



Diggin' Dirt

Notes From the Head Gardener

Inside this issue:

<i>Pear Salad</i>	2
<i>When is a Pear Ripe?</i>	2
<i>Garden Tips & Tricks</i>	3
<i>MG Meeting Minutes</i>	4
<i>Pumpkin in History</i>	6
<i>Oleander Caterpillar & Moth</i>	7

Special points of interest:

- Hilton Head/Bluffton Garden Tour October 18th
- Next MG Meeting October 23rd
- Turf Love begins 10/31
- Next MG class starts Jan 2009

This is one of those glorious autumn days that all gardeners love. Here in the Lowcountry it is still a bit warm but the mornings are crisp and cool and now is the perfect time to get out and dig. The colors on my blooming plants have become deeper and more vibrant as they relish the cooler evenings. The butterflies are abundant this time of year also. As I write this I am looking at a Bottlebrush, *Callistemon citrinus*, that must have over a dozen butterflies vying with a hummingbird for the nectar in those red flowers. Earlier this year my pink bottlebrush bloomed for the first time. The flowers were significantly smaller than those on the red variety and such a pale pink as to be almost invisible. It is an interesting curiosity, but not a plant I will want more of; it is just not worth the real estate in my smallish garden.

Because late November is always such a busy time

for all, our next general membership meeting will be held on October 23, at 1:00 pm in the Bluffton Library. Since this is the perfect time to plant we have chosen to have a plant swap in lieu of a speaker. Please bring plants and cuttings to trade and share with your fellow MG's. This has proven to be a fun event in the past and I look forward to seeing what new plants need to come home with me.

A new section of Habitat for Humanity houses are ready for landscaping and a hardy group of MG's will be on hand to help with the plant selection and design. We work in tandem with the Dataw Garden Club, which purchases most of the plants and some very hardy Marines from the Air Station who do the tilling and digging. You have to love those muscle men.

Bill Leonard is about to start training for the Turf Love project. Please con-

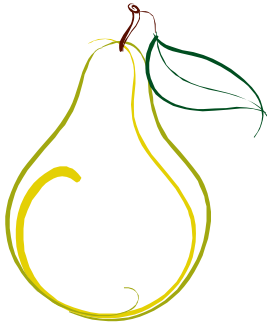
sider joining his classes as this is a pilot project we think will eventually travel far beyond the Lowcountry in scope. We hope to be the trainers for the whole state one day.

The excitement is building for the 1st Hilton Head/Bluffton Garden Tour and Plant Sale, coming up on Oct. 18th. The hosts for this event have been prepping their gardens for many months and this promises to be a tour not to be missed. A wonderful selection of plants, chosen for their ability to do well in this climate, will be available for sale at the Discovery Museum. Please tell your friends and neighbors about the tour and plant sale.

The Rent a MG project is going strong and has been very successful. Additional team members are always needed to keep up with the demand for the service.

(continued on page 8)

Pear & Blue Cheese Salad



- 2/3 cup toasted & coarsely chopped pecans
- Baby salad greens
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons whole-grain mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 ripe pears, such as Anjou, Bartlett, or Comice
- 2 ounces mild blue cheese (about 1/2 cup loosely packed crumbles)

Directions

Whisk the vinegar and mustard together in a large salad bowl. Season with the 1/4 teaspoon salt and some pepper. Gradually whisk in the olive oil, starting with a few drops and then adding the rest

in a steady stream, to make a smooth, slightly thick dressing.

Quarter and core the unpeeled pears and thinly slice; add to the salad. Scatter the cheese and nuts over the salad, and season with salt and pepper, to taste. Toss the salad gently to evenly dress all the greens. Divide among 4 plates and serve immediately.

When is a Pear Ripe?

"There are only ten minutes in the life of a pear when it is perfect to eat."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Pears do not ripen well on trees. They are harvested mature but unripe and need to be ripened after harvest. Bartlett pears change from green to yellow as they ripen. Non-Bartlett pears (Anjou, Bosc, Comice,

Seckel and Forelle) do not dramatically change color as they ripen. Because pears ripen from the inside out, the best way to check for ripeness is to "check the neck for ripeness". To do this, gently press near the stem with

your thumb. When it gives to gentle pressure it is ripe, juicy and ready to eat. If you wait until the middle chances are it will be overripe.

If you have ideas to improve the newsletter or would like to contribute an item to a future edition, please contact
Jenny Staton, bordersandjacks@earthlink.net

Garden Tips & Tricks

Seed Starter Containers

- Use clean cardboard containers from end caps of toner or printer cartridges
- Poke a few extra holes in the bottom of container for root growth and water absorption
- Place in watering tray to absorb moisture and avoid spillage
- After plants emerge, transplant as necessary
- Cardboard is biodegradable when planted (carry tray to gardening area as cardboard container sometimes breaks down and may not transfer easily)

Cutting starter kit

- Use 16 oz. to 20 oz soda bottle with cap
- Cut around neck about 75-90%
- Bend open and put in rooting soil / material about half full and water until moist
- Take 4 – 5 inch cutting from camellia, azaleas, etc. , strip off all leaves but top one or two

- Angle cut the bottom, dip in rooting hormone powder, gently place into small pencil size hole in soil, firm soil around cutting
- Bend top of bottle (with cap) over to provide insulation and greenhouse effect.
- Secure with small 1" or 2" square piece of duct tape (write plant name on tape), but this still allows some air circulation
- Keep in shady area, but not any direct sunlight
- Ensure moisture but not damp nor dry, roots should form over time

Plant Markers

- Use old venetian blinds cut at whatever height you want 1 – 2 feet
- Use pencil to label the names (will not fade in sun or rain)
- Cut "V" on one end to aid when inserting into garden soil

Deer Repellant Formula

(some people wear rubber gloves)

- Two egg whites, 2 cups of water, 1 minced clove of garlic, 2 tablespoons of

hot pepper powder or hot sauce, a dash of dish soap

- BLENDER, BLENDER, BLENDER (did I mention to use a BLENDER?)
- Blend contents well (set on "pulverize" or "liquefy") and strain with cheesecloth into spray bottle

Apply every 3 weeks or after excessively heavy rains



Seed Packet Markers

- Laminate **empty** seed packet, attach to garden stake, useful information reference on package and a picture too.
- If you did not use all of the seeds, scan both sides of package in color, print and laminate back-to-back and attach to garden stake

Squirrel Repellant

- Use oil of peppermint and rub on fruits/vegetables
- Reapply after heavy rain

-Jim Lorenz

Note: Credit goes to George Westerfield for supplying me with some of these.

☐ I would rather sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself than be crowded on a velvet cushion.☐

~Henry David Thoreau

LMGA General Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date:
September 25, 2008

Meeting Location:
Bluffton Library

The meeting was called to order
by Alice Massey at 1:15 PM.



Treasurer's Report
Edwina Mooneyham

Bank balance as of 9/08
\$7,786.66

Previous bank balance as of 7/08
\$6,666.82

Project Committee Reports

Hilton Head

Betty Manne, 342-3434

- Boys & Girls Club – Activities will be performed on Friday @ 4pm. This is a change from the past.
- Construction of The Butterfly Pavilion at Honey Horn will begin in Dec., The pavilion should be up and running in Spring 2009.
- Pinckney Island Butterfly Garden – Meets Wednesdays at 9:00. Betty read a complimentary letter that was received from a representative of the Department of the Interior concerning the impact of the project.
- Master Gardeners' Garden Tour – Event is planned for 10/18/08, from 10:00 AM –

4:00 PM. Seven (7) gardens, located on HHI and in Bluffton are on the tour. Tickets are on sale at Sunshine Nursery and Markel's in Bluffton, both Greenery's and Bruno's and Burke's Pharmacy on Hilton Head. The pre-tour will take place on 10/14 for members who are assisting with the event. Call Deb Pilcher, 757-7288, to volunteer.

- A plant sale will take place on 10/18 from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM at the HHI Welcome Center. Plants are needed for the sale. Contact Bette.

Bluffton

Bill Leonard, 548-0168

- Heyward House – Activities limited during July and August. Project will start again on Thursday, October 23 at 9:00 AM.
- Pritchardville Convenience (Recycling) Center – Work is scheduled to start on 9/26 at 8:30 AM.
- Turf Love – This program will be introduced on 10/31. There will be a 2-3 month trial program in Sun City. Eight (8) Master Gardeners have volunteered. There is a possibility for 20-40 home site visits.

Northern Beaufort County

Pat Lauzon, 524-5671

- Habitat for Humanity Project will start on 10/18 at 8:30

AM. A sign-up sheet is available.

- Beaufort Garden Club – Scheduled for June 2009. Help is needed.
- Rent-A-Master Gardener – The program is working well. May need to increase the cost for the service after 1/1/09. Fifty-dollars seem to be a reasonable price. Martha Jamison 986-5965.
- Alice reported that the St. Helena Convenience (Recycling) Center project has been completed and it looks good.

CES Update

Laura Lee Rose

- The primary objective of the Master Gardener program is to provide community service and training.
- Report MG hours on-line at the MG website. Report education and training time for you and for training time provided to others.
- The next MG class starts Jan. 2009.
- Enviroscope – At Hilton Head PSD # 1 on 10/29 and 11/5
- Help is needed at both county offices.
- Storm Water Rain Barrel Project is scheduled for 10/1 at the Bluffton Town Hall.
- Introduction of new Master Gardeners. Membership list will be updated.

(continued on page 5)

LMGA General Meeting Minutes (continued)

CES Update Shawn Jadmicek

Introduction of Jim Lorenzo who obtained his Master Gardener Certification. Congratulations to Jim!

Master Gardener Leadership Conference

- Alice Massey and Ed Pappas represented LMGA.
- The objective of the meeting was to establish a state advisory board for the Master Gardeners organization.
- LMGA By-Laws have been updated and are awaiting review by a lawyer and CPA.
- The LMGA name has been registered with the State of South Carolina.
- Articles of Incorporation will be submitted to the state after which, LMGA will work to obtain non-profit status.
- Non-profit status is important in the effort to obtain grants for projects, the identification of tax status and to reduce the personal liability of the officers.
- The vote for changes in the By-Laws will take place at the next General Meeting that is scheduled for 10/23/08.
- Evelyn Baker is responsible for the "phone tree" to contact members.



Program – Growing Bananas in the Southeast

Guest Speaker: Richard Wallace, PhD, Department of Chemistry & Physics, Armstrong Atlantic State University

"Growing Bananas in the Southeast"
Dr. Wallace presented a brief history of bananas and his major role in working to develop a banana plant that would thrive in the Savannah area. He then showed some great pictures of various stages of growth of banana plants. He said that growing banana plants for foliage was relatively simple; the plants need fertilizer (they are very heavy feeders), heat and water.

In working to develop a banana plant with fruit, however, requires some planning. Two approaches were considered:

1....the plant needs to grow, bloom and ripen fruit before the frost comes...in one season. Our

season is typically mid April to mid November.

2....a stem needs to survive the winter, grow and bloom the following Spring in time to ripen the fruit before Fall arrives.

There was one variety, Veinte cohool, that was capable of producing fruit in one season. It is planted in late April, blooms emerge in early August and the fruit is harvested in mid September.

Best banana types to grow:

- Kandrian...12-15 ft.
- Ice Cream...8-10 ft. (this one is most like the Cavendish that we are most familiar with)
- Sweetheart...7-9 ft.
- Dwarf Orinoco...7-8 ft.
- Dwarf Namwah...6-7 ft.

Dr. Wallace showed pictures of some of the ornamentals we can grow:

- M.ornata..."Magenta"
- M.ornata..."Lavendar"

Questions followed. His presentation was very informative!

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Irene Randall & Kathy Rundquist

Pumpkin in History

References to pumpkins date back many centuries. The name pumpkin originated from the Greek word for "large melon" which is "pepon." "Pepon" was nasalized by the French into "pompon." The English changed "pompon" to "Pumpion." Shakespeare referred to the "pumpion" in his *Merry Wives of Windsor*. American colonists changed "pumpion" into "pumpkin." The "pumpkin" is referred to in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater* and *Cinderella*.

Native Americans dried strips of pumpkin and wove them into mats. They also roasted long strips of pumpkin on the open fire and ate them. The origin of pumpkin pie occurred when the colonists sliced off the pumpkin top, removed the seeds, and filled the insides with milk, spices and honey. The pumpkin was then baked in hot ashes.

History of the Jack-o-Lantern

People have been making jack-o-lanterns at Halloween for centuries. The practice originated from an Irish myth about a man nicknamed "Stingy Jack." According to the story, Stingy Jack invited the Devil to have a drink with him. True to his name, Stingy Jack didn't want to pay for his drink, so he convinced the Devil to turn himself into a coin that Jack could use to buy their

drinks. Once the Devil did so, Jack decided to keep the money and put it into his pocket next to a silver cross, which prevented the Devil from changing back into his original form. Jack eventually freed the Devil, under the condition that he would not bother Jack for one year and that, should Jack die, he would not



claim his soul. The next year, Jack again tricked the Devil into climbing into a tree to pick a piece of fruit. While he was up in the tree, Jack carved a sign of the cross into the tree's bark so that the Devil could not come down until the Devil promised Jack not to bother him for ten more years.

Soon after, Jack died. As the legend goes, God would not allow

such an unsavory figure into heaven. The Devil, upset by the trick Jack had played on him and keeping his word not to claim his soul, would not allow Jack into hell. He sent Jack off into the dark night with only a burning coal to light his way. Jack put the coal into a carved out turnip and has been roaming the Earth with it ever since. The Irish began to refer to this ghostly figure as "Jack of the Lantern," and then, simply "Jack O'Lantern."

In Ireland and Scotland, people began to make their own versions of Jack's lanterns by carving scary faces into turnips or potatoes and placing them into windows or near doors to frighten away Stingy Jack and other wandering evil spirits. In England, large beets are used. Immigrants from these countries brought the jack o'lantern tradition with them when they came to the United States. They soon found that pumpkins, a fruit native to America, make perfect jack o'lanterns.

Source: The History Channel
<http://www.historychannel.com/exhibits/halloween/pumpkin.html>

Oleander Caterpillar & Moth



The oleander caterpillar, *Syntomeida epilais*, feeds only on oleander, a plant poisonous to most animals. At maturity, the orange-red caterpillar with black tufts of hair is 2 inches in length. There are usually three generations a year. The eggs are laid on the leaves. The larvae feed gregariously on the undersides of leaves at first skeletonizing them and then eating the leaves completely. The larvae pupate in cocoons on the oleander plant. The life cycle requires about two months for completion. Overlapping generations may occur when the larvae and the adult moths, purplish black with white dots on the wings, can be ob-

served together.

The adult stage of the oleander caterpillar is sometimes called the "polka-dot wasp moth". Wasp moth is the common name given to the

subfamily of moths to which this species belongs because of their resemblance to some wasps. The moth's body and wings are a beautiful iridescent blue/green. Small white dots are found on the body, wings, legs, and antennae, and the tip of the abdomen is red/orange. These moths are slow-flying and active during daylight hours which contrasts them with other moth species which are usually nocturnal.

*University of Florida
IFAS Extension*



Lowcountry Master Gardener Association



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LMGA Mission and Goals

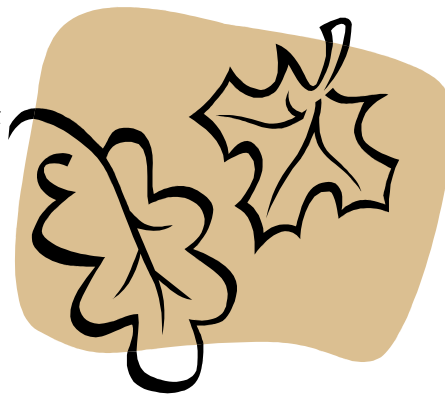
The purpose of the association is to educate its members and to support and engage in projects and activities which promote and foster community enrichment, knowledge and enhancement in the areas of horticulture and ecology. The Association shall be organized and operated for the benefit of its members and shall operate on a not for profit basis.

Notes From the Head Gardener (continued from page 1)

All MG's involved in any projects should be in contact with Bobbie Bryson who handles all the publicity for our organization. It is important that we present a unified front to the media and Bobbie has established relationships with local, regional and national publications to present our activities in a positive and professional light.

If you haven't already set up a compost bin or pile,

now is a good time to do it. A good mix of your kitchen wastes and grass



clippings along with some dry leaves and/or shredded paper will provide you with a wonderful

supply of "brown gold" to top dress your plants with. By feeding our soil with home made compost we are also reducing our footprint on the earth by keeping materials out of the landfills. As Master Gardeners we promote being positive stewards of the earth, let's start this at home.

— Alice Massey