

Master Gardener

Newsletter

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A rose between two blooming guys: Zulema flanked by Tom and David.

Master gardener success Wichman shows how to enjoy what we do

Master gardeners are supposed to be role models for the community when it comes to home landscape management.

monthly meeting. And if he didn't leave you feeling better about our program in Leon County, you must not have been there.

Tom Wichman is a role model for us.

Our state coordinator is not only generous with his vast knowledge of plants and best gardening practices, but he has an infectious manner that inspires master gardeners to try a little harder, get a little more involved and take a lot more joy in what we do.

Tom's tips

How to get the most out of master gardening:

- ✓ Communicate with your Extension agent
- ✓ Report your time accurately
- ✓ Provide the best service possible
- ✓ Keep on learning
- ✓ Have fun

Beginning with a tour of our garden to a covered-dish feast prepared in his honor, Tom was as full of curiosity about what we do in Tallahassee as he was forthcoming with what's happening elsewhere and how we can take part in more opportunities

available to us.

On his first trip to the Leon County

*(Please see **WICHMAN** on page 5)*

Tom was the guest at our July 13

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What's happening

Tree hugger's delight: ID session set

The monthly meeting for Aug. 10, will feature a chance to hone up on tree identification skills.

single or double, plus a 13 percent occupancy tax.

There will be a short lecture by **Stan Rosenthal**, a hands-on opportunity to identify cuttings of specimens in the garden with Stan and **Zulema**, and the presentation by **Will Sheftall** on common invasive and exotic plants.

Lean and re-learn

Interviewing of candidates for this year's class are scheduled to be conducted this month. Classes are scheduled to begin Sept. 7 and continue until graduation Dec. 14.

During this period, there will be no scheduled monthly meetings. Our events committee will try to arrange some special educational field trips. We'll let you know when and where.

In addition, check out the class schedule on our web site (<http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/mg.htm>). It's the second selection from the top. There may be a scheduled topic in which you're interested. You're always welcome and you can count class time as educational hours.

Web newsletter

While you're on the web site, surf over to the newsletter. From May on, we've posted new, easy downloadable copies — identical to the print version, only in color.

State conference

Still on our webpage, click on the top item for information on the state conference, Oct. 22-25 in Jacksonville.

As we went to print, online registration for the conference was still not available.

But you can book a room at the conference hotel. And, as Tom reminded us during his visit, there are only so many rooms available at the conference rate. (\$90 per night,

Before...

It's one of nature's true wonders that creatures such as these eastern black swallowtail larvae, feasting on bronze fennel in our demo garden can turn into...



... After

... the kind of beauties **Mary Ann Tonnacliff** photographed in her yard. This is an eastern tiger swallowtail.



If you didn't get the July 25 gang message on procedures, check the office bulletin board or ask Zulema next time you work the phones.

Open house date set

Keep the morning of Sat., Oct. 14 open. That's the date for our fall open house.

Watch for news on the event, or contact Coordinator **Jim Roberts** to volunteer early. (jroberts45@comcast.net.)

Propagators wanted

The team put together after the spring open house to propagate plants to show off in the fall is still looking for volunteers. If interested, please contact:

Marion Nims (marion@statistix.com), **Ellen Fournier** (ellen.fournier@laspbs.state.fl.us) or **Tricia Yates** (triciayates@yahoo.com).

Greenhouse update

Ed Oaksford still has spots on his team investigating ways to make an Extension Service greenhouse a reality.

If you'd like to get involved, please contact Ed at etoaksford@earthlink.net.

Crape Myrtles galore

The first crape myrtle field day July 12 at IFAS's North Florida Research Center in Quincy showcased more than 90 species and cultivars that **Dr. Gary Knox** and his colleagues are evaluating for adaptability for Florida. In case you missed it, ask **Lydia Alexander** about it.

Site visitors gear up

With three site visit reports under their belts, members of Coordinator **Glenn Mayne's** team "stand ready to grow this program."

The Leon County Extension
Master Gardener
 Newsletter

This is a publication of the Master Gardeners Association of Leon County, a non-profit, educational organization that operates under the auspices of the Leon County Cooperative Extension Service and the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS).

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July edition team

Editor's message

Our 'garden' has many blooms

By **Bob Douglas**, Master Gardener

While driving around town recently, I caught an NPR report on the political instability in Afghanistan. The notion that **President Karzai** is a good guy who doesn't have enough other talented people around him to form a functioning government prompted one Afghani to say words to this effect:

"We have a saying: It takes more than one flower to make a garden."

It struck me as a good gardening axiom that rings true beyond the geopolitical

realm. Take our own master gardener program, for example. Our metaphorical garden is full of flowers. And, while they're not always blooming at the same time, there are always some master gardeners who take the lead and make our overall program shine.

From pulling weeds to answering phones, from bringing snacks and water on work days to serving on committees, there are always some of us in bloom.

It's enough to make the folks in Kabul green with envy.

MG profile

Mary Ann makes a difference

EDITOR'S NOTE: This month, we're starting a new feature: A mini-profile of one of our members, starting with board vice-president **Mary Ann Tonnacliff**.

She's a regular at work days, guides tours at open houses, helps maintain our garden plant list on the web and lends her wisdom and support to various projects around the Extension office.



Mary Ann

With quiet competence and good nature, Mary Ann makes a difference in our program.

But there's much more to Mary Ann than master gardening — starting with her family.

She and her husband Mike have five children and nine grandchildren, about whom there's much to be proud.

Before retiring, Mary Ann was a nurse manager of a 14 bed intensive care unit with specialty in cardiology.

Always a gardening buff, she enrolled in David's class in 2002 "to further my knowledge, become acquainted with other gardening obsessives like myself, become proficient enough to help myself and others with our gardening "adventures."

She enjoys "the friendship and kinship I feel with those MGs who are committed to gardening and to making the Tallahassee program as good as it can be."

Mary Ann also is involved in Goodwood and the Tallahassee Garden Club — including 'junior gardening' with elementary school kids.

When she's not gardening, her interests include music (singing in a couple of groups), bridge, meals on wheels, reading and photography. (She likes to take close-ups of the beauties that frequent her own butterfly garden. Check her work one Page 2.)

As a board member, she's committed to creating program enhancements to keep volunteers involved.

Best practices

Ivy: some yards are out of its league

Some yards don't belong in the ivy league. Take the one that one of our forensic gardening teams was dispatched to recently.

The homeowners called the Extension office for help because the leaves on their English Ivy, planted on a shady slope in their yard, had started to turn yellow and die.

Their problem defied diagnosis by phone, so a site visit was in order. The team sent included: **Marge Hillaman, Liz Schmidt** and **Cindy Smith**, with **Glenn Mayne** observing.

The ivy originated from a neighbor's yard. A year ago, the plants started to show signs of stress. The homeowners had applied a systemic fungicide to no effect.

On close inspection, the team found leaves covered with raised spots and subsequently suspected the problem was *Colletotrichum* — a form of anthranose, a fungus that

commonly affects English Ivy.

The team noticed the fungus was on the neighbor's ivy, though not as severe. (That yard was flat, and thus not as vulnerable to nutrient runoff as a sloped yard, which had not been fertilized and may have been over-watered.)

The team's recommendation:

- ✓ Remove the affected ivy and dispose of it using plastic bags; and
- ✓ Treat the remaining healthy ivy with copper sulphate — available at some garden centers — in accordance with label directions.

Fertilizer may help, too.

The slope was weedy (pea vine, poison ivy and Virginia creeper). The homeowners said they plan to get rid of everything and start over. Not a bad idea.

Turf woes: More than one culprit

Sometimes it's more than one factor that causes turf problems. And sometimes a quick diagnosis can lead you down the wrong path.

Take the case of a homeowner who notices his centipede turning brown in spots four to six weeks after he applied atrazine in March. Based on photos sent and information provided by the owner, atrazine damage was suspected as part of the cause. But it was decided that a site visit was in order for further diagnosis.

The team — which included **Bob Douglas, Glenn Mayne, Joan Futch, Lydia Alexander** and **Cindy Smith** — inspected the yard a month after the homeowner called and found the lawn was already coming back.

In the intervening time, the homeowner had trimmed back the border grass that was blocking the spray pattern of a sprinkler head that was watering one of the originally damaged spots. Moreover, there had been some rain.

It should be noted that the homeowner is a trained master gardener experienced in applying atrazine and has done so in past years without damaging results. While he did not water immediately after applying the atrazine and has watered sparingly since to conserve water during recent

drought conditions, the team concluded the chemical was not the primary cause of the damage. Rather, it was "a perfect storm" of drought, drainage, soil and sun.

The team's advice included:

- ✓ Waiting for rain.
- ✓ Regularly inspecting the irrigation system to insure adequate coverage.
- ✓ Considering amending the soil in those areas where drainage or soil quality is an issue.
- ✓ Considering planting a ground cover other than turf — or using mulch — in those areas where turf doesn't thrive, either because of soil or sun conditions.
- ✓ Considering mixing in St. Augustine plugs in those areas where centipede is not thriving.
- ✓ Considering foregoing annual applications of any weed-killing chemicals, in favor of control by manual weeding.
- ✓ Concentrating on growing a healthy lawn by: Maintaining a mowing height of no lower than 2 inches; preventing thatch accumulation; guarding against over-fertilization; and watering appropriately — when the turf shows signs of drought stress, especially in the fall and early spring.

Cover story

Our program part of something bigger

(WICHMAN, Continued from page 1)

Extension office since becoming state coordinator more than six years ago, Tom began by putting what we do in context.

He told us the master gardening program was started in 1972 by an agent in Washington state who felt that well-trained volunteers could handle many homeowner questions, freeing him up for more technical problems. From there, the program has grown in size and scope. It now involves some 75,000 volunteers — 4,000 in Florida alone.

In Florida, the program operates in 52 of our 67 counties. Last year, master gardeners volunteered more than 387,000 hours — worth an estimated \$6.9 million — having contact with more than 481,000 homeowners. (In

Leon County, 185 master gardeners volunteered 5,718 hours involving 10,450 contacts.)

Tom emphasized the importance to reporting all our

hours. It's beyond personal recognition, he said, knowing that some of us don't keep score beyond our certification requirements. Recorded hours have implications for government funding.

Tom underscored the importance of being in tune with David and Zulema — understanding their needs and letting them know our desires. (The kind of things our board strives

to do.) And he emphasized the importance of basing advice to homeowners on research supported by IFAS.

Keep learning, he said. Try three to five new plants a year. And take advantage of courses, conferences and field trips (which will be highlighted in future newsletters).



Prize winners

Tom gives the 2005 plant-ID championship award to **Loretta Denes** and **Katherine LaRosa**. Teammates **Katherine Hamilton** and **Pam Sawyer** could not attend.



Learning can be fun

Tom demonstrates a Jeopardy-like game where players get points for framing garden-related answers in the form of questions that homeowners might ask of master gardeners. Contestants, from foreground to rear, are: **Justin LeBlanc**, **Ed Schroeder**, **Katherine LaRosa** and **Loretta Denes**.

August in the Tallahassee Garden

Attention paid in the dog days will pay off by Helping your fall garden

Tips from Katherine LaRosa, Master Gardener

August can bring misery to the Tallahassee gardener. Our shrub, flower and vegetable beds start looking bedraggled. It's too hot to work outside, but there's lots of work to do.



Katherine

Just remember that a little effort now can lead to a much more lovely and productive fall garden.

When that first cool October day arrives, you can fully appreciate the fruits of your August labors.

Trees and Shrubs

- ✓ Maintain a two to three inch layer of mulch around your shrubs, flowers and newly planted trees. Rain and hot weather cause organic mulches, especially pine straw, to break down quickly. Check your mulch and replenish where needed.
- ✓ Fertilize trees and shrubs that were planted within the past three years, using a fertilizer such as 15-0-15.
- ✓ A light pruning with hand pruners can greatly improve the appearance of shrubs such as ligustrum, elaeagnus and cleyera that tend to send up shoots that protrude above the canopy of the shrub. Prune these longer shoots back to a main stem or trunk to give the shrub a neater, more natural look.
- ✓ Remove spent blooms from crape myrtle, butterfly bush and Vitex (chaste tree) to encourage them to re-bloom in four to six weeks.
- ✓ Propagate oleanders, hydrangeas, and azaleas using tip cuttings.
- ✓ Cut the faded flower stems off hydrangeas.

Annuals, Perennials and Roses

- ✓ Sow cosmos, zinnia, Mexican sunflower and cleome seeds.

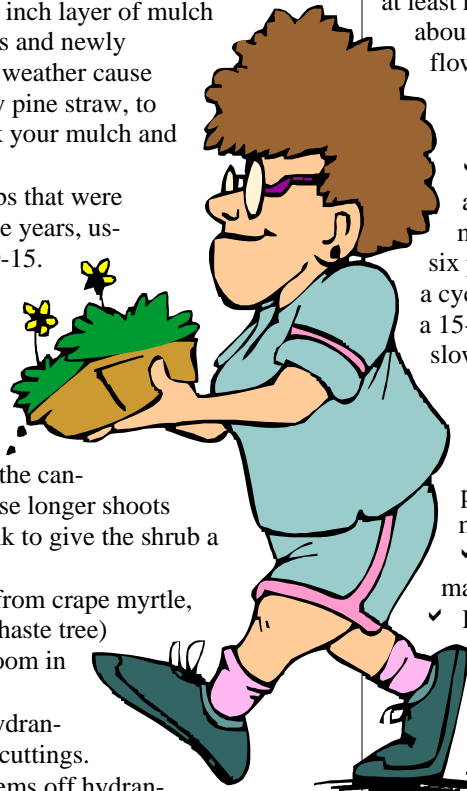
- ✓ Plant lantana, coleus, melampodium, torenia, angelonia, pentas, salvia, globe amaranth, *Plectranthus* 'Mona Lavender' or *Zinnia augustifolia*.
- ✓ Cut back tired looking annuals at least half-way to the ground.
- ✓ Also, cut back perennials such as salvias and swamp sunflower.
- ✓ Prune modern roses, such as hybrid teas, grandifloras and floribundas, especially if the roses have not been dead-headed on a regular basis.
- ✓ Cut back large varieties to 30-36 inches above the ground.
- ✓ Cut out any diseased, injured, or spindly growth.
- ✓ Shorten the main canes and lateral branches but leave at least half the length of each main cane or branch. In about six weeks the rose should produce a flush of flowers.

Lawn Care

- ✓ If your lawn hasn't been fertilized since spring and it's not looking that great, fertilize late this month with a 15-0-15 fertilizer. Use no more than six pounds per thousand square feet and apply it with a cyclone or rotary type lawn fertilizer spreader. Select a 15-0-15 fertilizer with approximately 7.5 percent slow-release nitrogen.

Vegetables and Herbs

- ✓ During the first half of August, remove old plant material. Destroy diseased or infested plant material.
- ✓ Add compost, chopped leaves or other organic material and dig it into the soil.
- ✓ Plant peppers, eggplants and tomatoes. Choose a tomato that has been bred to set fruit in the heat such as 'Heat Wave', 'Sun Chaser,' 'Sun Leaper,' 'Solar Set' or 'Florida 91.' Plant deeper than usual, about six inches deep. Mulch well.
- ✓ In mid to late August, plant carrots, beets, mustard, snap beans, cabbage, okra, cucumbers, southern peas, squash, cantaloupes, watermelons, pumpkins and cauliflower.
- ✓ In late August, plant broccoli, collards, and turnips. Sow seeds for chives, parsley, cilantro, sage, thyme and dill.



Demonstrating good gardening

Stewardship: Walking the talk

By Loretta Denes, Master Gardener

Ane Tofield is on vacation this month. I'm filling in for her, but I'm going to stray from the usual subject in order to respond to our editor/president's request in last month's newsletter.



Loretta

As I read his message to be good stewards of our own property, it felt like he was speaking to me directly. My husband and I have just bought a home on Harriet Drive near Lake Jackson. We now live in a lake-protection zone, on a half-acre lot.

Every decision we make regarding this land will be made with the lake in mind.

My most immediate concern is the two large -- very beautiful, I will admit -- Chinese tallow trees in the front yard. They have to be removed. Chinese tallow trees are a huge problem in many areas, not just Lake Jackson. Their seeds

will soon mature and fall from the tree, dropping into the ditch that directs rainwater towards Lake Jackson.

The same is also true of the seeds of heavenly bamboo (*Nandina domestica*) and coral berry (*Ardisia crenulata*).

Then, I'm afraid I'll be working on getting rid of the wandering jew (*Tradescantia zebrina*), privet, rose mallow, wisteria, and elephant ears. (My experience is that these plants are most successfully removed mechanically without use of chemicals.)

Although not technically an invasive, Asiatic jasmine has been allowed to grow freely, almost to the top of one of our live oaks. It will be cut off at the base and allowed to die.

Eventually, I'll install a butterfly garden, reduce the lawn areas, and work on attracting wildlife, always with Lake Jackson in mind.

So my message to you, President Douglas, is this: I heard you loud and clear. Now I've got to get busy.

Mark your calendar

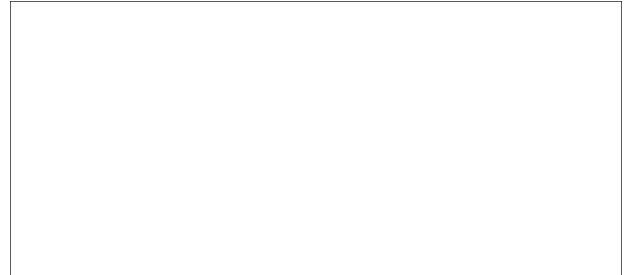
August 3 Thursday	MG Association Board meeting.	10 a.m. - noon
August 10 Thursday	Monthly education meeting. Tree identification. Please see Page 2 for details.	9 a.m. - noon
August 21 Monday	Demo garden work day. Check our website in advance for what your team is doing.	9 a.m. - noon
Sept. 4 Monday	Labor Day. Extension office closed.	
Sept. 7 Thursday	New master gardener class scheduled to start. Please see Page 2 for details.	9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
	MG Association Board meeting.	10 a.m. - noon
Sept. 18 Monday	Demo garden work day. Check our website in advance for what your team is doing.	9 a.m. - noon
Oct. 14 Saturday	Fall open house. Please see Page 2 for details.	
Oct. 22-25	Master Gardener State Conference in Jacksonville. Please see Page 2 for details.	

All events are at the office unless otherwise indicated.

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