



As I've been getting my beds and yard ready for fall and the approaching first freeze. I think how much everything has changed from the original plan I had for this property. Some ideas didn't work out exactly like I had hoped and some thrived. Then there's the fact that I've changed direction about a dozen times because of some new inspiration. Maybe a plant, a piece of art or losing a huge old oak. Our gardens are extension of ourselves, in that they are often very personal. Each and everything in it being carefully chosen and cared for. They are often places we spend hours alone or with our closest family and friends.

Over the life of your garden it will never be "done", it's a living thing and you are a gardener. We are never satisfied. There is always room for that plant that caught your eye when you were just walking through the local nursery. That one perennial that could be split up maybe shared with that friend that always comments on it. That's one great thing about our personal gardens, there is no deadline. Well, we all want them looking great for the holidays and peak seasons but we can dig it all up and change it anytime we like.

Nine years ago I had a large oak removed and the stump ground. It was in bad shape and leaning toward the house. The previous owner had built a brick planter around the tree. While I was demolishing the planter and working with the wood chips, I used the area as a temporary bed for plants I hadn't chosen a permanent home for yet. Now that bed has a little of everything in it from plants seeding while they were waiting. Now that I've built a deck overlooking that area, that bed needs to be redesigned to be seen from the drive, the deck as well as the patio doors. I think this might carry over to spring.

CORK PLANT SALE MARKERS- Jan Coffey



We love this simple project because it's an excuse to buy more wine! Just save your corks to use as plant markers. Write the name of the plant on the cork with a permanent marker, then stick it on a stake or bamboo skewer. If you don't have wine corks, you can buy some at a craft store. This is one of the easiest ways we've seen to make plant markers. They're pretty darn cute, too!

I found this idea on Pinterest and remembered the struggles of trying to identify donations at our last plant sale. Perhaps our MGers could use this clever way for marking prior to planting or repotting. Donna Feldmaier has provided a preview of her contributions to the LMG Plant Sale which will premiere at the Uptown Market this year. This is a good reminder to start dividing and potting your own ten (or more) contributions.



MULCH FROM HEAVEN -Ann Barklow

Fall is here! What that means for most of us is leaves, leaves, leaves. This also means work, work, work. Not for me. This is the most exciting time of year!

I will thoroughly enjoy the kaleidoscope of colors from the trees and shrubs as I cheerfully blow the fallen leaves out of the beds and into an area of lawn or driveway, mow them and return them to the beds, my compost, or in my vegetable garden.

(WARNING! Do not blow out leaves from beds that have had a lot of pollinator activity because many of our pollinators including bees, butterflies, and moths overwinter in stems and leaf litter. Only do this if the leaves are too big and heavy and will bury or become matted on the surface. It is best to be a lazy gardener when it comes to pollinators)

When leaves are whole they will decompose slowly. If they are too big they will get matted

down on the soil. When you shred them with the mower you will have several cut pieces on them. Bacteria and fungi will move into the cuts and start their decomposition which translates into wonderful topsoil by spring. It will be similar to the forest floor and what happens there naturally.

If there is still green grass growing (providing no herbicides or pesticides have been used) you can have a wonderful combination of green grass and brown leaves which will speed up decomposition as it is placed around your plants. It's like composting in place.

I also use these leaves to put a light protection on perennials such as coneflower. I find the hybrids to be a little less tolerant of frost so this will give them a little blanket of warmth.

I make this wonderful natural mulch with a battery operated blower and mower so even though I will produce noise pollution, I will not have the exhaust fumes. I grab the plump mower bag of shredded leaves and mulch everywhere there is bare ground.

Some people have a mulching mower and they mow the dormant lawn full of leaves and this nestles them into the blades of grass providing a wonderful addition of frost protection and as it breaks down feeds the soil. I may let my husband do that once but I need lots of leaves since my landscape is new and hasn't completely filled in.

Many people use the usual shredded bark mulch or pine straw as a design element and weed suppressant in between shrubs and refresh twice a year. I found that extremely labor intensive and expensive. \$700.00 a year for double ground mulch to be exact!

There is a lot that goes behind the scenes of shredded bark mulch. First a company has to get the trees to make mulch. Then they have to create the mulch using large shredders, store the mulch, and deliver the mulch. This uses equipment, gas, and oil. It also causes noise and air pollution. In the permaculture world we would call this a large carbon footprint activity.

In my efforts to be a good steward of our earth I now look at these activities in a new light.

First I am planting layers of plants to fill all bare ground so mulching won't even be necessary. This revelation was given to me by Claudia West and Thomas Rainer in their book *Planting in a Post Wild World*.

My ground cover layer is an eclectic selection of various plants such as *Angelina 'lemon ball'*, *John Creech Sedum*, *Chrysogonum virginianum*, *Festuca 'Elijha Bleu'*, *Heuchera 'Melting Fire and Citronella'*, *Thyme*, *Hypericum tricolor*, *Oenothera fruticosa*, *Sedum ternatum*, *Stokesia*, *Verbena homestead*, and *Tiarella cordifolia* to name a few. These are my new 'mulch'! They roam and sprawl under my shrubs, perennials, trees and around my stepping stones. They soften my walkway and hardscape areas and perform much the same duties of mulch by suppressing weeds, protecting the soil from runoff and torrential rains, and cooling or warming the roots of plants. When they bloom they provide pollen and nectar for pollinators. Many of them are evergreen and some get lovely fall color. Any bare areas left can be filled with my shredded leaves. I don't know about you, but the benefits of a 'living mulch' sound pretty attractive to me.

I also have a lot of pine needles that fall and my mower makes a lovely acidic mulch out of them



and I add that to some of my acid loving plants like blueberries.

There are other ways to mulch up your leaves such as leaf vacuums that mulch as they suck them up into a bag. Other gardeners put a layer of leaves in a large trash can and use a string trimmer to shred them up and of course any mower with a bag will work great. If you are patient you can gather all your leaves in a pile and let it turn into leaf mold in a year or two. You can add them to a compost pile too and if you need more greens to balance it out, visit your local produce department for their throw aways.

Now I just need to decide what to do with that \$700 savings.

PLANTS FOR LATE SEASON INTEREST- Sandy Orr

I stole into Ann Barklow's garden to get this shot of her *Lobelia cardinalis* on Oct. 27th. What a babe.



PERFECT FUSION OF MASTER GARDENERS AND GARDEN CLUBS

The City Garden work day brought out 15 stalwart gardeners, who tore into the canna lilies and ginger lilies that have plagued the plot for years. Our newbie Master gardeners were well represented by Carol Mitchell, Mack, Marcia, and Lee. The lesson of this day was, if you plant cannas, ginger lilies, or Mexican petunia (ruellia), buy a track hoe to dig them out three years later. Some of the Mexican petunia was even planted in big black plastic nursery pots turned to offset the holes in the bottom and it still escaped!



Carol and Lee

Mack



Sharlene (Unit One Garden Club) and Sandy

RE-UP YOUR VALUABLE MASTER GARDENER MEMBERSHIP IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY!-Sandy

It's entirely selfish, garnering me good friends, lotsa seeds and plants, and a reason to live. As a side effect, it accomplishes some good for the community.



Lakeland Master Gardener Association Membership Renewal

Master Gardener Membership Dues are \$20.00.

Payment is due by the Awards Banquet to be eligible to vote.

Make your check payable to Lakelands Master Gardener Organization (LMGO) and mail to:

**Melody McInville
345 Klugh Rd.
Abbeville, SC 29620**

New Member **Renewal/Transfer**

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone # Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

Email Address: _____

Year Graduated MG Program: _____

Transfer: (Y/N) _____ From: _____

Check here if you do **not** wish to be listed in the directory.

Clemson Extension Office _____

Facebook Page _____

Public Relations _____

Community Garden _____

Membership _____

Social Activities _____

Community Projects _____

Newsletter _____

Topiary/Greenhouse _____

Community Voucher Distribution _____

Plant Sale _____

Web Site _____

Education _____

Programs & Speakers _____

Suggested topics/activities for the meetings or continuing education: _____

***** Please do not write below this line*****

Date Paid _____

Date Membership List Updated _____

PODCAST CORNER

Ann Barklow suggests that to continue our seed-starting education we listen to Still Growing Podcast #590: How to Save Seed with Cheryl Moore-Gough from Still Growing...A Weekly Gardening Podcast in Podcasts. <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/still-growing-a-weekly-gardening-podcast/id659709301?mt=2&i=1000393785566>

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