



Master Gardener Thymes

www.lakelandsmastergardener.org

February 2010



Attention!!!

Regular meetings will be held only January, March, May, July, September, and December. The meeting time will still be at 6:30 and the meeting place will be announced.

Dwight Long has agreed to serve as our president for 2010 and Patti Larson has agreed to serve as treasurer. We still need a VP and secretary. Any interested members, please contact Dwight or Sandy Stachursky. Thanks to Dwight and Patti for stepping up to help out.

Committee Chairs for 2010

Community Projects: Sandra Johnson

Education: Helen Spiller

Finance/Fundraising: John Wham

Phone: Nicole Ellis

Membership: Open for volunteer

Newsletter: Jean Anderson with Mary Woodiwiss doing the mailings

Programs/Speakers Catherine Swindell

Public Relations: Open for volunteer

Social Activities: Open for volunteer

Web Site: Chuck Bender

Office Help: Vince Plotczyk

Are Your Spring Bulbs Coming Up Already?

December 17, 2009

Submitted by Chuck Bender

by Gene Sumi, Homestead Education Coordinator (Homestead Gardens Blog)

If you see the green tips of daffodils or tulips poking through the surface of your soil, not to worry! They may be some of the early risers who could not wait until the calendar said it was spring. Higher than normal temperatures may have triggered bulbs to begin sending forth green shoots, but this does not signal an early spring. The green shoots will not develop much beyond this stage and will not form full leaves and flowers until their appointed time in the spring.

The main thing for you to do in this case is nothing. Do not put anything over the green shoots – no soil, mulch or other protection is required. The green shoots will not be severely damaged by exposure to winter cold. I have been asked my advice on this subject recently by several customers of Homestead Gardens and my response to them has been just this.



Mark Your Calendar!!!!

Plant Sale Dates:

Set-up: April 8

Sale: April 9-10 ONLY

GREENWOOD FARMER'S MARKET

*Mark your calendars with the Annual Spring Plant Sale Festival at the Market. The event is scheduled for Friday, April 9th and Saturday the 10th. The Master Gardeners are a major draw for the event and we look forward in you participating again this year.

*Our opening day will be Saturday, June 19th. The Market will once again be enrolled in the Senior Nutrition Program and we truly count on the Master Gardeners' service during the opening in dispersing the vouchers to the seniors. ~ Market Board of Directors

Principles of Shade Gardening

Students will learn about creating and maintaining a shade garden. Topics covered will include types of shade, soils and plants as well as irrigation techniques. **Registration limited to 15.**

Instructor: John Elsley, a 50 year veteran in public and private horticulture. His extensive shade garden around his Greenwood home has been featured in various national publications and television shows.

Dates: Two classes: Thursdays, **February 18 & March 18**; 2:00-3:30 pm

Fee: \$35

Location: On site: Elsley's Garden, Greenwood

Course Description:

1. Creation & maintenance of a shade garden in our area
2. Differing types and characteristics of shade.
3. Distinctive features of various soils together with the preparation and ongoing maintenance.
4. Irrigation techniques
5. Discussion of the numerous and extremely various range of plants – both native and alien – that can be utilized in a local shade garden.

Quick summary of Meeting of Master Gardener Board and Committees (January 28th)

Submitted by James Hodges

SuSu Wallace will have full minutes of meeting, but several decisions were made concerning 2010 meetings and projects. A decision was made to go to a 6 meeting per year schedule for 2010. The next monthly meeting will be held on the typical second Thursday in March. More details and programs will be announced later. The 2010 fund raiser will again be a plant sale at the Farmer's Market Spring Festival in April. We discussed working on the topiary project for those interested, working on a flower planting around the Extension office sign and repeating a container growing project for the public again this spring.

Other details on projects and volunteer opportunities will be announced later. I plan to hold additional seminars and continuing education program into April and May and will begin to put together a schedule. If you have ideas on topics please email me with those. I plan to hold a couple of trainings such as problem solving and going through working at the office for those interested.

I am pondering another Advanced Urban Tree program again this spring in late April and May. I offered this program two years ago for 5-6 weeks on a weekly basis with a fee of \$50. Let me know of your interest. I held the last one on a weekday afternoon.

Lakeland Master Gardener Hours for 2009

Lakelands is primarily Greenwood Residents, but included Abbeville County and a few McCormick and Laurens county residents.

	Total Hours	Off. Vol.	Contacts	Cont. Ed.	Comm. Vol.	Mileage
2009						
First Quarter	1420.86	231.61	667	276	908.25	7118
Second Quarter	1935.5	272.75	898	145.5	1517.3	8641
Third Quarter	539.5	132.5	567	104.5	302.5	3154.5
Fourth Quarter	858.95	244.75	309	174.25	439.95	4182.8
Quarter Totals	4754.81	881.61	2441	700.25	3168	23096

The total Master Gardener volunteer hours for 2009 were 4054 with 700 hours of continuing education for a total of more than 4754 hours of time given.

2010 Awards Banquet—Genetics Center

Despite some difficulty with getting organized and finding the exact location within the larger facility, we had a good crowd of 45 on hand for the event. We celebrated another good year for the Master Gardener program even though there were many changes during 2009 for Clemson Extension. We wish to thank Bryan Wesson and his wife Julianne Collins for working to obtain the use of the Genetics Center. Julianne works at the Genetics center and obtained permission for our group to use the facility as well as opening up the facility and setting up the tables and chairs.

We celebrated the class completion of twenty new students in the 2009 fall class.

Certificate Presentation-Class of 2009 (Interns)

Bob Bentley	Anita Herzsprung	Skip Norton
Charlotte Cabri	Jason Jordan	Sarah Sowell
Sarah Carroll	Jean Mabe	Betty Tabor
Maureen Colby	Steve Maxwell	Stephen Tabor
Susan Foddrell	Mike McKinney	Glenn Witt
Sharon Harwell	Sue Monaghan	Mary Woodiwiss
Kim Hastings		Howard Wooten

We presented full Master Gardener certificates to 6 members of the 2008 and have others who are working on their full 40 hours.

2008 Class Certified Master Gardeners

With some hours ==>>>

Patti Larson	Yvonne Combs
Richard Larson	Vickie Hedden
Charlotte Perosino	Jimmy McInville
Leo Petrusha	Millie Parnell
Vincent Plotczyk	
Melody McInville	

I presented a special award for Topiary project work for Nancy Collin and Chris Snipes who contributed hundreds of hours to this project. I presented an everywhere Master Gardener award to Vince Plotczyk who contributed has contributed more than 700 volunteer hours since 2008 at the Mall office, the new office location and many of the work projects throughout the year.

Thanks to all Master Gardeners who contribute so many hours during 2009.

James

Renewal Pruning, a good way to handle overgrown shrubs

Homeowners and inexperienced landscapers will sometimes make the mistake of planting large-growing shrubs along the foundation of a building or home. As the plants mature they overgrow the site, crowd other plants, hide windows and appear out of scale with the building. Even some appropriately sized shrubs get leggy and impossible to reshape if not pruned for several years. This occurred at my home last year. Three Japanese hollies had topped out near my windows and required several prunings each year to maintain their size. Several had broken branches or misshapen areas. In simple terms I was not happy with them. It was time to prune severely, called renewal pruning, to bring the plants within acceptable bounds.

Renewal pruning means cutting the plants back to within 6 to 12 inches of ground level. In this instance, timing is more important than technique. The best time to prune severely is February before spring growth begins. Renewal pruning leaves a very sparse, ugly plant with few green leaves, but abundant new growth appears by midsummer. Once the new shoots are 6 to 12 inches long, prune the tips to encourage lateral branching to fill in the plant. My Japanese hollies looked terrible until the new growth was well established by late summer. For several months I thought I had made a mistake, but now after a full year they look very good and manageable.

Most broadleaf shrubs such as azaleas, camellias, privets, glossy abelia, many holly and cleyera respond well to renewal pruning. Renewal pruning techniques are more successful if plants are healthy and disease free.

Old, tall nandina cultivars that become leggy can be reduced gradually in height by removing one third of the older, taller stems each year. The overall height of the plant will be reduced and the new sprouts will fill in and improve the appearance of the nandina plant without sacrificing flowering and berry production for one season that can occur with complete cutback.

Boxwoods, junipers, pines, cypress, cedar, arborvitae, yews, and other narrow-leaved evergreens do not respond when severely pruned and may decline. It is often more appropriate to transplant or rip out and replace with small plant types of plants.

Garage Growing--A method to cope with Winter Blues in the Plant World

Since fall our area has been submerged by constant rain fall, cool weather and cold weather. Attempts to engage in yard work, winter activities or preparations for spring gardens or landscapes have been crippled for me. Soils remain saturated for long periods of time, so even on an occasional nice weather day I can't accomplish much. Preparations for a new raised bed for strawberry plants remains a muddy unfinished project that increases my frustration level even further.

It is too early to begin seeding inside for warm season crops so I've gone outside again this year into my garage with cool season green crops. Actually, I prefer outside growing when possible. Starting cool season seed in an unheated garage may seem difficult, but I've grown various lettuces, spinach, carrots and broccoli transplants all winter long. I have pre-germinated snow pea seeds in trays for a week or two when the outside soil is wet and cold. I started my first crop of lettuces and spinach in late October and another in mid-January this year. I will add more in February.

The process involves trays with plastic covers that can be used occasionally to protect the young seedlings and a blanket may cover everything for a 15 degree night or two. I water lightly, leave the trays uncovered most of the time and make sure the soil drains completely. I often replace the water proof bottoms with standard tray bottoms and water or add liquid fertilizer outside once every week or two as needed. Germination and growth is slow, but there is no hardening off required once the transplants are ready to be upsized into containers. I place the trays so they receive sunlight from windows for part of the day. During warm days I move them outside for better growth. When it is not freezing overnight I often leave the trays outside.

The advantage I find is that I can get a month ahead of the cycle, grow varieties that you never find as transplants and move them into larger pots earlier. I'll use large pots with the soil level 6-10 inches below the pot top. I can cover each as needed for the first 3-4 weeks if necessary. I get early crops of lettuce and spinach with very little insects around to harm them. I can use old pots instead of raised beds in these plantings and work when the soil is wet.



Spinach and several lettuce in January 2010



Shallow planting in February 2009 of romaine and red lettuce



By early April 2009 I had plentiful broccoli and lettuces

Herbicides

Pre-emergence and Post-emergence for lawns Timing is Everything

Vincent Plotczyk

Weed Types and Life Cycles

When you use a pre-emergence herbicide or post-emergence herbicide it is important to know the types of weeds you want to control. There are several types of weeds, broadleaf, grass and sedges. The life cycles are annuals (summer and winter), biennials and perennials.

Annuals - these live for one year. There are two types of annuals, summer and winter. Summer annuals germinate in the spring. Winter annuals germinate in the late summer or early fall.

Biennials - these live for two years. They germinate in one season, produce flowers and seeds in the second year and then they die.

Perennials – these live for two years or more and are more difficult to control because they reproduce from seed and vegetative buds on the roots.

If you are not sure of the type of weed(s) that are causing you problems, take some samples to your county Extension agent for identification. Once your weeds are identified, the appropriate herbicide recommendations can be made.

What are pre-emergence and post-emergence herbicides?

Pre-emergence herbicides **MUST** be applied prior to weed seed germination. Pre-emergence herbicides will not control weeds after they have emerged. Before applying any herbicide **READ THE LABEL!** The label will provide information such as weed species, active ingredients and at what rate to apply. Pre-emergence herbicides create a thin layer on the soil surface which acts as a weed barrier. **This barrier must be left undisturbed!** When applying a pre-emergence herbicide, liquid, wettable powder or granular, **uniform coverage is very important.** Complete coverage is a must. Check your application equipment and be sure it is accurately calibrated. This will insure that weeds do not escape. Once you have applied your pre-emergence herbicide you will need to activate it. You can insure you herbicide is activated by irrigating immediately. A ½ inch of irrigation is needed. If no irrigation is available and you must depend on rainfall you will need to apply your pre-emergence earlier than you would if you were irrigating to insure ample time for rain fall to occur. Some common problems are improper timing of the application of the pre-emergence herbicide. Usually the pre-emergence was not applied soon enough. Another reason is abnormally high rainfall. This will cause dilution. Pre-emergence herbicides have a threshold level of concentration in the soil to be effective. Check the Clemson HGIC site for when to apply a pre-emergence herbicide to your lawn. The maintenance calendar for your type of lawn will have this information. You can find the maintenance calendars at this address: <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/landscape/lawns/>

Post-emergence herbicides are applied after weeds have emerged. They are classified as systemic or contact and selective or nonselective.

What is the difference between systemic herbicide and contact herbicide?

A **systemic herbicide** is absorbed and moves through the plant. They are useful in controlling perennial weeds. For best control the weeds need to be actively growing.

A **contact herbicide** kills only the portion of the plant that it comes in contact with. Contact-type herbicides control small annual weeds. They have little effect on perennial and large annual weeds.

What is the difference between selective and nonselective herbicides?

Selective herbicides only kill specific plants.

Nonselective herbicides will kill or injure any plant it comes in contact with.

All post-emergence herbicides have a drying time range of 30 minutes to 8 hours for maximum effectiveness.

Check the Clemson HGIC site for when to apply a post-emergence herbicide to your lawn. The maintenance calendar for your type of lawn will have this information.

Remember! Before applying any herbicide **READ THE LABEL!** The label will provide information such as weed species, active ingredients and at what rate to apply.

What if I can't apply a pre-emergence or post-emergence herbicide?

In these situations, cultivation and hand pulling may be the only option available to you.

Sources:

Dr. Wayne Wells, Extension Professor and Turfgrass Specialist, Mississippi State University

Sherry Lajeunesse, Extension Urban Pest Management Specialist, Montana State University

Fred Yelverton, Ph.D. Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Turfgrass Weed Management, North Carolina State University

Clemson Cooperative Extension

Thomas L. Watschke, Pennsylvania State University

North Carolina State University Department of Biology and Agricultural Engineering

A Guide to the use of Pressure Treated Lumber in Gardening

While completing the Master Gardener course this past fall I overheard someone talking about the use of creosoted timbers in raised beds. Apparently this is a no-no and quite dangerous. The next morning I set about clearing the old railroad crossties out of my garden. Since they had been in place for 20 years, most of them came out in small pieces. This worried me, so I spent a lot of time raking the offending splinters from my vegetable garden. Later that week I set about creating new beds from 2x12x12 pressure treated lumber. The beds seemed nice and also looked as if they would help solve my tilling/plowing/irrigation problems quite handily. Alas, in a later class I heard the same person talking about the dangers of pressure treated lumber!

Now I *like* my new raised beds and I fully intend to fabricate more of them very soon. I also like my health and that of my family's. So, I set out to determine just what the problem of using pressure treated lumber might be. Of course the first place to look would be the internet – AND the Clemson University site. The first hit was from the Master Gardener Magazine with a definite “thumbs down” for using pressure treated lumber in locations where food plants are grown!ⁱ The next hit was from another doctor at another university (Texas A&M) indicating that the CCA's in pressure treated lumber are not hazardous.ⁱⁱ Suddenly the awareness dawned that I, the little Master Gardener Intern, was in the midst of a disagreement between *numerous* “experts” in the field.

I did note one interesting thing in Dr. Chalker-Scott's article. She repeatedly referenced “CCA” and arsenic as being the chief danger. Not knowing what CCA might be, it was back to slaving over a hot keyboard to find out. CCA or “Chromated Copper Arsenate” **was** the active ingredient pressed into wood to make it unpalatable to termites and fungi. As you would suspect, the arsenic compound was not good for animals or people and it probably was a good idea to keep it out of the garden even if the Aggies said it was OK.

It all turned out to be a moot point. CCA's are no longer used in pressure treated lumber. It seems that someone in Massachusetts did a study on playground equipment made with the stuff and found a lot of arsenic and chromium in the soil around the swings and slides. (Never mind that the US Government had earlier completed a study indicating that the soil around a pressure treated stake that had been in the ground for over thirty years did not contain additional arsenic or chromium!ⁱⁱⁱ) Anyway, as a result of the playground study the US Environmental Protection Agency stopped the use of the offending chemical in 2003.

The chemicals now used for treating lumber include ACQ (Alkaline Copper Quaternary), Micronized Copper Quat (MCQ) and Copper Azole (CBA-A & CA-B).^{iv} All of these chemicals make the wood tasted yucky to the infecting organisms, but are not particularly harmful to animals and humans. Copper is about the only element that may leach into the soil from them and it is passed out of our bodies through the urinary tract.

So, I have satisfied myself that the new treated lumber is safe and plan to not only use it for raised beds, but also in building my new three-bin turning compost bins. (The Texas A&M plans appear to be excellent!)^v If I should ever have problems with this solution in the future I will be more than happy to let you know!

Mike McKinney)

(skybird564@gmail.com)



ⁱ Linda Chalker-Scott, Ph.D., Extension Horticulturist and Associate Professor, Puyallup Research and Extension Center, Washington State University

http://www.puyallup.wsu.edu/~Linda%20Chalker-Scott/Horticultural%20Myths_files/Myths/CCA%20wood.pdf

ⁱⁱ <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/landscape/compost/chapter3.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Department of Agriculture Journal of Environmental Quality (1979, Volume 8, No. 1)

^{iv} <http://www.strongtie.com/productuse/ptwoodfaqs.html> (from the Simpson Strong-Tie Company)

^v <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/landscape/compost/chapter3.html>