



FROM THE GROUND UP FLORENCE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS NEWSLETTER

April 2016

"Sowing The Seeds Of Love For Gardening"

<http://www.florencecountymastergardeners.org>

From the Potting Bench,

There are a lot of activities available for the Florence County Master Gardeners. I hope you have made plans to join in as many of them as you are able. The April meeting of the FCMG will be held at Taylor Garden Shop. We will meet there and get a tour of their nursery and learn about the new plants for this spring. After the tour, we will have our business meeting.

Elections are the first order of business at the April meeting. The membership will elect the officers for the upcoming year. Results will be announced at the meeting.

Pee Dee Farmers Market Spring Plant and Flower Sale. This is a four-day event and we will need volunteers at the information booth each day. Also needed is help with Wednesday's set up and Sunday's clean up. We will not be selling cookbooks at this event. George Radcliffe has sent out the Sign Up Genius notification. Combine your volunteer time with some great shopping opportunities. The time passes quickly when you have the opportunity to talk to other gardeners

PDREC Discovery Day Saturday, May 7 will be the Master Gardener's plant sale as part of Discovery Day. We have plants growing in the hoop house thanks to those who have donated some from their own gardens or have started annuals. We need clean plastic bags (ie grocery stores or Walmart) that we can use for plants that have been sold. We also need some trays, plastic or cardboard, to transport the plants. If you have any of these to donate, please bring them to the meeting on the 18th. We will be setting up our display area on Friday afternoon weather permitting. Discovery Day runs from 10:00 am to 3:00. In addition to the plants, we will have some games children can play: Tic-tac-toe, identify the plant by its smell, and Memory using plant pictures. Please volunteer for one of these four time slots: Set up on Friday; 10:00 – 12:30 on Saturday, 12:30 – 3:00 on Saturday or Clean up Saturday afternoon. This is our major event for the year and we need everyone's help. If you are still planning on donating plants for the sale, please let me know.

Florence Cty Center Farmer's Market At our March meeting, it was voted and approved that the MG's staff an informational booth on the fourth Saturday of each month May through October. The Market will operate from 9:00 – 1:00. It was also approved that we would sell plants or produce from our own gardens at the booth. That means that if you volunteer to staff the informational booth, you can sell your produce as well and keep your profit. You can also register as an individual for any of the other Saturdays of the Farmer's Market. Registration forms and more details will be available at the meeting.

PDREC Raised Beds There are 2 raised beds that are available for adoption. If you would like to try something new and different this is the place for it! Let Happy know if you want to use one of these raised beds.

Timrod Park, Keep Florence Beautiful There hasn't been much activity on this garden since it was adopted in January, but all that is changing with the warmer weather. Now is the time to fill the bed with colorful annuals. If you'd like to join these MGs, please let Ginger know.

See you at the meeting!

Christine Petrush

Next Meeting: April 18th

The next meeting of the FCMGA will be held on Monday, April 18 at 6:30 pm. We will be meeting at Taylor Garden Shop and Nursery. It is located on Third Loop Road one-half mile from the intersection of Irby and Third Loop on the opposite side (south side) of the road from the Clemson Extension Office. After the tour, we will have our business meeting. On the agenda for this month's meeting:

Election of Officers for the upcoming year

The Pee Dee Farmers Market Spring Plant Sale April 21 - 24

Discovery Day Plant Sale at PDREC on May 7
FCMGA participation at the new City Center Farmers Market

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**"A BUNCH OF HERBS"
CHEESE SPREAD**

8 ozs. Cream cheese
1 stick unsalted butter,
softened
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp. thyme
1 tsp. basil
1 tsp. marjoram
1/2 tsp. tarragon
1 tsp. dill
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 Tbsp. chives
Freshly ground pepper
Tabasco

Mince garlic and herbs in food processor or by hand. Whip butter and lemon juice, add cream cheese and whip until light. Add herbs and seasonings (freshly ground pepper and Tabasco sauce to taste). Pack into a crock or serving dish and chill until ready to serve.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Darlington Master Gardeners
Annual Plant Sale**

Kalmia Gardens
Joslin Ed. Center 9am-2pm

Midlands Plant & Flower Festival

April 14 – 17, 2016

Thursday – Saturday 8:00 am – 6:00 pm
Sunday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

South Carolina State Farmers Market

**Riverbanks Botanical Gardener
Spring Plant Sale**

Saturday, April 23 @ 9:00am-12:00pm
at the Botanical Garden Parking Lot
(enter from Botanical Parkway)

Pick from more than 60 varieties of plants including a few staff favorites.

[Preview Plant List](#)

**Moore Farms
Wine Stroll**

Saturday, April 23, 2016
2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Stroll through the garden with a wine glass in hand. Ignite your taste buds with over 50 different wine selections plus food from local vendors.

This merriment will occur while listening to tunes from the Jazz Revolution. All ticket proceeds will be donated to the Lake City Senior Center

[Link](#)

76th Annual Sumter Iris Festival

Swan Lake
May 27-29

Sumter's Iris Festival is South Carolina's oldest continuous festival and is consistently ranked among the top festivals in the Southeast. The 3-day festival includes concerts, arts & crafts, plants & flowers, antique & classic car shows, and a number of contests and lots of children's activities.

[Brochure](#)

May In The Garden

General

Mulch trees, shrubs, and flower beds

Keep vegetables and plants weeded. A cultivated soil absorbs rain better. Apply 6 inches of mulch to retain moisture.

Herbs: if you do not have a sunny bed near the kitchen, grow your herbs in a pot. Try basil, thyme, oregano, chives, and parsley

Root cuttings of chrysanthemums, mint, basil, hydrangeas, and other herbaceous perennials. Take 3-4 inch stem cuttings of new growth, leaving at least 2 sets of leaves. Dip the cut end into rooting hormone. Tap to remove the excess and insert into a container with moist, porous soil. Firm soil lightly. Keep soil moist and you will have a new plant in approximately 10 days!

Thin seedlings as recommended on the seed package.

Pull spent plants and replant area to prevent weed spread

Stake plants while young to prevent breaking.

Compost disease-free grass clippings and organic wastes

Treat fire ant mounds according to insecticide labels

LAWNS

Planting: Warm-season lawns can now be planted, replanted, or rejuvenated with Bermuda, Centipede, St. Augustine, or Zoysia grasses.

Fertilizing: Warm-season lawns early in the month, using 3-4 lbs. per 1000 sq.ft. of 16-4-8 fertilizer. Water well after fertilizing.

Special Care: Mow often, in order to only remove 1/3 of the grass blades' height each time. Check the mower blade and keep it sharpened. De-thatch Centipede lawns.

VEGETABLES & FRUITS

Planting: Sow warm-season vegetables and herbs, including basil. Transplant warm-season seedlings. Plant heat-loving watermelons, okra, southern peas, sweet potatoes, and pumpkins (only varieties which matures in 120 days).

Fertilizing: " Side dress" corn and other heavy feeding crops with nitrogen. Use no more than 1 lb. Nitrogen per 100 ft. row. Blueberries should be fed now with acid-based fertilizer at a rate of 1/2 cup per plant. Water thoroughly.

Irrigation: The secret of growing onions is to keep them watered. Regular watering helps blueberries throughout their growing season.

Special care: Stake tomatoes and peppers while plants are small. Mulch heavily now. This will keep soil temperature stable, and preventing blossom-end rot. Do not use fertilizer or pesticides when plants are stressed, water first! Watch for pests and treat when found.

Harvest: Harvest strawberries every 2 days. Harvest herbs before flowering for best flavor.

TREES & SHRUBS

Planting: Complete major planting, delay future plantings until fall. Plant container-grown trees and shrubs.

Irrigation: Newly-planted trees and shrubs will require more frequent watering as the roots have not had time to grow into the soil. Water every 5-7 rainless days.

Special Care: Faded yellow leaves with green veins on gardenias, azaleas, etc. are a sign of chlorosis, an iron deficiency. This can be cured with an application of iron sulfate or an acid-based fertilizer, containing iron, around the plant. Look for lacebugs on azaleas. Spray with cygon, malathion, or orthene

FLOWERS

Planting: Plant summer annuals, perennials, and your planters. To minimize shock from strong light, protect your seedlings until established with newspaper, baskets, or small branches. Plant seeds for cosmos, four o'clocks, and sunflowers in the garden.

Fertilizing: Fertilize roses after the first bloom. Make monthly applications to annual and perennial beds.

Irrigation: Water new plants regularly. A soaker hose is more efficient and keeps water off leaves and flowers.

Prune: Spent rose blossoms. Remove faded flowers from annuals and perennials. Prune clematis now. Pinch back mums.

10 SIMPLE STEPS TO A BETTER GARDEN

The 10 basic tenets of the SMARTGARDEN™ program are principles that apply to all of us as responsible stewards of the earth. Listed beneath each tenet are several examples of specific practices. Depending on your region's climate and your individual garden site, some of the examples will apply to your gardening situation, others will not. You are probably already following some of these practices on a routine basis, but others may be new to you.

1. Work with nature whenever possible.

1. Avoid impulse buying--select plants that are well adapted to your site, including natives
2. Select plants that are resistant to pests and diseases common in your region
3. Avoid plants known to be invasive in the garden or in the wild
4. compost yard and kitchen wastes and use the compost in your garden
5. encourage natural predators of problematic pests
6. rotate annual plants, especially vegetables, to reduce incidence of disease
7. practice sanitation--dispose of plant parts that may harbor disease and/or insects

2. Assess your site thoroughly.

1. test your soil for pH, nutrient content, and beneficial soil organisms
2. test your soil drainage
3. determine your USDA hardiness and AHS heat zones
4. know which areas of your yard represent Microclimates
5. identify areas of your garden in terms of light exposure: sun/part sun/shade

3. Assess yourself and your lifestyle

1. time available for gardening
2. what you want to grow
3. physical benefits and limitations
4. financial limitations
5. willingness to try new ideas

4. When adapting natural conditions to create a garden for plants that may not be suitable for your site as it exists, consider optimum location and all modifications necessary for the garden prior to planting.

1. adjust soil pH slightly, if necessary
2. improve soil fertility and structure by regularly integrating organic matter
3. site the garden according to available crusting

5. Learn specifics about your plants so that you can provide them with appropriate care now—and later

1. plant at proper depth
2. provide required nutrients and water
3. prune appropriately and at the proper time
4. provide support for plants that need it

5. transplant or divide plants when necessary

6. Look at your plants regularly, make notes to help plan future gardening efforts and avoid repeating mistakes.

1. keep track of plant names including cultivars
2. be aware of planting, flowering, fruiting dates
3. record dates of fertilization, incidences of pest problems, and pesticide applications
4. make end-of-season notes about annual vegetable varieties you want to grow again, as well as those you don't
5. mark the location of perennials that are late to start growth in spring

7. Conserve water

1. water early in the morning or use drip irrigation
2. water deeply, not daily
3. apply mulch to reduce evaporation and soil crusting
4. collect water from downspouts for use in garden
5. provide extra water to newly planted areas until established

8. Use all available resources

1. consult authoritative periodicals and books (like the AHS SMARTGARDEN Regional Guides).
2. research pertinent Web-sites
3. talk to local gardening professionals at botanical gardens or garden centers
4. share information with other gardeners through garden clubs or garden chat groups

9. Consider each gardening practice in terms of environmental impact

1. monitor pests to determine when control is necessary
2. use the least toxic products to control pests
3. remove pests by hand or with hard sprays of water
4. encourage natural predators and beneficial microorganisms
5. avoid unnecessary use of power tools to reduce emissions and noise pollution

10. Above all, have fun!

The goal of the SMARTGARDEN™ program is to make gardening easier and more successful. If you find you are not having fun with your current garden, analyze why it is not fulfilling. It may be that you are making things hard on yourself by trying to create something complex when you have very little free time. Consider trying a new design or growing different kinds of plants. Maybe you find gardening too solitary an activity, in which case try joining a community garden or volunteer at a local botanical garden.

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