



# FROM THE GROUND UP FLORENCE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS NEWSLETTER

May 2016

*“Sowing The Seeds Of Love For Gardening”*

<http://www.florencecountymastergardeners.org>

## From the Potting Bench,

Hip Hip Hooray and give yourselves a pat on the back, at the success of our Discovery Day Plant Sale at PDREC. So many of you helped to make this a success whether it was in donating plants, tending the plants in the hoop house, spreading the word, working at the sale or buying some of our plants.

The May meeting will be held at the home of Candy Davis. This meeting is also a meet and greet for our new class of Master Gardeners. Please come and welcome our new MGs. The June meeting will be our Annual Cookout and Plant Swap at Lynches County Park on June 20. If you have any suggestions for meetings in July and August, please let me know.

Welcome to our new and returning officers. Their term will begin with the June meeting.

President, Christine Petrush;  
Vice President, Ginger Bryngleson;  
Treasurer, Shelby McCormick  
Secretary, Candy Davis.  
George Radcliffe will continue on in the roll of Web Master.

Our ballot included an opinion survey. If you missed the meeting or even if you already completed the survey and have thought of new things to add, please take a few minutes to complete it now and email it to me. You can cut and paste the questions and add your answers in an email. This is your group and we need your valuable input to know which direction we should take. [Link to survey](#)

Happy Gardening,

Christine

## Quotes From The Garden

It takes a while to grasp that not all failures are self-imposed, the result of ignorance, carelessness or inexperience. It takes a while to grasp that a garden isn't a testing ground for character and to stop asking, what did I do wrong? Maybe nothing.

~Eleanor Perényi, *Green Thoughts*, 1981

**Want to earn your volunteer Hours, here are some places to volunteer.**

**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.

## Next Meeting: May 16<sup>th</sup>

The May meeting for the FCMGA will be held at the home of Candy Davis. If you did not receive her earlier email and need directions, please contact her at: [mustangcandy@hotmail.com](mailto:mustangcandy@hotmail.com)

We'll have a carry in dinner with Candy providing shredded chicken sandwiches and decaf ice tea. Ginger will bring sun teas. Please bring a dish to share with the others. Plan to arrive after 6; we'll eat when most everyone has arrived.

This is the first MG meeting for our new Master Gardeners. Remember to wear your name tag to help our new MG's match names to faces.

We look forward to seeing all of you there.

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**Caprese Salad**

Fresh summer tomatoes, basil and mozzarella have never tasted better than in a classic caprese salad. Yum!

**Ingredients**

1 pound fresh mozzarella  
4 large heirloom tomatoes  
1/2 cup loosely packed fresh basil, torn  
Sea salt  
Freshly cracked black pepper  
Balsamic vinegar  
Extra-virgin olive oil

**Preparation**

Slice mozzarella and tomatoes 1/4 inch thick; arrange on serving platter. Sprinkle with fresh basil, salt, and pepper. Drizzle to taste with balsamic vinegar and extra-virgin olive oil.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Riverbanks Botanical Gardener  
String Gardening**

Saturday May 21  
10:00am–12:00pm

Add excitement to your garden through a creative use of vertical space as we create hanging planters. By wrapping the root ball with string and a special soil mix, the plants can grow suspended from tree branches, arbors, etc., for a one-of-a-kind garden. Everyone will string one plant to take home.

**Cost:** \$20 per person per class.

**Moore Farms**

**May Days Plant Sale and BBQ**

Friday, May 20th and Saturday, May 21st  
8:30 am to 3:30 pm each day

Want to add some additions to your landscape? Looking for that "WOW" factor? This plant sale is for you! The plant sale will feature many varieties of choice, hard-to-find and unusual plants. Moore Farms horticulturists will be able to assist you with any questions and we only sell what we believe in, so every plant is a winner!

[Plant List](#)

**76<sup>th</sup> 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](#)

**Brown's Ferry Daylilies**

**Georgetown, SC  
OPEN HOUSE SALE**

JUNE 4th and 5th

If you are in the area, please make plans to stop by. You will see thousands of daylilies in bloom and catch some good sale prices, too.

This event is the highlight of our season. Please call if you need additional information or recommendations on local accommodations.

[Link](#)

## June In The Garden

### General

Water lawns during dry, hot periods.  
Mulch all trees, shrubs, and beds.  
Weed beds as weeds compete for water.  
Water newly-planted seeds daily.  
Water newly-planted trees, shrubs, and perennials to avoid stress.  
Sow annuals and perennials.  
Prune hydrangeas as soon as flowering ends.  
Fertilize gardenias.  
Fertilize evergreen shrubs and deciduous trees.  
Keep vegetables picked.  
Cover fruit trees with netting to keep birds away.  
Plant fall-flowering bulbs.  
Divide iris.  
Check for powdery mildew on crape myrtles and treat.  
Check for insects, especially on roses and crape myrtles. Treat on both sides of leaves.

### LAWNS

**Irrigation:** Centipede and St Augustine need 1 inch of water weekly. Water between 5 a.m. and 10a.m. to minimize the evaporation and disease.

**Special Care:** Check for cinch bugs and spittle bugs in lawns and treat. Nematodes may also cause problems, especially in sandy soils. The best defense against these pests is to maintain a healthy lawn. During period of drought, raise the mower blade an inch to conserve moisture and minimize lawn stress.

### VEGETABLES & FRUITS

**Planting:** Plant tomato seeds or root suckers for fall crop. Watermelons can be planted the latter half of this month. Sweet potatoes can still be planted.

**Fertilizing:** Fertilize tomatoes and cucumbers with 5-10-10 combination monthly.

**Irrigation:** Water plants during dry spells to encourage large beautiful fruits.

**Special care:** Cover any trees and bushes with netting to prevent birds from feasting on crops. Squash vine borers can be detected by sawdust-like material found at the base of the plant. Treat if found.

**Harvest:** Harvest squash, okra, and cucumbers daily to maintain fruiting. Pick corn just before cooking.

### TREES & SHRUBS

**Planting:** Plant container-grown trees and shrubs. Plant blooming crape myrtles, to assure selected colors.

**Irrigation:** Mulch shrubs and trees. Water during dry spells, especially newly planted ones. A 5-gallon bucket with a small hole in the bottom, filled every 3-5 days is an excellent watering device.

**Fertilizing:** Fertilize gardenias, after blooming. It is time for a second application on evergreens and deciduous trees.

**Pruning:** Maintain shape of evergreens by lightly pruning. Prune hydrangeas and other flowering shrubs, after flowering to prevent removing next year's buds.

**Special Care:** Watch for yellowed leaves on azaleas, which may indicate an iron deficiency. Treat with liquid iron.

### FLOWERS

**Planting:** Sow annuals, such as cornflower, sunflower, marigold, and portulaca to fill gaps between garden plants. Water daily.

**Bulbs:** Sternbergia, lycoris, gladiolus, caladium, canna, and dahlias may be planted in June.

**Fertilizing:** Fertilize annuals to keep plants healthy and blooming. Fertilize roses monthly and water well.

**Irrigation:** Keep blooming plants watered to ensure more beautiful flowers.

**Prune:** Prune faded blooms to promote longer blooming. Pinch back petunias that are leggy. Pinch back mums and asters to delay blooming until fall.

**Special Care:** Spray roses weekly to control mildew and black spot.

## Controlling Insects Organically

By Kathy Anderson

Most gardeners are anxious to get out into their gardens as soon as the weather warms up and the first green sprout appears. Unfortunately, plant-eating insects are just as anxious as we are to get into the garden. They seem to think that our beautiful shrubs and tasty vegetables were planted for their benefit!

There are many fine products available in catalogs and garden centers to control insects. But for health or environmental reasons, some gardeners are hesitant to use chemicals in their garden, especially in a vegetable garden.

So what can you do to avoid sharing your beautiful flowers, shrubs and vegetables with every insect that passes through the neighborhood without using potentially harmful chemicals? Practicing good garden housekeeping should be your first defense in the battle of gardener versus insects. In other words, keep a clean garden and don't give the insects a place to hide and reproduce. Rake up any dead leaves from the ground and discard them, or better yet, add them to your compost. Harvest vegetables as soon as they ripen, and don't leave over-ripe vegetables in the garden. Clear out all dead foliage from your gardens in the fall. Prune out any dead or damaged branches from your trees and shrubs, making clean cuts without ragged edges where insects can hide.

If you find insect damage on your plants, there are a large number of organic products that work in a variety of ways to kill insects or discourage them from eating your garden plants. Because many organic insect controls are used for specific types of insects, it is very important to know what insects you are dealing with before choosing the correct organic insecticide. Carefully examine the damaged plant to find the culprits, looking under the leaves and along the stems where they may be hiding. Your county's Ag Extension Agent can help identify specific insects, or you can also do an online search for insect identification sites.

Butterflies often lay their eggs on plants, and when those eggs hatch the little caterpillars will stay and feed on the plant as they grow. Caterpillars can be controlled using a common organic insecticide known as *Bacillus thuringiensis*, or Bt. Bt is a naturally occurring bacteria that causes caterpillars to stop eating and die. There are several varieties of Bt that can be used, depending on the type of caterpillar you're after, including one specific to Colorado potato beetle larvae and another for corn earworms. Bt is also effective against tomato hornworms, the little green worms that like broccoli and cabbage, and bagworms. Bt should be applied at 1-2 week intervals to kill succeeding generations of insects. Gardeners with butterfly gardens should avoid using Bt on their plants because it is harmful to butterfly caterpillars. However, Bt is completely harmless to pets and people.

Diatomaceous earth is another natural insecticide that may be used on a variety of insects. Diatomaceous earth is a fine powder that feels like talc, but it is actually the fossilized

skeletal remains of small aquatic critters called diatoms. It is completely harmless to people and pets, but when soft-bodied insects come in contact with it, the tiny sharp edges of the diatoms lacerate the insects, making them dehydrate and perish. Apply diatomaceous earth in the early morning or evening when the plants are wet with dew, which will make the powder stick to the surface of the leaves and doom the insects that walk through it. Diatomaceous earth can be used to control ants, aphids, beetle grubs, box-elder bugs, flea beetles, those nasty little earwigs and many more insects. It's also safe to use on houseplants, and can even be sprinkled on the ground to control slugs.

Insecticidal soap is another favorite organic insect control. Safe to use around bees, birds, and animals, insecticidal soap is made of fatty acid salts. It can be used in the garden and on houseplants to control aphids, spider mites, whiteflies and some leafhoppers and caterpillars. The drawback to insecticidal soap is that it must be sprayed directly onto the offending insects to be effective. Insects breathe through their shells, and insecticidal soap suffocates insects by coating their shells so they cannot breathe. Insecticidal soap must be applied thoroughly and repeatedly for the best results.

There are also plant-based insecticides available. The seeds of the Neem tree produce an oil that disrupts insects' reproductive cycle, preventing them from multiplying. The Neem tree is native to Southeast Asia and is also grown now in Australia for its insecticidal properties. Neem works quickly and is effective against a variety of caterpillars, beetles, aphids and borers.

Many insects are actually fussy eaters and they won't eat plants that are distasteful to them. If you've grown garlic you may have noticed that insects leave it alone. You can find insect repellants made with garlic that can be sprayed onto plants to prevent insects from eating them. These garlic-based insect repellents become odorless within five minutes after they're applied and leave no aftertaste on food crops. The plants actually absorb the garlic and stay distasteful to insects for up to a month. There are also garden insect repellants available that are made with hot peppers. Like the garlic-based repellants, the hot pepper repellants are sprayed on the plants to make them distasteful to insects.

Organic insecticides and insect repellants are becoming available at more garden centers and gardening catalogs every year. It is not difficult to control insects with organic insecticides, but the organic gardener must be diligent with frequent plant inspections and take prompt action to avoid infestations when insect damage is found in the garden. Kathy Anderson has been an avid gardener for many years and has grown tomatoes by the acre, along with many other vegetables, flowers and landscape plants. Kathy recommends <http://www.freeplants.com> as a great place to learn more about gardening. Article provided by <http://gardening-articles.com>.