



December 28, 2011

Volume 3, Issue 1

Tipton County Master Gardener's

Garden Gazette

From Our President

Inside this issue:

<i>January Gardening Tips</i>	2
<i>Perfect Christmas Tree</i>	3
<i>Gifts for Gardeners</i>	4
<i>Holiday Plant Care</i>	5
<i>Plant of the Month</i>	7
<i>Garden Recipes</i>	8
<i>Mark Your Calendar</i>	9-10
<i>January Birthdays</i>	11

Now that another New Year has rolled around and the coldest of the winter months are upon us, we are all probably chomping at the bit to be out in the garden. Wait. The seed heads of our flowers and grasses will feed some of the wildlife through the next few weeks. Still fill your bird feeders and maybe cut up an apple or orange for the birds once a week. If you must clean up those flower beds, place your discarded vegetation in your compost pile or if you don't have one, now is a great time to start one. Even if you find composting unsightly or distasteful, please consider the shelter it will provide for the

critters this winter, not to mention food if there are any seed heads left. You can always dispose of it this spring.

Another thing we may all be doing is planning our gardening for the year. We still have three and a half months until *last frost* and I'm sure if you are like me, you will be getting real antsy by mid February. I'm saving my kitchen scraps (veggie, coffee grounds, and egg shells) for my new lasagna garden I've started. I hope to be finished with it by spring planting time with pictures to follow in February either here or on the website.

I have a tall Sheppard's hook strategically placed in the yard where, for my feathered friends, I plan to put out a peanut butter pine cone. I froze this leftover one from Earth Day last year at the museum. Maybe the squirrels will respect me this time... Nah, they'll get to it somehow and I'll catch one swinging from the pine cone in an attempt to break the string. It will be quiet entertaining depending on how long the string holds up.

Extension Highlights

I have a poinsettia that a coworker gave me for the holidays, I would like to know is there any way I can keep it for next year? Richard Livingston, Germantown, TN

It is possible to keep your poinsettia and have it bloom again next year, but it will take a little work. If you'd like to try:

January through March: Keep watering your poinsettia when the surface is dry.

April: Gradually decrease the amount of water it gets, allowing it to completely dry between watering. Move it to a cool spot, like your garage. You want the temperatures to be about 60 degrees.

May: Cut the stems back to about 4 to 5 inches and re-pot the plant in the next size larger container. Continue watering when the surface of the soil is dry.

June: Move the poinsettia outside to a partially shaded location. You can let it stay in the container or plant it in the soil.





Extension Highlights (continued)

July: Cut back each stem about 2 inches. This will encourage new shoots and a compact plant. If left unpinched, the poinsettia will grow too tall.

August: Bring the plant back indoors, where it can receive some sunlight and check it for insects. Cut the

rplant back, leaving three to four leaves on each stem.

September: Continue to water when the surface dries out. Also, you can start to fertilize every two weeks with a liquid all-purpose houseplant fertilizer, such as Peters, Miracle-grow etc. Read and

follow fertilizer directions for the size of the container.

October: Poinsettias are short-day plants, meaning they need about 10 weeks of complete darkness from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. in order to re-bloom. Any exposure to light during this time will delay blooming.

January Garden Tasks

January is a time of planning for gardeners. Although many days are warm enough to work outside, our coldest weather often occurs in January. The garden pace slows, providing time to read and design, and there is always clean-up to be completed if the weather allows.

Anytime this month: When weather permits and the soil is workable, plant woody ornamentals; they will be established and more drought tolerant if planted now rather than in the spring.

Plant crocus bulbs. Fescue lawns can be weakened or killed by the smothering effect of tree leaves, so be diligent about keeping the last of the leaves off the cool season grass.

Don't throw out the leaves; collect and compost them for a great soil amendments. Weed out the cool season weeds, and apply mulch to

suppress them.

Perennials that are dormant can be safely moved or divided now.

This is a good time to prune because the leaves are gone from deciduous plants, allowing you to see the branch structure better. The exception is spring-flowering shrubs.

Most broad leaf evergreens and shrubs can be pruned this month. Do not shear plants.

Try rooting the cuttings from boxwood and other broad leaf evergreens; you will have plenty of material if you are pruning them anyway. Maintain mulch about a foot high around the canes of roses to protect the graft union. The next rose pruning occurs in February.

Apply lime to your roses; in the Mid-South roses generally need lime, if in doubt.

On early- and mid-season camellias, dead head blossoms that are brown from frost so that they will con-

tinue to flower if they have buds.

The free time offered by days too cold or wet to work outside is a great time to revisit notes and work on designs.

Many of the plant catalogs arrive this month, so it is a good time to research, think about, and order your choices for the new growing season.

Read about gardens; many gardeners I know are into books on the subject. I'm reading a couple of new garden books out: I'm excited about *Trees for All Seasons: Broadleaf Evergreens for Temperate Climates* by my Portland friend Sean Hogan. This is the first book written that focuses on broadleaf evergreens. I am also enjoying the updated version of my favorite woody plant book that came out this fall the *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants 6th edition*, by Dr. Michael A. Dirr

The first rule of successful gardening is to work with, not against, The natural setting.
Burpee Complete Gardener



©InternetClipart.Com

Go Native or Go Wild with Wildflowers

Do you spend several hours each week mowing your lawn? Do you ever wonder what you can do to reduce the amount of time you spend on the mower without giving up your large lot or acreage? If you answered "yes" to those questions, the answer may be go wild with wildflowers. The thought of this may bring visions of a weed patch and angry neighbors, but it doesn't have to be that way. A well planned and planted "wild" area containing native and/or wildflowers can be tidy and beautiful.

Native plants are sometimes referred to as wildflowers, but not all wildflowers are native plants. Native plants are those that were growing in a particular area before human settlement. Wildflowers are native or exotic (introduced) herbaceous plants that are capable of growing, reproducing and becoming established without actual cultivation or human intervention. Even if you decide to grow only "native" plants, do not confuse a garden of native plants with a reconstructed prairie. The process of developing a true prairie ecosystem is complex, involves specific genotypes of native plants and is difficult to accomplish with less than a quarter acre. Native plants and wildflowers are attractive in small garden areas as well as larger expanses of land that are not cropped or mowed. As expected, a garden containing a variety of blooming forbs (broad-

leaved plants) and grasses swaying in the breeze is a perfect match for our Iowa landscape. Besides being beautiful, there are several advantages to growing native plants. They adapt to our local conditions by tolerating harsh winters, summer heat, drought and wind. Once established, they require little or no irrigation. Native plants also grow well without additional fertilizer and are resistant or tolerant to most insect pests and diseases.

Plant species included in most wildflower mixes are selected for their ability to withstand the extremes of a specific climate and for their lasting flowers and variety of bloom times. Some common wildflower species found in mixes blended for the Midwest are: New England aster (*Aster novae-angliae*), cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), lance-leaved coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), corn poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), bee balm (*Monarda spp.*) and Indian blanket flower (*Gaillardia pulchella*). Wildflowers can be planted in the spring, summer or fall with advantages and disadvantages with each season. If you are interested in planting a wildflower area yet this year, the best plan would be to prepare the planting area this summer, order or purchase the seed this summer and plant the seed later in the fall.

Site selection. For most wildflowers, select an area that receives full sun. The area should have a somewhat natural look to begin

with, such as along a wooded area at the back of your property, along the driveway or fence, or in a large expanse in the front or back yard.

Soil Preparation. Remove existing vegetation this summer and keep it weed free until planting time. Non-selective herbicides, such as Round-up®, will make the job easier. Wait until the vegetation is nearly brown and dead -- 10 days to 2 weeks -- before tilling the soil.

Seeding. Fall planting should be done after a killing frost. Plant your wildflowers the same time you plant your spring-flowering bulbs. A late planting is important so that the seeds will not sprout before winter. If your site is a slope with risk of soil erosion and washing the seed away, prepare the soil and plant in early summer.

There are many nurseries that specialize in wildflower seeds. Select a blend that is recommended for your area and a blend that contains what you desire in your wildflower area or meadow garden. That may be a combination of grasses and brightly flowering forbs or species that attract butterflies. The seeding rate depends on the seed blend and what percent is grass seed. On average, a grass/wildflower blend should be sown at the rate of 10 pounds of seed per acre or a quarter of a pound per 1,000 square feet. Broadcast the seed evenly over the area and carefully rake the seed into the topsoil.



The wise gardener
anticipates June in
January.

House and Garden



Use Winter to Identify Yard Areas that Drain Poorly

Identifying the places that drain poorly or slowly can be a lot easier now than in a spring downpour, said the Master Gardener coordinator for Kansas State University Research and Extension. Drainage is the biggest problem in yards that don't provide suitable outlets for unabsorbed rain or irrigation.

MANHATTAN, Kan. - A sizable ice or snow melt can provide clear evidence of landscape and garden areas that don't drain well. "Of course, you won't be able to do anything about those areas until the ground thaws. But, identifying the places that drain poorly or slowly can be a lot easier now than in a spring downpour," said Ward Upham, Master Gardener coordinator for Kansas State University Research and Extension. Poor drainage can

result from an array of factors - clay content, hardpan, slope and the like. Despite the cause, however, it always leads to the same thing: poor oxygen levels in the soil. "Plants suffer when moisture fills the tiny cavities where well-drained soil would have air. Roots may just drown, but often they develop diseases that bring a more lingering kind of death," Upham said. Drainage is the biggest problem in yards that don't provide suitable outlets for unabsorbed rain or irrigation. Lack of outlets can damage more than plants if excess water only drains toward the house. "Solving that kind of situation can be a massive undertaking. Generally, it requires hiring a professional and plunking down hard cash or doing lots of homework and investing hard labor," he said. If improving the soil is all that's needed, however, several approaches are possi-

ble:

Add good topsoil so water can't just sit. Till or spade, mixing it with the underlying soil.

Add a 2-inch layer of organic matter (e.g., peat moss, compost) and till or spade it in deeply.

For beds that grow annuals each year, mow fall's dead leaves and garden refuse. Layer about 4 inches of the "chipped" output on the soil and incorporate deeply, so the debris can compost over winter.

"Any of additives will improve drainage, but don't skip mixing them into the existing soil. Roots don't like to cross the kinds of barriers created by one type of soil sitting on top of another," Upham said.



Basic to an integrated life is a dominate ideal. To plow a straight row one must keep his eye on the goal rather than the plow.

J. M. Price



What Should a Gardener do With Leftover Pesticides?



The life so short, the craft so long to learn. This was said about literature, but it really fits gardening better.
Henry Mitchell



SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — Most homeowners with a lawn or garden use some pesticides to help control a few pesky critters. Generally, those pesticides are not completely used during a growing season and are kept for future use.

"Carryover of the pesticide will require some special attention to insure the safety of the product and effective use of the product in the future," said Patrick Byers, horticulture specialist, University of Missouri Extension.

Effective handling should include consideration of proper pesticide disposal, proper and safe storage of a pesticide until it is needed next year, proper labeling of a pesticide not in an original container and the shelf life of the pesticide.

Byers also offered his insight to the following questions about leftover pesticides.

Question: I have some pesticides left over from last year. What should I do with them if I have no use for them in the future?

Answer: "If you know the product is good and you have no use for it in

the future, maybe a neighbor can use it. Be sure and give it to the user with the label so they will know how to properly use the product. Another option is to dispose of the leftovers at a local household hazardous substance recall event or drop off site," said Byers.

Q: When storing pesticides for use next year, are there any special precautions in regard to storage temperatures?

A: "The effect of different external conditions may be different for different products. Generally, the label will remind the user how the product should be stored. But if in doubt, always keep the product above freezing temperatures. If you know your garage freezes during extreme cold conditions, this may not be the best place to store your chemicals. Low temperatures generally do not affect wettable powder and granule products," said Byers.

Q: Can moisture conditions adversely affect pesticides?

A: "Moisture can wreak havoc on wettable powder and granule products used as pesticides. Caking is caused by moisture and can lead to chemical changes that may reduce effectiveness. Keeping

these products dry should be the primary concern," said Byers.

Q: If pesticide contents must be transferred from its original container to another, should any special precautions be taken?

A: "If it is necessary to transfer the contents to a new container, the original label should be transferred and attached as well. Any container that once held a household pesticide should be triple rinsed and disposed of in a manner that children and pets cannot reach it," Byers said.

Q: Do most chemical pesticides have a shelf life?

A: "Yes, most chemicals do have a shelf life when they are most effective. Anywhere from two years and more can be expected. Factors affecting the shelf life may be the composition of the product and storage conditions. For instance, Roundup may be good for two or more years.

Get Rid of Weak Tree Branches Before Winter Brings Ice

MANHATTAN, Kan.--The experts' tree-pruning rules allow for one big exception: Any time is the best time of year to remove diseased, damaged or dead branches.

Late fall can be an especially prudent choice, however, said Charles Barden, forester with Kansas State University Research and Extension. Outdoor temperatures are still likely to be above 20 degrees. When the weather's colder than that, the act of pruning itself can cause tree injury.

The timing also gets rid of weak branches before they can become a deadly missile in a wintertime ice storm.

"A combination of heavy ice and strong winds can easily turn a damaged limb into a 'widow-maker.' At the same time, the mix of ice and wind will test every weak joint in the tree," Barden said.

Mature limbs often weigh hundreds to thousands of pounds. But, an accumulation of ice can increase that by 30 times or more, he warned. Plummeting to the ground just adds to the weight's force.

"A small, icy branch can hurtle down like a frozen spear," Barden added. "If it hits with its pointed end first, a twig can go right through a roof."

Compared to deliberately pruned limbs, weather-broken branches are much more likely to cause collateral tree damage, too, he said. A big break can leave split wood behind or peel away great swaths of bark

and internal wood from the trunk. Once free, the limb also can break others and/or damage any part of any tree it hits on the way down.

"Of course, taking out power lines is certainly no challenge for an ice-damaged tree. Any nearby building will be at risk, as will any passing car, pet or person," Barden said.

Each tree owner has to make the call on whether to prune out problem branches or hire a pro to do the job. To help owners in making that decision, however, Barden offered guidelines he's picked up from foresters and long-time arborists: If you wonder whether you have the experience, knowledge or assurance level to do the job safely, you probably don't. Find a reputable tree care service and ask for a certified arborist.

As a rule of thumb, if a branch is less than two inches wide, go ahead. If it's two to four inches thick, think twice. If it's more than four inches across, get experienced help or be very sure of what you're doing.

Cutting or pruning above ground is extremely dangerous without firm footing in a lift or a comfortable, secure anchor to the tree. Rather than trying to work from a ladder, hire a professional.

Never work near power lines. Call the electric company, which will have arborists on staff.

If you can't find and review your chainsaw manual, seriously consider hiring someone else to do the work. Ex-

perience helps – a lot – and that includes the insights gained while operating a particular saw. Nonetheless, the great majority of chainsaw injuries each year happen to experienced operators, using familiar machines.

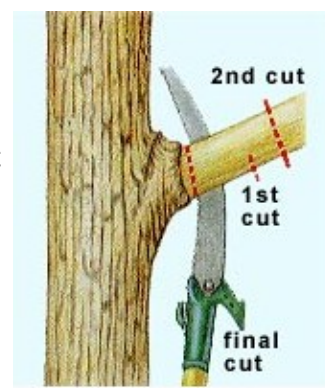
Barden also advises tree owners to learn the recommended guidelines for pruning. If nothing else, owners should know when and why to prune a tree. And, they should recognize the steps involved in doing a good (and safe) job – whether doing their own pruning or overseeing someone else. County and district K-State Research and Extension offices can provide that kind of information, he said. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service has a short manual called "How to Prune Trees" on the Web at http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/howtos/ht_prune/prun001.htm. K-State Research and Extension's "All About Pruning" (C-550) covers what to do with both deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs. It is available online at <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/hort2/c550.pdf>.

"You'll find that the general recommendation is to prune healthy trees and branches later in winter, during the first three months of the new year," Barden said. "That timing greatly reduces the odds for excessive-looking sap loss. Besides, the unhealed wounds and the chemical scents that they emit won't be able to attract the insects that help spread such diseases as Dutch elm and oak wilt."



Good gardening is very simple, really. You just have to think like a plant.

Barbara Damrosch



Plant of the month



Lenten Rose

Submitted by Susan L. Conlon

Winter is almost over, and the spring garden has almost sprung. During the winter, did you ask yourself, “What plant has interest that I can enjoy throughout all the seasons?” Lenten Rose, or *Helleborus x hybridus*, may be the answer. Lenten Rose is a durable perennial that performs well in shade gardens, has evergreen foliage and produces colorful blooms in early spring.

Lenten Rose has recently been named the 2005 Perennial Plant of the Year by the Perennial Plant Association, a national organization dedicated to the promotion of perennial plants.

There are several reasons to include this plant in your garden. In late winter to early spring, Lenten Rose starts to bloom and will continue to do so for up to three months. Bloom colors range from white and light pink to red and deep purple. There are single- and double-flowering forms and bicolor blooms, too.

After flowering, enjoy the clean, dark green foliage that makes this plant a must-have in any shade garden. Clumps are generally 2 feet wide by 2 feet tall, and the foliage adds a unique bold texture to the shaded landscape. For this, Lenten Rose makes a perfect backdrop for the delicate blooms of spring-flowering bulbs and other perennials, such as Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*). If the foliage gets tattered and rough-looking in late winter, simply cut it back as the new leaves emerge. Doing this prior to blooming also improves the display of the blooms.

This easy-to-grow plant prefers a rich, well-drained soil. It should be planted in a partial shade to full shade location. Once established, Lenten Rose is a tough, drought tolerant perennial.

Lenten Rose also requires very little care. Unlike many other garden perennials, Lenten Rose does not typically require dividing every 3-5 years. According to the Perennial Plant Association, established clumps of Lenten Rose can be left alone for up to 20 years. If your Lenten Rose needs dividing, keep in mind that it will take the divisions a little time to recover. This plant recovers from dividing slower than most, so it will appreciate a little patience and tender care.

Lenten Rose is a great shade perennial to pair with other plant textures and colors like ferns and impatiens. This plant is also a good companion to other early spring bloomers, such as Barrenwort (*Epimedium* sp.).

Lenten Rose is used quite nicely as either a specimen plant or in mass in a shade garden. Allow this plant to naturalize in a woodland setting. Because flowers can hang just below the foliage, consider planting Lenten Rose on a slope or hillside to enjoy viewing the flowers from another angle. For those whose gardens are typically buffets for deer, good news! Lenten Rose is a deer-resistant perennial!

Plant Lenten Rose in your garden now and enjoy its evergreen foliage all year. When it gets to be late winter next year, and there seems to be nothing to enjoy out in your garden, your Lenten Rose will signal that it's time to look forward to spring.

Garden Recipes



"Big Easy" Gumbo



Recipe Time

Total: 48 Minutes

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup peanut oil
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour \$
- 1 cup chopped sweet onion \$
- 1 cup chopped green bell pepper \$
- 1 cup chopped celery \$
- 2 teaspoons Creole seasoning
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 3 (14-oz.) cans low-sodium chicken broth \$
- 4 cups shredded cooked chicken \$
- 1/2 pound andouille sausage, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 1 1/2 cups frozen black-eyed peas, thawed
- 1 pound peeled, large raw shrimp (1 6/20 count) \$

Preparation

1. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat; gradually whisk in flour, and cook, whisking constantly, 5 to 7 minutes or until flour is chocolate colored. (Do not burn mixture.)
2. Reduce heat to medium. Stir in onion and next 4 ingredients, and cook, stirring constantly, 3 minutes. Gradually stir in chicken broth; add chicken and next 2 ingredients. Increase heat to medium-high, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, and simmer, stirring occasionally, 20 minutes. Add shrimp, and cook 5 minutes or just until shrimp turn pink.

Note: We tested with Zatarain's Creole Seasoning and Savoie's Andouille Sausage.



Mark Your Calendar

"Lawn & Garden EXPO" hosted by the Tipton County Master Gardeners
Saturday, April 14, 2012, 8AM-3PM
Brighton Middle School, 7785 Hwy 51 South (West at traffic light)
Brighton TN 38011
Tipton County Master Gardener (901) 476-0231 www.tiptoncountymastergardeners.com
Dynamic speakers have been engaged, plus, many more interests.

Memphis Botanic Gardens

Brown Bag Lunch & Learn. Chickens in the Backyard

Jan 11, 2012

(12:00 PM - 1:00 PM)

Director of Horticulture and long-time animal enthusiast Rick Pudwell talks about raising chickens for eggs, meat, or companionship.

Chickens are allowed in most cities with some stipulations. He will address housing, feeding, problems, and the day to day care needed to keep a small flock healthy.

Bring a sack lunch or order a box lunch from Fratelli's Café.

Free to members or with Garden admission.

No reservations required. Call 636-4100 for information.

Dixon Garden and Gallery

Munch and Learn:

Winter-Flowering Plants with Dale Skaggs

Wednesday, February 22, 2012 12 pm

Dixon Garden and Gallery

Munch and Learn:

A Year of Blooms in the Dixon Gardens with Curt Hart

Wednesday, January 25, 2012 - 12 pm

Memphis Area Master Gardeners

It's time to start thinking about Spring Fling 2012!

2012 SF dates are: March 30 and March 31. Mark your calendar!

Contact Linda Taylor, Lifetime Member, MG'98.

Memphis Area Master Gardeners

Habitat Design Class

Once again this year, Jeff Golladay and Jim Gafford will be conducting a class for Master Gardeners who would like to assist in the design of the landscaping of a Habitat home. They will discuss all aspects of the Habitat build and review past plans for your input. Most of all they will emphasize that the landscaping budget is \$200 so ideas must be both creative and inexpensive. The first class will be Thursday, January 26, 2012 at the Habitat office at 7130 Winchester Road just east of Riverdale. This interactive 90-minute session starts at 6:30 pm. Security will be provided in the parking lot. To register just send an email note to Jeff Golladay or Jim Gafford, sign up at the December or January meeting or contact the MAMG office.

Lichterman Nature Center

Seed Swap

January 28, 2012

Come to Lichterman Nature center January 28, 2012 & share the fruits of your own gardening labors with other Mid-South growers.

Mark Your Calendar

Tipton County Master Gardeners
2012 Intern Class Orientation
January 3, 2012 6 PM

Dixon Gallery and Gardens

Jan. 7-Feb. 25: Dixon Gardening School: 9 a.m.-noon

Saturdays at Dixon Gallery and Gardens (Hughes Pavilion and Winegardner Auditorium). \$125 (\$100 for Dixon members). A new eight-week format. School offers the most current horticultural information and techniques. Instructors include Dixon staff, industry professionals. A wide range of topics will be covered. Reservations required. Limit 25. (901) 761-5250, ext. 100.

Primary Business Address
111 West Washington Avenue
Covington, TN 38019-2557

Phone: 901-476-0231
Fax: 901-476-0235
E-mail: bleigh1@utk.edu

We're on the Web:

TiptonCountyMasterGardeners.com

FaceBook

<https://utextension.tennessee.edu/tipton/Pages/default.aspx>



The Tipton County Master Gardener Program trains and maintains horticulture volunteers for the University of Tennessee (UT) Extension Office. The goals of this program shall be to increase the availability of horticultural information for their members and the community at large and to improve the quality of life for the residents of Tipton County through horticulture volunteer activities.

December Birthdays



Barbara Gantt	January 7
Juanita Hansen	January 8
Bob Miller	January 27

