

The Bloomin' News

APRIL, 2015, Vol. VI, 93

Les Leckron, Chairperson

Joanie Opperman, Editor

Member of FLORIDA FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS



Chairman's Message

How time flies! It hardly seems like two years since I was installed as the Chairman of the Titusville Men's Garden Club for my second time! I had the honor of serving previously in that role about ten years ago. Our Club has changed a lot over the years, and will continue to change to meet the needs of our Club Members. As I started this term as Chairman, I was available to work at the Tree Farm, since I was laid off after the end of the Space Shuttle Program at KSC. After six months, I was again employed at KSC with the Test and Operations Support Contract, and no longer available on the regular Tuesday and Thursday Tree Farm work days. I applaud all the Club member for their dedication to learning and growing. Some of us don't get to the Tree Farm much, but can lend our support in other ways and when we have some free time. Some members like to come to the monthly meetings to learn about horticulture and be active in a group outside their normal line of work or other activities. I've enjoyed my term as Chairman since I got to know a lot of new people and learn something from each one of you. As the new Club Officers take over, please give them the support they need and participate as you can. I've been a member of the TMGC since the mid 1980's, and look forward to the Club growing more robust and continue being a jewel of Titusville! Keep it Growing! Les

New Members, YOU Are Welcome

We are always looking for new members and have great opportunities for learning at our monthly meetings, at the Tree Farm and at special events. We have facilities to start plants from seeds/clippings. We meet at 7:00p.m. on the 2nd Monday of each month at the Garden Center on Sisson. For information, call Joanie @ 480-8807.

APRIL IN THE GARDEN

April is a busy month in the garden. Most plants are growing well. By mid-month, day temperatures will be up in the 80's and most nights will be above 65 degrees.

Replenish mulches to conserve moisture and keep weeds down.



AZALEAS have about finished blooming. Now is the time to continue a care program to assure good blooms next year. Feed each AZALEA with a good, acid-forming fertilizer at the rate of ½ cup per plant per month. Prune and trim large AZALEAS, and pinch back branch ends until mid-June. AZALEAS, unlike most other plants, will branch wherever you cut them.

DAY LILIES are ready to start blooming. ROSES are growing rapidly. ROSES are heavy feeders and require frequent watering. Regular fertilizing every 2 weeks in our sandy soils is not excessive.

CRAPE MYRTLES already have extensive new growth. An application of a Bloomer fertilizer every 2 weeks will assure more and larger blooms. Mildew is a common problem on both leaves and blossoms, even in full sun.

LAWNS should be fertilized now if you did not fertilize in March. Plug, sod or seed to fill in bare areas in your lawn or to start new lawns. Provide sufficient irrigation, within water restrictions, to give your lawn an inch of water in any week your lawn gets less than an inch of rain. Cut Bahia and St. Augustine grasses 3 to 4 inches high. If grass clippings are left on the lawn, the grass should be mowed more frequently than when clippings are removed.

Move ORCHIDS to shady outdoor locations and feed every 2 weeks. Move tropical plants outdoors. Feed all container-grown plants.

Bulbs for April planting include ACHIMINES, AMARYLLIS, AGAPANTHUS, BLOOD LILIES, CANNAS, CALADIUMS, CRINUMS, DAHLIAS, GLADIOLI, GLORIOSA, GINGER and RAIN LILIES.

Warm season plants that will perk up flower beds include AGERTUM, ASTER, BEGONIA, BLUE DAZE, COLEUS, COSMOS, DAY LILIES, IMPATIENS, MARGOLDS, PENTAS, PERIWINKLE, SALVIA, VERBENA and ZINNIA.

Garden Club Web Sites

National Garden Club: www.gardenclub.org

Florida Federation of GC: www.ffgc.org

TGC site: <http://www.nbbd.com/npr/tgc/>

TMGC site: <http://www.nbbd.com/npr/tmgc>

THE PINEAPPLE – Steve Korpacz

Have you ever tasted home grown PINEAPPLE? It is usually very sweet, much better than grocery store fruit. You can start by cutting the top off a PINEAPPLE, wait a day or two for it to harden off, then plant an inch or two deep in a rich, slightly acidic organic soil. You can leave some of the fruit on the edges of the top; the plant can use this for food until it becomes established. I like to start with a 6" x 6" pot, since the roots are not deep. I fertilize lightly and monthly with a liquid fertilizer like Miracle Grow or Peter's. Just pour onto plant and in crown too. Once the plant has become established, you can move it to a 3 gallon size pot, after 6-7 months.

In a 3-gallon size, you can fruit the plant once it has some size (18" – 24"). At 1 year old, I like to take a small piece of apple or banana and force it into the crown. As this decomposes, it emits ethylene gas and forces the plant to fruit. You can harvest your first PINEAPPLE a few months later. You will know it's ready when you can smell it from 2 – 3 feet away. Just twist the fruit and it will detach from the plant, then you can start all over again. The PINEAPPLE can be propagated several other ways: slips, suckers, rations and crowns (described above). Slips arise from just below the fruit, suckers from the axils of the leaves and rations which grow from the base. Slips and suckers are the preferred method of propagation.

A 5-gallon is all the plant will ever require as they don't have deep root systems. I like container growing mine; it's easier to weed and to protect from cold weather. The PINEAPPLE is not cold tolerant at all. They will need protection. Give growing PINEAPPLES a try. The flavor of a home-grown PINEAPPLE can't be beat. **Keep it Green.**

Review of "The Mini-farming Guide To Composting" by Brett L. Markham - submitted by Bob and LouAnn Smith

If you are trying to garden in Florida, you MUST understand the value of making and utilizing compost. Your soil can, and does, vary biologically immensely from one spot to the next in your backyard garden. This one fact alone dictates the value of raised beds where you as the gardener can mix your soil for maximum nutrients. By consistently adding organic matter, you will build the soil season after season, thus requiring less and less fertilizer, fungicides, and pesticides.

"...Nature is on your side. It's really hard to mess up compost so badly that you will get no compost at all. Nature loves compost and will turn anything that was once alive into compost all by itself."

So, while most books only cover "aerobic" composting made at relatively high temperatures (thermophilic), Mr Markham has chapters on anaerobic (without oxygen), aerobic (using oxygen), indoor mesophilic composting, vermicomposting, biochar, and more. This book is chock full of references from many sources for those who seek more in depth information.

In chapter 2 entitled " Starting With The Soil" he states "counting earthworms is the easiest and least expensive method of assessing your soil's biological activity." We have, therefore, been devoting a good bit of time and energy to raising red wiggler earthworms. By utilizing the castings to produce "worm tea" for use as a foliar spray or as a drench, we feel we have seen a significant improvement in our garden. The worm castings can also be spread in the beds for a wonderful organic fertilizer. By feeding the worms our kitchen compost materials, we also reduce the amount going to a landfill. For information on making your worm bin and raising earthworms, there are many videos on U-tube, or you can contact us and we will share the information we have accumulated. We have a large number of ornamental and vegetable starts to trade or share. What do you have? Call Bob or LouAnn (267-1673) in North Titusville. We hope you will look forward to future articles about other aspects of our garden experiences such as Keyhole Gardening, Kokedama, Living Walls, ideas for more sustainable living, and Hydroponics or Aquaponics.

TREE FARM NEWS - Ed Rahn

Thanks again to all the folks who help weed and tend to plants and trees on Tues. and Thurs. Thanks to Buck for m-o-w-i-n-g and s-p-r-a-y-i-n-g for weeds!

Buck has also built two raised beds for vegetable planting in Tony's honor, as he always had peppers, stringbeans, tomatoes, kale & red beets for us to enjoy!

We have also been propagating in the mist house, and request cuttings from your home; plants that we could be planting vs. buying. Mulberries are almost ready to enjoy! Try some!



"Looking Back on Our Spring Sale"

Upon evaluating the results of our last Sale on March 6th & 7th, there seemed to be thoughts and remarks about the great amount of effort put in by members who work regularly at the Tree Farm for so little monetary return. Most members seemed very disappointed and vowed to be better organized for the next sale. That I'm sure will happen.

I would like to encourage everyone to take another look at it however. We have been given the opportunity to spend wonderful hours at the Tree Farm alongside friends who share the common interest of learning to grow and nurture plants. Everyone seems to put all social media behind them as they enjoy the fresh, plant

scented air, when the pollens aren't being a problem. The birds make the music and the cool breezes are so welcome to the sweat on our brows. I am so grateful for the fellowship I enjoy with each member as I get to know them.

I don't think there can be a price placed on this wonderful opportunity to get to know and appreciate our fellow gardeners and friends. So no sale can ever be disappointing from this point of view. Rosie

Joanie's Corner – Forsythe Pot

Something new to try!! First get a plastic pot with drain holes, at least 6-7 inch diameter with a hole in the bottom.

*A 2-1/2 inch clay pot—sorry, it has to be clay.

*Vermiculite (or other soilless mix) a growing medium.

*Paper towel or a scrap of used paper.

*A small cork or plug of children's play clay.

*Water

How to make a Forsythe Pot

*Cover the hole in the bottom of plastic container with paper.

*Plug the hole in the bottom of clay pot with cork or clay. This is the most important step in Forsythe Pot basics. No water should drain from the hole at the bottom of this pot!

*Fill plastic pot almost to the top with Vermiculite.

*Push the empty clay pot into center of Vermiculite filled pot.

*Fill the clay pot with water and water the Vermiculite until water drains freely from the bottom.

You've just completed your first Forsythe pot! Propagation can begin when excess drainage from Vermiculite stops. Just place your cutting stems into the Vermiculite in circle around clay pot. Vermiculite holds water; clay doesn't. Keep clay pot filled with water and it will gradually seep through the clay into Vermiculite, but will only let enough water to keep Vermiculite damp. Propagation is easy because the cuttings will remain in a moist, but never soggy, environment. Just keep the clay pot full of water and let the pot do all the work!

Titusville Garden Club–Day Group From the Prez

April 1 – TGC Morning Meeting – Annual Reports due
“Orchids: Practical tips on Growing, Dividing, Re-potting”
April 1 - TGC and FFGC Dues are due
April 18 & 19 –FFGC Convention, Boca Raton
April 22 - Board Meeting @ 10:00a.m.

Florida Native Plant Society- Sea Rocket Chapter

The Sea Rocket Chapter's meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of the month; 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Enchanted Forest, 444 Columbia Blvd (Hwy 405). The public is welcome. For info: 264-5185
<http://www.nbbd.com/npr/SeaRocket/>

Just a Friendly Reminder!!!

Our yearly Membership Dues are

Due by April 1st, 2015!

Please give to Teri (new Treasurer)

At the Tree Farm on Tues or Thurs or

At April's meeting on the 13th!!

Titusville Men's Garden Club

Meets 2nd Monday of each month at

7:00 p.m.

**Garden Center, 5275 Sisson Road,
Titusville, FL**

Our next meeting is April 13th, 2015 !!

******* Annual Dues are due April 1st *******

Single member \$25; couple is \$45.

Joanie Faulls, Sanctuary Steward of the Enchanted Forest, is our guest speaker on April 13th at 7:00p.m. She will be sharing on the EEL program; endangered land, plants and animal species. The public is welcome!

PLANT & TREE SALES

April 11th – Brevard Botanical Garden – Spring Plant and Craft Sale (9am to 3pm)

Cocoa Ag Center. For info: 633-1702

April 18th – Native Plant Society Plant Sale 10am-3pm... Enchanted Forest on S.R. 405 Come celebrate Forest's Earth Day Festival.

April 25th - Brevard Rare Fruit Council – Edible Fruit Tree Sale. (8am to 4pm) at Melbourne Auditorium

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW OFFICERS FOR 2015

Duane “Buck” Cowen - Chairman

Kathryn Woidtke – Vice-Chairman

Teri Quam - Treasurer

Emily Leithauser - Secretary

Please send your articles to Joanie at freddiefla@yahoo.com to be included in next month's Bloomin' News.



**The Bloomin' News
Titusville Men's Garden Club
Joanie Opperman, Editor
Email: freddiefla@yahoo.com
Cell: 321-480-8807**

The Titusville Men's Garden Club

Next Meeting: 2nd Monday of the Month, 2015 -- 7:00 p.m.

Titusville Garden Center, 5275 Sisson Road, Titusville, FL 32780

INVITATION TO JOIN THE TITUSVILLE MEN'S GARDEN CLUB

Who We Are: A non-profit club that enjoys gardening and contributing to our City's beautification and our environment.

What we Are: As a part of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, we are a partner of the Titusville Garden Club.

What We Do: We educate and help each other to enjoy gardening, teach and learn to enjoy plants. We assist others to propagate, grow and distribute trees and plants to non-profit organizations. We participate in voluntary efforts to help Titusville's "Tree City" initiative to plant 2,000 trees per year.

Where We Meet: We meet on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Garden Center, 5275 Sisson Road (south of SR 50 / north of SR 405). We also meet at our Tree Farm near Stuart Park off Thoreau. Members adopt corrals of trees and plants to grow and have fun.

How We Operate: We presently sponsor an April and an October Tree and Plant Sale. The sales receipts are used to support the Club, purchase materials, and donate plants to the City and other worthy non-profit causes. Some members grow plants to landscape their own homes (all are welcome to do so). Dues are \$25.00 Single, \$45.00 Couple, annually.

Send application below to Titusville Men's Garden Club, P. O. Box 1783, Titusville, FL 32780.

For information, phone Joanie @ 480-8807

Name: _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____ **Cell:** _____

Street: _____ **City** _____ **Zip** _____