



# The BACK FENCE

Check out the local MG website: [www.muextension.missouri.edu/gkcmg/](http://www.muextension.missouri.edu/gkcmg/)



Wake Robin (*Trillium erectum*)  
James Henderson-[www.2bnthewild.com/plants/H14.htm](http://www.2bnthewild.com/plants/H14.htm)

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## Lorna's trek through wildflower paradise

By Lorna Earnest, Class of 2000

*(Editor's note: As Lorna explains below, she is traveling with her family on a unique hike through the Appalachian Trail. As Lorna updates me, I will add her travel experiences in the Back Fence as it relates to flora she experiences on her trip).*

As some of my fellow Master Gardeners know, I'm traveling along with my husband and daughter as they attempt to through-hike the Appalachian Trail. We left in March and hope to return to the Kansas City area in September. While they are out hiking 18-20 miles each day, I'm hiking much shorter distances along forest trails that allow me to search for interesting wildflowers. Before I left, I told Jim that I'd send him a monthly article about anything particularly interesting that I saw.

For the past couple of weeks we've been in northern Georgia and through The Great Smoky Mountains National Park. I've seen lots and lots of trillium, violets, wild geraniums, and other common forest wildflowers. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, it turns out, is renowned for its variety of wildflowers. Over 1,400 species grow in the park. In fact, I read that north of the Tropics

only China rivals the southern Appalachians for plant diversity. So it appears I'm in a great location for observing wildflowers.

I had no idea that there are so many different types of trillium until acquiring a little field guide titled, 'Wildflowers of the Smokies', and am still searching for good specimens of Wake Robin (*Trillium erectum*) and Painted Trillium (*Trillium undulatum*). My daughter



Painted Trillium (*Trillium undulatum*)  
Thomas G. Barnes-<http://plants.usda.gov/java/>

Katie is in on the act now, also. Every morning when she sets out on the trail she has in mind two or three wildflowers to search for. At the end of the day if she has spied one or more, she tells me where to find them so I can get a photo. Thanks to her sharp

**Wildflowers continued on page 2**

## Wildflowers continued from page 1

eye I've got photos of Jack-in-the-Pulpit, and infrequently-seen Purple Phacelia, maroon-flowered Trillium, and Beaked Violet. Following is some brief information about these wildflowers—taken from 'Wildflowers of the Smokies'—along with my photo of each one:



Jack-in-the-Pulpit (*arisaema triphyllum*), Daniel Reed-www.2bnthewild.com/plants/H14.htm

Jack-in-the-Pulpit (*arisaema triphyllum*): Is a member of the arum family. The plant grows 12"-36" tall and the 'pulpit' is 2"-6" tall. The hooded pulpit of this plant, with "Jack", the minister standing within it, isn't actually the flower on this plant. The true flowers are tiny and clustered around the feet of "Jack". The "pulpit", called a spathe, may be green or brownish-purple, and striped or mottled. Some Jack-in-the-pulpits are all male, others all female, and still others have both sexes. The plant's maroon color and carrion odor are clues that it is pollinated by flies. It is found in moist woods at various elevations.

Purple Phacelia (*phacelia bipinnatifida*): Is a member of the waterleaf family. The plant grows 1'-2' tall and the flowers are 1"



Purple Phacelia (*phacelia bipinnatifida*), James Henderson-www.2bnthewild.com/plants/H14.htm

across. Blooming in April and May, the plants are occasionally found in rocky woods at low-mid elevations. Purple phacelia is the tallest of the four phacelia species found in the Great Smoky Mountains. The lavender-blue flowers sit atop hairy glandular stems. The leaves are 2"-3" long and are divided into segments along a common axis. Each segment is then lobed or cleft. Very attractive



Maroon trillium (*trillium cuneatum*), Daniel Reed-www.2bnthewild.com/plants/H14.htm

when forming large colonies.

Maroon trillium (*trillium cuneatum*): Is a member of the lily family. The plant is 6"-12" tall with

flowers 2" long. This flower, the sessile-flowered maroon trillium, is occasionally seen in moist woods at low elevations. It blooms in April and May. The flowers maintain an erect, closed appearance, are reddish-brown to maroon, and are ill-scented. A similar species, *Trillium luteum*, is much more commonly found and has yellow, lemon-scented flowers. Trillium is derived from the Latin prefix "tri", meaning three. All trilliums have their parts in threes or multiples thereof. They have three leaves, three petals, three sepals,



Beaked Violet (*Viola rostrata*), Daniel Reed-www.2bnthewild.com/plants/H14.htm

three stigmas, and six stamens. Even the berries have three or six sides.

Beaked Violet (*Viola rostrata*): Is a member of the violet family. The plant is 4"-8" tall and the flowers are 1/2"-3/4" across. The plant is found occasionally in moist, rich woods, often near Eastern hemlock trees, at low-mid elevation. It blooms in April and May. This violet was named for the slender upward curving protrusion on the flower's lower petal. All violets have a spurred petal, but this flower's spur measures 1/2"-1" long, making it easy to distinguish from the others. This species is a "stemmed violet", so named because it has leaves that alternate along an above-ground stem (rather than a circular cluster of leaves on a leaf stem).

# Gardeners' Playdough

By Becky Peck (Class of 2003)

This past spring, I flipped through the new gardening catalogs with wild abandon. In one, I found a product I have never heard of: Seed Balls. I emailed the catalog and asked for more information. It seems that seed balls are really quite an old concept.

Seed balls are a mixture of red clay, humus, water and seeds. The balls are scattered directly onto the ground. They are particularly useful in seeding waste areas in your yard. They are also beneficial in arid areas. Some native North American tribes used forms of seed balls, but the current champion is a natural farmer named Masanobu Fukuoka.

The clay and humus prevents the seeds from drying out in the sun, getting eaten by mice and birds, or from blowing away. When enough rain saturates the clay, the seeds sprout and are protected within the ball where they have nutrients and beneficial soil microbes. The balls fall apart as the seeds within them begin to grow. No additional watering is necessary.

From [www.pathtofreedom.com](http://www.pathtofreedom.com) comes this recipe for seed balls:

Yield: 30-40 balls

1. Mix 3/4 cup of dry organic compost with 1/4 cup assorted seeds. Various wildflower and vegetable seeds can be used. To create a haven for beneficial insects, consider wild flower, mustards, radish and wheat combined.
2. Add the mixture from (1) above to about 1 1/4 cups of dry terracotta clay (finely ground, with no lumps). Do not use white or gray clay. Terracotta clay can be obtained from ceramic supply warehouses.
3. Mist with water while stirring until the mixture sticks together.
4. Take pinches of the mixture and roll it in your hands until it is the size of a penny.
5. Put the seedballs in the sun to dry for a day or two. A fabric "hammock" works well.
6. Broadcast the seedballs in the area you want to naturalize.

After the balls dry, you can use them immediately, or store them in a cool, ventilated place for several weeks. A minimum application of seed balls is one per square foot. As an added benefit, they save time in that you do not have to prepare the ground to receive the seeds.

The site suggests a few other seeds that attract beneficial insects:

Clover, alfalfa, alyssum, nasturtium, yarrow, carrot, dill, daikon, celery, fennel, caraway, chervil, gypsophila, coriander, calendula, anise hyssop, phacelia, agastache and amaranth.

There is actually a Seed Ball Consortium. At [www.seedballs.com](http://www.seedballs.com) is an article by Hillary Loring of the Consortium about "Seed Balls: A New Tool for Revegetation."

This may be one more way for us to optimize our time during the summer months by preparing seedballs during the dead of winter. Save your seeds this summer for next summer's new adventure! First we had heirloom seeds, and now heirloom methods. I see a pattern.

# Helping your plants survive the heat

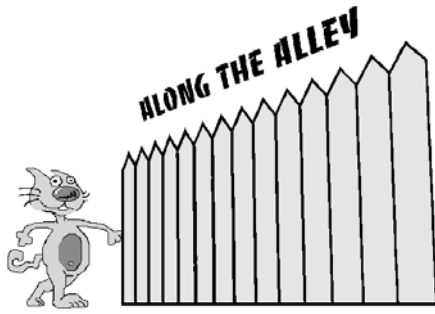
By Becky Peck (Class of 2003)

Are your plants ready to tackle a hot, dry Kansas City summer? A plant's chance of survival in our Kansas City heat and humidity is improved dramatically if you select the right plants. Some familiar flowers that stand up well in heat and have some degree of drought tolerance are coneflower, yarrow, sedum, sage, iris, yucca, daylily, liatris (gayfeather), gaillardia (blanketflower), rudbeckia (black-eyed susan), dusty miller, euphorbia, Mexican sunflower, coreopsis and silver mound. Many of these old favorites now come in new colors. Coneflowers can be found in yellow, orange and purple. Sedum now comes in black with red flowers. A native plant is one indigenous to our area and it will be more likely to survive our environment than any other. Information on these plants can be found at [HYPERLINK "http://www.grownative.org"](http://www.grownative.org) [www.grownative.org](http://www.grownative.org).

However, even drought-tolerant plants need adequate water. For best results, water at the ground level with a slow soaker hose. This is a hose that allows a slow and steady drizzle of water to escape through numerous small holes. Overhead watering results in water on the leaves, which promotes disease. It is much better to have one thorough soaking per week than to give lots of small drinks of water to your plants. Deep watering encourages the roots to go down deep where it is cooler and more moist. The best time to water is the early morning hours.

To preserve the moisture you have, hold down weeds, and add needed organic nutrients to your soil, mulch. Keep the mulch away from touching the stem of the plant, where it could encourage disease as it decomposes. You can purchase mulch, or just use

Heat continued on page 8



By Joanne Couture, Class of 1991

*Play Garden Jeopardy (Test your entomology skills): This garden pest occurs as females only during spring and summer, when giving birth to live young. Males are produced in late summer when mating is necessary to bear overwintering eggs. WHAT IS...? (Solution at end of article)*

### Welcome two new “transplants”

After seventeen years in St. Louis, Karen Cox and her husband have returned to the Brookside area of Kansas City. She is adding a bur oak, serviceberry, arrowwood viburnum, elderberry, and deciduous holly to provide a bit of shade for her sunny garden. Their property came with a pond (her husband added some small goldfish and koi) and an “odd-looking waterfall coming out of the back fence line.” Karen, a St. Louis-trained MG and “native plant lover,” is a director of the Missouri Prairie Foundation. “Most of my own garden will always be planted for bloom sequence to attract hummingbirds, butterflies, pollinators, and seed-eating birds. But she also “succumbs to any and all annuals.” Favorites: *Agastache* ‘Shades of Orange,’ *Anisacanthus* ‘Pumpkin,’ *Salvia leucantha* ‘All Purple,’ *Stachytarpheta* ‘Coral,’ *Salvia* ‘Freida Dixon,’ and *Cuphea* ‘David Verity.’ A general horticulturist and certified arborist, Karen’s rebuilding her business here.

Pat Glover, as a Kentucky MG, was involved in a “unique, three-state program (Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio) using the resources of the three

states” which conjoin in that area.

“My volunteer work was preparing a bulletin about the history, lore and care of ten annuals that grew in the area.” A pastor of the United Church of Christ, Pat was transferred to a church in Enon, Ohio and joined the local MGs, staffing the Hot Line and writing articles for the local newspaper. Attending several sessions of the local Ohio MGs, Pat “found my calling, which brought me full-circle to my roots”—vegetable gardening while growing up in a small family farm in Hinkley, Ohio. Pat now has two 4 X 10 raised beds in her Blue Springs garden, “experimenting to see how long into the season I can grow vegetables.” She’s also experimenting with a unique way of growing potatoes. Forming a tall cylinder of chicken wire lined on the bottom with newspapers, she tucks potatoes into a blanket of straw, adding to it as the vines grow. We’ll print her results in the next “Alley” report. A Missouri transplant since last October, Pat now lives at a local retirement facility for Church of Christ pastors.

Lynn Israel (‘05) misses the fifty-six roses in her former California garden. Born in Independence, she now lives in Raytown, where she has “the beginning” of a rose garden (an English rose, ‘Guinevere,’ is a favorite), plus a “pretty nifty” hosta garden with fern and columbine under dogwoods and redbud. Thornless blackberries and blueberries thrive on an old compost site. “Boy, have they flourished! Woo-Hoo!” (But all MGs have tales of woe. Ask Lynn about her \$1200 lawn or the stone patio she “browbeat” her children into constructing). Lynn is busy as administrative assistant at a local bank, plus spending time with her five children and seven grandchildren. Vacation time means back to northern California, visiting her daughter and some grandchildren.

Sara Scheil (‘04) does not have the

popular rain garden, but she does catch nature’s gift with three, fifty-five gallon white plastic barrels. Husband Paul sealed the top lids, turned them upside down, then fitted kitchen strainers into the new tops to keep out debris and mosquitos. The eaves’ spout empties into the strainers. Bottom spiggots provide instant, free water for her veggie crops: everything from spring greens to eggplant, kale, lima beans, squash, peppers, turnips—and purslane!

*Portulaca oleracea*, “high in Omega-3 for high cholesterol, can be used raw in salads and cooked in soups, stews or casseroles”, said Sara, adding, “I learned all this from Wild Edible classes at Burr Oak Woods.” To preserve, wash, drain, and place the leaves on a cookie sheet and freeze. Later, store in freezer containers.

**NOTE: *Stalking the Wild Dandelion: A Guide to Wild Edible Plants*** warns that the similar, wild spurge is toxic. But spurge is wiry and oozes milky sap when broken, while purslane is fleshy and succulent.

Marilyn Joy (‘05) has started a new front-yard perennial garden. A shrub rose is a focal point, surrounded by burgundy ‘Stella d’Oro’ daylilies, dwarf fountain grass, liatris, spiderwort, three ‘Miss Kim’ lilacs, and ‘Gold Mound’ spirea’. To fill in flower boxes and an existing bed of agastache, white phlox, campanula ‘Purple Sensation’ and mullein verbasicum, Marilyn adds overwintered geraniums, plus annuals grown from seed: snapdragons, nasturtiums, alyssum, moonflower vine, and amaranthus. This summer, she’s sharing her home-seeded Brandywines and Cherokee varieties with folks who’ve never planted tomatoes before. Plus, she’s mentoring a future MG: her seven-year-old grandson; they’re propagating a honeysuckle bush that will be cut off the mother bush and planted in his

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**Alley continued from page 4**

garden.

Kim Dyer ('05) works in the greenhouse of a large local nursery. Like other MGs who participate in Hotline and "Ask the Gardener" booths, Kim hears some doozies from the public: "I want a plant that comes in all colors, doesn't need watering, and blooms all summer. I don't want to trim it or transplant it. It also has to come back the second year." "I want some blue annuals for the sun and yellow for the shade." [easier to reverse that order!]. "I want a perfect, red monarda that is exactly 28" tall to finish the garden." [Kim wonders, "When is a garden ever "finished"?]. "I have only 1-1/2" of soil because of rocks. I want something to grow there. But I don't like sedum." "I want something fragrant that doesn't attract bees." When not puzzling over impossible questions from clients, Kim was busy this spring preparing her Levasy property for the MG Tour. Her gardens are cleverly designed to make the extensive, surrounding lawn mowable. Kim treasures plants inherited from her grandmother: a "nameless" iris that "smells exactly like grape Kool-Aid" and "ancient" peonies. She also favors *heuchera* 'coral bells' and Asiatic lilies—and anything in pink!

Kauffman Memorial Gardens, near UMKC, showed off some striking plants in late May—Fringed loosestrife *Lysimachia ciliata* 'Firecracker,' the perennial *Salvia sylvestris* 'May Night,' and *Stachys marantha* 'Rose Big Betony,' whose tall, pinkish plumes thrusting out of crinkled, green leaves were abuzz with bees. Sad news: Kauffman gardeners and regular visitors mourned the loss in April of their beloved resident cat, Rocky, apparently chased into nearby traffic by roving dogs. The Conservatory seems forlorn without Rocky curled, napping around a container palm. They plan to adopt a new resident cat next winter, when the busy season tapers off.

The *KC Star* (4/6/06, A-1) announced what most local MGs already know:

"Defining Hardiness Zones Can Be Tricky." Are gardens north of the river in Zone 5, while those in Midtown or Blue Springs in warmer Zone 6? A few years ago, the USDA paid the American Horticultural Society \$60,000 to revise the zonal map. But it was later rejected when it created an uproar, especially among nursery owners who feared "customers would gamble with the new zones and try to grow plants more suited to southern climates." For example, Nikko blue hydrangeas, crape myrtle or mimosa trees might be OK in Independence, but questionable in Kearney. The USDA still has not agreed on a new map. But local MGs know the infamous vagaries of local weather—the "October Surprise" snowfall, the devastating icestorm, the mild winters when honeybees are foraging on warm January days. The *Star* wisely concluded, "Each garden is a series of microclimates where growing conditions can differ."

"Alley" readers: Anyone tried the newly advertised Rootblast, whose "amazing formula" claims to produce "award-winning plants. . . even in bad conditions, clay or gravelly soil"? It makes EVERYTHING bigger and better. Even grass will be "greener, problem free." It was introduced this spring in local stores. This would be amusing to try, even for skeptical MGs. If you've tested it, please let me know. Results will be published in a future column.

Daylily aficionados: Want to try your hand at hybridizing? These suggestions come from "Made-to-Order Daylilies" in garden guru's P. Allen Smith's *Garden Home*, page 114:

1. Select parent daylilies.
2. Collect pollen from plant A and apply to plant B. Be sure to label

for future reference.

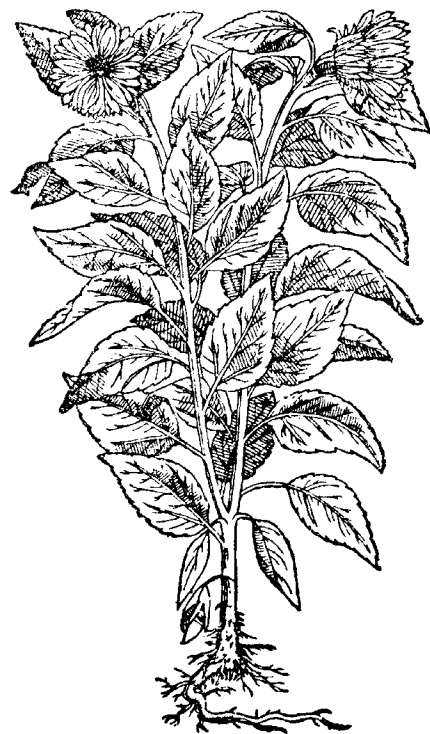
3. Once daylily B has flowered and formed a seedpod, collect the seeds that are black, shiny and plump.
4. Store seeds in an airtight freezer bag in the refrigerator for 6-8 weeks.
5. Finally, sow the seeds, preferably in a soil-less mix.
6. Transplant seedlings to selected locations.

The following anonymous Web ditty, dedicated to all local weed-fighters, is printed with apologies to our own MG import, Elaine Coleman, who is also a member of the Royal Horticultural Society:

There was a young Brit from Leeds  
Who foolishly swallowed some seeds

But the poor young lass  
When she was covered with grass  
Couldn't sit down for the weeds

-----  
*ANSWER: What are aphids?*  
(From *Pests and Diseases* by Pippa Greenwood, 2000)



582.—PERENNIAL SUNFLOWER.  
*HELIANTHUS MULTIFLORUS*. G. 613.4.  
Yellow. 6 ft. Fl., 4 in. Aug.—Oct.

# Bayou Bend—Much more than a garden

By Becky Peck, Class of 2003

The Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens is located near the center of Houston, like an oasis of the past with a skyscraper reminder of where you really are towering in the background. Ms. Ima Hogg was the daughter of the first native-born Governor of Texas. She and her brothers built what I would call a mansion on the Bayou Bend Property, where they lived together briefly before one brother died and the other left to be married. Ms. Hogg continued to live in the house, ultimately redecorating it into period-specific furnishings of a number of different periods in our American History. The antiques in this house are so unique, that no cameras, purses, etc. are allowed. All your “carryables” must be locked up in a locker before you can enter. As you gather your self-guided tape and headset, you are asked to either leave your jacket on or take it off now. They do not want you to sling your arms about in removing clothing and possibly injure one of the collectibles. You are probably thinking just how priceless can these antiques possibly be? Try a silver sugar dish made by Paul Revere! The early American paintings and decorative arts—furniture, ceramics, silver and glass—date from 1620 to 1876.

This has to be the best entrance to a home and garden that I have ever seen. Adjacent to the parking lot is a wooden suspension bridge over the Buffalo Bayou River to reach the entrance to the gardens. The formal gardens reflect the Country Place Era from 1880 to 1920 in American Landscape design. They gardens are an outgrowth of the classical architecture of the house. Classical muses are themes for the garden rooms. A Greek goddess and two muses from Greek mythology anchor the north gardens.

Credited with introducing azaleas to Houston, Ms. Hogg’s gardens make you feel like you are in southern Louisiana at an old plantation of southern charm. Throughout the grounds you will find magnolia trees, crepe myrtles, ferns, azaleas, dogwoods and other woodies associated with the south. Bayou Bend is the only formal public garden in Texas currently practicing organic gardening. Arriving at Bayou Bend only ten days into February found many of the aforementioned plants in bloom. I would estimate the first of March as a lovely time to get away from the gray and brown of the Kansas City winter and slip into a beautiful garden in robust bloom that has a huge piece of American history to share as well. Ms. Hogg was one of the founders of the Houston Symphony in 1913. Her appre-



The Clio Garden



The Diana Garden



The House

ciation for the finer things of life extend throughout this sensory experience as well. Some of the sights from early February are shown in the accompanying photos ... enjoy!

# Plan now for an abundant fall garden

By Kellie J. Rodriguez, Intern, Class of 2005

Don't think your gardening days are numbered just because we are in the dog days of summer. You still have plenty of things you can get in the soil to ensure your garden continues to be fresh and vibrant throughout the growing season. The late summer/early fall time offers a great selection of seeds and transplants that produce nutritious veggies and showy flowers.

The key to sowing and planting lies in a little math. October 15 is roughly the first frost date for the greater Kansas City area. For sowing seeds, use the "days to maturity" date on the back of the seed packet. Subtract the number of days from the first frost date and this will give you the last day to sow to ensure harvest. By August 1st we still have ten weeks of growing time left or a little over 70 days. This is perfect for successive plantings (planting a row every few days for a staged harvest) of fast-growing Spring radishes and exciting lettuce varieties, or a single planting of many other delicious vegetables.

Radishes need 25-40 days; leaf lettuce, 40-50 days; beets, 55-70 days; bush green beans, 50-60 days; zucchini squash, 50-60 days; cosmos, 60-70 days, and cucumbers, 50-70 days. Enjoy the dramatic beauty of Swiss chard then harvest to enjoy the taste!

Are you ready for a gourmet salad? Think salad greens, scallions, and baby beets. Try new things . . . have you ever grown tangy arugula? These are only a few of the types of things you can add in your garden now!

Another point to mention is that seeds unwillingly germinate when our soil temps are up in August. Prepare by watering the planting site a day or

so before sowing the seeds. Plant the seeds slightly deeper than you would in cool soils. Mist the sown seeds carefully. Consider placing dampened burlap bags over your newly sown seeds until they germinate and then remove the bags. Check often! Provide timely watering for vigorous growth and protect from the grueling heat by staking canopies, if needed, over those cool season crops. A little work equals an excellent reward later.

Never leave an empty spot—plan for continued harvest until that frost date. Don't hesitate to pull out plants that have passed their prime. Compost them and replant with seeds or trans-

plants that you still have time to harvest. And if surprised by an early frost, don't fret! Use loose straw or leaves to protect your plants.

A little planning will ensure a dynamite garden. Don't forget the cooler weather is great for planting perennials, trees, and shrubs. Several cool-season annual transplants are nice to set out, as well, such as pansies. Plant bulbs for a big spring show. Lawns need special attention to prep it for the cold weather too. Even city dwellers who love container gardening can produce fall harvest and drama. What are you waiting for?

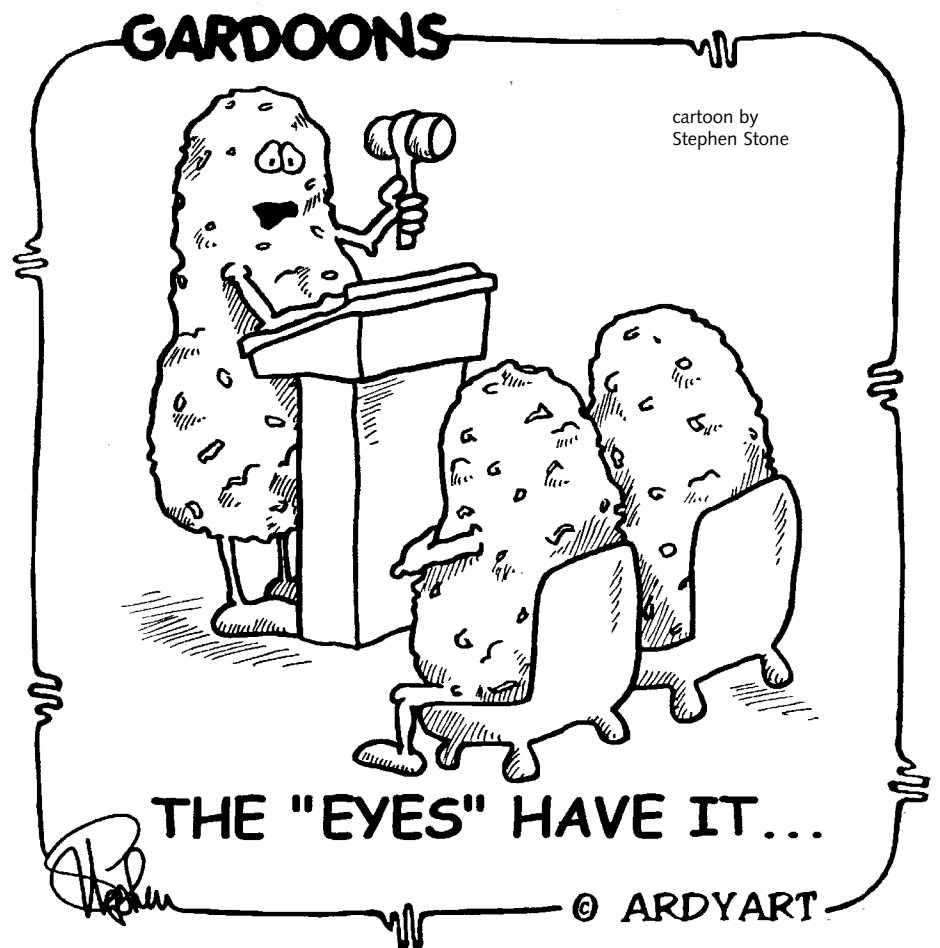




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**Extension**

# Drought relief for home gardens

By Lala A. Kumar, Horticulture Specialist

The KC area is facing a drought. Rainfall was below normal for May and July. Moisture reserves in the subsoil are fairly low. The effects of the drought are quite visible in the gardens, and have been compounded by the heat. Signs of drought and heat are prominent on trees and shrubs and less prominent in lawns due to some rain from time to time. Some of the common signs of drought on tree and shrubs are: dropping of leaves, sparse foliage, pale leaves and scorched leaf margins. Even large trees will benefit from water. Lawn irrigation has very little impact on large trees. As responsible gardeners, we should maintain plants while conserving water. The following suggestions may help:

- Irrigate flowering plants first since they have the greatest need for water.
- Newly planted trees and shrubs should be watered on a weekly basis. A rough estimate will be 25-35 gallons of water per week.
- Water slowly and deeply as clay soil can absorb 0.2 to 0.5 inches of precipitation per hour. A soaker hose can be efficient for watering.
- Add a 2-3 inches deep layer of bark mulch around all newly planted trees and shrubs. Straw mulch can be used for vegetables.
- Big trees can be irrigated every 2-3 weeks. As a rough guide, a tree with a canopy of 20 feet diameter may need 100 gallons of water per tree every 2-3 weeks. Try to irrigate about 50 percent of the drip line away from the trunk.
- If you have been watering your cool season grasses on a regular basis or at regular intervals, continue watering 1.5 inches of irrigation every two weeks to maintain hydrated

grass crowns. The main objective is to keep a hydrated grass crown so that it will recover in the fall.

- For hot season grasses, water 1 inch of irrigation every two weeks to maintain hydrated grass crowns.

Watering guides are for drought survival and not for optimum growth and production. Water discharge from a faucet can be easily measured by collecting water in a gallon milk jar and recording the time. Controlling the knob can control the flow of water. For example, for a new tree I would suggest to keep the flow at 2 gallons per minute and apply 30 gallons in 15 minutes. During the drought, the goal should be to keep trees, shrubs and lawns alive with restricted water supply.

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**Heat continued from page 2**  
your grass clippings.

If you are putting your plants in pots, purchase some water retention pellets at the garden store. These are mixed into the soil as you plant. Do not fill the pot to the brim, as the pellets absorb moisture, expand, and cause the soil line to rise. The moisture they hold is then released to the plant as needed.

Container color matters. Black pots absorb heat, where white ones reflect it. Clay pots are porous and lose moisture quickly, where plastic tends to retain it. Cement surfaces, like patios and sidewalks, also reflect additional heat on your plants.

If you have located a plant in a place where it isn't thriving, don't be afraid to move it somewhere else. Shock to the plant is lessened if you move it during the cool evening, water it amply and protect it from direct sun until it settles in.

Follow these simple tips and proudly show your plants' colors throughout the hot, dry Kansas City summer!