

# The Bloomin' News

APRIL, 2017 Vol. VI, 116

Buck Cowen, Chairperson

Joanie Opperman, Editor

Member of FLORIDA FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS



## Chairman's Message- Buck Cowen

Hello, Gardeners...Well, it's me again, and it's that time of the month! We, the members of the Titusville Men's Garden Club, are doing a great job at the Tree Farm. It looks great, and we are slowly getting ready for the Spring Sale. I hope we all know it takes a little more effort when we have sales. We should all understand that our sales generate the moneys to sustain us thru the year, and provide camp experiences for children. We all have discussed the need of new members! It is up to each of us to recruit new members. We are all here because we like to garden. We also have to remember we are allowed to operate on City property only because we are a not-for-profit group, and donate plants to other not-for-profits and the City. Again, when I came to the club, I was told we could not afford to pay for the work we did. Weeding, trimming, cutting grass, building shelves, or helping at sales. SO, take a plant or plants for your own use. If I or anyone works for 3 or 4 weeks or more and takes nothing and then takes a few plants... that is not stealing. So let's get back to working together. If new ideas are in the wind, they must be brought up at a meeting. If the majority says no... that's the way it is. Be prepared to vote for new officers. Just Me, Buck

## 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, MARIGOLDS, PENTAS, PERIWINKLE, SALVIA, VERBENA and ZINNIA.

## 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 pot 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 as the flavor of a home-grown PINEAPPLE can't be beat.

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### **Review of "The Mini-farming Guide To Composting" by Brett L. Markham - submitted by LuAnn 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 LuAnn (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.

### **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 9:30a.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Tree Farm until further notice. For information, call Joanie @ 480-8807.

### **TREE FARM NEWS -**

Thanks again to all the folks who help weed and tend to plants and trees on Tuesday and Thursday. Thanks to Buck for m-o-w-i-n-g!!!

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

We have also been propagating in the mist house, and now need to pull up rooted plants and up-pot into 1-gallon pots, then place in shade before the sun.



### **Some ideas for Spring & Summer Planting!**

*\*Wheelbarrows can be used as planters for vegetable planters. These planters can then be rolled around the yard as needed for the sunshine or shade. Same can be done for the 4 wheel garden wagons with wire sides.*

*\*A bale of straw hollowed out, add gardening soil and plants. Water as needed. Plants can be inserted into the sides of the bale as well as the top.*

*\*A cracked birdbath that won't hold water any longer can also be used as a planter. Various salad plants can be placed into the birdbath--scissor trimming can add to a great tossed salad. Adding a few strawberry plants along the rim of the birdbath can not only provide additional color but fruit also.*

### **Garden Club Web Sites**

National Garden Club: [www.gardenclub.org](http://www.gardenclub.org)

Florida Federation of GC: [www.ffgc.org](http://www.ffgc.org)

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

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

### **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 (continued on page 4)



Titusville Men's Garden Club

# PLANT SALE

APRIL 7th & 8th

Friday 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Saturday 9:00AM to 2:00 PM

Azalea, Camellia, Latana & more  
from a Florida Grower.

Large variety of plants grown by  
members, including perennials, bulbs,  
shrubs and trees.

A portion of the proceeds will be used for  
college and summer camp scholarships.

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



## Forsythe Pot (continued)

\*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!

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## Titusville Garden Club–Day Group From the Prez

April 5 - "The Amaryllis, Culture, Care & Hybridization" – Theresa Myers

April 5 - Annual Reports due/General Meeting

April 28 – Crazy Hat Party

## Florida Native Plant Society- Sea Rocket Chapter

The Sea Rocket Chapter's meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> 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/>

On March 16<sup>th</sup>, members met at the Tree Farm for a St. Patty's Day Lunch & work day. Thank you, Teri, for cooking the corned beef and cabbage for us! You are a great chef! Thanks to all who came and enjoyed.

## VEGETABLES – Sharon Adams

Iron Lady Tomato is in the Gardens Alive catalog, and is the newest, greatest tomato for here! Also, they have Miragreen Peas, the absolute finest for here. This would be for next December for folks to have time to order and grow if they want. The tomato is resistant to "Septoria leaf spot", early and late blight, our main problems here.

The garden club might want to grow them, but they are NOT listed as nematode resistant, so members would order Pacific Mustard seeds from Johnny's and plant them now and later. You grow them, the bees like them and just before they go to make seeds you mow them and till them under. They are like the old VAPAM and kill nematodes in the soil. Two plantings now and in summer. They grow well and at any time would make a nematode-free garden bed. Along with Green Cure from Johnnys for powdery mildew on squash, cucumbers etc.

Also a "might be" remedy for spider mites; i.e., a cup of dark molasses per gallon sprayed on leaf undersides. They hate sulfur. You cannot spray sulfur in the summer. But the molasses contains sulfur so will contain peach brown rot and will not burn the plants

## TITUSVILLE MEN'S GARDEN CLUB

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at

Tree Farm at 9:30a.m.- until further notice

1230 Thoreau Street

Titusville, FL

Our next meeting is April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017 !!

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

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

April 7<sup>th</sup> - 9:00a.m. to 5:00p.m.

April 8<sup>th</sup> - 9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.

**Men's Garden Club Spring Sale**

Tree Farm, 1230 Thoreau Street – Titusville

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April 8<sup>th</sup> - Brevard Botanical Garden

**Spring Garden Jubilee Sale (9am to 2:00pm)**

3695 Lake Drive, Cocoa. For info: 633-1702

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April 22<sup>nd</sup> - Earth Day at Enchanted Forest

(Hwy 405) 444 Columbia Blvd, 10am-3pm

**Native Plant Society Plant Sale**

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April 22<sup>nd</sup> - Brevard Tropical Fruit Tree Sale

625 E. Hibiscus, next to Melb. Auditorium

(8 to 4pm) [www.brevardtropicalfruitclub.org](http://www.brevardtropicalfruitclub.org)

Please send your articles to Joanie at [freddiefla@yahoo.com](mailto:freddiefla@yahoo.com) to be included in next month's Bloomin' News.



**The Bloomin' News**  
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# The Titusville Men's Garden Club

Next Meeting: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the Month, 2017 -- 9:30a.m.

Tree Farm, 1230 Thoreau Street, 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 the Titusville Water Maintenance Facility. Members adopt 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). With permission from a plant's adoptee, members may take plants for personal use. Dues are \$25.00 annually.

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

**Phone Joanie at 480-8807**

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Cell:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_