



Master Gardener News

A monthly publication of the St. Louis Master Gardeners

October 2005

Calendar of Events

- October 1st & 2nd** – Best of Missouri at Missouri Botanical Garden 9:00 – 5:00 p.m.
- October 4th** – Advisory Committee Mtg. 1-3 p.m. Kemper Center
- October 9th** – Harvest Fest at Shaw Nature Reserve
- October 12th** – Continuing Education Class: Plant Diseases by Nancy Patkay, Manager of the Plant Clinic University of Illinois
1:00 -3:00 p.m. Kemper Center Classroom
- October 22nd & 23rd** – Orchid Society Sale/Lily Society Sale at Ridgway 9-5 p.m.
- November 9th** – Continuing Education, Visit to ORMI (Organic Recycling Mgmt., Inc).



What's Inside

- Marshall Manger Memorial Award
- Weeds a Problem?...check out Holly's book review
- What's Pleaching? Read John Stephen's Q&A
- Connie Alwood's tribute to "March of the Penguins"
- Need Hours Before the End of the Year?...See the Help Wanted Section

A Word from the Editor, by Stacy Rolfe

As I walk along and put my gardens to bed for the winter, I look at all the plants I have, marveling at the beauty of their delicacy and then I wonder to myself, why would anyone name a plant 'bleeding heart'? Was their heart bleeding when they made this plant's discovery? Did they think people wanted a plant that looked like a bleeding heart in their yard? And yet, why was the 'obedient plant' named so as well? Did this guy throw the towel in with his kids? Or his wife? And when he discovered this plant he said "Aha! Finally something that can't talk back to me? And where did 'blanket flower' come from?

I mean, it's not like in an emergency you can say, "Go get the blanket from that flower", it's not a linen closet. And yet I wonder. How about Cardinal Flower? Was this guy a Cardinal fan? Baseball or the bird? Or did he confess his sins to this plant? What gives? Fairy Fishing Rods...I'm not making this one up either. What's the deal? I mean come on! How about 'Sneezeweed'? Have you ever heard of such a thing? Where's the appeal with this one? Yeah, we're all racing out to get this plant. And then there's Stonecrop...don't even get me started on what was going on with this guy.



MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

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





Help Needed Inside and Out...

Gateway Greening is the recipient of a USDA grant which will allow us to work with area agencies to bring fresh produce into the inner city through community gardening, food preservation classes, and mobilizing local farmers to bring their home grown food into the city at a low cost to inner city residents. We will be constructing an urban farm to be used for the St. Patrick Center restaurant as well as to produce fresh food for distribution in St. Louis city communities. We will also construct a hoop house, a heated structure with a rounded plastic roof, to extend our growing season.

The hoop house will be located at Gateway Greening's outdoor office at 3815 Bell St. in St. Louis City. Vegetable and flower seedlings and starts will be grown in the hoop house for distribution to community gardens and neighborhood residents as well. The hoop house allows Gateway Greening staff and volunteers an opportunity to start "growing" earlier in the season and getting a head start on spring, therefore having more time to plant seeds. Our hoop house will be constructed with a thick plastic roof, a heated concrete floor, and an irrigation system. From construction to use of the hoop house, there is much opportunity for volunteer involvement.

Master Gardener involvement in the project is most welcome! Expertise and

interest will be needed this fall in the areas of concrete, electrical, irrigation systems, and carpentry to construct the hoop house, and on-going expertise and interest in seed propagation and hardening off seedlings in the future utilization of the hoop house. Please contact Renee Davidson—Community Development Coordinator at Gateway Greening for more information and/or to volunteer or to express your interest in the project. Volunteering with Gateway Greening counts toward your Master Gardener service hours. We look forward to meeting and working with you on this new project!



SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

St. Louis University Seeking Volunteers for Nutrition...

St. Louis University Gardens to Tables Project
Dietetic interns and graduate assistants work year-round with St. Louis children and their families in classrooms, school and university gardens, and summer camp. Their goal: nutrition education through food gardening.
Master Gardeners are needed to help prepare these nutrition educators. Could you do a short presentation or activity on one of the following topics?
Soil, Composting, Vermiculture, Weeds,

IPM, Beneficials, Gro-Tables, Herbs, Raised beds, Edible flowers, Common plant diseases, Extending the growing season and Planting considerations for our zones

Many programs will be on weekdays but please reply if you can help on weekends or evenings. Contact Marilyn Claggett 314 968-1653 or moann11@aol.com.

Monday, October 17, 9-12 noon:
Master Gardeners are also encouraged to help with the next monthly Garden Workday for the SLU garden at Rutger and Compton Avenues. We will clean up and amend beds and rows, roto-till, and ask you lots of questions about making our gardens better. Please join us if you can.



Kemper Center Volunteer Help

The Kemper Center is in need of a Master Gardener to work the front desk on a regular basis. We need some consistent coverage from 12:30 to 3:30 on Saturdays in October starting October 8th. This would be the afternoon shift and this person can expect to come every Sat thereafter.

Please contact Tammy Palmier at 314.577.9487



Marshal Magner State Conference Award Announced



The Advisory Committee has established a memorial to longtime Master Gardener Marshall Magner, who died in May. Known as the Marshall Magner State Conference Award, each year one St. Louis MG will receive paid registration to the Missouri State MG Conference. The MG will be chosen at random during the annual Holiday Party in December for the following year's conference registration fee.



Advisory Committee minutes for August 30, 2005 can be found at <http://outreach.missouri.edu/stlouismg/minutes/minutes.htm>



Holiday Party Date Set!

Mark your calendars now for the annual Master Gardener Holiday Party scheduled for Wednesday December 7, 2005 from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. in the Beaumont Room at Ridgway Center. Watch for more information in the November issue.



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: steven.cline@mobot.org by October 15. A ballot for voting on the MG of the Year will be in the November MG newsletter.



October Gardening Tip...

Continue watering your garden, especially evergreens, even if soil is dry.

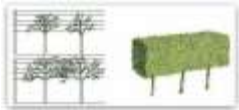




Q&A With John Stephens

Q: Can I divide my schefflera?

A: Schefflera, *Brassaia actinophylla*, usually grows as a single-stem, woody plant and cannot be divided. If your goal is size-reduction, you can prune the plant back to acceptable stature; if it's new plants, you can propagate schefflera by stem cuttings or by air layering. Schefflera is often propagated commercially via seeds, but since it rarely flowers in the house, this option isn't viable for the home gardener.



Q: What is pleaching, a term I read on the Missouri Botanical Garden website?

A: Pleaching is a long-term system of training trees, vines, or large shrubs to provide special effects such as overhead shade, vertical partitioning, or screens. It involves interweaving of branches and stems as well as the use of supporting members such as wires, slats, and stakes. An example of a pleached aerial hedge, at an early stage, can be viewed in the Baer Court at Missouri Botanical Garden.

Q: Will my new passion vine survive in the garden during the winter?

A: Although a few species in this large genus, (*Passiflora sp.*), of mainly evergreen, tendril-climbers and a few annuals, perennials, and trees are claimed to be hardy to USDA Zone 5,

most will not survive minimum temperatures below 40 or 45°F. Since you could not identify your plant, it might be best to treat it like *Passiflora caerulea*, a common houseplant sold in the St. Louis area. For an example of a more hardy passionflower, *Passiflora incarnata*, see the PlantFinder webpage at

<http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/Plant.asp?code=Q280>

Q: What do you experts think of the PeeGee Hydrangea?



A: *Hydrangea paniculata* is an old fashioned plant that seems to be coming into new favor. It is easy to grow and is known as the sun loving hydrangea. Numerous varieties are available; 'Tardiva' is being grown with success in the Kemper Gardens. It is one of the more cold hardy of the hydrangeas.

Q: Will the pumpkin plants, which are coming up all over my compost pile, actually produce fruit?

A: Yes, assuming the plants attain the flowering stage and the resulting flowers are pollinated. Since the season is so far advanced, there may not be sufficient frost-free time for the pumpkins to mature. After setting a few fruit, clip off the growing ends of the vines to channel maximum energy into fruit development.

Q: Will the leaves of my rubber plant heal up after being damaged by movers?

A: Damaged leaves seldom heal; they usually just become

more unsightly. Such leaves can be removed. After the plant has become established in its new location, you may want to reshape it by pruning to compensate for any major defects that were created.

Q: Is there any hope that my large white pine will survive after being struck by lightning in a recent thunderstorm?



A: Conifers are frequently damaged by the high internal temperatures generated in a lightning strike. Consultation with a professional arborist is recommended. Otherwise, a program of watchful waiting may be your only recourse.





Book Review by Holly Parks

Solving Weed Problems is a discussion of plants that you want to get rid of in order to improve your garden. Peter Loewer helps identify which plants are truly weeds and then shows you the best way to eliminate them. The text is easy to read – Mr. Loewer has a wry sense of humor which keeps you interested in every topic.

First the book spends a chapter on defining what is a weed. Mr. Loewer decides that a lot of the problem are 'exotics' or plants introduced from somewhere outside the native environment such as kudzu, leafy spurge and purple loosestrife. Many of the plants he discusses are now considered invasive species. The book covers a lot of topics you might not expect including the pollination of weeds, how long the seeds might live and how they are dispersed. Of course it covers how to fight weeds including safe chemical means of eliminating them. Thankfully, our ubiquitous Roundup is considered one of the 'safe' chemicals.

There are separate chapters on the worst weed trees in the country, shrubs, grasses and bamboo, annuals, perennials and mosses, vines, aquatic plants and lawns. Each plant is described and evaluated followed by the best method to eliminate them. Although there are a number of line drawings, the single flaw in this book is that it should contain more pictures of the actual weed. You may be surprised at some of the local weeds; he includes our burning bush, wintercreeper, English

holly and privets, for example, as weedy shrubs. Fountain grass, foxgloves and vinca minor are some more surprises. I found that not only was I not keeping the wild onions and clover under control; I have actually planted weeds deliberately!

Solving Weed Problems by Peter Loewer is a 282 page softcover book published by The Lyons Press. It is available at the Missouri Botanical Garden gift shop for \$14.95 before your 20% Master Gardener discount.



Bird Bath by Connie Alwood

Certainly children thousands of years ago jumped up on a rock or stood on a slope, threw themselves into the air, and flapped their arms as if they were wings. Their descent to earth was as disheartening as it is to today's young. We want to fly. We yearn to be birds. We see a hawk soar or watch a hummingbird zoom off in seemingly four different directions at once and we feel a pang of envy, a sense of inferiority even. Alas! we are earthbound. Of course, we can always take a plane. But every child knows that's not the same.

The irony is that birds don't necessarily want to fly. The hottest movie of this past summer has been about a group of flightless birds--penguins--who apparently gave up their ability to fly and settled for "marching" and swimming. Lots of other birds have also joined the penguins in their disdain for flying. It turns out that one of the main reasons for flight is not joy, but to escape from predators. Remove the predators and many species are quite content to keep

both feet on terra firma. Basically flying requires a good deal of the bird's energy.

Of the forty flightless birds in the world, most reside on islands, especially in New Zealand, which had no mammalian predators until man introduced them and himself about 1,000 years ago. Most of us are familiar with the flightless penguins, kiwis, and ostriches, but there's also a flightless parrot, duck, and even a cormorant. These birds have evolved wing bones that are small; they have flat breast bones instead of the rounded ones that would anchor the strong muscles needed for flight. They also have more feathers overall.

In many cases giving up the ability to fly was a bad decision. Several of New Zealand's flightless birds and those from other islands are extinct or endangered--none so ignominiously as the Dodo. Not only did our intrusion onto his island, Mauritius, send him into extinction, but we have even blamed him for becoming extinct.

The Dodo, Great Auk, and even those adorable flightless birds in "The March of the Penguins" may have given up the ability to fly, but children everywhere will wonder why.



Ornamentals – All Month

Plant spring bulbs among hostas, ferns, daylilies or ground covers. As these plants grow in the spring they will hide the dying bulb foliage.

Nuts or seeds of woody plants usually require exposure to 3 months cold before sprouting. This may be provided by outdoor planting in fall or “stratifying” in an unsealed bag of damp peat moss placed in the refrigerator.

Container grown and B&B trees and shrubs can be planted. Loosen the soil in an area 5 times the diameter of the root ball before planting. Mulch well after watering.

Fruits – All Month

Store apples in a cool basement in burlap sacks.

Vegetables – All Month

Sow cover crops such as winter rye after crops are harvested.

Turfgrass – All Month

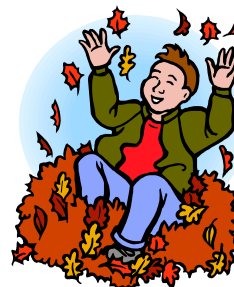
Seeding should be finished by October 15th.

Miscellaneous –

Week One: Fall color season begins.

Week Three: Begin peak fall color in maples, hickories and oaks.

Week Four: End of peak fall color.



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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