

The Bloomin' News

APRIL, 2016, Vol. VI,105

"Buck" Cowen, Chairperson

Joanie Opperman, Editor

Member of FLORIDA FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS



Chairman's Message

Hi fellow Gardeners.....

Well, we all should be having a great time cleaning up our yards. As gardeners, we consider this fun as it surely is not work! Getting gardens spruced up, or thinking of where we can add something new. Getting a leg up on neighbors and friends, having the best yard in the neighborhood. This takes a lot of work in Florida.

They, the people who know about things, say more flower gardens and less grass. We like that idea, but it still keeps us busy keeping the gardens stripped of weeds. I've fallen for their story, and I'm going for less grass. What do I plant? Just about anything!! Fill up the gardens, make them look good to your eye. You are the one who looks at them.

On a business note!! Everyone, all members, should be getting ready for the sale. Pick up and place signs. Make sure you put them on the inside of the side walk!! Ask property owner for permission.. Remember each spot so you can pick them up after the sale. This is not our first sale so we all know what has to be done. If you see something you think needs doing, please Do it!! We are all cogs in the wheel of the garden club. We are not all of the same mind set Sooo !!

The friends we have in the club are working well toward a common cause! Let's keep up the good work. Give the club a little more of your time for the sale. Don't forget meetings are very important! We have discussed a meeting change! We will meet Monday evenings during daylight saving time hours. When it gets dark early as in standard time, we will meet in the afternoon. Driving at night is difficult for us older folk! Don't forget sale!, sale!, help!, help!.....Just Me, Buck

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.

GRAPE 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, MARIGOLDS, 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 -

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" - Rosie

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 very grateful for the fellowship I enjoy with each member as I get to know them. I don't think a price can be placed on this wonderful opportunity to get to know and appreciate our fellow gardeners and friends.

Titusville Garden Club–Day Group *From the Prez*

April 1 – A Jester’s Crazy Hat Cocktail Party
(4:00 to 7:00pm)

April 6 – “How to Propagate Plants” Instruction & Hands on Demonstration--Linda Gombert, Tulinda’s Garden, LLC. Join us for Refreshments at our “Meet & Greet” @ 9:30am, our meeting at 10:00am or come to this free program at 11:00am at the TGC Clubhouse, 5275 Sisson Road, Phone: 321-264-4266

April 20 - 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, 2016!

**Please give to Teri Quam, Treasurer
At the Tree Farm on Tues or Thurs or
At April’s meeting on the 11th!!**

UPCOMING GARDEN CLUB SALES

April 1 – “April in Paris” – Eau Gallie Square 5:30-8:30p.m. www.eaugalliearts.com

April 9 – Putnam Cty Master Gardener Plant Festival – 386-329-0318 or pfletch@ufl.edu

April 9 (9am – 5pm) & **April 10** (11am – 4pm) Downtown Winter Garden, “Spring Fever in the Garden”, pet friendly & free event, food, kids’ zone, workshops, auctions, farm mkt. www.springfevergarden.com

April 29, 30 and May 1 – Merritt Island “I Dream of Orchids” 53rd Annual Sale Kiwanis Island Park – lectures, orchid exhibits, orchid plants for sale, supplies, frequent drawings (321-626-0686) www.platinumcoastorchidsociety.org

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 11th, 2016 !!

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

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

Special Speaker for April 11th meeting is: SALLY SCALERA, Horticulture Agent for UF/IFAS. She will be talking about soil.

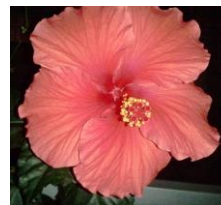
PLANT & TREE SALES

April 8th: 9am - 5 pm & April 9th – 9am - 4pm
“Men’s Garden Club Spring Tree & Plant Sale”
Tree Farm – N of intersection Stuart & Thoreau
April 9th – Brevard Botanical Garden – “Spring Garden Jubilee” (9am to 2pm) Free classes, vendors, guided tours (633-1702x0) Next to Cocoa Ag Center, 3695 Lake Drive. info@brevardbotanicalgarden.org

April 23rd – Native Plant Society Plant Sale 10am-3pm... Enchanted Forest (S.R. 405) 444 Columbia Blvd, Titusville (264-5185) Come celebrate “Earth Day Festival”!!

April 23rd - Brevard Tropical Fruit Club – Fruit Tree Sale. (8am to 4pm) at Melbourne Auditorium, South-East lawn 625 E. Hibiscus Blvd., Melbourne

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
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Titusville Men's Garden Club

PLANT SALE

APRIL 8th & 9th

Friday 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Saturday 9:00AM to 4:00 PM

Azalea, Camellia, Lantana & more
from a Florida Grower

Plus a large variety of plants grown by members,
numerous perennials, bulbs, bushes and trees -
too many to list

Come early for best selection!

**Follow signs to
Knox McRae to Hood to
1230 Thoreau St.
Next to Stuart Park**