



## PRESIDENT'S NEWS:

*"Oh to be in England..." Robert Browning*

Summer has arrived with a heat so intense that we dare not venture out in the middle of the day. Along with it came the dreaded Japanese beetles, ravaging our remaining roses, crepe myrtle, and other sweet blooming spring favorites. I get up at dawn to walk the dog across the crisp grass of our fields. As we walk, sudden memories of England come to mind and I wonder why. Then I realize that this is the week before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and the week that we've packed for England several times in the past.

In the 80s and 90s, when we worked in fast-paced technology jobs, we fell into the pattern of taking a much needed two-week vacation to some distant location this time of year and as the years went by, we increasingly returned to England. Initially we targeted the theater, shops, and museums of London and made literary pilgrimages to our favorite authors. But very quickly, we fell in love with the villages and countryside. In our rented car, we traveled the back roads from village to village, staying at B&Bs that were often working farms or cottages by the ocean. We chatted with the owners, ate in the local pubs, and visited all the National Trust sites: gardens, manor houses, and wonderful, old churches. Increasingly, the gardens became our top priority: cottage gardens, formal gardens, and even city gardens. Even the roadsides were beautiful—hedgerows filled with plants with unknown names, and once in the Lake District, we traveled a road where foxgloves of all colors filled the roadside for miles and miles.

One of the most memorable gardens was the "Lost gardens of Heligan" in Cornwall. On a beautiful setting by the sea, a wealthy family had created a wonderful garden in the 1800s of newly discovered plants from other parts of the world. In World War I, all the family sons were killed, and in their grief, the family moved away, abandoning their home and gardens. In the 1980s, the gardens were discovered and restored, uncovering towering tree-size camellias, rhododendrons and gunnera with leaves 6 feet across.

Oh, to be in England in July! Perhaps next year.

Betty

**THE JULY MEETING will be held on Tuesday, July 21st at 10:30.** We will have a BBQ, ice cream and watermelon picnic at Shelter #2 in McFarland Park in Florence.

We will provide BBQ, slaw, rolls and drinks. Please bring a complementary side dish (chips, beans, potato salad, etc.), dessert, melon, or ice cream.

Please contact Martha Sue Montgomery if you can bring a freezer of homemade ice cream.

John Baker will share his tips for keeping our tools sharp and in good condition, and Chris Becker will be on hand to answer any plant or pest questions that you might have.

*Gail Johnson, Program Chair, 764-2717.*

Hospitality Committee Co-Chairs:  
*Martha Sue and Scotty Montgomery and  
 Frances Marks*

*Photo: Texas bluebonnet – Dee Hubbert (see page 5)*

If you are interested in attending a meeting or would like further information about Master Gardeners or becoming a Master Gardener please contact Betty Balch at 757-4023 or [bettyhbalch@aol.com](mailto:bettyhbalch@aol.com).

### THE "GIVE-A-HAND" WINNER FOR

**JUNE** was **Nancy Kelley** for "great talent and willingness to help on projects and great work on Arts Alive plant sale."

Other give-a-hand nominees were:

**Dennis & Betty Balch:** All their hard work at Ivy Green; **Dot Burke:** Great job on Arts Alive booth; **James & Jean Dunn:** Wonderful care/work at the nursery; **Kaye Hillis:** Selling Cookbooks; **Eugene Johnson:** For sharing his garden on the garden tour; **Gail Johnson:** Great programs; **Lynn Wilson:** Work for Arts Alive: Setting up booth and great signs; **Heather:** Always there to help out: Work on the newsletter; Selling Cookbooks

**CEU FOR JUNE MEETING** was 1.25 hours.  
Don't forget to log it!

### COOKBOOKS FOR SALE

We've sold quite a few but need to sell many more to pay for the order!

They're bound in three ring, hard cover and brightly colored binders with room for expansion and a book stand, and only \$15 – great for gifts.

So let's move these cookbooks. Share your copy among your contacts and sell a few.

Proceeds go to a great cause – our Scholarship Fund.

If you don't cook, buy one for the cause and the cover!

If you need books between meetings, there are some available at the Extension Office or call Kaye at 766-7376 or Heather at 764-7177 and we can arrange to meet you and swap books for money (or checks).

### 2008 CLASS TSHIRTS

If you were in the Master Gardener **2008 class**, your free t-shirt is now available from Chris Becker at the Lauderdale Extension Office.

## NEWS, VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND UPCOMING EVENTS –

### PROJECTS - IVY GREEN

The rose garden was completed just in time for the opening of "The Miracle Worker." We continue to nurse the newly planted areas and groom the butterfly and herb beds. The summer heat is starting to take its toll on the spring-blooming perennials, but the Limelight hydrangeas and the summer annuals are starting to look good. We completed the cell phone tour recordings and brochure this week. Feedback from visitors and the tour guides has been very positive.

**Dennis Balch, Chair, 757-4023**

### PROJECTS

Vivian and David visited the Alabama Music Hall of Fame on July 1, and reported that the wildflowers planted earlier this year were blooming well. A photo will be posted on our website.

**David and Vivian Lawler, Co-Chairs.**

### NWSCC BASKET PROGRAM FOR NURSING HOMES – Sunday July 12<sup>th</sup>

If you signed up previously or would like to help students design plant baskets please call **Dot** for additional information

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FLOWER SHOW AT THE NORTH AL. STATE FAIR - SEPT 2009

Please phone **Kaye Hillis at 766-7376** if interested in volunteering at the Flower Show. Areas needing volunteers include entry registration, "staging" of entries, clerking and judging.



### MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD:

**Kaye's Book and Magazine Recommendations:**  
"Phillip Oliver (2008 class), has pictures in a book by Marie Harrison, "Flowering Shrubs, & Small Trees for the South." It is worth looking at."

"This month's article in "Alabama Gardener" features the President's Home on UNA campus, plus a

great article and photos by Phillip Oliver. The work done by B.J Cale and the staff has really made the campus a showplace.”

**And one of Kaye’s Handy Hints:**

Fill a gallon milk jug with water and freeze. Then take it out of the freezer, and punch several holes in it, then place it next to whatever you want to water while you are busy or away for a few days. The ice will slowly melt, and give you plants a drink of water. Also, you can bury a gallon jug in the ground, leaving about 2 to 3 " above ground. With the same method as before just let the jug do its thing, and re-fill the jug when it becomes empty. Before you had to re-freeze the jug, but with the last one you just keep adding water when needed. I've tried one of these, and believe me it works. Great for vacations, and busy schedules.



**From the Aces Home Grounds Blog:  
HOT SUMMER DAYS ARE TOUGH TO BEAR  
FOR TOMATOES**

**by Chuck Browne, Lee County Extension Coordinator  
Posted by Shane Harris 6/25/2009**

There have been many calls about flowers on your tomato plants drying up and falling off without setting any fruit. You are probably hoping that I have an answer for you that will stop this problem.

First the good news this condition is NOT related to any nutritional disorder, or any disease or insect damage. It is related to temperature. Despite the fact that tomatoes evolved in the tropics, flowering in tomato is sensitive to temperature. When day temperatures exceed 85 degree and night temperatures exceed 72 degrees °F, tomato flowers will abort. An important factor involved with temperatures, the longer the condition will last the more serious the effect on flowering. Short exposures such as a week or less should not cause much of a problem. It is interesting to note that although the combination of high day and night temperature causes blossom drop, high night temperatures alone can be detrimental to flowering even if day temperatures are not over 85 degrees °F.

Now the bad news, older or heirloom, home garden varieties which are most popular among home gardeners are more sensitive to high temperatures than many of the newer hybrids that are presently available. When fruit do not set and all other conditions are otherwise favorable (sufficient water and fertilizer, good pest control appropriate pH) plants generally become vigorous and dark

green. Even new hybrids, however, are susceptible to blossom drop.

Commercial growers in the southeastern US have suffered with this problem for many years until the recent advent of "heat set" tomato varieties. These varieties have been bred for tolerance to high day and night temperatures common in the summer and early fall. In fact, many of these varieties set fruit under poor growing conditions-extended cool, rainy periods as well as during extended periods of hot weather.

**What to do:** For this year or for an existing planting, keep the plants healthy. Keep plants watered. Maintain fertility levels and control any pest problems as any additional stress will make the condition worse. The plants will produce flowers and set fruit when temperatures become more favorable.

For next year, try growing a "heat set" variety. Many seed catalogs carry a wide range of tomatoes. Read the descriptions carefully looking for phrases such as "heat set," "hot set" or "heat tolerant". Often these varieties have references to their heat tolerance in their names. Varieties such as 'Sunbeam,' Sunmaster,' Suncrest,' and 'Sun Leaper' have performed well in Alabama even during extended periods of hot weather and have become a mainstay for many of our commercial tomato growers.



**“A TRIP THROUGH TEXAS, SPRING 2009”**

**By Dee Hubbert,**



For the last several years, Charles and I have wanted to visit the “Hill Country” of Texas. We have wanted to see the famous Texas Bluebonnets that grow there, and there is a famous and significant archeological site located there that was important for Charles to see.

Well, this year we did it, and what a wonderful time we had! Although the bluebonnets were not as abundant as usual because of the recent droughts, they nonetheless were simply beautiful. There are six species of Lupine that grow in Texas and altogether they are the official

state flower. Bluebonnets can be blue, white or pink, but blues predominate.

**Below: Texas bluebonnet (*Lupinus Texensis*) and Winecup (*Callirhoe digitata*)**



There were large swaths of these beautiful wildflowers along Texas roadways. We also saw other stunning wildflowers including Indian blanket, Plains coreopsis, cenizo (purple sage), Texas thistle, ocotillo, pink evening primrose, cedar sage, lantana, Prairie verbena, Drummond phlox, lemonmint, spider lilies, winecup, gay feathers, Cardinal flower, Texas mountain laurel, fleabane, Indian paintbrush, rain lilies, white prickly pear, sleepy daisy and mountain pink. The Indian paintbrush was especially unusual because the blooms were mostly orange, cream and yellow. We loved the little winecups- they glowed a beautiful burgundy color.

There are over 5,000 species of wildflowers that grow in Texas. Twenty percent of them are in the sunflower family. The Texas DOT sows 30,000 pounds of wildflower seeds annually. They delay mowing until after the spring and early summer wildflower season is over.

**White prickly poppy (*Argemone abiflora*)**



Seeking more adventure, we decided to do a thorough trip and go into the Big Bend National Park, which is so breathtakingly beautiful it is hard to describe. It is a land of desert and mountains. The area usually gets about eight inches of rainfall annually but this year was different. Spring rainfall transformed the arid region into beautiful color. Traveling on both paved and dirt roads, we saw Chisos bluebonnets, claret cup cactus, desert marigolds, yucca, ocotillo, prickly pear cactus, agave, spiderwort, Tohoka cactus and Huisache daisy as well as some of the same wildflowers and plants we saw in the Texas Hill country. One agave had a bloom spike over ten feet tall (the agave only blooms once in its entire lifetime)! The cacti were especially out-

standing with so many in full bloom. We were told by Park Rangers and horticulturists that this happens after abundant spring rains, and Texas had its share this spring.

**Below: Huisache daisy (*Amblyolepis setigera*)**



Having not seen enough of Texas and still having fun, we decided to head up to the Panhandle Plains and maybe slide over into New Mexico. There we viewed juniper woodlands, sagebrush, mesquite and some different wildflowers including Chocolate daisy, Black-eyed daisy and Blackfoot daisy. Grasses that dominate the landscape seem to consist mostly of Little bluestem and Buffalo grass. These grasses have extensive root systems which help with erosion control. Lots of crops are grown in this area. The ranches are sometimes huge extending for over twenty miles along roadways.

From there we turned reluctantly back towards home, but not before we toured through the Prairies and Lakes region, the Hill Country again, and finally the Piney Woods of East Texas. The Prairies and Lakes region is notable for its characteristic deep, fertile, black soils. There we saw a great many of the same wildflowers we had seen growing all over Texas, except for the desert species such as agave, cenizo, ocotillo and cacti.

The Piney woods gets lots of rainfall. Mixed pine and hardwood forest and swamps that have pitcher plants and orchids are predominant.

We had the good fortune to tour several magnificent gardens including the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden located on the Stephen F. Austin State University campus in Nacogdoches, Texas. This garden features 7,000 azaleas, 300 camellias, 200 varieties of Japanese maples, 240 varieties of hydrangeas and 400 rare ornamental trees and shrubs. Although we missed the peak season for bloom, the garden was certainly worth seeing. It is located in a shaded Loblolly pine forest and consists of plants which thrive in the acidic, sandy loam soil.

We also had a horticultural tour of the fabulous Tyler Texas Rose Garden. This garden features over 32,000 rose bushes and 600 cultivars. Featured are the Heritage Rose Garden, which the Smith County Master Gardeners maintain; The Meditation Garden, the English Rose Gar-

den, The Lady Banksii Garden and the Camellia Garden. This garden is one of the trial sites in the United States for new rose cultivars under consideration for introduction through AARS. Smith County Master Gardeners test and display under-used varieties that have potential for East Texas landscapes. Proven performers are highlighted.

We toured many of the State parks and Museums throughout Texas and stopped at a hundred spots along the way to search for fossils or artifacts. We even visited Florence, Texas which was in the midst of a city-wide cleanup.

Charles and I like an adventure and this trip certainly was one. We were amazed at the beauty and huge variety of Texas. Going out west many times on Interstate 40 we passed without taking time to really see and appreciate Texas. We just went through it and on our way to someplace else. This trip we took our time and are so glad we did!

**Thanks to Dee for sharing her trip and photographs with us.**

**Heather**



**From the Aces Home Grounds Blog 6/3/2009**

**“NAKED LADY”**

**Tony Glover,  
Regional Extension Agent, Jefferson County**

**Question:** We moved into a new home last year and noticed an unusual flower spring up. They have lovely red flowers but no foliage. Do you know what these lovely flowers are called?



**Answer:** This is likely one of the *Lycoris* species that go by a number of common names such as naked lady, spider lily, surprise lily, magic lily, resurrection lily, and hurricane lily. These lilies are members of the Amaryllis Family, which includes other well-known bulbs such as common amaryllis, daffodils, rain lilies and snowdrops.

These lilies are easy to grow and naturalize readily. If you plant new ones or move to a new location the bulbs should be planted so the "neck" is just below the soil surface. Dormant bulbs are best planted during late summer and fall, whereas actively growing plants can be planted other times of the year. These lilies thrive in sunny to partially sunny areas such as the edges of woodlands and shrub borders or under deciduous trees. They do not require fertilizer or irrigation, but grow best in loose, moist soil with good organic matter.

The types of these lilies that grow best here will have long, narrow leaves that emerge in fall, persist through winter, and die down in spring. The clumps of blue-green foliage resemble liriopse (monkey grass) but with a pale stripe down the center of each leaf. Leaves turn yellow in spring and should be allowed to die naturally. Cutting back leaves while they are yellowing will harm the bulb and reduce flowering. No leaves are present during summer months when bulbs are dormant or when the blooms arise (hence the name Naked Lady).

They are called surprise or magic lily because in late summer after a heavy rain flowers appear almost magically since there is no foliage to indicate where the bulb is planted. Leafless stems emerge and quickly grow 12 to 24 or more inches tall before being topped by 8-inch clusters of tubular flowers. Most species have flowers with narrow, strap-like petals and extremely long stamens, giving a spidery appearance to the flowers (and hence another common name, spider lily). These lilies make excellent cut flowers as well as beautiful garden plants.

They have a reputation for inconsistent flowering from year to year. This is often caused by bulb crowding. Large clumps of bulbs should be divided every few years to avoid reduced growth and flowering caused by crowding. Bulb clumps are best divided from now through early summer when bulbs are dormant. Flowering may be delayed a year or more due to the shock of dividing.

*Lycoris* species have long been used as garden flowers in their native habitats of China and Japan. Bulbs of all *Lycoris* species contain the alkaloid poison, lycorine. Although *Lycoris* bulbs are considered to have low toxicity, homeowners should be aware of the poisonous potential, particularly if small children and pets are present. On the other hand, this poisonous component has the benefit of making these plants resistant to damage from deer and rodents. Another alkaloid component they contain is galantamine, which is used in medications to treat Alzheimer's-type dementia. *Lycoris* is being grown in plantations in China for mass harvest to extract this compound.

Although I am sure you can find information on the web about these plants you should be careful if using the common name, "Naked Lady" when doing a web search. Better yet, for more information just go directly to this publication:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/EP/EP25500.pdf>



Would you believe “Dancing Figs?”

**JULY - GARDENING CALENDAR**

**FRUIT AND NUTS** – Protect figs and other ripening fruit from birds.

**SHRUBS**- Continue to root cuttings until late in the month and mulch to keep soil moist. Remove faded blooms promptly from crape myrtle and other blooming plants.

**LAWNS** – Watch for diseases. Mow regularly and water as needed.

**ROSES** – Keep roses healthy and actively growing. Apply fertilizer. Wash off foliage to prevent burning if any fertilizer falls on plants.

**ANNUALS AND PERENNIALS** – Water as needed to keep plants active.

**BULBS** – Iris and spider lilies may be planted late this month.

**VEGETABLE SEEDS** – Plant beans, field peas, rutabagas, squash, New Zealand spinach and Irish potatoes. Plant cabbage, collards, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and celery for the fall crop.

**VEGETABLE PLANTS** – Plant tomatoes in Central and North Alabama



June meeting - Martha looks at heirloom roses from “Petals from the Past”.



Some Children’s Museum project team workers- Shirley, Charlene and Marie

Photos: Jean Dunn and Dee Hubbert  
 Newsletter: Heather Russell-Gregory  
 If you have comments or suggestions re newsletter please contact 764-7177



Some members of “The Healing Place” crew- Preston, Dot, Lynn and Kaye

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