FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .

Don't Say That Too Loud!

Tuesday, June 9th, while I was strolling through Dale and Nora O’Connor’s daylily gardens, Calvin was at home mowing and doing other chores in the yard. After I got home he and I were sitting on the front porch and he said, “That oak tree right there is my favorite tree on the place.” I looked at him and said, “I wouldn’t say that too loud.”

Well, today is four days later. It is Saturday, June 13th. It’s 8:30 a.m. and I’m sitting at my desk with no lights on. It’s raining outside. The closeness of the thunder and lightening tells me that this particular storm is almost overhead. The reason I don’t have any lights on is the winds that came through last night took down the above mentioned “favorite” oak tree in the front yard. As the tree fell it took down our power and phone lines. The power company says it may take them a few days to get the power back on and the phone company says it will be at least next Tuesday.

The tree (thank Goodness), fell away from the house, into the front pasture. As it fell it took down a pine tree, two dogwood trees, the pasture fence and (to me) the worse thing, one of my twenty-year-old camellia bushes. It, of course, messed up the yard and tore up the concrete driveway.

We are counting our blessings. As I said, we are fine. The house was not damaged. The cat, the nine cows and the nine chickens are all accounted for, so all is well in our little corner of the world.

I told Calvin that if he has another “favorite” tree to keep it to himself.

I pray that all of you came through the recent storms with no damage. I look forward to seeing each of you at the July meeting. Until then be safe and don’t work outside too long in the heat.

Pat

Pat Bullock
FRUITS AND NUTS- Protect figs and other ripening fruit from birds.

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

LAWNS-Watch for diseases. Mow regularly. 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.

MISCELLANEOUS-Keeping flowers, shrubs, trees, and lawns healthy is the major task this month. This demands close observation for insects and diseases. Water.

VEGETABLE SEED-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.

"It's hard to think anything but pleasant thoughts while eating a home-grown tomato.

--Lewis Grizzard
Rain Barrel Workshop
Tuesday July 14th, 2009
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens - Auditorium
2612 Lane Park Road Birmingham, Al 35223

This workshop is designed to teach people how to make their own rain barrel. During this workshop there will be a presentation on harvesting rainwater and a demonstration on how to make a rain barrel. This will include instructions on how to attach the rain barrel to the down spout of the gutter system of your home. One lucky person will win the completed rain barrel by a random drawing to be held at the end of the program.

The cost of this workshop is $5.00 to cover our material cost and refreshments.

Pre-registration is required with payment for this event and should be sent to:
Rain Barrel Program
Hanna Center
2612 Lane Park Road
Birmingham, Al 35223

Master Gardeners may pay at the door with e-mail or phone confirmation of attendance: 879-6964 x 10
Or e-mail: Tony Glover gloveta@aces.edu
The JCMGA met at the home of Nora and Dale O’Connor. President Pat Bullock called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. There were two first-time MG’s present, Frances Thompson and Paulette Johnson. We also had five members from the St. Clair County MGA visiting with us.

The minutes from the April meeting were approved as written. The Treasurer’s Report from April was approved and will be filed for audit.

There was a correction to the minutes from May. Mary Hooper was the winner of one of the prizes. After this correction, the minutes were approved. The Treasurer’s Report from May was approved and will be filed for audit.

Harold Deason, Chairman for the 2012 MG State Conference, announced that the site committee would be meeting next week to pick the site for the 2012 State Conference.

Anne Thomas, Treasurer, announced that we have 153 active members per the state roster.

Scrapbook/Historian Connie Barron asked everyone to take pictures of any events you are involved in and forward the pictures to her. Be sure to name the MG’s in the pictures.

Pat announced that at the August 18, 2009 MG night meeting, Herb Lewis will present a program on Backyard Birding. This program will be open to MG’s, family, friends, and the public. Please put this date on your calendars.

New Business: No new business.

Volunteer Opportunities: Carolyn Snow has requested monthly help from the MG’s to assist with membership mailouts. She also has a need for other office type assistance. Call her at 414-3962 or csnow@bbgardens.org.

Bruce Steele awarded door prizes. Winners were Courtney McCrory and Mitzi Owen.

The meeting was adjourned and everyone toured the O’Connor’s lovely garden. Every lily was labeled, as were many other plants. Our sincere thanks to Dale and Nora for inviting us to visit their beautiful garden.

CEU’s:
2.0 CEU’s were awarded for the May Plant Swap
.75 CEU’s were awarded for Richard Healy’s Basics of Herb Gardening program.
2.0 CEU’s were awarded for the O’Connors’ garden tour.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sue Stinson, Secretary

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**JUNE, 2009**

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| Balance Checking Account: 6-25-09 | $ 8,662.32 |
| Certificate of Deposit - $ 5,000.00 |

Budgeted Items:
AMGA Dues Owed                 $15.00
Class/Conference Expenses      83.48
Scrapbook Expenses             39.84
Door Prizes                    86.88
Website Expenses               81.39

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**Deadline for the next issue of Roots and Shoots:**
July 27th
Blossom-End Rot in Tomatoes: Causes and Prevention

Tomato growers must take care to avoid blossom-end rot (BER), a disorder that can dramatically reduce both quality and quantity of tomato fruit. By using a few simple irrigation and fertilization practices, damage due to BER can be prevented or reduced. Blossom-end rot is a physiological disorder, not a disease. It is easily identified as a brown, leathery rot developing on or near the blossom-end of the fruit. It starts with a dry brown lesion the size of a dime, generally increasing in diameter as the condition worsens. In time, lesions often become covered with a black mold. BER is caused by calcium deficiency, usually induced by fluctuations in the plant’s water supply. Because calcium is not a highly “mobile” element in the plant, even brief changes in the water supply can cause BER. Droughty soil or damage to the roots from excessive or improper cultivation (severe root pruning) can restrict water intake preventing the plants from getting the calcium that they need. Also, if plants are growing in highly acidic soil or are getting too much water from either heavy rain, over-irrigation, or high relative humidity, they can develop calcium deficiency and BER. To control BER, take the following steps:

• Keep the pH of the soil at 6.0 to 6.5. Perform a soil test and apply the recommended rate of lime, using dolomitic or high-calcium limestone. Be sure to apply lime 2 to 4 months before planting tomatoes.

• Apply the required amount of fertilizer when necessary based on soil test results for tomato. Applying too much fertilizer at one time can induce BER. Following soil test recommendations is the surest way to fertilize properly.

• Use mulches to conserve moisture. Use pine straw, straw, decomposed sawdust, plastic or newspapers. Mulches conserve soil moisture and reduce incidence of BER.

• Give your plants adequate water. Tomato plants need about 1.5 inches of water per week during fruiting. Extreme fluctuations in soil moisture can result in a greater incidence of BER.

• If your plants develop BER, spray them with a calcium solution at the rate of four pounds of calcium nitrate or calcium chloride per 100 gallons of water (or four level tablespoons per gallon of water). Be careful with calcium chloride. If day temperatures are greater than 85 to 90°F, calcium chloride can burn plants. Under high temperatures, use calcium nitrate. You should spray 2 or 3 times each week, beginning when the second fruit clusters are blooming. Spraying calcium is not a substitute for proper irrigation and fertility management.

• Some varieties of tomato tend to be more sensitive to conditions that cause BER. Try growing several varieties and keep notes as to their performance.

• If you experience severe problems with BER, you should remove the infected fruits. Once a fruit develops BER it will not re-grow or repair the infected area. Remove the fruit, otherwise the damaged area could serve as an entry point for disease causing bacteria or fungi.
Many thanks to Nora and Dale O'Connor for allowing us to visit their lovely garden.

photos by Connie Barron

Blackberry Wine Cake

By popular request, here is the recipe for the Blackberry Wine Cake Pat Bullock brought to the June meeting:

Cake:

1 (18.25 oz.) package white cake mix
1 (3 oz.) package blackberry flavored gelatin (I use Jello brand Blackberry Fusion)
4 eggs
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 cup blackberry wine

Glaze:

1 1/2 cups confectioners’ sugar
1/2 cup blackberry wine

1) Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease and flour a 10 inch Bundt pan.
2) In a large bowl, stir together cake mix and gelatin mix. Make a well in the center and pour in eggs, oil and blackberry wine. Beat on low speed until blended. Scrape bowl, and beat 4 minutes on medium speed. Pour batter into prepared pan.
3) Bake in the preheated oven for 40 to 45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. Pour 1/2 of the blackberry wine glaze over top of cake while still warm. Let set for 10 minutes then remove cake from pan. Allow cake to cool fully before pouring the remaining glaze on top.
4) To make the Glaze: In a small bowl, stir together the confectioner's sugar and 1/2 cup blackberry wine.
Mark your calendar

July 8 Lunch and Learn: Suprising Succulents. Succulents are becoming increasingly popular in gardening schemes outdoors and indoors because of their almost infinite varieties of size, shape and color in foliage and flower. Learn how to appreciate, plant and propagate these plants from a self described succulent addict, Michelle Reynolds, a collector of succulents for the past ten years whose own garden was featured in Birmingham Home and Garden Magazine. Aldridge Gardens 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Cost: Members $10/ $17.50 with lunch; Non-Members $15/ $22.50 with lunch. Registration and prepayment deadline: Monday, July 6. For more information, call 682-8019 or visit: www.aldridgegardens.com.

July 14 JCMGA meeting, 10:00 a.m., Hannah Center, BB Gardens

July 14 Rain Barrel workshop, 1-3 p.m., BB Gardens. See page 3 of this newsletter for registration information.


July 24 Rain barrel workshop. 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Jeff State Campus, Pell City. For more information: www.aces.edu/~gloveta/upcomingmeetings.php or www.aces.edu/homegarden/HomeGrown.php.

August 1 Petals from the Past 3rd Annual Tomato Contest. All entries must be delivered and ready for tasting by 9:15am. Judging will begin at 9:30 promptly. Prizes will be awarded for taste and appearance in the categories of heirloom (open pollinated), Roma/plum, cherry/pear and hybrid slicing. There will also be prizes for the largest tomato and ugliest. Limit one entry per category and each entry must consist of 2 to 5 tomatoes. 10:00 a.m. Growing Great Tomatoes. Chip East, Regional extension agent, will discuss tomato variety selection, care and insect and disease control. Petals from the Past, Jemison, AL. For more information, call (205) 646-0069 or visit: www.petalsfromthepast.com.

August 2 Tour of the Figs and Bunch Grapes. Dr. Arlie Powell will discuss variety selections and care of figs and bunch grapes. Sample some of the varieties available. 2 p.m. Petals from the Past, Jemison, AL. For more information, call (205) 646-0069 or visit: www.petalsfromthepast.com.

Volunteer Opportunities

BB Gardens Library. Volunteers are needed for the following shifts: Tuesday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; Wednesday, 1-4 p.m.; Thursday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; 2nd Saturday, 1-4 p.m. For more information, call Elizabeth Drewry at 414-3932, or Jason Kirby at 414-3967.

Gary Gerlach Plant Information Center HelpLine. MG volunteers are needed to man the help line and answer gardening-related questions from the public. For information, contact Tony at 205-879-6964/ext. 15 or e-mail gloveta@aces.edu

ACES office, Beaty-Hannah Center, BBG. Volunteers needed to help answer phones, file, etc. For information contact Annette Drummond at 879-6964.

BB Gardens Volunteers are needed to help with the following BBG events: Cocktails in the Gardens, Aug. 13, Sept. 10, Oct. 8, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.; Great Pumpkin Festival, Oct. 17, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Fall Plant Sale, Oct. 17 - 18. Volunteers are also needed to provide flower arrangements for BBG lobby. For more information on these and other volunteer opportunities, contact BBG volunteer coordinator Carolyn Snow at 414-3962.