



FROM THE GROUND UP

"Sowing The Seeds of Love For Gardening"

February 2014

From Our President: Tom Pantos

Greetings Master Gardeners. I hope you all are keeping warm as Mother Nature continues to challenge our resolve to stay comfortable both inside and out. We are lucky as humans to have the convenience of a thermostat or fireplace in our homes to adjust as needed to stay warm and cozy during the cold evening hours. However, many of our outside plants are not privy to a thermostat or warm fire. Many plants are dependent on us humans to help them make it through these cold and trying times. Mulch, blanket covers, small lights, or buckets of warm water are some of the tools we have at our disposal to help our prized plants make it into the coming spring weather just ahead and I hope many of you folks are utilizing these tools to help your plants along. I have several small citrus trees (too big to bring inside) that I adorned with green Christmas lights to help them make it through the cold nights. Some of my neighbors have stopped by to ask if I knew Christmas had come and gone over a month ago.

The tickets for the Spring Extravaganza have been distributed, 250 'Save the Date' postcards have been mailed to select individuals, and posters are being circulated among commercial, retail, and public entities both in Florence as well as Lake City. Thanks to everyone who is helping to sell tickets. If you don't have enough tickets, please direct interested individuals to the Florence County Extension Office. The Administrative Assistant, Anjanette Washington, has agreed to have them available there. She can be reached at 661-4800 x111.

The folks in Lake City continue to be a pleasure to work with and they have indeed opened up new avenues that can potentially contribute to significant growth in our Association. There are also new and exciting

programs/projects being discussed at the Pee Dee REC that I think will get the attention of many of our members. I say this because, after having the opportunity to meet Dr. Matt Smith, the new Director, and listening to how he feels, I believe we can work cooperatively on some of his visions toward improving the links between the Pee Dee REC and the public. Dr. Smith has accepted an invitation to attend our February meeting and share these visions with us. I think you will find what he has to say very enlightening.

Sally Haynes presented the program for our January meeting and as was expected by all in attendance, did an absolutely outstanding job! Sally, aka the Herb Lady, is not only a gifted speaker; she is also accomplished in the art of involving her audience in the program. Pictures can be found on page 5 of the newsletter. Thanks Sally for a job well done.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the February meeting. Tom Pantos



Photo from Spartanburg Community College Horticulture showing a winter protection blanket in use.

FROM THE GROUND UP

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DUES REMINDER

The FCMGA By-Laws require a member's dues be paid in order to vote on any issue brought before the Association. Dues are \$10 and can be paid at the next meeting on February 17 or mailed to:

Janet Bugbee

1923 Penn Farm Road

Timmonsville, SC 29161

Quotation Corner

"Flowers always make people better, happier, and more helpful; they are sunshine, food, and medicine to the soul."

Luther Burbank

Upcoming Events

FCMGA Meeting

Monday, February 17

6:30 PM

The meeting will include remarks from Dr. Matt Smith, Executive Director of the Pee Dee REC as well as a presentation by Tom Pantos titled "Picture Perfect Plants." Please bring your camera to the meeting.

League of Women Voters

"The use of genetically modified crops in local agriculture"

Monday, January 27

5:30 PM

The League of Women Voters meets the 4th Monday of each month at Central United Methodist Church. Meetings (open to the public) begin with networking at 5:30 PM followed by the program at 5:45 PM.

Moore Farms Botanical Garden

Terrariums: Bringing the outdoors in

Saturday, February 22

9:30 AM – Noon

Registration: \$40 per person

For more information, contact Rebecca Turk at rturk@moorefarmsbg.org

Orchid Care

Thursday, February 27

9:30 AM – Noon

Registration: \$20 per person

For more information, contact Rebecca Turk at rturk@moorefarmsbg.org

Master Gardeners of York County

Joy of Gardening Symposium

Saturday, March 1

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Registration: \$50 (deadline is 2/21/14)

Lexington County Master Gardener Volunteer

2014 State Master Gardener Jamboree

Friday, May 2

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Registration: \$50

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February In The Garden

GENERAL

Clean foliage on houseplants.
Order seeds or purchase from local farm center.
Prune rose bushes.
Prepare vegetable garden.
Take soil sample to Clemson Extension Service.
Move established plants to other locations this month.
Freshen up edging, flower bed areas, and natural areas.
Remove dead branches, twigs, and leaves from areas to prevent disease.
Cut early flowering shrubs to force indoors now.
Trim mondo grass and liriop with lawn mower set on high.
Be sure to put out birdhouses and fill feeders and birdbaths. Water during dry periods.
Lime lawn and garden beds if indicated by a soil test and not already performed.

LAWNS

Mowing: Using the highest setting, mow ground covers of mondo and liriop mid-month.
Special Care: Spot treat broadleaf weeds. Pre-emergent herbicide should be applied when forsythia are in bloom to control crabgrass and other summer annual weeds. This is generally March 1 in the coastal and central areas of SC.
Repair areas in lawn with sod if necessary.

VEGETABLES & FRUITS

Planting: Sow outdoors: peas, snow peas, Chinese cabbage, onions, broccoli, beets, carrots, lettuce, radishes, spinach, turnips, Irish potatoes, and transplant collards. Plant the "short day" onion varieties for bulb onions. Plant blueberries now. Use 2-3 different varieties to ensure pollination and fruit production. Select local varieties (rabbit eye) for best results. Finish planting fruit trees. Start herb seeds indoors of basil, borage, chamomile, parsley, and summer savory. Sow chives, dill and coriander outdoors.
Fertilizing: Fertilize and lime herbs. Rosemary, sage, thyme, and marjoram, and parsley need extra lime. Fertilize fruit trees. In the absence of a soil test, Pecan trees will need 4 lbs. of a complete fertilizer such as 10-10-10 per inch of trunk diameter as measured at 4.5 ft. above ground. Zinc is also important to pecan nutrition. In the absence of a tissue analysis, apply 1 lb. of zinc sulfate to young trees and 3-5 lbs. to large trees each year. A soil pH of 6.0-6.5 assures availability of essential nutrients. Fertilize established strawberries with 6-8 lbs. of 10-10-10 per 100 feet row.
Pruning: Prune peaches, plums, apples, and pears.
Special care: Plant bare root woody landscape plants and trees. This is also the time to prune summer-blooming evergreen shrubs

FLOWERS

Planting: Sow seeds for warm-season annuals indoors: marigolds, zinnias, coleus, salvia, etc. Plant bare root roses. Check stored bulbs, corms, tubers for signs of rot.
Fertilizing: Continue feeding pansies every two weeks with liquid fertilizer and water regularly. Feed spring bulbs with 5-10-10 or bulb food when leaves appear. Fertilize roses toward the end of the month. Fertilize established perennials with 12-6-6.
Pruning: Prune rose bushes: remove dead, diseased, and weak wood now, saving 3-5 good canes. At the end of the month, prune pampas grass to within 6 inches of the ground. This is the last month to prune hybrid tea roses.

HOUSEPLANTS

Look for spider mites, scale, and mealybugs. If found, spray with dormant oil or insecticidal soap as directed on the label. Plants on window sills need attention on cold nights. Tender foliage will be killed if they come in contact with the cold window.

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Re-using containers? A cautionary tale.

Garden Professors Blog

Published January 10, 2014

<http://blogs.extension.org/gardenprofessors/2014/01/10/re-using-containers-a-cautionary-tale/>

I attempted to clean up our little home greenhouse over the holiday break. There's no good place to recycle pots around here, and I hate throwing them away...so I suffer from container build-up. Figured I'd sort through the haphazard pile in the corner of the greenhouse, wash and re-stack the useable ones, and finally ditch the busted ones.

As I started separating the first stack, I noted a tiny flash of red. It is well-known and oft-reported among my gardening and grower buddies that the Southern Black Widow (*Latrodectus mactans*) really enjoys a nice stack of grubby pots. But I hadn't seen one in quite a while, and not at our current location.

Boy, did I hit the jackpot.

I'm not afraid of spiders. At all. Quite fond of them, actually – they are immensely useful and fascinating critters. And only a very few pose any kind of danger.

In the case of the Black Widow, a bite injects a neurotoxic venom (latrotoxin). The bites and ensuing symptoms are allegedly quite painful, though rarely fatal. In this instance, I chose not to sacrifice my comfort for our collective edification, i.e. “How Bad Can it Hurt?” (see [Blister Beetle post](#)).

So, I squished her. But felt pretty bad about it. As I worked through the stacks, I found another.



Shook her to the floor and did some more tap-dancing. Perhaps it was time to stop taking pictures and put some gloves on.

By the time I got through the entire pile, I'd found and mused thirteen of them, sized small through pretty darn large. The landscape fabric on the greenhouse floor was peppered with little beige, black, and red blobs (you don't need to see that photo).

There were none in the stacks of shiny new nursery pots I'd ordered for our blueberry transplants. But if there was some growing media or plant debris still stuck inside, there was a high probability of finding a spider.

Moral of this story? Think twice about leaving a bunch of dirty plant containers piled up. A simple hosing out before I'd stacked them would have probably prevented such a large infestation.

There's also a significant chance that I will forget all about the need for caution the next time I'm potting up stuff. Which may lead to an even more educational and entertaining blog post, where I describe “Adventures In [Lactrodectism](#).” Because I'm sure I missed a couple, or they're hiding in the gravel. As the old saying goes,

“Seeing a spider isn't a problem. It's a problem when it disappears.”

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January Meeting Photos

