY GENERAL MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CLIFTON CHENIER CENTER AUDITORIUM AT 220 W. WILLOW ON WEDNESDAY JANUARY 9TH AT NOON (DUE TO THE NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY)

LINDA GAY WIL PRESENT "SEASONAL COLOR AND FLOWERING BULBS". LINDA, A "HANDS IN THE DIRT" HORTICULTURALIST AND GARDENER", RETIRED FROM MERCER ARBORETUM AND BOTANICAL GARDENS AFTER 25 YEARS OF GROWING THE GARDEN.

2012 LPMGA BOARD MEETINGS

THE DECEMBER 17TH MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE AT 11:30AM AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM AT THE CONVENTION CENTER. THE 2012 BOARD WILL TURN OVER INFORMATION AND RECORDS TO THE 2013 BOARD AT THIS MEETING. THE 2013 BOARD TAKES OFFICE JANUARY 1ST. CONTACT LINDA BROUSSARD FOR DETAILS.

LPMGA HISTORIAN NEEDED FOR 2013

The Historian is in charge of keeping media archives of anything pertaining to LPMGA. Committee responsibilities include:

- Creating and maintaining scrapbooks for each MG fiscal year
- Creating and maintaining scrapbooks for special events or projects
- Working closely with each committee chair and MG members to obtain photos of anything LPMGA, including taking or arranging to have photos taken
- Keeping any clippings from the newspapers of articles relating to LPMGA publicity and activities of individuals and groups of Master Gardeners
- Providing scrapbooks for viewing at any event, meeting, or program of LPMGA

The Historian position is open to any LPMGA member. Please contact Babette Werner for more information.

Congratulations MaryAnn Armbruster Volunteer Coordinator

MaryAnn Armbruster **for 2013** has agreed to serve as LPMGA Volunteer Coordinator for 2013. MaryAnn is a native of New Orleans but has lived in eight states and France, travelling mostly for her job. She took the Master Gardener Class in Maricopa County, Arizona in 2009. When she retired, she moved to Lafayette to be near family and transferred to LPMGA. She can be reached at maryannarmbruster@yahoo.com for volunteer coordinator questions starting in January. Please continue to contact Anita Petitjean until January.



Mark your calendars for Southern Garden Festival April 12-14, 2013

Southern Garden Festival (formerly "Tour My Southern Garden") will feature artists, live music, food, Master Gardener presentations and, of course, the beautiful gardens and garden fairies. This annual event, which benefits Family Promise of Acadiana, is shaping up to be our largest and most exciting ever. We look forward to seeing you in the spring! Volunteer opportunities will be posted as soon as details are available.

Pine Straw Sale a Success

Another successful pine straw sale is behind us! Thanks to everyone for timely picking up their bales and thanks to those who took fewer bales so more MGs could have some. I enjoyed visiting with all of you. Remember to order early next year. Now get out there and spread them!

Theresa Gore

MEMBER-AT-LARGE ELECTION TIME LINE

The At-Large member serves as ombudsman and liaison between the Board and the general member. This person is selected independently by the general membership by ballot vote following the nomination from the floor. Prior approval by candidates is required before names can be submitted for nomination.

October Meeting: Nominations from the general membership for At-Large member are made and members decide on the method of voting. Since only active members can vote, the recommendation is made that ballots with space for additional nominees would guarantee that only active members are voting.

November Meeting: Election of the At-Large member is held at the same time as election of the other Board members.

December Meeting: Installation of Officers, including Member-At-Large.

All Officers, including Member-At-Large take office January 1st.

Dues To Be Paid By January 31st

LPMGA dues of \$10.00 for 2013 membership are being collected now. Dues must be paid before January 31st, 2013. Dues received after January 31st will incur a \$5.00 late fee. If you have any questions about dues, please contact Kathy Van Ness or Linda Alesi

RECORD YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS BY DECEMBER 31ST

REMEMBER THE DEADLINE IS FAST APPROACHING! WE CAN'T PUT OFF RECORDING OUR SERVICE ANY LONGER. Volunteer Service and Continuing Education hours must be logged in before midnight December 31st. After that date it is impossible to edit, revise, or post any data for the year 2012.

It is your responsibility if you want to maintain the ACTIVE MEMBER status. To continue your active status you MUST REPORT/LOG IN your 20 hours of approved volunteer service and your 6 hours of continuing education hours on the MG web site: LSUAgCenter.com.

If this is your initial year of service to the Master Gardeners then you must complete 40 hours of volunteer service to obtain Active Membership.

I will be happy to assist you in any way to get your hours up to date but please do not wait until the last week in Dec to do it!! Please feel free to call. -- Anita Petitjean, Volunteer Coordinator

2012 MENTOR COMMITTEE

My thanks to the 2012 Mentor Committee. I could not have asked for a more enthusiastic group of volunteers. The contributions that this group of MG's gave to the new class were beyond my wildest expectations! Thank you for your dedication and service. Mary Ann Armbruster, Linda Broussard, Maggie Chaisson, Danielle Colvin, Tinker Dugas, Kathy Hidalgo, Marie Jones, Tina Jumonville, Sherlyn Larrison, Stacy Lee, Louann McClelland-Long, Jeanell Menard, Juanita Morrow, Mazie Movassaghi, Mary Toce, Kathy Van Ness, Jewell West, Cindy Wiley, and Jan Wyatt.

Hidden Talents Revealed at MG Class Picnic



On November 8th the Mentors hosted a get together under the trees for the MG Class.

Class member Donna Walker (with a little help from a few friends) demonstrated her incredible cake decorating skills with a fabulous fondant fantasy. The cake was shaped as a table with a cloth, gloves and shovel laid across. A basket of fondant fruits and vegetables topped the incredible creation. Absolutely amazing.

Outside, our own Gerald Roberts amazed everyone with a special talent of his own (and a little help from James Brown). It turns out that Mr. Roberts is a certified, (or is that certifiable?), dancing machine. Hmm, have they cast Dancing With The Stars for 2013?



BETWEEN THE ROWS

VEGETABLE GARDENING WITH MARY ANN

Well, Thanksgiving has come and gone, and there were lots of things to be thankful for this year. The weather has been interesting – way warmer than I expected with little rain – but I'm harvesting beautiful tomatoes, peppers and eggplant. The temperature dropped below freezing for a few hours one night and was predicted to be in the low 40s/high 30s a couple of nights, so I played it safe and covered all the hot weather crops for three days. Since then it's been well above freezing. That's the story here in Acadiana, we get just enough cold to kill plants if they are unprotected, then we have two or three more weeks of beautiful weather that could ripen fruit, IF we can get the plants through those few hours of freezing temperatures. I know it's not an option for commercial growers, but for us little home growers, saving those old sheets and blankets or purchasing commercial row covers) pays off well. It takes a little effort, and you do have to pay attention to the forecasts, but it's also very rewarding to get those beautiful fruits late in the season when most other people are just cleaning up for the year. The photo shows the harvest on Saturday. That's not bad for the 24th of November.

The cool weather crops are coming along well. Nothing is producing yet, but the garlic is well up and everything else is looking good. I have continued to plant a few new transplants every week to extend the harvest and prevent that shock of facing 27 heads of broccoli just when I've committed to doing something for the Master Gardeners or my best friend is visiting for the week. This extended planting keeps the produce coming over a long period, but just a head or two at a time – exactly the way I want it. Now this is something that you will have to determine for yourself: do you want a large quantity, all at one time to put up, or do you want a trickle over a long period to consume fresh? Once you've decided which is right for you, just plant to get the result you need. Since there are only two of us, I've found that one head of cauliflower or broccoli is perfect, I steam it lightly and serve half. The other half I shock in ice water, drain and freeze. No extra pots or long hours standing in the kitchen, but at the end of the season, I have a nice store in the freezer to see me through the hot weather.

The Surround seems to have been keeping the stink bugs off the tomatoes, but again, the weather has been cool, so I can't say it's cause and effect. I'll keep it for the spring and do a side by side trial. It does seem to do a nice job of preventing sunscald though.

I had tomatoes, lettuce, bell peppers and cucumbers for a salad on Thanksgiving – not a bad payoff for watching the forecast and laying some sheets over the plants for a few nights. I also cooked some of the 40 pounds of sweet potatoes that I bought last week. Maybe next year I'll plant some sweet potatoes myself. I'll just check to see what tips the LSU Ag Center has to offer and maybe I can figure out how to get a trickle harvest.

Until next month,

Good Gardening, MaryAnn Armbruster, PhD, MG



2013 CALENDARS

Calendars will not be sold at the Social, but are available through Gail Wakefield, Linda Alesi, and Mary Ann Armbruster. Gail will have them for sale Wednesdays at the Demo Beds. These beautiful and informative calendars are a perfect Christmas present and a bargain for the member price of \$10.00. Pick up yours today.

THANK YOU 2012 CONTRIBUTORS

It's been a great year for LPMGA, and I have certainly enjoyed recording our successes and reporting on our many excellent programs and projects.

I would like to thank all the members who have contributed to the newsletter over the past year, and to encourage the members of the 2012 Master Gardener class to consider contributing photos and articles.

I'd like to send out special thanks to Jeanell Menard, Gerald Roberts, Sandy Rhodes, Tina Jumonville, Linda Broussard, Babette Werner, Nancy Ann Rowe, Vivian Katz, Becky Taylor, Patricia Soileau, Linda Alesi, Kathy Van Ness, Charles Hebert, Candy Bienvenu, Sherlyn Larrison, Anita Petitjean, Lois Manuel, Beth Shea, Mary Ann Armbruster, John Fiero, Sarah Schoeffler, Steve Santillo, Sharon Bakay, Theresa Gore, Jan Wyatt, Glenda and Norman Balliviero, Theresa Rohloff, Lauren Latiolais, our very appreciated but anonymous "What Plant Am I?" columnist, Janice Prejean, Carol Reed, Stacy Lee and the entire Plant-Fest team.

Wishing everyone a joyous holiday season and all the very best in the coming new year,

Louann McClelland-Long

WHAT PLANT AM I?

ANSWER

Kalancheo thyrsiflora



LPMGA ON AOC IS IN THE GARDEN

"In The Garden" airs live at noon on the first Thursday of each month and replays Fridays at 2:30 pm, Mondays at 4:30 pm, and Wednesdays at 5 pm. All on AOC1, Channel 15 on Cox Cable. The program will stream live on ustream.tv www.ustream.tv/user/lafayetteparishMGs

Visit www.aocinc.org and check the "Newsroom" for the 2013 Programming Schedule

If you are interested in volunteering with the AOC Team, please contact Vivian Katz
 Watch LPMGA'S Award Winning AOC Program "In The Garden" and earn one hour of Continuing Education Credit.

THE HERB GARDEN

The pleasures of growing and using herbs

HERBS OF CHRISTMAS

Old customs and legends have connected many herbs with Christmas. Using herbs during the holidays will add symbolism, beauty and aroma to the season. Here are just a few to enjoy.

Rosemary – Remains the herbal symbol of love, loyalty, and remembrance and has long been associated with Mary. Having a rosemary plant in your house on Christmas Eve is supposed to bring good luck for the coming year. Rosemary is also often used as a small live Christmas tree. They don't like being pruned up as a Christmas tree, and they don't like living in the house, so right after Christmas plant them outside and let them grow back to their natural shape.

Frankincense and Myrrh—They were considered so valuable during the time of Christ that they were taxed at each place they passed through. The clearer and darker the resins, the higher the quality and price they fetched. By the time they reached Jerusalem, only the kings could afford them. Frankincense pods and myrrh gum are both scented plant materials which may be classified as herbs. Frankincense is a resin found in small thorny trees known as *Boswellia Thurifera*. The sap oozes from the trees, forming small white pods which harden upon contact with the air and turn yellow. These pods are then burned for their aroma. The oil is calming and soothing.



Myrrh was used by the Egyptians and Hebrews for incense, cosmetics, perfumes and medicines. It has also been used as an embalming tool. Like frankincense, myrrh was once considered to be a rare treasure. The plant has fern-like foliage with dull white flowers and grows to be approximately three feet tall. Myrrh is known for treating sore throats, infected gums and stimulating the circulatory system.

Mistletoe – This herb has played a role in Christmas celebrations for centuries and has long been a symbol of love. The berries on the mistletoe sprig are supposed to be removed as each kiss is taken. However, since these berries are poisonous, this probably is a tradition best left in the past.

Rue – The herb of grace. The Roman Catholic Church used brushes fashioned from rue to sprinkle holy water during mass.

Thyme – A manger herb signifying the courage and strength of Christ.

Pennyroyal – One of the manger herbs. In addition to its pleasant aroma, it repels insects.

Lavender – The symbol of purity, lavender is said to have received its lovely scent when it served as the drying rack for the Baby Jesus' swaddling clothes.

A little something to make and enjoy this holiday season.

Christmas House Spray:

Pine 4 drops, Mandarin 2 drops, cinnamon 1 drop

Add oils to a spray bottle in 1 ¼ cups of distilled water. Spritz the air away from wood furniture.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS.....

Beth Shea

MEET THE CLASS OF 2012

INTRODUCING GROUP FIVE AND THEIR MENTORS

CINDE' RISINGER

A Texan who came to Lafayette as a child when her family moved due to her father's transfer. Cinde' is a retired Social Worker with 33 years in Child Protection. She is a proud grandmother to 3 beautiful, sweet, smart grandkids, and loves to paint and travel. Cinde' wants to drive NASCAR, lists her favorite plants as ferns, and wants to become a Master Gardener because "I love gardening and wish to become more knowledgeable, particularly about South Louisiana plantings".

KAYE COX

Kaye is a native of Lake Charles who moved to the Lafayette area when she married. A former educator, she lists her current occupation as "full time gardener at my home". Kaye could not choose a single favorite plant because she loves so many. She wants to become a Master Gardener because she is "passionate about gardening". Kaye sings, likes cookbooks, and would love to go to Seaworld.

HEATHER WARNER-FINLEY

This retired, Michigan native came to Lafayette because of her work as a Geologist/Biologist. Hawthorns (Parsley Hawthorn) and hollies are her favorite plants. Heather wants to become a Master Gardener because of her interest in botany. Heather is a serious reader, likes rain gardens, and would fish a lot more if she could.

DEBBIE WILLIAMS

Hails from Anacoco, Louisiana and came to Lafayette when she married. Debbie was a physical therapist and has 4 adult children, loves her family and her dogs. She would love to travel to Italy. Her favorite plant is the hydrangea Debbie would like to become a Master Gardener to increase her gardening knowledge.



Mentor-Linda Broussard, Cinde' Risinger, Mentor-Margaret Chaisson, Kaye Cox, Jenny Tucker, Heather Warner-Finley, Ronald Kennedy, Deborah Williams, Mentor-Tinker Dugas, Mentor-Marie Jones

JENNY TUCKER

Is a Lafayette native and an enthusiastic member of this group of over achievers.

RON KENNEDY

Ron is a Houston native who moved to Lafayette due to his work in the Oilfield. He is currently retired, but substitute teaches at LHS. The dogwood is his favorite plant, and Ron would like to become a Master Gardener "to broaden my knowledge, and give back to my community". Ron loves jazz and blues, going on cruises and making furniture when he's not playing with his grandkids.

Woo Hoo! I Did It!... So What Do I Do Now?

Congratulations to the graduates of the Master Gardener Class of 2012. The Problem Boards are done, the exams are over, Graduation is at hand....so what now?

Starting your volunteer career, and finding that special niche can be a little intimidating. *Where do I start? Who do I contact? Who can help me decide?*

LPMGA is a very active group. We are involved with projects in our community, with other organizations, at the Demo Beds, and at Schools. There are opportunities for speakers, organizers, builders, writers, planners, planters and doers. The possibilities for performing your volunteer hours are almost endless and will hopefully be enjoyable and rewarding. Begin with deciding where your interests lie, what skills or knowledge you would like to use or attain, and if you would like to challenge yourself to try something new.

Each class member should have received a list of Committee Chairs and Demo Bed Chairs. If a particular committee is of interest to you, contact the Chair and introduce yourself, if they don't need have a need for volunteers they probably know of others who do.

If you need help deciding where you'd like to start, contact your mentors or the Mentor Chair Anita Petitjean. They are there to offer support, can tell you what each Committee does, talk over what your interests are, and help you decide what you'd like to try. They can help answer those "Who do I call about getting involved with...." and "Does anyone need someone who wants to...." questions.

Don't judge a committee by just its name. Keep in mind that even if you don't enjoy public speaking, the Speakers Bureau, Garden Talk, and other public speaking committees have "non-speaking" positions too. Plus, you might find that presenting isn't as scary as you thought! But remember, if you try a volunteer job and it's not for you, there are many other opportunities.

Check the newsletter for volunteer requests. The January issue will feature a "Help Wanted" section with ads for a variety of volunteers, and Chairs will submit requests throughout the year.

Attend the General Meetings and get to know your fellow members. Most of our members don't bite, everyone is excited to welcome our newest members, and it's a great way see what the group is involved in and planning next.

If you are involved in an activity in the community, or have an idea for a project that might be of interest to LPMGA, don't forget that the project must be approved by the LPMGA Board before your hours count. Your Volunteer Handbook contains a form to submit to the Board. Contact your Member-At-Large, Gail Wakefield, or Volunteer Coordinator if you need help.

If you'd like to help set up at meetings, plan the Socials, plan our future, serve on the Board, recruit speakers for the AOC television program, organize digital photographs, help with Habitat for Humanity, scrapbook, propagate plants, educate the public about gardening, distribute publications, report on LPMGA events, head a Plant Swap, help lead a tour for a group of students, organize Garden Strolls, present a Garden Talk at the Demo Beds, man the Ask A Master table at a community event, or any of a hundred other things LPMGA has a place for you.



NOVEMBER GARDEN TALK

GARDENING FOR BIRDS



Sharon Bakay (MG 2008) educated the crowd on everything you need to know to attract birds to your garden when she presented her November Garden Talk. For a complete list of plants and other details, please contact Sharon.

Some of the highlights from her notes are:

There are many things to consider when planning a garden for birds. The first is habitat. Bill Fontenot defines habitat as “any place where food, water, and shelter for living things may be found on a self-perpetuating basis. Food for birds shouldn’t be limited to seed mixes, water to birdbaths, nor shelter to bird “houses”.” The greater the variety of habitats we provide, the greater the diversity of wildlife we will find in our gardens

If you want to have a successful “bird garden”, plant the plants that birds use. Birds and native plants have coevolved. Consider planting a combination of annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, fruit trees, and native grasses. Try to stagger your plantings so that something is always in bloom throughout the spring, summer, and fall. When planning your garden be sure to include stretches of open spaces as well as your plantings. Many wild birds are attracted to brightly colored gardens; planting annuals is the quickest and easiest way to make your yards attractive to them.

One of the requirements for attracting birds to our yards is having plenty of cover. Evergreen trees are a necessity; they provide shelter for birds during inclement or cold weather as well as nesting sites in the spring and shade and respite from the heat during the summer months.

Some of the trees, shrubs, and other plants that Sharon suggested were:

Eastern Red Cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*), Prostrate or Creeping Junipers (*Juniperus horizontalis*), trees from the pine family, Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and Pond Cypress (*T. ascendens*).

The Firespike (*Odontonema strictum*), Shrimp Plant (*Justicia aurea*), Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), Possum Haw (*Ilex dicidua*), American Holly (*I. opaca*), River Birch, Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*), Coralberry or Indian Currant (*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*), Arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*), Rusty Blackhaw (*V. rufidulum*), and swamp viburnum (*V. nudum*), Wahoo (*Euonymus americana*) The dogwood family gives us the flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) who’s berries are consumed by seventy five species of songbirds and game birds. However, here in the lower south, the native dogwoods are fairly difficult to grow.

The persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) is a mid-sized deciduous tree in the ebony family with many admirable attributes. The bark is laid out in small rough blocks of charcoal gray to black; the twigs are curvy while its trunk is normally straight and clean with foliage occurring on the upper one third. Fruit is important robins, yellow-rumped warbler, and cedar waxwings. Humans also enjoy the fruits, but let them fall to the ground; when picked from the tree they aren’t yet ripe. This is another plant where only the female produces fruit. So do plant a male plant nearby.

The laurel family gives us a plant which produces a product that most south Louisianians are very familiar with—file’ powder which comes from the sassafrass tree (*Sassafrass albidum*). Azure blue fruits are borne in the summer but are seldom seen due to their popularity with birds. This is a small to medium sized plant for homes with a west side exposure and a well drained landscape site. One of Sharon’s favorite bird plants in the vervain family is the American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*).

WATER

Birds need a clean dependable source of water especially during our hot dry summers and during the very cold weather. The man-made water source should slope to a depth of no more than 2 – 2 ½ inches. The water should be emptied and refilled daily. Algae buildup makes the bottom slippery and a well-used birdbath becomes fouled with bird droppings and other debris. Moving water is even more attractive to birds than the still water in a birdbath. Water misters or drippers can be added to the birdbath. Hummingbirds like to fly through the mist.

December Garden Class

10 am Saturday December 8th Rock and Grass Shoppe 1800 East Milton
 Holiday Decorating with Garden Greens Nancy Richard and Judy Keller
 Contact Sherlyn Larrison for more information

December Garden Talk

10 am Saturday December 15th
 at the Demo Beds

FATIMA STUDENTS VISIT CHILDREN'S GARDEN

On November 7th, Master Gardener guides Marie Jones, Gary Trahan, Gail Wakefield, Dale Oglesby, Tinker Dugas, and Anita Legget led students from the Fatima school through the Children’s Garden. The guides led tours for a total of 107 children on their third grade Science Class outing.



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Gardener's Gazette is issued to all members of the Lafayette Parish Master Gardeners' Program.

All members are encouraged to submit news, educational features, and photographs. The deadline for all submissions is the 24th of each month for publication in the next month's issue.

Please send items to the editor: Louann McClelland-Long
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participation in our meetings, please call
 337-291-7090

Please note: All meeting and event dates, times, and locations are subject to change.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
30	31 New Year's Eve	December 2012				1
2	3	4	5 LPMGA Social 6-10pm	6	7	8 9 Garden Class at Grass and Rock Shoppe 10am Holiday Decorating with Garden Greens
9 Hanukkah	10	11	12	13	14	15 Garden Talk
16	17 11:30 LPMGA Board at Convention Center	18	19	20	21 First Day of Winter	22
23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas	26 Boxing Day	27	28	29