



Master Gardener News

A monthly publication of the St. Louis Master Gardeners

September 2005

Calendar of Events

September 3-5th Japanese Festival at MBG

September 17th- 19th Master Gardener State Conference, Kansas City, MO

September 22nd – Autumn begins

September 24th – 25th Dahlia Society Show at Ridgway Center 9-5 p.m.

September 27th MG Advisory Committee Mtg. EECC Bldg. 1-3 p.m.



What's Inside

Best of Missouri Market showcases Master Gardeners at their best

Get out your thinking cap...nominations are being sought for MG of the Year...

Second crop of broccoli? Read John Stephen's Q&A

Create an outdoor room...check out Holly Park's book review

Who wants to write for the Post Dispatch?

A Word from the Editor, by Stacy Rolfe

I finally did it. I took my own advice that I so freely give and snapped pictures of my yard from every which way. I have digitally caught the good, bad and ugly of how it looks in today's environment, as well as how it looked in its happier growing weeks of early summer. Now, along with my gardener's journal which I have had on hand for the past two years, I am going through and recording my own notes of how things look. What's blooming? What performed well this year? What underperformed? What needs dividing and what looks thin? These notes along with my pictures will better guide me as I lay out my footprint for next year's landscape. I believe that all gardeners enjoy the variety of faces that our

gardens can wear. Like our children, some faces we like, others need to go to time out. Next year, I'd like to minimize those time out faces. Having a recorded document of my likes and dislikes with pictures to support my temperamental memory should give me a nice framework to shake things up a little come next spring.



MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

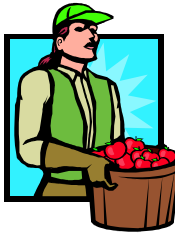
To provide research-based horticultural information to the public for community service and gardening pleasure.





St. Louis Post Dispatch has on-line Q&A possibility...

Have a hankering to go online to answer questions from St. Louis-area gardeners? The St. Louis Post-Dispatch's web site, STLtoday.com, is looking for a Master Gardener to monitor its online "Garden Talk" forum and write a weekly Q&A column to field two or three questions of general interest each week, online exclusively. Mary Reedy and Anita Joggerst both have given the forum master turns. But it does take some time to do so. If you think you're interested, go to www.stltoday.com/gardenga to see recent columns or www.stltoday.com/gardentalk to see the forum. Or call Kurt Greenbaum at the Post-Dispatch - 314-340-8123 -- for more information.



Best of Missouri Market has a few opportunities available...

If you missed the initial sign-up for the Master Gardener booth at the Best of Missouri Market, it's not too late to sign up to take a turn at the cider press! BOMM will be held October 1st – 2nd at the Missouri Botanical Garden. Volunteers are needed to help operate the electric cider press, decorate the booth and field general gardening questions from the public. All volunteers are encouraged to wear their badge and MG shirt, or a yellow shirt.

Hours needed are Friday, September 30th 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.; Saturday October 1st 7:00 – 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.; Sunday October 2nd 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Please contact Dan Litsch at 636.938.5487 to coordinate your volunteer hours and availability.

Tennyson, Leon Zickrick and Gordon Gosh who handled the braut barbeque. It was a fun and informative time and we thank you for all your effort. Kemper Center Staff



Bulbing Help

The Garden's Membership office is asking for some help from four to six Master Gardeners to assist with the Thursday, September 15, 2005 Members' Day program on bulb gardening. The program starts at 11:00 am in the Shoenberg auditorium and then moves out into the Samuels and Heckman Bulb Garden. Bulb expert, Jason Delaney will be leading a discussion on cultural practices and bulb garden design, Master Gardeners will help to answer questions in the bulb gardens. If you are interested, call Brenda Zanola in the Membership office at 577-0879.

Nursery Day Thanks!

Merci

The 10th Annual Nursery Day event organized through the Kemper Center was a huge success with 180 attendees from nurseries, garden centers and related greens businesses in the St. Louis area. We want to thank a special group of Master Gardeners who helped make it possible by their help and organization. Thanks go to Linda Kalicak, Don McQueen, Sophie Conner, Jack Lane, Ann Robison, Harold



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Q&A with John Stephens



Q: How can I tell how much water is being delivered by my new irrigation system?

A: Place several short, straight-sided containers in the area being serviced by the system. Operate the sprinklers for a timed interval. Measure and record the depth of water in each container. An average of these values will give you a pretty good estimate of the amount of water, in inches, being delivered to your garden.

Q: What could be causing large numbers of gray-green leaves to be falling from my burning bushes?

A: The foliage of burning bush, *Euonymus alatus*, is often attacked by the common spider mite. When resident populations become high, as during hot, dry periods, discoloration and leaf drop often becomes pronounced. This problem can usually be prevented by semiweekly washing the plant foliage with a forceful spray of water.



Q: How can I speed up the ripening of grapes in my garden?

A: Other than offering normal care, there's nothing a gardener can do to accelerate the rate of ripening of grapes. One can, however, improve quality of fruit and prevent bird damage by bagging. Using brown paper bags of suitable size, cover the clusters of unripe fruit, and securely tie the bags to the grape vines. Closely watch your fruit as it approaches harvest.

Q: Can I get a second crop of broccoli by cutting back my plants?



A: Some varieties of broccoli do indeed form small side heads after the main head has been harvested. These are slower to develop and usually inferior to the first head. New transplants for a fall crop can be set out until mid-August.

Q: How can I remove the spider webs from my yews?



A: The spiders, which constructed the webs on your yews, pose no problems. In fact, they might be classified as beneficial in that they are trapping various insects, some of which may damage the plants in your garden. Just leave the webs in place to weather away.

Q: How are colors of flowers related to the parent plant's medicinal properties?



A: If it exists at all, the relationship between flower color and medicinal properties is neither straightforward nor well-documented. To get a better understanding of medicinal properties of plants, visit your local library to consult books on medical botany.

Q: How can I get rid of that unpleasant odor that seems to be coming from the boxwood plants around my patio?



A: The foliage of the common boxwood, *Buxus sempervirens*, has a definite fragrance that many people find objectionable. Since the odor level is increased by wounding, avoid trimming your plants during "patio season". There is nothing to be done to reduce the odor save replacing the plants with some species you find less malodorous.

Q: Do deer eat surprise lilies?



A: Supply your own answer; there seems to be disagreement about this.





Nominations Sought for Master Gardener of the Year

Nominations are being accepted at this time for Master Gardener of the Year.

This award recognizes the volunteer who has gone above and beyond with their level of commitment to the Master Gardener organization. If you know a MG who has exceptional qualities and should be considered for this award, please send a short paragraph to Phil Egart at: philip.egart@mobot.org by October 15. A ballot for voting on the MG of the Year will be in the November MG newsletter.



Book Review with Holly Parks

Dramatic Effects with Architectural Plants is billed as the first comprehensive guide to all aspects of planting and designing with architectural plants. The author's premise is these plants are the skeleton and framework of the garden, allowing you to create a garden that is striking year round.

Much of the book is devoted to achieving visual effects with the most attractive of these plants. Unfortunately, it has two flaws for the Midwestern gardener. The first is that it tends to concentrate on very formal forms such as clipped cypress, pleached hedges, forcing shrubs in standards, topiaries and sculptured "meatballs" (in Mike Miller's terminology). The second problem is that many of the plants recommended will not do well in the Midwestern climate, as they are Mediterranean plants. This would include agave, camellia and acanthus.

The book is divided into sections to address specific topics in creating outdoor rooms: vista and framework, shape and form, foliage and texture, location and ambience. Each section has lavish photographs, which are sometimes printed in black and white to emphasize the plant shape. However, I found it frustrating that the photographs do not label the plants which are pictured.

A plant directory listing the plants that the author favors follows the topical section. Unfortunately, the individual plants do not include appropriate zone information – only comments such as tender or very hardy – forcing you to refer to the introduction to determine if they might work in the Midwest. An appendix with some "how to garden" subjects wraps up the book.

Dramatic Effects with Architectural Plants by Noel Kingsbury is a 144 page hardcover book published by The Overlook Press. It is available at the Missouri Botanical Garden gift shop for \$35.88 before your discount as a Master Gardener.





Bird Bath by **Connie Alwood**

Two years ago in September Glen Kraemer, who teaches classes on lawn care at the Missouri Botanical Garden, advised me to renovate my lawn--completely. "Mow, Roundup, dethatch, aerate and seed it. Then add water and wait." he said. I did. The reward came before a single seed sprouted into a leaf of grass. While in the watering stage of the process, I looked up into the late afternoon sky to watch one of birding's most spectacular sites--hundreds of Broad-winged Hawks migrating south for the winter.

In twenty-five years of birding I have only witnessed this spectacle ten times, for the conditions have to be just right. It has to be late September, the third week or so. The hawks need both a cold front to assist their flight and thermals to provide the buoyancy so that they need not actually flap their wings. They can just glide, from one thermal to another.

What the viewer needs is a hillside to see them. Usually two days after a cold front, when the wind has subsided and the sun is shining the birds will lift off from a deciduous forest where they have roosted for the night. You need not even get up early. Broad-winged Hawks don't migrate before 10:00am.

The Broad-winged Hawk is a small buteo that nests in deciduous forests throughout the eastern part of the continent from Florida to Canada. In the St. Louis area I have seen them nest in such places as Pere Marquette State Park and Castlewood State Park. Like most hawks they eat a wide variety of food, including small birds, mammals and even insects. In September they migrate south in flocks of a dozen to as many as 10,000 by the time they get to Texas. In Panama they can blacken the sky with their huge numbers. Many go on into South America as far south as Bolivia. In April--May they return to their nesting sites in North America.

I plan to aerate the lawn later this month. Every once in a while I'll be looking up.



Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes July 26, 2005 can be found at
<http://outreach.missouri.edu/stlouismg/minutes/minutes.htm>

Level II Training Guidelines, Approved Activities and Applications...

A new format for achieving MG Level II certification is now in effect. If you are interested in advancing to Level II, contact Phil Egart at 314.577.9441 or phillip.egart@mobot.org to receive information by mail or e-mail. The information sheet contains Master Gardener Level II Training Guidelines, Level II Approved Activities, and an Application for MG Level II Certification.

Those who have completed Level II Training need to do this in order to be recognized as having completed this training. Those wishing to complete Level II, must register first prior to taking classes.





Don't Forget to Turn Those Hours In!

MG Robert Weaver has published the first issue of The Gateway Gardener magazine, a free publication distributed through more than 100 locations throughout the St. Louis area, including garden centers, nurseries, florists and other green-industry businesses, as well as libraries, bookshops, and select coffee shops, bagel and bread shops and other locations. At Missouri Botanical Gardens, you can pick up your copy at the Garden Gate Shop or the Kemper Center for Home Gardening. See www.gatewaygardener.com for a complete listing of current distribution sites. MG Barbara Perry Lawton is a featured columnist in the magazine, joining a wide range of highly regarded professionals contributing sound gardening and lawn care advice targeted to the specific challenges of gardening in the St. Louis area.

The form to submit your volunteer hours can be found at <http://outreach.missouri.edu/stlouismg/who/hoursform.htm>. This form is to be used only by those who are not submitting their hours on line. If you have any questions, please call Phil Egart at 314.577.9441

St. Louis Master Gardeners Kemper Center for Home Gardening

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We would love to have Master Gardeners submit articles for Master Gardener News. Remember that articles are due no later than the 10th of the month. Please send copies to Stacy Rolfe (srolfe@charter.net). Letters may be edited for length or content.

Master Gardener News is published monthly for St. Louis Master Gardeners. Stacy Rolfe serves as Editor, assisted by contributors whose bylines appear in each issue.

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