



# Over the Garden Gate

## President's Corner

*Mindy Wade*

Alfred Austin wrote, "The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul."

As we say goodbye to 2019 and hello to 2020, we all know we will have warm sunny days in the middle of "winter" and cool days in the middle of "summer". But what we can really count on is that there will be something to excite and enchant us in every season and everywhere we look there will be something growing and blooming.

Please take the time to share your knowledge with others. Offer pearls of wisdom as well as research-based educational facts. Enjoy what you are doing and let that show in your efforts. Try something new! Thank those who have "shown up," "helped out," or really "surprised you!"

So to those of you who have enjoyed this year with Hall County Master Gardener Extension Volunteers I say THANK YOU! If it has not been your favorite year, thanks for sticking with it anyway and may 2020 be a brighter star on your horizon.

It is popular this time of year for news programs and entertainment publications to provide a "year in review" type of round up. I am not a fan because something always gets left out but I will give it a try! I apologize up front!!!

Thanks to all those who have chaired a committee or project - and there are so many of you! Expos, Garden Walk (and those homes on the Garden Walk!), public gardens (Cherokee Bluffs, Wilshire, Extension Office, Alta Vista, Elachee, Victory Garden), Major Demonstration Gardens (Linwood, Gardens on Green and the Lovett Literacy Garden, Jubilee Garden as well as Atlanta Botanical Gardens Gainesville), one-time projects (Ag Day, Ask-A-Master-Gardener booths, Butterfly Release, Scarecrow in the Gardens, Trees in the Garden), those who have worked with a Youth Gardening Group at Lula, Sugar Hill, Riverbend, Myers, Chestnut

Mountain, Martin, Spout Springs, Mt. Vernon, Oakwood, Brenau University Gardening Students, Gardens on Green, everyone who wrote for this newsletter, presented at the library or the Extension Office or at various garden clubs, community gatherings or public spaces. Thanks for those who have answered the phones, mentored the trainees, worked on the website, provided slideshows at every meeting, gone on home visits, designed roundabouts, shivered in the cold, sweated in the heat, answered the call or given a suggestion. Almost never have I asked for assistance and been turned down! Thank you to the Sunshine/Outreach Committee, the Publicity Committee and the Picnic/Christmas Party Committee and the hosts of those events, to the Budget Committee and the Youth Gardening Grant Committee. And last but not least, to the 2019 HCMG Board. This tremendously hardworking group of people have kept things running smoothly!

It has been my pleasure to serve as President for 2019. Thank you all for allowing me to do so.

Finally, Leo Buscaglia said, "The fact that I can plant a seed and it becomes a flower, share a bit of knowledge and it becomes another's, smile at someone and receive a smile in return, are to me continual spiritual exercises." I agree wholeheartedly!

*Mindy Wade*

### Write for Us!

Like to write? Have something to say? Your fellow master gardeners want to hear from you!

Email Rick at [rsfreeland@charter.net](mailto:rsfreeland@charter.net) for details.

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Even in the dank, dark of mid-winter, your landscape canvas can be bright and colorful from tree top to ground with native plants selected from a palette of evergreen species.

## Sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana* L.)

Specimen understory tree stays evergreen in our mild winter to bear broad shiny leaves with smooth-gray bark and mild scent of bay laurel spice. Fleshy, red-coated seeds attract fruit-eating birds. In 1678, English botanist John Banister collected seeds in the Colonies and sent them to England where it was to be first magnolia species to be cultivated.



## American holly (*Ilex opaca*)

Understory tree-shrub is distinguished by broad leaves with curved edges and sharp, spike-like points. For a profusion of red berries, plant three female plants to one male plant to pollinate this dioecious species.

## Inkberry/Appalachian tea (*Ilex glabra*)

Small shrub with bright green leaves in winter, grows 5 to 8 ft. and spreads to form colonies. Bees pollinate the small greenish-white female flowers in late April to produce a prized honey and create pea-sized, black inkberries in early fall. Appalachia tea can be brewed from dried and roasted leaves.



## Rosebay rhododendron (*R. maximum*)

Large shrub with long, waxy, deep green leaves grows to 13 feet in deep, well-drained acid soils in low to medium light, promising large, showy, white to purple summer flowers.

## Galax/Beetleweed (*Galax urceolata*)

Leathery, shiny, dark green leaves create a rosette at base of plant and turn to brownish-red in winter. Forms a lush ground cover in shade on north facing slopes with good drainage, and produces single spike like, white flowers in late spring.

## Heartleaf (*Hexastylis*)

Perennial herb with rounded or pointed, variegated or solid leaves hugs the humus-rich ground surface with early spring flowers propagated by ants. Among the 10 species native to our ecosystems of particular note are Little brown jug (*Hexastylis arifolia*), Dwarf-flowered heartleaf (*Hexastylis naniflora*) rare, Largeflower heartleaf (*Hexastylis shuttleworthii*), and the endangered Variable Heartleaf (*Hexastylis heterophylla*).



## Pipsissewa/Spotted wintergreen (*Chimaphila maculata*)

Perennial herb with dark green, variegated leaves emerge from creeping rhizomes to grow 4 to 6 inches high. White flowers in late July create a rosette at base of plant and are pollinated by insects and dispersed by the wind. Grows in well-drained, acidic soil

## Yellow jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*)

Twining vine with dark green leaves on thin stems that drape over

walls, and climb trees and trellis. Yellow clusters of trumpet-shaped flowers attract a wide range of pollinators and can bloom during winter warm spells.



## Partridge berry (*Michella repens*)

Creeping woody vine of shiny, bright green leaves forms ground cover that spreads vegetatively on hill sides. Two small, white flowers fuse to form bright red berries that ripen in October for winter wildlife food.

## Christmas fern

Perennial fern grows singly or in clumps of two and threes in moist, shady habitats. Sterile leaves remain through winter while fertile leaves die back. Cultivate in many environments and soils to control erosion on steep slopes.



With native plants for all seasons and all reasons, *Garden as if your life depends on it because it does*. Naturalist Doug Tallamy

The following info comes from the Cape Cod Master Gardener booth and was offered to O.T.G.G by Sharon Van de Water.

### How Climate Change Affects Your Garden

- 1) Warm spells in fall and winter can disrupt the plant's natural cycle and leave buds, leaves and flowers vulnerable.
- 2) Cool temps in fall trigger plants to reduce growth and store energy. As temps approach freezing, growth stops and perennial plants become dormant, better able to withstand cold.
- 3) Many plants require a chilling period before growth resumes in spring. Plants native to areas further south with a shorter chilling requirement may resume growth during a warm period in winter and then be damaged when cold weather returns. The result is often no spring flowers.
- 4) Warm days followed by freezing nights can cause bark injury on trees with thin, smooth bark.
- 5) Alternate soil freezing and thawing can result in shallow-rooted plants being heaved out of the ground. Death often results when roots are exposed.
- 6) Heat stressed plants are more susceptible to leaf and bud damage as well as insect attack.
- 7) Plants require consistent soil moisture to thrive, especially during heat spells. Improve your soil's ability to hold water and provide nutrients by adding compost.
- 8) Heavy rainfall can compact some soils, making it harder for plants to move roots into or through an area, and may erode other areas, exposing roots. Divert water away to prevent damage to your soil and the plants growing in it.

### How to Adapt Your Garden to Climate Change

- **Reduce your lawn.** If you don't regularly walk or play there, consider eliminating grass.
- **Ground covers** grow in areas that get only light foot traffic. Add native shrubs and perennials for color and multi-season interest, without mowing or frequent application of chemicals.
- **Choose plants** best adapted to your climate and growing conditions, such as natives.
- **Mulch has three functions:** protecting trees and shrubs from cuts from lawn trimmers and mowers; holding moisture in the soil around the plant's roots, where it does the most good; and protecting roots from extreme temperature swings in summer and winter.
- **Plant trees** to absorb carbon dioxide and take up excess rain water.
- **Get a rain gauge** for an accurate reading on how much water your garden is receiving. Even a tuna can set in the lawn is better than no idea of how much water has fallen from the sky or the sprinkler.
- **Use rain gardens** to redirect and absorb heavy rains. Create stone-lined stream beds to carry excess water away without eroding gardens or lawns.
- **Evergreens**—both trees and shrubs—must be well watered in fall before ground freezes; they lose water during the winter and cannot take it up from frozen ground.
- **Use drip irrigation** to water vegetable gardens and ornamental beds. Hoses covered by a layer of mulch are not visible and the water is not lost to evaporation.
- **Keep plants healthy.** Healthy plants are better able to deal with stress of all kinds.

### The Gardener's Anonymous Creed

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| (Repeat after me)   | I recognize my horticultural dependency.  | If everyone else has it, I must have it, too.  |
| want it.  |   |  |
| I want it all.  | I recognize your horticultural dependency.  | If no one else has it, I must get it first.  |
| I want it NOW!  |   |  |
| If it will not grow in my zone or is prohibitively expensive, I want it most of all.                        | I will willingly aid and abet your dependency, as you aid and abet mine. This makes us infinitely happy.      | If I have planted everything I have already purchased, I must immediately buy more plants. |
| I am perfectly willing to forgo any necessities of life, such as food for my children, in order to have it. | All money saved by virtue of comparison shopping equals found money and is therefore not counted as spending. | (At this point, it is customary to recite your credit card number from memory).            |
|   |   | Happy Gardening!   |

### What the Heck?

#### Root Washing

The practice of removing all soil from the roots on B & B or container stock, pruning root defects, and spreading the roots in a hole only as deep as the root system and 3 times as wide.

## Life on a Rock

Marcia Tague

Those crusty, fuzzy patches on trees and rocks...what are they really? **Lichen!**

Lichen are composite organisms which are formed by a symbiotic association between a fungus and an alga. It is manifested in crusty patches or small bushy growths on tree trunks, rock walls, etc. In this *mutualistic* relationship, the fungi provide the home and the algae provide the food. The fungi are the dominant partner since they provide the structure on which the alga can grow. The alga use sunlight and photosynthesis to produce food for the fungi; the fact that this process of food manufacturing is going on means that lichen are converting carbon dioxide into oxygen, a crucial need for human survival.

When you go out to look for lichen, you will see three general types or forms. Foliose lichen have an obvious top side and bottom side. The *thallus* (the plant body) can be flat and leafy like lettuce or full of ridges and bumps. The lobes may stand away from the *substrate* (the material the lichen is attached to) and can be lifted away.

*Fruticose lichen* look like tiny branching trees without leaves. The thallus is multi-branched and is attached to the substrate by a flattened disc therefore they can be removed from that surface by hand.

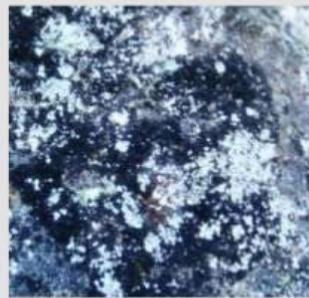
Fruticose lichen can also have round branches that have a central core or a core that can be hollow. Some have a mass of flat branches that get all tangled up together, looking like a 'very bad hair day'.

*Crustose lichen* are scaly crusts that are tightly attached against a surface. They can come in bright, vibrant colors, but also greys and greens. When lichens are wet, they show more color.

Lichens can survive in some of the most extreme environments, from temperate forests to icy tundra, from the tropics to the deserts. They can shut down their metabolism in order to survive. It's amazing to know that lichens are the "dominant vegetation on as much as 8% of the land on Earth".

It's not surprising that these little specimens are important as medicinal remedies both historically and in current research. Being used as a natural pigment for dyeing cloth and wool has also been a use for lichens. They are extremely slow-growing, but long-living. But the longevity of lichens is threatened in this century by factory and urban air pollution. They are so sensitive to it that they are now being used to assess levels of toxins in Europe and North America.

Those curious little patches on rocks and trees are far more complex than they look; we have barely scratched the surface here! Lots more to learn...



Crustose  
(crusty)



Fruticose



Foliose  
(leafy)

## Best Time to Plant

Vince Evans



Fall, to me, is the very best time to plant. It is a mile ahead of Spring, which is the second best time. Problem with Spring is usually you have to baby-sit the plants all the way through Summer. Especially if it was like our past Summer. Roots do not have time to develop before hot weather arrives. Of course, this is just my opinion, you may have a different one.

Fall is the best time to match up colors. You get to see right away what plants will look like and how they compliment and accent each other.

Fall may also be the best time to catch plants on sale as stores are clearing out their inventory—if you wait long enough.

Most times, you dig a big hole for plants. In the fall I am a little more patient to do this.

Maybe the final reason is that, in Fall, you are excited to add a new plant to the landscape. You have gone through Summer and may just need to make a slight adjustment to the landscape.

Now most of these reasons might apply just as aptly for Spring, but I told Rick I would get him a little article for the newsletter. And, truth is, that will not wait until Spring.

So get out there before the days are completely dark, bummer!