



A Washing Machine Drain Bog ??

by Caroline R. Dean

I have created several artificial bogs. Most of them are planted in Sarracenias and plants that usually grow with them. Almost all of the plants have been rescued from sites that were being destroyed and were brought to me because many people know that I photograph the plants and teach with them.

Some of the other bogs are planted with Hymenocallis and plants that grow with them because I have been working to clarify some of the confused nomenclature of these plants. Some of the botanists don't agree with each other and I just wanted to know.

A team from Kentucky came to Alabama about fifteen years ago to study the Monkey-face Orchid (*Platanthera integrilabia*). Some of the people escorting this team brought me two of the plants, which I put into my pitcher plant bog. The next year I had

about 18 new plants. It is amazing how well they have done. Some years are better than others. But I have plants in two of the bogs now and they are flourishing.

I started with artificial bogs because forty-five years ago, when we built our new house (then on the edge of town), the sewer line had not reached our street and we had to use a septic tank for a while. My husband did not want to run the washing machine water into the septic tank so he built a separate line to run it out into the back yard. I planted some bog plants in the damp ground and grew some beautiful plants in it, including goldenrod (*Solidago stricta*), Sunflower (*Helianthus florida*), Bunch Lily (*Melanthium virginicum*), Blue Flag (*Iris virginica*), and Purple Pitcher Plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*).

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Welcome to Summer

by Chuck Browne

June welcomes the first “official” month of summer. June is always a bitter-sweet month for me. It boasts the longest day of the year, on or about the 21. It also means that after the date of the summer equinox, the days get gradually shorter until winter begins on or about Dec. 21.

June is the month that you ought to be able to grow anything you want in the garden; temperatures are right, rainfall has been okay so far and insects have yet to become a real problem. There is still plenty of time to start warm-seasoned vegetable crops before our first frost.

Japanese Beetles

Here in Lee County, we are right on the geographical line where Japanese Beetles can be a problem. If you do not have them, consider yourself lucky. However, pay attention! They are marching South rapidly.

Adult beetles feed on at least 300 species of plants, including roses, other flowers and ornamentals, fruit trees, grapes and even poison ivy. They usually feed in groups and prefer plants that are in the sun. Beetles feed on the upper surface of leaves, which results in a skeletonized appearance of damaged leaves.

In Alabama, newly hatched grubs are present during the last part of July and the first part of August in most years. They continue to feed on grass roots through the late summer and fall, over winter in the soil as grubs, move up in the spring (about the time spring green-up occurs) and feed a little at that time.

Control of Adult Beetles

Non-chemical

✦ Hand collecting beetles may not be the most effective methods of control, but it can be used when beetles are less numerous. Simply drop the beetles into a solution of soapy water where they will drown. A hand-held vacuum cleaner can also be used to remove beetles. Beetle presence on plants tends to attract more beetles making their removal more critical.

Avoid traps to catch beetles. In most home landscapes, using one or more traps may do more harm than good. Traps attract more beetles into the area, many of which do not make it to the traps.

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ELEMENTS OF AN HEIRLOOM GARDEN

by Jason Powell

Old fashioned gardens were the rule at the turn of the century in much of the deep South. Mild winters and a nearly subtropical climate provide for lush gardens requiring attention and a regular pruning regime. Throughout the South, true cottage gardens existed anywhere there was a yard large enough and a gardener willing to maintain it. Such gardens were usually made in the front yard close to the road to encourage visiting. These small gardens did not contain large boxwood borders or many shrubs but depended on perennials, wildflowers, bulbs, re-seeding annuals, and old garden roses, not massed for effect but individually enjoyed.

Southern heirloom plants belong in Southern gardens. These plants are still with us for two reasons. First of all, they are adapted to our tough climate. Second, they provide a tie to our past. The following plants would have been available in the early 1900s and likely would have been grown by your grandmother and mine.

Perennials provided wonderful textures, a variety of colors, a host of fragrances, and good structure for early cottage gardens. Spring bloom was provided by blackberry lilies, bell flowers, carnations, pinks, foxgloves, lupines, penstemons, and verbenas. Yarrow, hollyhocks, bee balm, blackeyed susans and blanket flowers provided summer color. Autumn interest could be afforded by using asters, anemones, chrysanthemums, and forget-me-nots.

The biggest advantage of wild flowers and reseeding annuals in any garden is the

low maintenance aspect. This class of plants are typically free flowing and wispy. They can be planted from seed anywhere in the garden and allowed to freely reseed where they please. Wildflowers such as poppies, delphiniums, and larkspur would have been standbys for spring bloom in most cottage gardens. Dames rocket, campion, cosmos, rigid verbena, and coneflowers could provide consistently good summer/fall color.

Bulbs are the epitome of the old south garden. An early 1900 garden would likely have had spider lilies, crinums, and hardy gladiolus. Narcissus was popular genus including varieties of daffodil, Chinese sacred lily, and jonquil. Pink oxalis and rain lilies were found in gardens prior to 1900. Lily of the valley, montbretia, and leucojum can still be found in cemeteries and at old home sites.

Old garden or antique roses, in my opinion, are often the backbone of any good cottage garden. The versatility of these plants enables them to be used as low hedges, specimen plants, container plants, or climbers trained on structures. Dozens of varieties would have been available to gardeners during the early 1900s. The repeat blooming classes such as chinas, hybrid musks, noisettes, and old garden teas would likely have received the most attention. Names given to these roses such as the "Sweetheart" rose, seven sisters, old blush, Dorothy Perkins, and Champney's pink cluster will evoke fond memories for many.

If an old fashioned garden or cottage garden appeals to you, you're in luck. Consult most any gardening magazine on the rack today and you'll see photographs of this style garden being created from the northwestern U.S. to the southeastern sections. More nurs-



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Chemical

★ Carbaryl, such as registered formulations of Sevin, can be used by homeowners. Other insecticides available for controlling Japanese beetles include acephate, cyfluthrin, imidacloprid and bifenthrin. Use products according to label directions.

Volunteers Make a Difference

Many thanks to the 2004 Master Gardener interns who have volunteered in our office. Even if it seems slow at times, your presence helps us with our clientele. Dani Carroll, John Maples and I will be gone off and on throughout June and Master Gardeners' presence in our office will certainly be appreciated.

Please contact Nicci Loscalzo or Tesia Scott at 749-3353 and sign up for some Lee County "office time." Interns for 2004 need at least 20 hours office time to be awarded the Master Gardener certificate.

Remember, Master Gardeners from every level, seasoned to interns, can volunteer. County office volunteer time in *your office* is one of the things that keeps the Lee County Extension office operating smoothly.

100% Rooting Success

Never...never before, have I had 100 percent success in rooting anything. There are always the one or two strays that die and get cast out. Not so with the "hydrangea experience" last July. I wanted some lace cap hydrangeas and located two sources. I contacted local rooting guru, Dr. William B. Shell, and we were off.

The days we took cuttings were in late July, two days apart. Both were in the afternoon, cloudy and overcast with showers. Cut-

tings were trimmed and prepared in the air conditioned comfort of William B's kitchen. They were stuck immediately in the greenhouse and placed under mist. All rooted. This is not a lie!

At this point he took over. He stepped them all up and over-wintered them outdoors. Fertilizing, soil mixing and watering was all done by William B until this spring when I picked them up.

They will receive homes in good, partially shaded locations. I hope they will provide years of beauty to the new owners like they have done before in their respective landscapes.



Habitat for Humanity

by Gita Smith

Here is a great chance to gain your volunteer hours on a fun project. Habitat for Humanity will have two houses ready for us to come in and do landscaping and direct other volunteers to do the same. Please mark your calendars for July 8-10 when two houses on Lunsford Drive in Auburn will need your help.

We will work only in the cooler hours of the early morning and late in the day, as plants should not be transplanted in the hotter mid-day hours. That will save on our bodies, as well.

MGs will work from a lovely landscape design created by two of the Master Gardener students in this year's MG class: Helen Arnold and Kit Conner! Habitat for Humanity has a relationship with Green Hill Nursery, which donates shrubs and plants for the newly built houses. However, if you want to donate some flowering plants, preferably

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Potpourri

by Dr. William B. Shell

Lots of things have been running through my mind lately. Mostly I focus on Japanese maples; but recently, I have built my third raised bed. This relates to the tillage research that Charles Mitchell et al conducted last year at Auburn. The purpose was to determine the most effective type of “plowing” for gardeners and farmers. As you might recall, the back tiller did a real impaction job on the soil. It created a hard pan that vegetable roots wouldn’t penetrate and thus never reached their maximum growth and production. Amongst the other methods tried in the tests, double digging came out as the best way to prepare garden rows. Dig your row down to 10 or 12 inches and lay the soil to one side, then dig the row down to another 8 to 10 inches. Place the removed soil back into the row. Now you have a row about 15 inches deep of uncompacted soil. We found you can grow twice as much in half the space. The bad news: it is very labor intensive. The good news: it is very labor intensive. It will get you in “shape” in a hurry. My latest raised bed is built with treated lumber. Two by sixes twenty-four feet long, eight feet wide and a foot high. I filled the box with about a fifty fifty mix of old pine bark (1/4 inch) and top soil plus about ten cubic feet of perlite and 400 pounds of cow manure. I then added my fertilizer mix of Scott’s 12-6-6 Nursery Special and slow release Osmocote. I also added dolomitic lime, gypsum, Epsom salts, and micro-nutrients. I agree with you that is a bunch of overkill, but if you got it flounce it!! I used my back tiller to accomplish a thorough mixing. I have found that when I place my cuttings that I have propagated under mist in my green house into this raised bed, I get nearly 100 % survival and beautiful growth. Now the easy

part.... When you want to give them away, they are so easy to take up out of the bed with hardly any root disturbance. Getting back to building your container, you don’t have to use lumber. You can use whatever is handy that will contain your mix; old logs, rocks, beer bottles.

I have several species of Spiraea, but my most attractive right now is the Anthony Waterer. It has been in the ground going on its third year and is just showing out. Come get some cuttings and let’s try to spread the joy. Also, just a note concerning my Japanese maples... I will engage in summer grafting about the first of July, after the scions harden off, so plan to join me. I have all the rootstock and knives, rubber straps and bags. All you have to bring are your Band-Aids.

A quick word on the MG Demo Garden at Kiesel. Jaya and Barbara and Diane seem to be out there every other day, along with several others. Joanne Clark, who was a member of the first Lee County Master Gardener class, is also putting in lots of labor. Things are really shaping up and all should soon be in full bloom including our six flowerbeds. Also, let’s not forget our herb garden, put in by Carolyn and Patti!! You really must get out and ooh and aah and pull a weed or two (not many left).

Finally, I attended the 25th Annual Extension Council dinner, held at the First United Methodist Church in Opelika on May 27. Chuck and his whole crew put on a beautiful program and meal and even let me strawboss it. More than a hundred attended with much joy and praise. Had great piano music by Jim Warman, another master gardener, and on his birthday, yet.





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When I was given some spider lilies (*Hymenocallis occidentalis*) I had to plant a different bog, but the lilies grew with much success. Then I needed and added another bog for some String Lilies (*Crinum americanum*) and a different species of spider lilies (*H. latifolia*). Now I have a collection of *Hymenocallis* from Texas, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida and several places in Alabama.

One day while I was botanizing in Mobile on a dirt road at the edge of town, I saw that this road was being prepared for paving. At one place where Hall's Mill Creek crossed the road there were yellow pitcher plants (*Sarracenia alata*) and other bog plants that were all going to be destroyed. I brought some of the pitcher plants home and then had to prepare a proper bog.

We dug a hole four feet by eight feet, twelve inches deep (4'x8'-12"). I lined it with old plastic (to help keep the clay and roots out), punched some holes in the plastic, and then filled it with a mixture of good loam, sand, and peat moss. We put old crossties along the edges. The pitcher plants flourished, as well as pipeworts, redroot, yellow-eyed grass, and many other associated bog plants. These grew well for several years, but then more and more plants were acquired and more bogs needed.


In the next two bogs, I used 2"x12" treated boards for the borders. But now I have learned an even better trick. The bogs don't need to be 12" deep, so I use children's wading pools. The smaller ones work best.

We cut the rounded top off a pool, then dug a hole to fit the pool so that it came just to the top of the ground. We punched

holes in the pool so it would drain. My subsoil is heavy clay so it doesn't drain too rapidly but it doesn't stagnate. Then we mixed loam, Promix, very fine old pine bark, and sand. We filled the pool, watered it well and let it stand about two weeks. Then we planted it with my bog plants and were careful not to plant them too deep. This has to be kept watered but not constantly saturated. Rocks, or something, could be put to outline the pool and help keep the grass from coming in.

It is very necessary to weed the bogs by hand (a tedious job, but important). Among the plants that should not be allowed to grow in it are *Rhexia virginica* (Meadow Beauty), *Lachnanthes caroliniana* (Red Root), *Arisaema triphyllum* (Jack-in-the-Pulpit), and Lance-leaf Violet (*Viola lanceolata*). They spread rapidly and crowd out more desirable plants.

I am now growing six species of pitcher plants, *Sarracenia flava*, *leucophylla*, *alata*, *purpurea*, *rubra*, and *psittacina*. Also two species of Barbara's Buttons including *Marshallia mohrii*. Many of the plants found in the wild bogs are also growing in mine because the seeds are in the dirt when the pitcher plants are brought in. The Rudbeckias and Helianthus have to be thinned to keep them to a minimum but they can be transplanted to other parts of the garden and don't have to grow in the bogs. There are lobelias, turtleheads, asters, heleniums--too many different plants to mention.

I also have a thousand or two native azaleas, and many native trees, shrubs and wildflowers growing around my house. Visitors are always welcome. 



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perennials, to the site for flower beds, you may bring those to the houses on July 8 for planting as well.

Please contact Gita Smith, who will coordinate the crews so that work goes on smoothly at the two houses, located next to each other. This is an initial call for volunteers, and further instructions will come your way.

Please try to give at least four hours to this extremely worthy project! We will photograph and probably also video portions of this project to show the dramatic before-and-after accomplishments of Lee County Master Gardeners.

gitasmith@charter.net or call (334) 756-0911.



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eries, mail order and retail, are carrying appropriate plant material and making it available to gardeners. Or if you have old family photos look in the background. I am sure you'll see lots of flowers you may have forgotten your grandmother grew.

Jason Powell is the owner of the "Petals from the Past" nursery situated in Jemison, Alabama. He specializes in growing and propagating several old fashioned roses and other perennials. The nursery also offers several programs throughout the year appropriate for the seasons.



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◆Upcoming Events◆

Come visit the Auburn Arboretum open daily. Staff available Mon.-Fri., 7:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. The bog garden and other cool spaces and attractions await you. Curator Christy Hartsfield hopes fellow MGs will take a tour. Bog garden is located at back of arboretum near mowing shed. Maps available at the office, on S. College.

July 5-9, 2004: Forest Ecology Preserve - Young Naturalist Camp. Call Karni Perez at 334-826-0494 for information.

Thursday—Saturday, July 8, 9, 10, 2004: Master Gardeners and others assist in landscaping two Habitat for Humanity homes.

July 12-16, 2004: Forest Ecology Preserve-Camp Discovery. Call Karni Perez at 334-826-0494 for information.

Thursday, July 15, 2004: 5:30 p.m. Master Gardeners' Tour of Tom Corley's cabin and yard; social hour, short business meeting, & pot luck supper.

Thursday, July 24, 2004: Forest Ecology Preserve— Getting Bugged, presented by Dr. Wayne Clark. 334-821-3914



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