



Digging It!

February, 2008

Seeds For Thought...

A Message from the Agent

In January, the Master Gardeners met at the Booneville Senior Citizens Community Building. Beverly Duke presented a program on Butterfly Gardening. She handed out brochures and printouts, and as a bonus, gave away plants that she grew from cuttings. The members learned the names of over 60 species of butterflies found in Arkansas, and received information on their feeding, flight, thermoregulation and mating. Beverly taught the group how to turn a small space into an environment conducive to butterfly activity including favorable plants, sun availability, and water. Rocks in full sun are necessary, since butterflies are cold-blooded and can not regulate their body temperatures. Furthermore, Beverly informed the group about caterpillar food plants, which would enable anyone to see the joy of nature, as a caterpillar metamorphosis into a butterfly.

In February, the Master Gardeners met in Paris at the Community Outreach Building. There were many new faces in attendance. After a meet and greet session, Elizabeth Patty gave a program on the early growing season beginning in February. Be prepared to protect your new growth from a cold snap. Have garden blankets available for small plants. For large plants, use extra mulch to keep the soil temperatures from fluctuating too much. Ample moisture is key, even in cold temperatures.

The first Monday of the month, the Master Gardener Club meets in Booneville or Paris. For more information on their programs or horticulture practices, be sure to attend the meetings. Call the Extension office for more information.

Master Gardening Events

- River Valley Lawn and Garden Show – Fort Smith – March 14-16. Open to the public, their website is <http://rivervalleygardenshow.org>.
- Master Gardeners State Conference – Springdale – May 29-31. Early registration is due on April 1. Active members can register until March 3. Others may register after March 3. All registration closes on May 9. You have three ways to register:
 1. Online at https://www.meetingsintherock.com/reg/imgc/default_new.asp. Pay by credit card and be registered immediately.
 2. You can print the form from the website after it has figured your costs. Mail the form in with a check or credit card information.
 3. Get the registration form from Extension. Mail form with your check.



**Logan County
Master Gardener
Contributor:**
Elizabeth Patty

Booneville Office

#24 Courthouse
Booneville, AR 72927
Phone: (479)675-2787
Fax: (479)675-4086
E-Mail: loganb@uaex.edu

Paris Office

#15 Courthouse
Paris, AR 72855
Phone: (479)963-2360
Fax: (479)963-2360
E-Mail: loganp@uaex.edu

David Moseley
County Extension Agent –
4-H / Agriculture

PLANT OF THE MONTH

MOUNTAIN LAUREL (*Kalmia latifolia* L.; Heath family; Ericaceae) is a round-topped evergreen shrub, usually 4-10 feet high, which occasionally becomes a small tree.



The many-flowered clusters of blooms, 4-5 inches across, open in May. Each individual cup-shaped flower, white or pale rose and less than an inch across, is faintly imprinted with purple dots. Calico-bush is one of the shrub's common names, the flowers being likened to polka dotted calico. Spoon-wood is another.

The Indians made spoons and trowels from the wood of the root, which is soft and easily worked when newly dug and becomes hard and smooth when dry. Kalm, for whom Linnaeus named the plant, took an Indian-made spoon of mountain laurel home with him as a souvenir of his American travels.



Latifolia is the Latin for "broad leaved." The shrub belongs, as do the broad-leaved rhododendrons, to the Heath family - hence *Chamaerhododendron*. Native range: NE to Florida and Louisiana. Zone 3.

Source: *Plants of Colonial Williamsburg* EP

Fragrant Flowering Gifts

Grow your own floral gifts for every occasion. Try pebble and water plants such as easily grown Lilly-of-the-Valley, Paperwhite and Paperyellow Narcissus and French Roman Hyacinths, available in autumn catalogs and garden centers.

Lilly-of-the-Valley flowers before other Hyacinths. Narcissus bulbs should be two inches in diameter.

Lily-of-the-Valley flowers within twenty-one days and can be scheduled for various occasions. Start them about January 23 for Valentine giving. Narcissus takes about five weeks; Hyacinths two months or more. Use any watertight container. Yard sales would be a good source for a pretty goblet or bowl. The container should be deep enough for root development and allow six inches for Lilly-of-the-Valley, four inches for Narcissus, and two for Hyacinths.

They are grown in shredded sphagnum moss and supported with clean pebbles. Trim ready rooted pips back to five inch lengths, shuck bulbs of dead roots and loose paper jackets. Narcissus will benefit from a brief period of refrigeration before planting. Place bulbs in bowls three-fourths filled with pebbles, crowd them without touching and pack in more pebbles. Add water to bulb bottoms and cool until roots are firmly anchored. Vigorous roots promote sturdier stems and abundant flower clusters. Should bulbs rear up on stile like roots, gently push them back into place and secure with more pebbles.

Hyacinths are planted the same way with their noses protruding.

Lilly-of-the-Valley pips are started by packing a handful of moist moss around each rootstock. Cover roots but not the sprouts. Thoroughly saturate the moss and withhold from direct sunlight until sprouts are about four inches tall.



A few lumps of charcoal will help keep wet moss and pebbles from smelling sour. Don't be alarmed by yellow top growth during rooting process. Exposure to sunlight will soon green the sprouts. Premature blossoms may be temporarily retarded by cool temperatures above freezing; also, extra pips and bulbs may be stored in a cool place until needed.

Inexpensive seasonal figurines give a finish touch to flower bowls. With your gift, enclose a card briefly stating that blossoms will keep longer in a cool, sunless location. Explain also that spent Narcissus and pips should be discarded but Hyacinths will bloom again outdoors.

EP

CHRISTMAS CACTUS

If your cactus is not blooming, try moving it to an area that is cooler at night and not light at night. A good mix to pot your cactus in is equal parts of loam, rotted barnyard manure, brown peat and sand.

Water generously through warm weather, adding soluble house plant fertilizer once a month. Water less in fall and winter.



EP

AFRICAN VIOLETS

Drooping leaves and upright centers are indications of insufficient light. Regular watering, good drainage and fertilization are a must. Water without getting the leaves wet. A pot with a reservoir for water or setting pots in a shallow container of water is a good method of watering. If setting pots in a shallow container, let set about twenty minutes; carefully turn the pot to drain out all excess water. Also when repotting, a wick can be inserted so it is in the bottom one third of the pot, run the wick out of the drain hole and into a container of water. It will "wick" the water as needed. I use a liquid detergent bottle to water my plants. I use 1/2 the recommended liquid fertilizer. I can better control the water and not get it on the leaves. The excess drains into the reservoir. I use the pots with the reservoirs. My mother always has the most beautiful African violets and I had a brown thumb until I started this method of watering. *EP*

HOW PLANTS GET THEIR NAMES

Botany, the science of plant life, has its own glossary. Begun when Latin was still the international language most widely used by scientists and learned men in Europe, this glossary is in Latin-not classical Latin but an expanded form used since the Middle Ages for many purposes. Plant names stem from other languages, many from the Greek. Along with geographical and personal names, these plant names were, and still are, "Latinized" in botanical writing. *EP*



PRUNING



To prune or not to prune? This is a question that gardeners face often. Pruning is accepted practice for the orchard, fairly frequently carried out in the rose garden, but rather haphazard elsewhere.

REASONS FOR PRUNING:

- ▶ To train the plant
- ▶ To maintain health
- ▶ To improve the quality of flowers, fruit, foliage, or stems
- ▶ To restrict growth

The height of the lowest branch can be from a few inches above the ground to 7 to 12 feet above the

ground. The removal of the lower limbs is done gradually, usually beginning in the nursery and continuing for several years after transplanting until the desired height is reached. For greatest strength, branches selected for permanent scaffolds must have wide angle of attachment with the trunk. Branch angles of less than 30 degrees from the main trunk result in a very high percentage of breakage while those between 60 and 70 degree have a very low breakage rate.

Major scaffold branches of shade trees should be spaced at least eight inches and preferably 20 to 24 inches vertically. Closely-spaced scaffolds will have fewer lateral braches. The results will be long, thin branches with poor structural strength. Radial branch distribution should allow five to seven scaffolds to fill the circle of space around a trunk. Radial spacing prevents one limb from overshadowing another, which in turn reduces competition for light and nutrients. Remove or prune shoots that are too low, too close, or too vigorous in relation to the leader and branches selected to become scaffold branches.

Source: U of A Master Gardener Handbook EP

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

May 29 -31 --State Master Gardener meeting in Springdale. Keynote speaker will be Roger Swain, former host of PBS's "The Victory Garden."



PINE RIDGE NURSERY OPEN TO PUBLIC - SPRING, 2008 DATES

Open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

March 15, 29; April 12, 26; May 10, 17; June 14.

Open from 12 Noon to 5:00 p.m.

March 16, 30; April 13, 27; May 11, 18; June 15.*EP*



Our Deepest Sympathy

The Master Gardeners send their sympathy, love and prayers to Sheila Brandt and her family on the recent loss of her son. Words are inadequate. - *EP*

All meetings and activities announced in this newsletter are open to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communications of program information (large print, audiotapes, etc.) should notify the county Extension office as soon as possible prior to the activity.

February	March	April
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Get garden planning information from Extension Office ●Strawberries ●Horseradish ●Carrots, Broccoli ●Compost ●Cabbage/Collards ●Brussels Sprouts ●Swiss Chard, Beets ●Radish, Lettuce ●Kale, Mustard, Turnips ●Irish Potatoes, Onions ●English Peas, Spinach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Okra seedlings in greenhouse ●Pepper seedlings in greenhouse ●Sweet Potatoes in hot bed ●Asparagus ●Pak Choi, Lettuce ●Carrots, Kohlrabi ●Radish, Cauliflower ●Cabbage, Broccoli ●Sweet Corn ●Mustard, Turnips ●Swiss Chard, Beets ●Irish Potatoes, Onions ●Spinach, Garden Peas ●Sweet Corn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Watermelon ●Basil ●Asparagus ●Sweet Corn ●Squash, Melons ●Okra, Peppers ●Cucumbers ●Sweet Potatoes ●Eggplant ●Dill, Tomatoes ●Beans (Snap & Pole) ●Kohlrabi, Broccoli ●Cabbage, Collards ●Swiss Chard ●Lettuce, Radish, Beets
