

OVER THE GARDEN GATE

Spring 2014
Volume 17 Issue 1

President's Corner

By Sarah Galshack

Thursday morning it was 24 degrees at my house—it's almost March—and I am thinking spring will never get here. Then peeking out onto my enclosed porch, what to my wondering eyes should appear? Buds and a few blooms beginning to open on my Dwarf Meyer lemon that I grow in a container. Hooray! There's hope! Can spring be far behind?? And it still has a few bright yellow lemons from last year's crop waiting to be picked. A beautiful sight!

Like my lemon, 2014 is off to a bloomin' good start for Hall County MGEV's. We've welcomed the debut of our wonderful new website, learned about the history of "Land Ethic's", taken a closer look at some great Master Gardener projects, and recognized a few of our many valuable members.

And the good news is, the best is yet to come. In the coming months, we'll be learning about the plight of the bees, the Blue Heron preserve, our work at the History Center gardens and much more.

Of course for Hall County MGEV's it wouldn't be a sign that spring is here without the Spring Expo. Master

Travel Journal ~ Holland in the Springtime

By Robbie McCormac

The Netherlands is a low-lying country, with more than 50% of its land at sea level. Consisting of twelve provinces, the country in its entirety is often referred to as Holland, which actually refers to North Holland and South Holland, two of the provinces. Travelling to Holland is a fantastic and rich experience full of history, folklore, art, bikes, beer, landscapes and of course flowers!

A great way to see Holland is by boat, and there are several different well-known companies that offer river boat tours. Each tour features a different itinerary, but

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Gardener organizations around the state are always contacting us to ask what the "secrets" are to our successful Expo. There are simple answers, in my opinion—great chair and committee persons putting in a high amount of hours to organize a great event and add to that, the extraordinary work of all our MGEV's that show up, work hard and have fun equals a successful event. Don't miss out, sign up soon to volunteer. Each of you is a piece that makes up the heart of this organization. It doesn't exist or function without you. Knowing this, if you have any thoughts, ideas, ways to improve, or complaints (just make them short!) please contact me: sgal2369@aol or call 770-536-9731. One last thought, "*No winter lasts forever, No spring skips its turn.*" ~Edith Sitwell

most feature cities or sights that are well known. If you explore Amsterdam you can experience Dutch masters like Rembrandt, Vermeer and Van Gogh, enjoy the smells of the flower markets, sample new foods and relax in a café along a canal. As you travel along the river you'll be able to discover medieval towns and landscapes full of bright spring blooms, windmills, porcelain and festivals. A highlight for any gardener is a visit to the Keukenhof Gardens. This garden is well known as one of the top spring gardens in the world, featuring more than 7 million tulips, daffodils, hyacinths and other bulbs—all

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Growing Native: The Rose Family

By Janelle Whalen

The rose family (Rosaceae) is particularly interesting in the spring because most of our beautiful flowering trees in March are in the rose family. In order to place a plant in the rose family these key words are important: five sepals, five petals, numerous stamens, and oval serrated leaves. If there is still any question, look at the base of the stipule (the “stem” of the leaf) and there will probably be a small pair of green appendages that look like tiny leaves.

In the rose family there are many genuses: the ones we would be most familiar with are Prunus (this includes plums, cherries, apricots, peaches,

nectarines and almonds), Malus (apples), and Pyrus (pears). Among our native trees are Sorbus (mountain ash), Aronia (chokeberry), Amelanchier (serviceberry), and Crataegus (hawthorn).

There are some wildflowers with tiny blooms including Aruncus (goatsbeard), Gillenia (Bowman’s root), and Spirea (meadowsweet). Then there are some larger wildflowers where it is easier to recognize the “5 petals, 5 sepals, and numerous stamens”. There include the genuses Rosa (wild roses), Rubus (raspberries and blackberries) and Fragaria (strawberries).

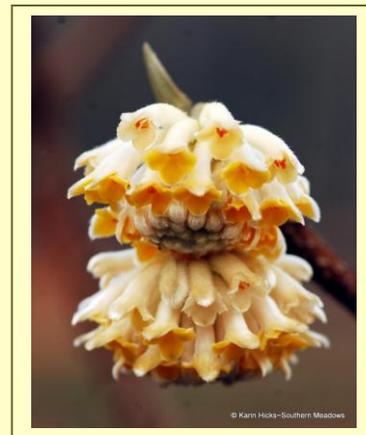
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Spring Gardening Calendar

By Hugo Kollmer

We are coming off one of the coldest winters we’ve experienced in a while. As a consequence, many of our ornamental plants, including shrubs, particularly evergreens, have sustained damage. Current evidence is browning and shriveling of foliage, especially on the tender tips. We can also expect less cold tolerant perennials such as elephant ears and angels trumpet to have succumbed to the cold unless they were adequately protected. On the bright side, replacement plants can be sought at our Spring Expo.

The extent of damage to woody plants can best be assessed when new growth appears. At that time, plant stems and branches, which do not exhibit growth, should be removed in accordance with good pruning practices. If you are impatient or just bothered by unsightly cold-damaged foliage, dead growth can be identified by scraping away a small patch of outer bark revealing the cambium below. Brown cambium indicates that the branch of the twig is dead, ready for removal. Brown shriveled



Edgeworthia chrysantha

buds are also an indicator.

Plants which have been sheltered indoors during the winter can be safely moved outdoors by the end of April.

If you haven’t already done so, fruit trees, except peaches, should be pruned well before buds swell. Peach trees should be pruned during the latter part of March. Control insects and disease by implementing a pest management plan, beginning with an application of a dormant oil spray before buds

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News from the Extension Office

By Wanda Cannon

Hopefully spring is just around the corner! With all of the brutal winter cold temps and rain, we have had many questions about the survival of our treasured plants in the garden. The Extension Office has been busy trying to reassure our clients that hopefully their loropetalums, azaleas and boxwoods made it through the harsh weather. We can only wait until spring to see how they all fared.

Extension is busy receiving many soil samples to be tested from eager gardeners ready to dig in the dirt and dreaming of warmer weather.

The 2014 Hall County Master Gardener Extension Volunteer program eagerly accepted 17 new trainees that have enthusiastically braved the bad weather and cancellations to be on their way to finishing up their classes in late March. This is a great group of men and women that have been a pleasure to work



Star Magnolia

with. The HCMG's have a great new website that should be more efficient and easier to navigate. Check it out. The website team did a wonderful job!

The Hall County Master Gardeners logged in almost 17,000 volunteer hours in 2013. Hall County is always a strong leader in volunteerism for the state. The HCMG's will be honored with a proclamation for their service by the Hall County Board of Commissioners on Thursday, March 13th at 6:00 pm at the Hall Co. Government Bldg. Make plans to attend. This is your big thank you and recognition

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Roses, Roses, Roses: The Easy Way to Have a "WOW" in your Landscape

By Pamela A. Keene

Nothing in the landscape is more impressive than roses in full bloom. However, many people avoid them because of urban legend that roses are difficult to grow and require a great deal of time. "Not so," says Ryan Tilley, consulting rosarian who works across North Georgia. "If you prepare your rose beds properly, choose the best varieties for your area and commit about 10 to 15 minutes every week, you can have a beautiful display of roses from May through December.

He offers guidance in putting in a basic 10 rose garden in full sun, which is manageable even for beginning rose growers.

Laying the Groundwork ~ proper planting soil is the first step to prolific roses. Tilley recommends digging about 18" down and removing the current soil in the bed, then filling it with a mixture of good components that will assure fine root development. Prepare the entire rose

bed, not just holes for planting the bushes. Bed preparation can be done in March or early April.

"Discard the Georgia clay and use a gourmet mixture of soil, soil conditioner and other additives to have the best chance at carefree roses," he says. "You'll need at least 24" of growing medium so the finished bed will be raised above ground level by at least 6 inches."

Here's his tried-and-true formula:

- Start with Green Brothers Earthworks flower mix (or other suitable high-quality black planting soil, such as Mr. Natural or Complete Landscape Mix, available in bags at local nurseries) to completely fill the space where the clay has been removed.
- Amend the soil with the following—one bag of lime, one bag of gypsum and one bag of milorganite

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planted by hand! The gardens are located in Lisse, about 15 miles south of Amsterdam. The 80-acre garden allows you to immerse yourself in a riot of fragrances and colors. The gently rolling paths and numerous pavilions, sculptures and water features add to your enjoyment. As you stroll through the beautiful garden, you experience the fleeting grandeur that lasts just a few short weeks. Keukenhof literally means “kitchen garden” and was so named because it was the herb garden outside the castle kitchen of Jacoba van Beiren in the 1600’s. The herb garden, along with a vast hunting area around the castle, now comprises the modern Keukenhof grounds. The Dutch ornamental bulb industry shows

off its best bulbs during the annual park exhibit, as well as in the indoor pavilions where they display their most beautiful cut flowers. Maybe next year will be the perfect time to experience Holland in the springtime!

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- organic fertilizer.
- Add five bags of Nature’s Helper or other soil conditioner.
- Use three bags of Mills Magic Rose Mix to till into the soil.
- Mix thoroughly throughout the entire space designated for the rose bed. “This formula and these proportions work well for a bed of about 10 rose bushes,” he says. “It’s important to prepare the whole area so that the roots will have a chance to develop and spread, giving them access to the full benefits of nutrients and watering.”

Premium Plants Produce Optimum Results~ Tilley is particular about the kinds of roses that he recommends, not only the source but also the varieties. “Look for potted roses with good

branching,” he says. “Avoid bargain basement purchases because you’ll get what you pay for. You must have good stock to produce carefree roses.” He suggests purchasing them from reputable nurseries or ordering online from growers including www.rosesunlimited.com in South Carolina, www.rosemania.com (which also carries a full line of products for roses) or www.davidaustinroses.com. Planting time is crucial and Tilley warns about early April

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from the county. Master Gardener volunteer hours save Hall County over \$300,000 in paid help. Hall County Master Gardeners are a vital and important asset to UGA/Extension and our county as a whole.

The Spring Expo is planned for April 4th and 5th at Chicopee Woods Ag Center. Volunteer and have some fun at this popular event organized by the Hall County Master Gardeners. Kudos to Chairs Mindy Wade and Irene Michaud and all of the chairs that make this event so successful! I am eagerly waiting for spring to sprout; to making design plans for new gardens, starting seeds and hoping I can grow that ultimate tomato this summer! I hope you are making some of your own gardening plans for this year. Get out and get involved in some upcoming volunteer opportunities and keep making that difference here in Hall County. You belong to a great group of gardeners!

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Bees love our fruit trees. Doug Tallamy, in his book “Bringing Nature Home,” also names many plants in the Rose family that are hosts to butterflies and moths.

When you are admiring the beautiful blooming trees and flowers in our area in March, take a closer look to see if they are in the rose family.

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swell.

Grapes and brambles (blackberries and raspberries) should be pruned now. Be sure to remove all old canes from the latter. Make the first application of fertilizer when new growth develops.

For improved appearance, remove old foliage from liriopae before new growth emerges.

Prune roses and shrubs that bear flowers on new growth now. Fertilize when new growth first appears.

If your lawn is harboring a few broadleaf winter weeds and/or annual grasses, control them by making a spot treatment with a post emergent selective herbicide. Prevent summer weeds with a post emergent herbicide applied in mid to late March.

Remove weeds and any remaining leaves and other

dead vegetation from flower beds. Divide and fertilize perennials.

Remove dead blossoms (deadhead) daffodils. Don't remove foliage until it turns brown.

Prune and fertilize azaleas and rhododendrons when finished blooming. Similarly prune other spring flowering shrubs which bloom on old wood.

Prepare birdhouses for new tenants by removing old nesting material and clean the interior of the boxes.

Prepare the soil in your vegetable garden for seeding and planting. Seed cool season crops now. Wait until soil temperatures reach 55 degrees before planting tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, etc.

Author's tip: There may be hope if you've been battling animal pests, including deer, rabbits and voles. Repellex, a relatively new product, acts systemically, to deliver a long-lasting disagreeable tasting substance throughout a plant's vascular system. It is listed for use on ornamentals, but not fruits and vegetables.

Grant Writing 101: A Short Course

By Robbie McCormac

Asking someone for money is always hard, no argument! But what do you do when you have a great idea for a school garden, you see a need in your community or you find out about a project that needs funding? That's where a grant comes in handy. Grants don't just fall out of the sky without a little work involved. Let's face it – just getting started can be intimidating, in addition to knowing what to do. So let's break it down into four manageable pieces.

Finding the grant–the good news is that a lot of the work has already been done for you. Using any search engine on your computer, type in the kind of grant you're looking for. Be specific. "Garden Grants" will return many results, but specifying "Garden Grants for Elementary Schools" or "Garden Grants for

Ecological Projects" will get you narrowed down to what you need for your project. It will take a little time to weed through the different sources and to read the details, so a quick tip is to scan through the form and find the deadline for applying–make sure it hasn't expired. Then, read the first several paragraphs to be sure you qualify before applying.

The application process–Don't be intimidated! You will need to gather certain information for most applications. Names, addresses, type of project, participants, budget, assessment criteria, community support, etc. are just a few items on most applications. If you are applying as a representative of an organization (school, youth program, city or county business) be sure you have received permission. Answer

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"I grow plants for many reasons: to please my eye or to please my soul, to challenge the elements or to challenge my patience, for novelty or nostalgia, but mostly for the joy of seeing my garden grow."

~David Hobsone

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what is being asked for each part of the application, and answer completely. If you don't have an answer, get the information before moving on. You'll need to check on the costs involved, either online or by going to a store. The information you supply must be honest and accurate. Don't leave any questions blank, because in most cases your application will get thrown out as incomplete.

Carry out the Project—Congratulations! Once you received the funding it's time to get to work. Set a timetable for your project, and purchase the items that the grant is funding. Stick to the budget you submitted as much as possible. If the costs have changed you will need to record this in your final report, adding documentation. It's important that you follow the goals and parameters that you submitted on your grant application, because that's what the money is for. This isn't the time to add additional items or make drastic changes. Take photos through the course of your work as your project becomes a reality.

Submit a Final Report—Most organizations require a final report with documentation of your expenses and your results. It's your obligation to prove that the money was spent accurately and honestly. Organizations differ in the type of accountability they require. Be sure you know when the final report is due. Stay organized! Keep receipts, document everything, save emails and keep a time log until at least 6

have passed after you have submitted a final report. Trust me; the next time will be easier!

For more information and some great grant sites check out these links:

www.foundationcenter.org/getstarted

www.eeingorgia.org

www.extension.uga.edu/k12/school-gardens

Georgia's Largest 2-Day Garden Expo and...
YOUR greatest opportunity to volunteer and have fun...come volunteer at our spring expo on Thursday, April 3rd, Friday, April 4th or Saturday, April 5th, 2014. You can volunteer in the following areas: vendor check-in, set-up/banners/tear-down, vendor load-in/out, admissions & parking, announcements/door prizes, garden cart control, plant holding area, Ask-a-MG booth, floater. And it's easy to sign up...go to www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4EAAA82AA5FB6-spring1 and simply follow the directions on the website. Looking forward to working with you at our expo. It's going to be great!

Irene & Mindy, Spring Expo Chairs

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frosts that can damage tender plants. If you order roses several weeks before planting time, keep them in a sheltered location and water them every other day. Then they will be ready to plant after the second week of April. Roses need plenty of room to grow, so they should be planted at least five to six feet from the center of one plant to the center of another. "Avoid crowding them in the bed to help prevent diseases and to give them ample air circulation," he says. "When they're growing vigorously they will produce long stems and need room to spread out." There's a science to planting roses as well. Place the bud union—the bulging area just above the roots, located on the lower part of the plant—about 2 to 3" above ground level when planting. This will help reduce possible damage from settling as the roses become established. "The plant will be placed in the ground slightly higher than it is in the pot," Tilley explains. Once all the roses have been planted, install the mulch of your choice across the whole rose bed. Mulching helps hold in moisture, stifles weeds and can reduce the chances of diseases. Then water each rose bush, giving each about a gallon of water, which is about 15 to 20 seconds of standard flow from a garden hose. Caring for your roses ~ "Newly planted roses need to be watered every day," Tilley says, "not soaking but about a gallon per bush, making sure you water the entire area where the roots are growing." Contrary to popular lore, he

says it's all right to get the leaves wet as long as you water between 6 am and 5 pm to allow the foliage to dry before dark.

Now for that 10 minutes a week explanation. Roses need to be sprayed for diseases and funguses, the most common of which is black spot. Tilley suggests a quality rose spray, such as Banner Maxx (generic version is Honor Guard) plus a product called Mancozeb. "Mix according to label instructions, just the amount you'll need each time, and it will take you about 10 minutes to spray your 10 rose bushes, he says. "The chemicals may seem to be expensive, but it's better to spend a little more money on something that will definitely work than to waste time with inferior products." Roses should be sprayed every other week from the beginning of the growing season through the end of blossoming, which can be as late as December if the weather stays warm. Watering should be done several times a week and a minimum of pruning can be done every week to 10 days. "Of course you'll be cutting your roses to bring into the house or share with friends, so pruning is really a simple and quick job periodically." For the amount of time you commit to your roses you'll be rewarded with an incredible 'wow' factor and dozens of blooms throughout the summer and fall. There's nothing better in my book."