



Christian County Master Gardeners Across the Garden Gate



Volume 5 Issue 3

June 2009

Secrets and Surprises

I went to a garden tour on Saturday morning. It was indeed a showcase! This lady does not have the certificate, the name badge or the T-shirt, but in my opinion she is indeed a 'master gardener'. I have a whole page of my notebook filled with practical 'tips and tricks' which I learned from her, including where to buy the most economical mulch, how to keep the deer away, pruning, transplanting, deadheading, perseverance, etc. I asked questions, she had answers. (Thanks, Dixie, for inviting me to your friend's garden tour!)

After an experience like that, I am a little overwhelmed when I look at my own efforts at 'gardens'. I have an area in my front yard, which I call my secret garden. I tell anyone who asks that the reason I call it that is because it is a secret what is planted there (we inherited it when we moved here). I have an area in my back yard that I call my surprise garden. I have to take full responsibility for it, but I am always surprised when I find something other than weeds coming up because I generally just sow any leftover or saved seeds in this area. Although I am slowly filling in my blank spots and

tackling the weed population, I still cannot keep my mind from jumping ahead and scheming for more, more, more. Perhaps that is the true bent of a 'gardener'. But my better judgment (and also my hubby) is saying less, less, less (take care of what you have!).

I have always fooled around with gardening and plants (perhaps an inherited trait from my green-thumbed Mother), but I never was totally devoted to it. It was just a pastime. I believe the 'turning point' for me was during a trip to Alaska in the summer of 2007. My husband, brother-in-law, and two sisters drove to Alaska in a 1994 Four Winds RV pulling a popup camper behind us. (We were like the Clampett clan going to "Beverly Hills"!)

The six week trip was indeed 'a dream vacation'! One of the most notable features of the entire trip was the gorgeous, bountiful flowers and shrubs we saw everywhere we went in Alaska. These really captured my attention, and once we returned to Missouri, I seemed to have no bigger interest than delving into 'gardening' to see if I could produce *anything* which would come *anywhere near* the beautiful flowers and foliage in Alaska.

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So, of course, the next and most natural thing for me to do was to sign up to take the Master Gardener course (Class of 2007). Although I do have the certificate, the name badge, and the T-shirt, I realize that I am still in a learning phase. Perhaps I should not really be called a 'master gardener' but rather a 'master gardener in progress'. One thing is for sure, the knowledge I gain from my fellow Master Gardeners is an invaluable part of the Master Gardener program. It is really amazing what you can learn in the middle of a 'volunteer hours' weed-pulling project!

I guess I haven't said anything of great value in this article. I do want to say, though, that I am encour-

aged and enlightened at every contact with my fellow gardeners, and with this in mind, I feel like I can and will 'conquer' these weed patches I call 'gardens'. No, I have nothing yet which can compete with neither Alaska nor the garden I toured on Saturday, but I do have hope!

My goal is that someday I will indeed measure up to the title "Master Gardener" and will be able to help and encourage others as I have been helped and encouraged through the Master Gardener program and my fellow members.

By *Virginia Roberts*

HERB GARDENING

Growing and using your own herbs can be a rewarding experience. Herbs can be used for medicinal purposes, culinary pleasures, or in craft projects. Generally easy to grow, herbs require little special care. Consider planting your own herb garden.

Growing Your Own Herbs

Herbs can be started from seed, or plants are readily available. If your tastes lean toward the more unusual or exotic, there are plenty of plant/seed catalogs available from which to order by mail. Some gardeners prefer to plant their herb gardens in containers, while others dedicate large garden plots entirely to herbs. The types of herbs you grow and the size of your garden are completely up to you. I have found that a container garden, located on the back deck, works best for me. While cooking, it is easy to go to the deck and snip whatever herbs my recipe calls for. You decide what best meets your needs. It might be helpful to think about how you will use different herbs before heading off to make your purchases. It is tempting to come home with a carful of herbs, only to find that you have neither the space or the need for some of them.

Here Are A Few General Guidelines About Growing Herbs

Most herbs are originally from the Mediterranean area and are sun lovers. Plant herbs in a location where they will get 6 hours of full sun for best results.

Neutral (6 - 7.5) or slightly alkaline soil is the preference of most herbs. If your soil is acidic, add lime, or other amendments to increase alkaline levels.

Don't overwater! Herbs prefer to be dry rather than wet. Too much water will kill herbs quickly.

Perennial herbs, such as thyme or sage, will last for numerous years. To prevent them from becoming woody, cut back at the end of each season.

The ideal time to harvest herbs is after the morning dew has dispersed and before the day heats up. This is when the essential oils are at their highest levels.

Drying And Storing

While most people prefer to use fresh, rather than dried herbs, it is not possible to store fresh herbs for very long. Drying herbs allows you to enjoy them throughout the winter months.

Monarda
(Bee Balm)



Monarda



Violet Leaves



Lemon Verbena



Rosemary



Herb Gardening Continued

The simplest way to dry herbs is to tie them into a bundle and hang to air dry. Tie the bundles loosely so that the air can circulate freely through them. Bundle each kind of herb separately. Hang the bundles in a dry shaded place, such as an attic.

A faster method of drying herbs is to use the microwave oven. Cover the turntable with paper towels and arrange the herbs in a single layer on the paper towel. Do not overlap or allow them to touch. Microwave for about 3 minutes on low power. Actual drying time will vary, depending on numerous factors. So check them every 30 seconds to prevent over drying. Remove from microwave as soon as the herbs are crisp and papery.

Store dried herbs in a dark airtight container. Avoid exposure to light.

How To Use Herbs

People use herbs for medicinal purposes, cooking, beauty aids, decorative projects and much more. I've included a few herb recipes you might enjoy trying.

People react to various herbs in different ways. Do not use any of these herbs or recipes in place of standard medical practices.

Note: 1 teaspoon dried herb = 3 teaspoons fresh herb.

Herbal Caffeine

(Measurements are using dried herbs, adjust as appropriate for fresh herbs.)

½ cup Monarda (Bee Balm)

½ cup Violet Leaves

¼ cup Lemon Verbena

¼ cup Rosemary

Mix together. Use one rounded teaspoon to one cup boiling water.

Steep, covered, for 5 minutes.

Strain before drinking.

“Southern Plantation Tea”

(Measurements are for dried herbs.)

½ cup raspberry leaves

½ cup lemon grass

¼ cup Hibiscus blossoms

¼ cup Chamomile flowers

Heat 2 cups of water to boiling and add 2 heaping tablespoons of mix to water. Stir, cover and steep 5 minutes. Strain and serve. To serve as a cold drink, add 1 cup pineapple juice and ½cup apricot juice to 2 cups of tea and serve over ice.

Raspberry Leaves



Lemon Grass



Hibiscus blossom



Chamomile flowers



Parsley



Herb Gardening Continued

Italian Seasoning

¼ cup each: parsley, basil, marjoram
 1/8 cup each: thyme and rosemary
 Grind in blender or food processor.
 Add to taste in any tomato based dish.

Rosemary Hair Rinse

1 cup rosemary
 4 cups water
 Bring water to boil, add rosemary. Remove from heat and cover. Let cool to room temperature. Strain liquid, discard herb. After shampooing and rinsing hair pour rinse over hair. Do not rinse out. Dry hair as normal.

By *Ellen Crawley*

Sore Muscle Bath

1 cup spearmint
 1 cup shave grass
 1/3 cup calendula
 3 ½ cups rosemary
 1 cup marjoram
 1 cup chamomile
 ½ cup catnip
 1 cup thyme
 ½ cup lavender
 1 pound Epsom salts
 Mix well and store in air tight container. To use, put 1 - 2 cups in a cotton muslin drawstring bag, tie closed and pour 3 cups of boiling water over the bag and let soak. Fill tub with warm water and then pour the bag and the “tea” into tub. Soak your sore muscles.

Calendula



Catnip



Lavender



Basil



Marjoram



Thyme



Spearmint

Shave Grass



Shave Grass



2009 GREENHOUSE MANAGEMENT SHORT COURSE

July 29 - 22

University of Missouri Columbia, MO

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For more information, see Christian County Extension Office

Companion Planting

Christine Chu gave us a very interesting program on non-typical vegetables, highlighting the creative vegetable bed done by the Greene County Master Gardeners. She mentioned companion planting during a reference to the positive effect of penny royal when grown with eggplants. When we read about the Native American Indians planting corn, squash, and beans, we may not realize that they were practicing companion planting. Their pole beans climbed the corn stalks and also fixed nitrogen in the soil. The squash provided a living mulch with their large leaves and there may also have been weed suppression by biochemical's from the squash.

There are several understandable explanations for beneficial or adverse plant associations. Some of them are:

- Trap cropping: A crop draws a pest away from another crop of primary interest.
 - Symbiotic nitrogen fixation: Legumes can fix nitrogen in the soil through a relationship with Rhizobium bacteria.
 - An allelopathic mechanism: Chemicals exuded from a plant can suppress pests or other plants. The African marigold repels nematodes by releasing thiopene. The black walnut uses juglone to stunt the growth of plants around it.
 - Spatial interactions: A tall plant can grow with a shade tolerant plant. This plant diversity can provide some insect pest control.
 - Nurse cropping: Plants that are tall and have a thick leaf canopy can provide a wind break for a more vulnerable plant. A nurse crop of oats is often used to help establish alfalfa.
 - Beneficial habitat: The right selection of plants can supply a refuge for beneficial insects such as lady bird beetles and bees. A California native wild-flower, Bee's Friend, has been used to attract bees and other pollinators to orchards.
 - Security through diversity: This is a specialized case of spatial interaction. A mixed planting of cultivars may allow one variety to produce when another fails or even reduce the insect population.
- As a general rule plants in the same family will have a beneficial or neutral effect if planted together. An exception occurs with tomatoes and potatoes. Though in the same family they don't grow well together, perhaps because they can get the same blight.
 - The onion family is universally despised by bugs.
 - Garlic offends Japanese beetles, vegetable weevils, and spider mites.
 - Celery deters the cabbage moth whose green caterpillar eats the cabbage family.
 - Beans repel the Colorado potato beetle and potatoes repel the Mexican bean beetle.
 - Hyssop, wormwood, thyme, and sage repel the cabbage moth.
 - Rue and white-flowered geranium are offensive to Japanese beetles.
 - Sage repels carrot flies and cabbage moths.
 - Tomato hornworms don't like borage or basil.
 - French marigolds destroy nematodes. They also repel white flies, beetles, and asparagus beetles.
 - Nasturtiums repel white flies and squash bugs.
 - Mint discourages cabbage moths and ants. Horseradish discourages bean beetles. Grow these plants in pots so they don't get loose in your garden.
 - When plants are attacked by the same pest or disease, keep them well apart. Tomatoes and corn have a pest in common. When it's on corn it's called the corn earworm. When it's on a tomato it's called a tomato fruit worm.

Two web sites that had charts I found useful were: www.attra.org/attra-pub/complant.html and www.ext.nodak.edu/county/cass/horticulture/vegetables/companion.htm

By Dayle Enderson

There are many web sites with charts of companion plants. They are similar but not identical in every case. This can lead to some confusion and it might help to have a few basic facts in hand to help interpret them. Here are some useful observations from "The Vegetable Gardener's Bible" by Edward Smith.

Learn How To Sell on eBay The Right Way!

Nellie Lamers, Education Specialist trained by eBay, will be the instructor for this two-day hands-on training.

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- Enhance listings with better descriptions and photography.
- Set pricing that will maximize your profits.
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- Avoid many of the costly mistakes that new eBay sellers may make.

**Thursday July 16, 2009
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
AND
Thursday, July 23, 2009
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.**

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Introduction to Excel 2007	08/07	9:30-12:30 1:30-4:30	Friday	\$60*
Intermediate Word 2 2007	08/11	9:30-12:30 1:30-4:30	Tuesday	\$60*
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The TCRC is located in the southeast wing of the Reeds Spring High School.
 Registration deadline is two days before the date of the class.

*Price does not include textbook—it is available at an extra charge. Publisher book is \$37.50 (this covers Intro and Advanced topics— there are not separate books for Publisher). Introduction books are \$22 each; Intermediate and Advanced books are \$35 each. We reserve the right to cancel classes with less than 3 students. Prices subject to change without notice.

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PREPAY orders only. Bring shirts (of your choice) labeled with your name when you order. The order will be placed after the August meeting.

Across the Garden Gate

June 2009

Christian County Master Gardeners
P.O. Box 160
Ozark, Missouri
65721