



# FROM THE GROUND UP

## FLORENCE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

### NEWSLETTER

April, 2013

*"Sowing The Seeds Of Love For Gardening"*

<http://www.florencecountymastergardeners.org>

#### **From Our President:**

Hello Master Gardeners,

What a busy month this has been. It looks like it won't get any less busy for some of us. It's good to be that way. It just might keep you younger; I'm hoping. Now if I could just get the weather to cooperate this Spring. I sure am itching to get out there and put my plants in the ground and I'm sure you are all getting tired of this cold like I am.

Don't over do it, when you do get outside for all your garden planting and yard work; and remember to wear sun screen, even now.

At this time I need to thank you all again for all your help at our annual Pee Dee Home & Garden Workshop. It went very well, and it was good to see all of you that came to help and enjoy the day. It is always such a long and eventful day and I know we couldn't have done it without all of you.

With that over, there will be so many other activities going on now. Keep in mind the valuable part we play at the Pee Dee State Farmer's Market, and be sure to sign up for some time to volunteer. The public counts on us always being there to answer questions or at least talk out problems with them. Remember if you don't know the answers, just jot them down for someone to contact them at a later time.

I hope to see some of you at some of the events that will be going on this month all over the state. 'Spring has sprung' in so many words. Time to get out there and 'think gardening'. It is a great time to get all of your volunteer hours too. Remember it doesn't take long to get 40 hours of volunteer time, especially when you're *doing something you really enjoy*.

Remember at the next meeting will be our election of officers and I hope to see everyone there. It is always interesting to see what our next year will bring. Please come at least to voice your opinion.

See you at the meeting on April 15<sup>th</sup>, right after the Festival at the Farmer's Market.

*"As the garden grows, so does the gardener"*

*Happy gardening,  
Janet Bugbee*

#### **2013 Spring Workshops:**

The Florence County Master Gardeners want to thank all of our members who volunteered their time and energy for the Workshops this year. An extra big thank you goes to our President Janet Bugbee. You need to work with Janet to truly appreciate how much she does to make all of our events rousing successes.

Everything about this year's event seems to be larger than previous years. With attendance at about 100, but even with this big a turnout, everything ran very smoothly. Our plants, close to 1500, were big and beautiful with many in full bloom. The customers loved being able to see the plants in bloom to know what they were buying.

#### **Last Meeting:**

The March meeting is always reserved for a review of the workshop attendees critiques. They were by and large, all very positive and many had some wonderful ideas for future speakers and classes. Another agenda item was the upcoming election of officers. Janet Bugbee has been president for 3 years and according to our bylaws must step down. We are looking for nominations for all the officer positions. If you are interested in serving or know someone who is, please let Janet Bugbee know.

#### **Next Meeting: April 15th**

6:30 PM at the John Calvin Presbyterian Church on Marsh Ave.

Election of new officers will be the focus on our April meeting. Additionally we would like to discuss ideas for what we, as an organization, want to do in the upcoming year. We would love to hear everyone's ideas.

#### **Wear Your Badge:**

Wear your Master Gardener badge whenever you are participating in any Master Gardener project or attending any Master Gardener function. It not only identifies you as an Florence County Master Gardener but indicates that you are officially working on or at a Master Gardener project.

**FLORENCE COUNTY MASTER  
GARDENER OFFICERS:**

President:  
Janet Bugbee 346-9272  
janetbugbee@gmail.com

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:  
Dot Muldrow 393-6774  
dotmuldrow@gmail.com

Treasurer:  
Sally Crowley 669-6477  
Watsmom@sc.rr.com

Secretary/Newsletter:  
Barb Thayer 662-1427  
thayer\_barb@yahoo.com

Anthony "Tony" Melton, Master  
Gardener Coordinator

~ DUES ~

It's that time of year again when we ask everyone for their yearly dues. Dues for the year are \$10. Please take the time to send in a check or bring \$10 to the next meeting. Dues can be mailed to:

Sally Crowley  
715 Joyce Lane  
Florence, SC 29501

Dues do not apply to this year's class members.

**Park Seed  
Flower Day 2013 will be on  
Saturday, June 22nd, 2013  
8 AM-4 PM  
Greenwood, SC**

Tour theme gardens, hear professional horticulturists speak on exciting gardening topics, and see over 1,500 exciting new varieties of annuals, perennials, vegetables, trees, and shrubs being tested in Park Seed's famous Trial Gardens! You live in or are visiting the Southeast, you owe it to yourself to see what all the fuss is about! Fun for all ages -- bring the whole family and don't forget your camera! We'll have food, drinks, and ice cream available for purchase on site. Come early for the best selection of our plant, bulb, and seed sale in our Garden Center

**Upcoming Events**

**Moore Farms Botanical Garden  
Bog Gardening  
Saturday, April 13th from 9:30 AM until 2 PM**

Pitcher plant bogs are some of the most fascinating and beautiful environments in our natural landscapes. In this class you will learn how to build a successful bog garden at home by following a few simple steps. Each participant will also create and take home their own mini bog garden—a special planter filled with pitcher plants, sundews and Venus flytraps.

Class registration is limited to the first 15 participants. The cost of the class is \$15 and covers all material for creating a bog planter, including soil, plants, containers and care instructions.

For more information contact [info@moorefarmsbg.org](mailto:info@moorefarmsbg.org)

**Midlands  
Plant & Flower Festival**

April 18 - 21, 2013  
Thursday, Friday & Saturday 8am-6pm  
Sunday 12-5pm  
SC State Farmers Market  
W. Columbia, SC

**Riverbanks Botanical Garden  
Saturday, April 27 @ 9:00am-12:00pm**

Riverbanks' horticulture staff has handpicked employee and visitor favorites for this year's spring plant sale. More than 40 varieties totaling more than 4,000 individual plants will be available for purchase. The sale will run from 9am to noon and there will be no pre-sale. Most plants will range from \$5 to \$10. Admission is free for those who enter at 1201 Seminole Drive, West Columbia.

**Brookgreen Gardens  
PLANTACULAR SALE  
April 13 & 14  
9:30 a.m. To 4 p.m.**

Mark Your Calendars for the Plantacular Sale  
The highly awaited spring Plantacular sale provides an opportunity to purchase high-quality, hard-to-find plants grown in Brookgreen's greenhouses. Brookgreen's horticulture staff and volunteers will be on hand to offer advice in plant selection and other gardening tips. Come early for the best selection!

**Riverbanks Botanical Garden  
Succulent Container Workshop  
Saturday, May 4 @ 10:00-11:30am**

Bring a coffee cup, mug or small shallow dish to create a striking succulent garden gift just in time for Mother's Day. Each attendee will design and plant their choice of succulent combinations in this hands-on workshop, as well as learn how to create a stunning, hanging succulent orb and living picture frames with a classroom demonstration.  
\$20 per person

## April In The Garden

### General

Prepare soils for planting by fertilizing soils according to soil test recommendations, if not already done.  
Purchase vegetable seeds and transplants, shrubs and trees, flower seeds and flats for planting.  
Fertilize established lawns, shrubs, and trees. Fertilize perennials if not done in March.  
Leave bulb foliage alone until it turns yellow.  
Be ready to protect newly-planted flowers from unexpected frost.  
Time to fertilize azaleas if blooming has stopped.  
Prune spring blooming shrubs after blooming stops.  
Remove suckers from below graft on roses and grafted fruit trees.  
Don't buy pot-bound transplants. Look at the roots carefully.  
Sow seeds for peanuts April 15th - May  
Sow seeds for winter squash April 15th -April 30th  
For a longer vegetable harvest season, plant at intervals during suggested planting

### LAWNS

**Planting:** Sow grass seed, lay sod, or plant sprigs and plugs of warm-season grasses now through July.  
**Fertilizing:** Fertilize all warm-season grasses according to the soil test analysis. Do it 2 weeks after grass begins to green up and grow about April 15th. Apply evenly.  
**Mowing:** Mow established lawns as short as possible. Remove dead grass and clippings with stiff raking.  
**Irrigate:** Water when the signs of wilt occur. Drench the soil to a depth of 5-7 inches (equivalent to approximately 1 inch of rainfall).  
**Special Care:** As centipede grass continues to grow, if yellowing occurs and continues, check for iron deficiency. Patch bare lawn areas by seeding, sprigging, or sodding. If moss is a problem, aerating may help.

### VEGETABLES & FRUITS

**Planting:** Sow seeds for beans, cantaloupe, cucumbers, okra, peanuts, southern peas, sweet corn, squash, and watermelon in the garden. Transplant eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes in the garden. Set out horseradish root now. Sow warm-weather herb seeds and transplants.  
**Fertilizing:** "Side dress" to fertilize established plants per established guidelines.  
**Irrigation:** Thoroughly wet the soil once a week, unless there is sufficient rainfall to moisten the soil around the roots.  
**Special care:** Control webworms as they occur. Spray Fruit trees, brambles, grapes, blueberries, strawberries, and pecan to control insects and diseases. Be sure to buy only disease-free stock from a reputable nursery.

### TREES & SHRUBS

**Planting:** Plant now, consider mature height and spread, and the proper growing conditions in the desired growing location. Plant azaleas, rhododendrons, and other flowering shrubs. Fall is best for planting. If you plant now, you must be prepared to take special care of your plants.  
**Fertilizing:** Fertilize and mulch new plants. Fertilize azaleas after blooming and mulch.  
**Irrigation:** Water new shrubs and trees once a week during dry periods and during the 1st and **2nd** growing season, to ensure their survival and rapid growth  
**Special Care:** Check leaves for diseases. Prune infected wood to eliminate source. Spray camellias and azaleas for scale and lacebugs, if present.

### FLOWERS

**Planting:** Sow seeds in the garden and transplant flats. Plant gladiolas, cannas, and other summer-flowering bulbs.  
**Fertilizing:** Use half strength fertilizer on newly-planted annuals.  
Fertilize roses after first bloom  
**Irrigation:** water regularly and deeply, up to 2 hours a week during dry periods.  
**Special Care:** Cut out the old canes on climbing roses after blooming and lightly head back new canes. Dig up overgrown cannas and divide. Control slugs.

**Southern Plant & Flower Festival**  
**April 11th - 14th**  
**Thursday - Saturday 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.**  
**Sunday 12 - 5 p.m**  
**Volunteer Opportunity**

Mark your calendar, we will once again have our Q&A booth set up taking questions from local gardeners. With this being a four day event, we will need from everyone. You will be receiving an e-mail with a link to a sign-up sheet. We are asking that you volunteer for two hours, but if you can only work for an hour that will be great too. We would like at least two Master Gardeners manning the booth at all times, but more won't hurt at all. This event is always a lot of fun so plan to spend a couple of hours answering questions and then go shopping.

**Basic Culture for Iris Ensata (Japanese iris), Iris Versicolor, and Iris Virginica**

It is a common but mistaken belief that *Iris ensata* (Japanese irises) are bog plants-though they do require ample moisture, especially up to bloom time. If grown with attention to moisture requirements, they will do nicely in ordinary garden conditions or in perennial borders. They will also do very well where the water table is a short distance below the surface, as beside a stream or pond; but in very cold climates, they do not like to have their feet in water during the winter. Perhaps no other irises are influenced to as great a degree by culture as are the Japanese ones. Good culture will increase height, branching, flower size, and both quality and quantity of bloom. *Iris versicolor* and *Iris virginica*-the native blue flag-may truly be thought of as bog plants though they, too, are quite at home in perennial borders.

**Soil Requirements:** These irises prefer a rich soil with plenty of organic matter. If the soil is clay, the addition of organic matter will help to loosen it. If the soil is more sandy, the organic matter will help with water retention and will add nutrients. Depending on what is available, till in an ample amount of cow manure, hay, straw, ground pine bark, etc. If using hay or straw, it may be necessary to add a high nitrogen fertilizer to compensate for the nitrogen used up in the decomposition process. The soil PH should be slightly acid, ideally between 5.0 to 6.5. Japanese irises will tolerate a wider PH range, but growth and bloom will not be as good. If the PH is too high, the leaves may turn yellow. If the PH tests above 6.5, it can be lowered by the addition of granular ferros sulphate, ammonium sulphate, or agricultural sulphur.

**Planting:** It is best to plant strong divisions of at least 2 to 3 fans. Smaller divisions take longer to get started and are more subject to loss. The rhizome

should be planted 2 to 3 inches deep, depending on the heaviness of the soil. If planted in a depression of 3 to 4 inches, the depression will help to catch and hold more moisture. Since new roots form above the old ones, if you wish to maintain a clump in one spot more than 3 years, planting in a depression will permit the gradual filling in of soil and help to maintain the plant's vigor for a longer period of time. Container grown Japanese irises may be immersed in water gardens from spring through fall. The pots should be removed from the water garden during the winter and given some protection. Extra care should be made to maintain high fertility for plants that are container grown. *Iris versicolor* and *Iris virginica* are more tolerant and can be wintered over in watery situations.

**Time of Planting:** Container grown irises can be transplanted at any time. Bare root plants may be transplanted from after the bloom period into early winter; but, transplanting shortly after the bloom period is probably best in both cases. This gives the new roots sufficient time to anchor the plant before winter freezes. After the bloom period, remove the bloom stalks as soon as possible. Again, this is the best time to divide and reset clumps. Continue to fertilize and provide extra water to encourage rapid growth. After planting the rhizomes, keep them well watered until the plants are well established. In the spring, if rainfall is not sufficient, give extra water until bloom time. The equivalent of 1 inch of rain per week will keep them doing well in most soils.

**Mulching:** After planting, a heavy mulch of 2 to 3 inches or more is beneficial. The mulch helps to conserve moisture as well as reduce weeds. If plants are set out in the fall, mulch is needed to prevent heaving over the winter in cold areas.

**Fertilizing:** All of these irises are heavy feeders. The liberal application of a balanced fertilizer such as 10-10-10 in the spring and again just after bloom time is beneficial. Weak plants showing light green foliage will be invigorated with a by-weekly foliar and drench application of a water-soluble acid fertilizer such as Miracid. It is all right to fertilize into September but not later because it is important not to stimulate more growth in the late fall.

**Insect Control:** Iris borers and other insects can be controlled with either an application of Cygon 2E or an application of Dimethoate. Spray in early spring first when the new fans are about 6 to 8 inches high and then again about 10 days later. If, by chance, there is an infestation of thrip in late summer, an application of Malathion may be appropriate.

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Walter Hoover  
Charles Street Garden  
Saluda, N. C.

[www.charlesstreetgarden.com/japaneseirises](http://www.charlesstreetgarden.com/japaneseirises)  
[charlesstreetgarden@tds.net](mailto:charlesstreetgarden@tds.net)

## Centipedegrass Maintenance Calendar

Prepared by Tim Davis, Extension Agent,  
Clemson University, and Chuck Burgess,  
Extension Agent. (New 04/04.)  
HCIC 1215

Centipedegrass is a slow-growing, apple-green, coarse-leaved turfgrass that is adapted for use as a low maintenance, general purpose turf. It requires little fertilizer (one to two pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year), infrequent mowing, and will tolerate moderate shade if it receives at least four hours of full sun, daily. It does not tolerate traffic, compaction, high phosphorus soils, high pH, low-potassium soils, excessive thatch, drought, or heavy shade. See [HGIC 1209, Centipedegrass](#) for additional information on care and varieties.

### February Through May

**Mowing:** Mow lawn at one inch at the time of initial greenup. Mow before grass gets above 1½ inches tall. Do not burn off centipedegrass to remove excessive debris because of possible injury to the lawn and potential fire hazard. For more information on mowing, refer to [HGIC 1205, Mowing Lawns.](#)

**Weed Control:** To control crabgrass, goosegrass, and other annual weeds, apply preemergence herbicides when forsythia are in bloom. Approximate times are March 1 in the coastal and central areas and March 15 to 30 in the piedmont/mountain areas. Apply postemergence herbicides in May as needed for control of summer annual and perennial broadleaf weeds, such as knotweed, spurge, and lespedeza. Do not apply until three weeks after greenup.

Centipedegrass is sensitive to certain herbicides, such as 2,4-D. Follow label directions and use with caution.

**Thatch Removal:** Power rake (vertical mow) to remove thatch in late May if necessary. A 2- or 3- inch blade spacing set ¼ inch deep in one direction works best. Do not use a power rake with a 1 inch blade spacing as severe turf injury may result.

**Insect Control:** Inspect for white grubs by cutting three sides of a one foot square piece of sod and laying it back to reveal the root zone. Control if necessary.

**Fertilization:** As stated, centipede lawns should receive 1 to 2 pounds of nitrogen per year, per 1000 square feet. The higher rate may be chosen for those desiring optimum aesthetics. Also, it may be needed if the lawn is growing in sandy soil or in an area with a long growing season, such as near the coast. Applying more than 2 pounds of nitrogen per 1000 square feet, per year can be harmful to the turf.

Apply ½ to 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet in late April or early May after lawn fully greens up. A soil test will help determine if a 16-4-8 or a 15-0-15 fertilizer is best for your lawn. A yellow appearance may indicate an iron deficiency due to soil temperatures lagging behind air temperatures. Spraying with iron (ferrous) sulfate (2 ounces in 3 to 5 gallons of water per 1,000 square feet) or a chelated iron source will help to enhance color. Lime may be added if a soil test indicates a need. To determine amount of product required to apply ½ pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet, divide 50 by the first number on the fertilizer bag. This will give you the number of pounds of product to apply. See [HGIC 1201, Fertilizing Lawns](#), for more information.

**Irrigation:** Water to prevent drought stress.

Centipedegrass grows best with about 1 inch of water per week. In the case of no rain, apply ½ inch every three to five days. Sandy soils often require more frequent watering; e.g., ½ inch every third day. Proper irrigation may prevent or reduce pest and non-pest problems later in the summer.

**During dormancy, water to prevent excessive dehydration. This is especially important if warm, bright days precede days forecasted to be in the low 20's or lower. For more information, refer to [HGIC 1207, Watering Lawns.](#)**

**Renovation:** Replant large bare areas in May using sod, seed (¼ to ½ pound per 1,000 square feet) or sprigs (5 bushels per 1,000 square feet). Mixing seed with 2 gallons of fine sand per 1,000 square feet will aid in distribution. Germination is expected in 28 days and establishment is slow. To ensure good germination, keep the seedbed moist with light, frequent sprinklings several times a day. It is not uncommon for it to take three years for a new lawn to become uniform and dense. For more information, refer to [HGIC 1204, Lawn Renovation.](#)