



Master Gardener Thymes

www.lakelandsmastergardener.org

OCTOBER 2007

MEETING CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER

Meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of each month at NW Volunteer Fire Department @ 6:30pm, unless otherwise noted. The Fire Department is located behind Harris Baptist Church off of Center Street.

OCTOBER 11th--- **Kathy Zahn from Emerald Farms** speaking about Herbs native to our area. She will cover their history, preservation, uses and how to grow.

NOVEMBER 8th---Who knows? Have not heard from Programs Committee...stayed tuned.

PRESIDENTS CORNER—*Julee Marshall*

While preparing to make a ten day trip to South Dakota in August, I realized that I would have been hard pressed to write an article for the September newsletter. So, I asked Jane Price if she could whip up something in my absence. Jane, thank you for putting in writing what has been a topic of concerned conversation for some time. "What is going to happen to the LMGA after 2008?" We have succeeded in getting volunteers for all of the officers except Vice President. I know there has to be someone out there who is willing to serve. Please consider it, for the sake of the organization.

While I'm in "thank you" mode, I'd like to thank Linda Kellam, Jane Price, Paul Drew, Connie Normand, Terri Mostiller, and Lanelle Johnson for manning our table at the Mall Office for the Wellness Celebration held on Saturday, September 15. Thanks also to Steve Odom and James Hodges for their help in getting the bulletins copied and delivered to the office before the event. We were very glad to have Steve drop by on Saturday lending his moral support. I think we all enjoyed seeing the crowd and sharing gardening information. I know I did.

I thought about all of you MGs while I was on my trip. We drove from Salt Lake City, Utah to South Dakota. And it was in Steamboat Springs, Colorado that I wished you all were there. They had a wonderful walking/biking trail along the Yampa River. And off of that trail, there was the Yampa River Botanic Park. Talk about a Master Gardeners Paradise! The park was created by the city on six acres of donated land. It is maintained by seasonal employees and volunteers. There are more than forty gardens and about five hundred trees. They grow native plants of the Yampa River Basin from the alpine to semi-desert zones. Most are perennials. They face some pretty severe challenges. Cold air flows down from the Continental Divide (10,400 feet) and slides under the warmer air in the valley. Temperatures can dip to -40 degrees and they only have about sixty frost free days. The summers are very dry with about fifteen feet of snow being almost all of their precipitation. In spite of that, they have created an amazing park. Some of the themed gardens include: Annuals Garden, Culinary and Medicinal Herb Gardens, High Country Natives Garden, Pioneers Garden, Pond Garden, and Waterwise Garden, with drought tolerant plants. All of the gardens were beautiful with nary a weed in sight. Imagine my disappointment when after only two photos, my camera batteries died.....

Have I Spoken Too Soon?

Since I volunteered to take up the mantle of newsletter editor from Lauren next year, I've been wondering if I spoke before I thought. (I tend to do that!!!) I'm really looking forward to the challenge, but I'm going to need everyone's help.

I know you are all chomping at the bit to send in articles to help Lauren the rest of this year, but be thinking of things you would like to contribute for next year also. And if you have any ideas of things to add to the newsletter, send me your suggestions. We would like to continue book reviews, reports of any gardens you've visited, and favorite recipes. Also, to committee chairs, continue to let Lauren and then me know of upcoming events.

For new class members, you can start earning your hours now!! You can earn hours for articles as well as any research done for them. Also, you will have opportunities to volunteer in the near future. For example, the mall office still needs volunteers and that's a VERY easy way to earn the hours you need.

Hoping to here from each of you, and frequently! **Jean Anderson**, jebiand@yahoo.com.

Lessons of Plant Life 101

The growing season is coming to an end soon. The year 2007 will not be remembered as a banner year for any of us plant growers. August and September have been busy for me checking ailing trees and shrubs around the Lakelands. In the many neighborhoods and subdivisions I have counted scores of dead or dying trees and shrubs of many species. There certainly will be a need for replacement tree and shrub planting this fall and winter in many area landscapes.

Or will there? Let's look at some of the observations I noted as I drove around.

1. Dogwood's were at the top of the dead and damaged list
2. Japanese Maples were close to top.
3. Leyland cypress in many dense plants suffered death and higher disease.
4. Dense, un-irrigated shrubs and trees in borders and clumps suffered losses

In 25 years of research work with trees the most important lessons I learned were what doesn't work. We can use this year's negative climate results on certain plants to improve our success in the future. All Master Gardeners have heard many times in plant selection lectures the infamous golden rule: "Right Plant Right Place". This simple technique would appear to make it easy for any plant person to select right. Just take a quick look, check the plant information and go with it.

A more appropriate use of the golden rule of plant selection might be:

Right plant, right place; if you avoid some other conditions by looking at future?

1. Too many right plants together (spacing)
2. Right plants site capacity over-loaded as plants grow creating stress points
3. Right plant wrong species or source of material
4. Right plant bad or wrong site
5. Right plant wrong water management

How do three of the plants mentioned above break the Selection "Golden Rule"?

Leyland Cypress is an example of a perception that it was the right plant for everywhere. Often it was planted at an inappropriate narrow spacing without regard to its rapid growth ability. Well spaced plants on moist but well drained soils have weathered the summer much better than those on heavy clays that restrict rooting and alternate between excess moisture and low moisture (wrong site). Tightly spaced trees quickly out grow available growing space and are easily stressed by hot temperatures and low rainfall. Stressed trees are then much more susceptible to diseases such as seiridium canker which can eventually kill infected trees. All five points noted above, probably played roles in various problem areas with this plant.

Dogwoods are widely planted too. A tree adapted to under-story forest conditions it is a natural shallow rooted tree with high water usage. It is a native tree, but has a natural range from north Florida to New England and the mid-west. Cultivars of plants have been widely distributed without regard, in some cases, to their adaptability to areas such as the South. Dogwoods can be stressed by heat, low moisture and damage from boring insects in the south. Adequate water is a major stress point with dogwood. Those in full sun need extra irrigation as well as those in shade with over-story trees such as pines. We forget that pines and other over-story trees are continuing to grow in our back yard, requiring more water and nutrients for them at the expense of shallow rooted dogwoods each year. Essentially, they need extra care before and during drought or maybe a few pines removed now and then.

Japanese maple is a popular non-native small tree that is widely planted. There are many seedling and grafted cultivars and types distributed in our area. Most of the high priced grafted plants are used as high light or display plants. This often means they are planted in full sun at a point in the landscape chosen by location, not necessarily by site conditions such as soils or drainage. They are similar to dogwoods in their needs for moisture, shallow roots, sensitivity to poor drainage and their adaptation as an under-story tree. As a plant from northern Asia they are not necessarily in tune with our southern growing cycle. Many healthy specimen trees were heavily damaged by the April freeze this spring. Many maple species generally flush early so they are susceptible to late frosts, but often more northern provenances (big word for geographic source) of material are highly susceptible to late spring freezes because they respond quickly to early warm periods during late winter. Native plants or local sources are not as easily fooled by the erratic weather in the south. The Japanese maples actually took a double whammy this year, as many suffered leaf loss and stem dieback from the freeze, then were hit by the stress of drought and record heat. Many declined dramatically during August and died or are barely alive. Introduced species often will require extra care and site modification in order to endure our extremes of climate. Maples like dogwoods could have used extra irrigation during the site, but when you use introduced species, their long term survival may not be as good as natives regardless of your care.

Finally, I've blamed most of the problems described above on plant selection and plant placement errors, but could we have managed the stress better? The difficulties of eroded clay soils cannot be totally corrected, but some of our greatest opportunities to improve our overall landscapes lie (get the pun) in improving our soils which will improve our moisture availability and plant rooting abilities. As long as we plant \$100 plants in 50 cent holes made in brick soils we will cry when our plants die. We will talk more about soils in our October 23rd Master Gardener class.

JUDY KELLEY'S CORNER—*A Gardener's Journal*

What is a real definition of a garden? One would quickly respond that it is a place prepared with soil, nutrients, and plants that a person will enjoy. That's true, but I think we could add a few more things to the real description of a garden. A garden is beauty, one of a kind, a painting, a stress reliever, a classroom, a recycling center, an experiment, a friendship, memories, and a gallery of collectibles.

I was just looking around my 'ready for a clean up garden' Tuesday trying to decide what I would share with you this month, when my yard figures caught my eye. AHA! What is a garden without collectibles! Spaced around my garden are several figures of children to represent our grandchildren. We don't often have all seven of them here together, but the seven little figures are out there catching bugs (I hope that little boy caught a lot of them this year.) and chasing butterflies – although I must remember to make her a new butterfly net. I've seen more butterflies this week so she might want to catch one to examine.

My husband wishes that I would leave everyone else's discarded treasures alone. But, just WHO can resist rescuing those poor abandoned goodies like the old rusted iron bed stand that I brought home in his truck one day. Then, there was the day that a neighbor put a red wooden wagon by the road, somewhat dilapidated I must say, and that wagon just called out to me and followed me home after dark so all the neighbors wouldn't be embarrassed. It became the base of the table I made from the wonderful piece of table glass another neighbor put out for pickup.

This year I've even added Gnappy the Gnome that I made for my parents many years ago. You know, they say every garden needs to have a gnome. Of course, the ceramic frog couldn't stand being alone so he moved in with the gnome. If you see a gnome house anywhere, let me know.

Old chairs are a favorite of mine. You don't even need a seat in one when you just let the chives and tarragon grow through. They do make great container holders spaced here and there. Of course, every garden needs a plow to represent all that work gardeners do. Over by my pomegranate bush majestically rests my uncle's hand plow. It certainly did a lot of work in days gone by and deserves to rest now.

Well, I could go on and on. You know, how can you go out and relax in your garden if you don't have all those treasures to look at as you look at your flowers? It sure saves a lot of money when you're in the rescue business. Oh well, maybe someday my husband will appreciate someone else's trash that has become my treasure.

Third Annual Lander Arboretum Lecture

Submitted by Jane Price

The Lander Arboretum Committee is pleased to announce that Mr. James Cothran will give the Third Annual Lander Arboretum Lecture. His talk "***Gardens and Historic Plants of the Antebellum South***" will draw from his recent USC Press book of the same title. He will invite his listeners to experience the gardens that flourished in this region from 1820 through 1860. During this period, prosperous southerners built stately houses and established high-style gardens in towns and cities as well as on plantations. The South's mild climate, long growing season, fertile soil, and traditional ties to the land fostered an abiding interest in gardening that encompassed the region.

A Greenwood native, James Cothran is a practicing landscape architect, urban planner, and garden historian. He holds degrees from Clemson University, the University of Georgia, and the Georgia Institute of Technology, and his academic training has included ornamental horticulture, landscape architecture, and city planning. A fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Cothran currently serves on the boards of the Southern Garden History Society, the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation, Trees Atlanta, and the Center for the Study of Southern Garden History of the Cherokee Garden Library. He lives and practices in Atlanta.

The lecture will be held at 7 pm on Thursday, October 18, in the auditorium of the Cultural Center on the Lander University campus. A silent auction of plants will precede the lecture at 6:30 pm. Tickets to the event are \$5 and will be available at the door. All proceeds will go toward campus landscaping projects.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mike Brown still needs Master Gardener volunteers to serve as Mentors for the new class members. James Hodges has approved volunteer hours for this project. Please consider volunteering to be a mentor. Contact Mike at: mbrown@sshhouse.com
- We will have workdays at the Oakland Memory Garden on Tuesday, October 16 from 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM and also on Saturday, October 27 from 9:00 AM - 12:00 Noon. We started this project in the spring and will complete it this fall. We will be weeding, mulching and planting. These are great opportunities for the new class to start earning those valuable volunteer hours. Also great for those needing to complete their hours for 2007. If there are questions, please contact Beth Kapperman at 223-6455 or bkapperman@nctv.com or Sandy Stachurski at 229-7444 or drglenn7@embarqmail.com. Thanks in advance for all your help.
- Nancy Collin wants you all to know that the Bonsai Expo at the NC Arboretum in Asheville is Saturday, October 13 from 9 to 5 and Sunday, October 14 from 12 to 4. This is a world class Bonsai collection and includes exhibits from a 6 state region. There will also be Ikebana flower arrangements and demonstrations. Arthur Joura, Bonsai Curator for the Arboretum, is well known for his Bonsai work using native plants from the Appalachian area. For more information, visit www.ncarboretum.org or call 828-665-2492.

INTRODUCING THE NEW MASTER GARDENER CLASS.....IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Continued from last month

SONIA CANFIELD-OLSEN: I have lived in Ninety Six my entire life. I have 2 daughters, Pam 21 and Molly 6. I grew up spending a great deal of time with my grandparents who had vegetable gardens and farms providing their own food supply and grew many different varieties of flowers. This instilled the love of gardening and nature in me. When I was in high school my father bought several peach farms and a kiwi farm in Edgefield County and I have spent many years since then helping him manage them until he pushed up the peach trees and planted pine trees 5 yrs ago. I was also a nurse for twenty five years until I had to retire due to health problems. Now I want to become a Master Gardener to increase my knowledge base and increase my enjoyment of gardening.

MARGARET HINES: I am married to Scott Hines who is an Emergency Care Center nurse at Laurens County Hospital. We have a black and white Tuxedo Cat named Sebastian who is our baby and our pride and joy. We have no children. I am the Assistant Director of Pharmacy at Self Regional Healthcare. I have been a SRH pharmacist for 24 years. I enjoy golfing, walking, cycling, playing cards, computers/informatics, and traveling. Working in my yard has become my PASSION and it helps relieve the stress of my job. My husband and my boss would be dead by now if it weren't for my yard. And I can enjoy the fruits of my labor and stay out of jail. I am interested in landscape design, trees and shrubs. I am looking forward to learning many new things during the Master Gardener program and I hope to make many new friends.

GINNY WILSON: I am a Greenwood native. I am one of five children, and my mother believed in child labor, therefore my siblings and I worked in the yard as well as the house. My interest in gardening also grew from the influence of my mother's sisters who were always working in their yards or talking about plants. Since my husband and I had six children we also incorporated their help in a vegetable garden. Over the last few years I have become interested in perennials which have spread over my yard. I worked at the Railroad Museum with many of the Master Gardeners last year when my sister-in-law, Sandra Johnson, invited me to come help. I'm looking forward to learning a lot and meeting even more interesting people.

JOHN BABB: My wife Sue and I enjoy both vegetable and flower gardening. Now that I'm a retired chef, time is available to join Master Gardeners where I hope to gain a keener knowledge about gardening that I can share with others. Roses, daylilies, calla lilies, and cone flowers are favorites because my mother has enjoyed years of success with them. Volunteer projects will be a challenge as well as a fun collaboration.

CINDY WILKINS: My husband and I moved to South Carolina a year ago from Deltona, Florida. While living in Florida, I wanted to join the Master Gardeners but, for whatever reason, I never got around to it. We have a new home now that needs a new yard, and since the soil and climate here is so very different from Florida; I thought this would be a great time to join. This also gives me the opportunity to meet people who are also interested in gardening.

WILLIE MARINE: I am married to the former Mary Patterson and we live in Aspen Heights. We have five children and four grandchildren, with one on the way. I am retired from the US Army, in food service, and I work as a cosmetologist. I am on disability now so I started a vegetable garden and also working with flowers. I got a pleasurable experience working in the gardens and I want to learn more about it. A friend of mine recommended that I try the Master Gardener class. My home was in Columbia. I have lived in Greenwood for the past ten years.

KATHY MIMS: I moved to Greenwood in June 2006 when my husband was transferred to Tranquil United Methodist Church as the pastor. I have always been interested in plants and started learning about them as a child from my grandparents, who were avid gardeners. When I moved to Greenwood I had never heard of the Master Gardener program until a member of the church, Jane Price, told me about it and encouraged me to take the class. After retiring in January from 30 years of teaching, I decided I had enough time now to do something for me, and so I signed up. I loved playing in the mud as a child and have never outgrown it!

DIANNE SHUBERT: I am a native South Carolinian, however my father was in the Navy so growing up I spent time in Rhode Island, Iceland and Mississippi. We moved to Greenwood after he retired. I have been with Wesley Commons for almost 10 years. After buying a house with a very large yard and trying to figure out what to do with it (and not being all that successful) I thought the Master Gardener class would help me. I enjoy working in the yard, but would like a better idea of what and where to plant. I would also like to plant a vegetable garden in the spring and would like to learn more about organic gardening.

There are about 8 Master Gardener class members that I have not heard from. Therefore, they do not appear in the newsletter. I will include their "bios" as I receive them. Hasn't this been fun? Editor

Bitter Melon (*Monmordica charantia*) has a well deserved reputation for being one of the most bitter of all vegetables. The fruit grows on a vine similar to that of cucumber and it is very popular in South East Asian countries like India and China. In India, in the Hindi language and in Pakistan, in the Urdu language, the fruit is called 'Karela' and in Tamil it is called 'Pavakkai'

Bitter melon has been successfully grown in South Carolina by more than one family in their kitchen gardens in Greenwood SC. Bitter melon seeds can be ordered via mail order from www.evergreenseeds.com which offer nineteen different varieties of seeds [see <http://www.evergreenseeds.com/bitgourbitme.html>]. A deep well drained sandy loam is ideal for growing bitter melon. Seeds are to be sown directly into the ground when the weather is warm and there is no danger of frost. Seeds are large like bean seeds and therefore maybe planted about half an inch deep. Seedlings may be expected to appear in about a week. Like pole beans, bitter melons require a trellis to support the climbing vines so that the fruit does not make contact with the soil. Jayshri Tailor of Greenwood SC has successfully grown bitter melon using a chain link fence for supporting the vine.

Bitter melon can be prepared sliced and deep fried, stir fried into dry curries and added to lentil stews. The taste for this vegetable is an acquired taste just as the taste for beer (which is not naturally sweet) is an acquired taste. While beer may be valued for its intoxicating properties, people usually eat bitter melon for its medicinal qualities.

There is some research that shows the bitter melon might be beneficial in the treatment of malaria and HIV infection. People of Asian origin value bitter melon highly for its benefit in the treatment of diabetes [Abascal K and Yarnell, E (2005), Bakhru, (1997) and Baldwa, et al (1977)]. Asian people use bitter melon to regulate sugar levels as a very cheap and natural alternative to insulin. Mokdad A H et. Al (2000) of the Centers for Disease Control report among Americans the prevalence of diabetes increased 33% between 1990 to 1998. "Increases were observed in both sexes, all ages, all ethnic groups, all education levels, and nearly all states..... The prevalence of diabetes was highly correlated with the prevalence of obesity." They conclude "The prevalence of diabetes continues to increase rapidly in the U.S. Because the prevalence of obesity is also rising, diabetes will become even more common. Major efforts are needed to alter these trends." Growing and consuming bitter melon may be part of those efforts and therefore it may be worthwhile growing this vegetable in your kitchen garden and learning how to cook it. Sutapa Ray provides a number of bitter melon recipes on her webpage http://milonee.net/bengali_recipes/bitter-melon/bittermelon.html. She also reports "I would like to mention that I have witnessed first hand the power of bitter melon to cure late (age) onset diabetes - all it took was a small glass of fresh bitter melon juice every morning on an empty stomach for a few months!"

Pictures of bitter melon are easily found on the Internet by doing a simple key word search using the key words "bitter melon". Evergreen Seeds provide colorful pictures of the 19 different bitter melons they offer on their webpage. There are many varieties of the bitter melon and the Chinese bitter melon looks and tastes very different from the Indian bitter melon. The Chinese bitter melon is larger and less bitter and is more commonly found in Atlanta produce markets such as H-Mart and DeKalb Farmer's market and Harry's. The Indian bitter melon is less common but it still can be found at the International Farmers market on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and in most Indian grocery stores.

Wikipedia accurately states "The fruit has a distinct warty looking exterior and an oblong shape. It is hollow in cross-section, with a relatively thin layer of flesh surrounding a central seed cavity filled with large flat seeds and pith....The flesh is crunchy ... in texture. The skin is tender and edible. The fruit is most often eaten green."

However, whereas Wikipedia reports that the texture of the vegetable is watery like that of cucumber or green pepper this is usually not so. The fruit is noticeably less watery than either cucumber or green pepper so water needs to be added during cooking to ensure the vegetable is cooked properly. While Wikipedia reports that the fruit can be eaten raw or ripe the fruit is most commonly eaten green and mostly in cooked form with the addition of spices and salt to make it more palatable.

References:

- Abascal K, Yarnell E (2005) "Using bitter melon to treat diabetes" *Alternative Complementary Therapies* 11(4):179-184
H.K.Bakhru (1997). *Foods that Heal. The Natural Way to Good Health*. Orient Paperbacks. ISBN 81-222-0033-8.
Baldwa VS, Bhandari CM, Pangaria A, Goyal RK (1977) "Clinical trial in patients with diabetes mellitus of an insulin-like compound obtained from plant source" *Upsala J Med Sci* 82:39-41.
Mokdad, AH, Ford ES, Bowman BA, Nelson DE, Engelgau, MM, Vinicor F and Marks JS, (2000) *Diabetes Care*: Sep; 23(9): 1278-83
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bitter_melon accessed on 2007-09-17

Uma, a new Master Gardener student, has really taken the BIG LEAP by writing the above article for the newsletter. I want to THANK Uma for contributing this article and for taking an interest in our little publication. If any of you are interested in researching and writing an article for our newsletter, I encourage you to do so. We all learn from these endeavors! And all of your time and effort counts towards those "oh, so important" volunteer hours. Thanks again to Uma. Send your articles to LBoylston@embarqmail.com (please note new email address)

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT—DON'T MISS THIS PLANT SALE AT BEN HAWTHORNE'S

Saturday(s) October 6 and 13 7AM-6 PM PLUS Sunday(s) October 6 and 14 1-6 PM

I have a HUGE number of plants, mostly perennials that I do not have room for and am reluctant to over winter! I will be offering these to the public, but not until the Master Gardeners have had the first shot! **I also will have various old "found art" (yard art) that I will (reluctantly) sell.** MOST of these are already potted up, but some will need to be dug so bring your shovel/trowel and pots. I have specified Latin names so that you will have the opportunity to research these before you buy. Most will sell for \$1 - \$5, depending on pot/clump size. **Cash only! Guaranteed the most unusual and satisfying yard sale you have been to this year!**

Directions to Ben Hawthorne's house and list of plants he has for sale during the Big Plant Sale:

From Greenwood, go North on 25 through the light at Deadfall Rd (the bowling alley location). Hwy 25 goes down a long hill at that point. Downs Rd is at the bottom of the hill, on the left, just past Calvary Baptist church. Turn left onto Downs and we are the 5th house on the right. 120 Downs Road.

ajuga reptans "atropurpurea", **acorus gramineus** "miniature gold", **allium cepo** (egyptian walking onion), **aspidistra elatior** (cast iron plant), **aster caroliniana** (grows 8' tall), **aucuba japonica** "gold dust", **chasmanthium latifolium** (northern sea oats), **clematis** -- fall-blooming, **clethra alnifolia** (summersweet), **crocosmia** "lucifer", **elymus magellicanus**, **quisetum hyemale** (horsetail), **euonymus fortunei** "harlequin", **foeniculum** (bronze fennel), **forsythia**, **hakonechloa macra** "aureola", **hedychium** (ginger), **helleborus orientalis** (lenten rose), **hemerocallis** (daylily), **hosta** various, **imperata cylindrica** "red baron", **iris pallida** "variegata", **lemon balm**, **liriope** "silver dragon", **Louisiana iris**, **lygodium japonicum** (climbing fern), **lysimachia congesta** (creeping jenny), **miscanthus sinensis** (maiden grass), **mondo grass**, **nymphaea** (water lily), **pennisetum** "mouldry", **pleioblastus auricomis** (yellow-var. bamboo), **prunus gladiosa** "rosea" (flowering almond), **salvia guarantica**, **sedum spectabile** "autumn joy"

WHEW!!!!!! Questions? Call Ben at 229-9421 or email him at ben_1955@hotmail.com

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