



# Master Gardener News

A monthly publication of the St. Louis Master Gardeners

April 2006

## Calendar of Events

April 10<sup>th</sup> – Arbor Day at Kemper Center 9:00

April 17<sup>th</sup> – Continuing Education Class  
MBG Children's Garden Tour  
Kemper Center Lobby 10:00 a.m.

April 19<sup>th</sup> – Continuing Education Class  
"All About Orchids"  
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Kemper Ctr.

April 25<sup>th</sup> – Advisory Committee Meeting  
EECC 1:00 p.m.

May 4<sup>th</sup> – Continuing Education Class  
Bird Gardening  
8:30 a.m. Location TBA



## What's Inside

Meet Mike Miller at Upcoming Book  
Signing at WBU

Seven Easy Steps to Create a  
Beautiful Butterfly Garden

Get Ready for the Great Perennial  
Divide!

What's Cooking in the Garden?

Those Crazy "Wild Ones" Have a  
New Contest for You...

## A Word from the Editor, by Stacy Rolfe

*I got out in my yard for the first time this weekend - and it felt good. The sun was shining, the air was warm and the dirt felt cool on my knees. I always find it reassuring to see new growth underneath all of the dead leaves. No matter how cold the winters are, no matter how much snow Mother Nature sends and despite the amount of foot traffic that our botanical friends have to bear, they forge through the winter and delight us each spring with their warm hearted glow of renewal. I needed to see this. I needed to see the rebirth of my yard. The rebirth of the memories of my yard as it has been in its glory and the promise of its return in the days to come. And as I was picking and pulling, raking and pitching I became*

*lost in my thoughts. I became caught up in the energy I was receiving from my plants and suddenly I was forming a plan in my mind. A plan for my overgrown garden in the back yard - the one I spoke about last month. I realized that what I enjoy doing most, being out in my yard, would be the perfect way for me to create a living memory garden of my father - a way for me to tenderly plant each and every plant as if I was planting a memory of a certain place in time. Each flower will have a story. Each statue a meaning and the individual tree to be planted will be the strength to carry it all. I have a sense of direction now and I can't wait to go down this path.*



MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

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





## Gateway Greening Needs Master Gardeners for the Great Perennial Divide

The Great Perennial Divide is a program that allows home gardeners to contribute excess perennials from their gardens to Gateway Greening. Gateway Greening sells these perennials at its annual plant sale April 28-29<sup>th</sup> at St. Louis Community College – Meramec. All remaining plants are distributed to the community gardeners from Gateway Greening's 170 community gardens. Gateway Greening needs volunteers for all aspects of the Plant Sale and the Great Perennial Divide. Volunteer opportunities include the following:

**Digging Crews:** Mid-March –April; digging crews are needed to drive to St. Louis residences to dig perennials from some of the area's most spectacular home gardens. Times are flexible and the commitment would be 3 hours per dig. Call Gwenne at Gateway Greening at 314.577.9484.

**Help at Collection Sites:** MG's are needed to help identify, label and care for plants at the following collection sites April 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>. Call the contact person listed in your neighborhood of interest:

### **Afton, Crestwood, Mehlville:**

Pat O'Neil 314.843.7744

### **Chesterfield, Creve Coeur, Maryland Hts:**

Patti Donovan 314.576.2938

### **Des Peres, Valley Park:**

Carol Wellman 314.966.8404

### **Hazelwood, Florissant, Ferguson:**

Nancy Senter 314.521.6534

### **Kirkwood, Sunset Hills:**

Gwenne Hayes-Stewart 314.966.8404

### **Lake St. Louis, St. Charles:**

Joan Grossman 636.561.4038

### **Ladue, Clayton, University City:**

Donna Steinhoff 314.995.9828

### **Town & Country, Manchester:**

Sue Reed 314.965.6813

### **Webster Groves, Brentwood, Maplewood:**

Tammy Behm 314.961.9942

### **Wildwood:**

Leigh Walker 636.458.2932

**Driver:** Volunteers are needed to transport plants to the plant sale April 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> and the Great Perennial Divide April 29<sup>th</sup>. Call Norm Leigh at 314.849.8730

**The Great Perennial Divide:** Located at the Carriage House 3815 Bell Ave. Help is needed to identify plants, organize and locate plants to correspond with community garden wish lists.

May 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

May 6<sup>th</sup> 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

There will be a pot luck lunch after work is done on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Please bring a dish to share!  
Call Renee Davidson at 314.577.9484.

**Plant Sale:** Volunteer to work at the plant sale Friday April 28<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Contact Renee Davidson at 314.577.9484.



Wild Ones has two opportunities for you...

Wild Ones Natural Landscapers is a national organization promoting biodiversity through the establishment of native landscapes. Our St. Louis chapter has two projects of interest to Master Gardeners:

Sunday, June 25<sup>th</sup> – Wild Ones teams with the Green Center in University City and Shaw Nature Reserve for the second annual Grow Wild Garden Tour. Volunteers are needed to act as hosts at native gardens on the tour and to help coordinate activities at the Green Center.

Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> - installation date for the winning garden in the Native Landscape Challenge. Volunteers are needed to help plant the winning garden. This project is jointly sponsored by Wild Ones, Shaw Nature Reserve and Missouri's Grow Native! program.

For more information on these opportunities, go to [www.grow-wild.org](http://www.grow-wild.org) and follow the links to the St. Louis Chapter, or contact Betty Struckhoff at 314.966.8404 or [bettystruckhoff@charter.net](mailto:bettystruckhoff@charter.net)





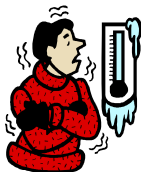
## Q&A with John Stephens

Q: How can I get rid of the mold that is growing on the walls of my basement plant room?



A: Long-standing moisture and/or high humidity conditions and mold growth go together. Try to determine the extent of involvement. If the areas are small, molds can be cleaned up using household bleach or similar products and reducing humidity in the basement. Such cleaning products must be used with proper protective equipment and good ventilation. If mold is extensive, professional help is recommended.

Q: Should my mandevilla be taken outside on these nice warm days?



A: No, mandevilla should be kept indoors until night temperatures can be expected to remain above 55°F. This is a good time to repot your plant, if needed, to restore vigor. Move it into a warm, bright location and begin to provide water and fertilizer on a regular schedule. New growth should begin soon.

Q: What can I do to make an area under my black gum tree, which is sometimes muddy, more attractive?



A: If possible, correct the intermittent drainage problem as the first step in improving the area around your black gum tree, *Nyssa sylvatica*. If this cannot be done, avoid traffic or other disturbance over the root zone. Since this is obviously already a marginal site for the species, take no actions that would increase the tendency toward "being muddy" such as mulching or planting ornamentals.

Q: How can I propagate an old dieffenbachia houseplant?



A: Dieffenbachia can be propagated with tip or stem cuttings or by air layering. Cuttings are generally easier. For example, a tip cutting 3-6 inches in length, taken in spring, planted in a moistened mixture of peat moss and perlite, maintained in bright, indirect light at about 70°F, will root in 4-6 weeks. It is helpful to enclose the cutting and its pot in a plastic bag to keep humidity at a high level during the process.

Q: What is a Sharon fern?

A: Sharon fern is synonymous with sword fern, *Nephrolepis exaltata*. The Boston fern, *Nephrolepis exaltata bostoniensis*, is a widely acclaimed mutation of this species.

Q: As a newcomer to the St. Louis area, I need to know what apple varieties do well here.



A: Many apple varieties are grown in Missouri. University Extension, University of Missouri at Columbia has published three guides G6021, G6022, and G6026 that bear on the answer to your question. These can be viewed at <http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/hort/g06021.htm>, <http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/hort/g06022.htm>, and <http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/hort/g06026.htm> respectively.



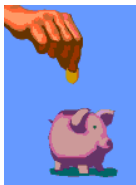


## Upcoming Events

Wild Ones, Shaw Nature Reserve, Grow Native Sponsor Native Landscape Challenge.

Tell your neighbors and friends or maybe your own yard is a candidate! This year, for the first time, the St. Louis area will have the opportunity to enter the Native Landscape Challenge. Visit the Shaw Nature Reserve website at [www.shawnature.org](http://www.shawnature.org) for entry form and complete instructions. One lucky winner will receive a garden makeover for his or her yard, which will include a professionally designed native landscape, up to \$1,500 worth of plant and landscape materials, and a volunteer-installed garden. Deadline for entries is June 15, 2006. The winner's garden will be installed on September 23, 2006. All entrants must be in a zip code starting with "631".

For more information, go to the website of any of the sponsoring organizations: [www.for-wild.org](http://www.for-wild.org) (go to St. Louis chapter) or [www.shawnature.org](http://www.shawnature.org) or [www.gronative.org](http://www.gronative.org) (click on workshops and events). You may also contact Betty Struckhoff at 314.966.8404 or [bettystruckhoff@charter.net](mailto:bettystruckhoff@charter.net)



## Save those Pennies!

All MBG Volunteers will receive a 30% discount at the Garden Gate Shop and the Little Shop Around the Corner on **April 7<sup>th</sup>**!

To take advantage of this sale, please show your volunteer ID badge.



**Mike Miller Book Signing at Wild Birds Unlimited, Chesterfield May 6<sup>th</sup>**

Popular local author and host of KMOX Garden Hotline will be at Wild Birds Unlimited in Chesterfield on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Miller will offer a brief overview of current gardening conditions then be available for questions and book signings. His most recent books, Month-by-Month Gardening in Missouri and Missouri Gardener's Guide: Revised edition will be available for purchase.

**Please call Wild Birds Unlimited to reserve your book copy at 636.537.5574.**



## All About Orchids Continuing Education Class April 19<sup>th</sup> 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Kemper Classroom

Don't miss this rare opportunity to spend time with Carol Gravens as she takes you for an inside tour of the orchid greenhouse! You will have the chance to see over 8500 orchid plants in three greenhouses, fondly known as the orchid range. Learn how to care, repot and maintain these delicate plants often overlooked because of their seemingly difficult temperament. Once you learn more about them you'll be guaranteed to keep one growing on your kitchen table.



**Meeting Minutes for February 28<sup>th</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting may be found at**  
<http://outreach.missouri.edu/stlouismg/minutes/minutes.htm>







## Gardening for **Butterflies**, **Beautiful Butterflies**

By  
Joyce Shoenberg  
MG Level 1 Trainee

For many of us, the attraction of wildlife adds immeasurably to the pleasures of gardening. My first small garden bed was created in relative ignorance but a few reliable perennials survived – daylilies, coneflowers, phlox, and a fragrant butterfly bush. The results reminded me of a “if you plant it they will come” scenario. How wonderful to watch butterflies of varying colors, sizes and decorative wing markings coming to feed and rest and pollinate during sunny afternoons.

In 2002 I attended an excellent presentation at the Butterfly House in Faust Park in Chesterfield about the plants and features to include in a garden designed for the aesthetic enjoyment, feeding and conservation of butterflies.

The Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House is an amazing place to visit and an always interesting place for learning. It opened in 1998, and merged with the Missouri Botanical Garden in 2001. Its’ mission is “to promote a better understanding and increased awareness of the natural world”. It provides touchable sculptures, outstanding exhibits of many fascinating invertebrates, learning classrooms and education programs, an engaging film about the behaviors of butterflies, a gift shop and two extraordinary environments for observing butterflies in

free flight.

I have come often to enjoy all of the visual pleasures of the lush diversity of plants in The Flight Conservancy and the beauty of the brightly colored butterflies in flight, or basking, or roosting, or perching, or nectaring, or puddling, or mating. There are anywhere from 50 to 70 tropical butterfly species in the glass flight house at any one particular time and the average number of butterflies is about 1200. On sunny days in particular, the air is filled with these delicate fluttering organisms flying in captivating aerial displays. At the end of the flight house pathway, guests find a glass “Miracle of Metamorphosis” case and are awed as they view butterflies emerging from carefully mounted chrysalides.

While the flight house is a marvelous exhibit of the habitat and behaviors of tropical butterflies, the outdoor Butterfly Garden is a wonderful “backyard” demonstration of plants that provide wildlife habitat and plants that serve as host plants for caterpillars and nectar sources for adult native butterflies. Volunteers are often available to help point out caterpillars and chrysalides. Lucky for me, signs are easily visible for plant identification and literature is available with a list of the best nectar-rich plants that attract adult butterflies as well as a list of host plants and the butterflies they attract for egg-laying.

In a condensed version, with more information available at the Butterfly House and at [www.butterflyhouse.org](http://www.butterflyhouse.org), these are the SEVEN EASY STEPS for butterfly gardening.

1. PLANT YOUR GARDEN IN FULL SUN
2. PLANT BUTTERFLY-ATTRACTING FLOWERS.
3. INCLUDE HOST PLANTS IN YOUR GARDEN.
4. USE COLORFUL PLANTS
5. DON'T USE CHEMICAL PESTICIDES.

6. LEARN ABOUT NATIVE BUTTERFLIES.
7. ENJOY!

In my garden, I have found that Swamp Milkweed has been very effective as a food source for Monarch adults as well as for their caterpillars. Black Swallowtails seem to choose Butterfly Bushes as a favorite (I have 6 in various colors) and I find their caterpillars in dill, fennel and parsley plants. Witnessing their life cycle and photographing these important and unique messengers of nature is a very rewarding experience and a wonderful way to participate in the stewardship of the earth. Sharing the experience with my husband, children and friends makes the rewards even more special.

*....everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow cycles of nature, is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace.*

MAY SARTON  
b. 1912  
American writer





## Bird Bath By Connie Alwood

Sometime in the last week in April I'll be in the garden when I'll hear an exuberant and bubbly song. The House Wren or Jenny wren as it is called, who has wintered in the southern United States and as far south as Mexico, announces his return with all the enthusiasm of the Marine Corps Band playing "Here Comes the Chief". I can't think of another bird whose song expresses as much *"joie de vivre."* With more élan than Chanticleer, he pumps his tail, cocks his head and trills forth his song. Then he flits about the yard investigating every available cavity, looking for the perfect nesting site.

Chances are that he'll find several in the neighborhood. Visit any hardware store or specialty shop and you will find very plain to ornate nesting boxes especially designed for the House Wren. We welcome this bird into our gardens like no other bird. We treasure his presence. We love his song. Then why is there a great debate over one of our most beloved songbirds?

The story goes back many years. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, a remarkable woman named Althea Sherman began to study the birds in her Iowa farmyard. The expression 24/7 applies to Miss Sherman's studies. She kept copious notes: in fact, volumes of journals on her observations on all birds are still studied by ornithologists. But it is her opinion of the House Wren that she is most famous for. The House

Wren, she concluded, was an obnoxious bird who regularly entered the nests of bluebirds, chickadees, and titmice and destroyed their eggs, or sometimes even killed their young. This bird was nothing but a feathered rattlesnake who should be extirpated from the neighborhood, not invited to join it.\*

Since then the "Great House Wren Debate" has been carried on. A Google search will give you both the pros and cons. But I suspect that the debate is really over. House Wren boxes continue to proliferate because this diminutive bird has sung his way into our hearts. Besides, the bluebird, chickadee and titmouse populations are doing fine.

\*This controversy was sparked long before the European Starling, introduced into the United States in 1877, had made its way to the Midwest. The starling's presence has created even further danger for cavity nesting birds.



Welcome to Cindy Corley-Crapsey as our new feature writer on edible flowers! Cindy is a Master Gardener who volunteers her time with the Speaker's Bureau. She has offered to write about flowers you can find in your garden and on your dinner plate!

## Pass the Posies By Cynthia Coley-Crapsey

Legend and literature abound with references to the common violet. Mythical Greek gods presented violets as gifts of appeasement. Romans used the flower medicinally. Quotes from Shakespeare's Hamlet and Midsummer Night's Dream speak of violets. Napoleon Bonaparte favored their sweet scent, and gave them to Josephine every anniversary. Recipe books from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century demonstrate their every day use.

Pansies, violas and violets of the Violaceae family have a mild and slightly sweet flavor. Popular uses are violet infused vinegar for salad dressing, as an ingredient in salads, and frozen in ice cubes for visual impact. Always use organically grown flowers, or flowers you have grown from seed. Try this recipe for crystallized violas, and beautifully transform cakes, cookies and custards into culinary art.

Purchase gum Arabic from a pharmacy. Dissolve 1 t in 1 1/2 T water. Pick freshly opened flowers that are dry, plucking the flower head from the calyx. Use a small watercolor brush to coat petals with the solution, and sprinkle with superfine sugar. Place on parchment paper to dry. Crystallized flowers will last several months in a sealed container.

Adapted from Edible Flower Garden by Kathy Brown.





Book Review  
By  
Holly Parks

and displacing the natives.

Trees of Missouri by Don Kurz is a 399 page soft cover book published by the Missouri Department of Conservation. It is available for \$16.50 at Shaw Nature Reserve gift shop.

Trees of Missouri is a manual intended to let you explore and deepen your knowledge of the great wealth of tree species in Missouri. It is filled with detailed descriptions and illustrations of the 167 trees that are native to Missouri. The author includes the habitat and range for each tree in addition to the physical characteristics. In addition to the range defined by states, a map of Missouri is marked with the specific counties. Illustrations include growth form, flower clusters, fruit clusters, stems, twigs, bark and other details to identify the tree. The book addresses how to care for and propagate the trees. It also includes lists of ones that have showy flowers, interesting fruit, fall color and those that are beneficial for wildlife. The book also gives advice on controlling exotic trees.

One of the introductory sections is "Keys to the Trees" which has a step-by-step method to identify a specific tree. It uses the leaf type, leaf arrangement and leaf/twig characteristics to point to a particular tree in the manual. This may be the most helpful section in the manual if you do not know all the species by sight.

Native trees require little maintenance, are more successful and more beneficial than exotic species. The exotics sometimes escape from their intended locations, taking hold in natural areas





Marv Rothberg  
February 7, 1927 – March 14, 2006

This issue is dedicated to the memory of not only my father, but, to all of those who have mourned the loss of a loved one. May your own memorial gardens flourish in their honor.

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**St. Louis Master Gardeners  
Kemper Center for Home Gardening**

P.O. Box 299 • St. Louis, MO 63166  
[www.outreach.missouri.edu/stlouismg](http://www.outreach.missouri.edu/stlouismg)

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](mailto: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.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI  
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 **MISSOURI  
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