



Douglas County Dirt

Douglas County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 8



Total Watering Ban in Douglas County~ began 7/1/07

News from the President of DCMGA

Hello fellow gardeners,

First, I want to apologize for the mix-up on the meeting date for July. I learned to check the church calendar before making changes. I hope you were not too inconvenienced.

I also hope everyone is having a good summer. I'm very grateful for all the rain that has come my way this past week. I hope your yards were also recipients of some much needed rain.

The vegetable garden still needs help on Wednesday and Saturday mornings at 9:00. Please consider giving some time to this important project. In spite of the lack of rain and this year having a more organic approach, our garden is going strong!!!! We are currently at a total of 547 pounds! Great Job Master Gardeners and Friends!

The rose garden project continues to move forward. If you would like to help or be a part of the group, please contact Janet Deal.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our August 2nd meeting and hearing our speaker Wayne Seabolt talk on Organic Compost and Soil Enhancements.

Let's all go play in the Dirt!

Sharon Morton

Next Meeting:

August 2, 2007

Douglasville, GA

6:30 for pot-luck

dinner

7:00 meeting

begins

How to get to the meeting site:

St. Julian's Episcopal Church

5400 Stewart Mill Rd

Take Chapel Hill Road to Stewart Mill Road (Intersection at Target and Shell gas station)

From I-20 turn right on Stewart Mill Road. Church is about 1 ½ miles on the right.

August 2, 2007



DC Master Gardeners Minutes of the July 5, 2007, Meeting

- President Sharon Morton brought meeting to order, buffet served.
- Treasurer Judy Cole gave treasurers report. Current account balance is \$9,978.00
- Michelle Kirk presented a check to DCMG in the amount of \$80 as DCMG share of proceeds from Town & Count Garden Club fundraiser in which they used some our DCMG plants left from our plant sale.
- Michelle Kirk is looking for volunteers for Wed 8-11th trade show of Southern Nurserymen's Association. Contact Michelle at 770-942-9764
- Virginia VanBuren was awarded her MG Certificate for completion of 50 hours as an intern. Congratulations!
- New louvers are in place in the greenhouse. Greenhouse is empty for the summer, plants are under a tree. If you are in the area, please consider checking on them to see if they need water.
- The vegetable garden is doing well and harvest in full swing. More help is needed on Saturdays and Wednesdays at 9:00 for picking, weeding etc.
- Janet Deal discussed Rose Garden plans that were submitted to BOC.
- Cultural Arts center on hold at this time.
- Vegetable garden contest is complete for this year. It was discussed that some new rules/requirements are to be implemented since the same people win year to year. We need more individuals to enter.
- Speaker Doug Dannels spoke about water gardening.
- Meeting adjourned, **everyone** got a door prize.

Broxton Rocks Tour

Date: 9/15/2007

~The Nature Conservancy ~ Georgia Chapter

Location: Coffee County, Broxton Rocks

Saturday, September 15, 2007

Located near in Coffee County, Broxton Rocks is a haven of unique habitats for plants rarely found in the southern United States . There are more than 500 species of plants native here, along with one of the few waterfalls you will see in South Georgia ! This tour is being sponsored by the City of Douglas.

Free, but reservations are required. Please call 912-384-4555.



The Bright Side of The Drought

While the drought conditions have made many gardens look pretty sad, there may be a bright side to the lack of rainfall. Take a look at the plants in your garden, around your neighborhood, too. Growing next to the parched lawn and wilted flowers, are plants that do not seem to be bothered by the lack of rain.



In my garden, I have noticed some plants that really don't seem to show any signs of stress from lack of water. Heavenly bamboo, *Nandina domestica*, looks fresh, with no brown leaves or scorched leaf tips. The berries are starting to form, and to look at the plant, you would not know this was a year out of the ordinary. *Pieris taiwanensis*, the lily of the valley shrub from Taiwan, looks better than its Japanese relative *P. japonica*, and is forming long panicles of flowers for next Springs show. The Japanese soloman's seal, *Polygonatum odoratum 'Variegatum'*, looks unaffected by the lack of water. This plant which is generally grown in partial shade, is even looking quite good growing at the edge of the woodland next to daylilies and native whorled leaf coreopsis, *Coreopsis major*, both of which look somewhat spent.



Traveling around Douglas County, I have also noticed how wonderful many of the crape myrtles look. Considering how the crape myrtles were affected by the April freeze, most have recovered nicely, and the blooms seem to be much better this year. Not all of the crape myrtles look good this year, however. Some do not appear to have fully recovered from the freeze, and those which are not mildew resistant are very obvious.

What I really like are some of the dwarf and semi-dwarf varieties. Planted in the islands of the parking lot of the Publix shopping center on highway 5, are some semi-dwarf crapes, varieties unknown, that are only about 6 feet tall. The pink variety is doing much better than the red (it really isn't a very pretty red either). Planted in front of the strip mall on Stewart's Mill, just off of Chapel Hill Road, are a white variety called 'Acoma'. This crape grows to about 10 feet tall and has a somewhat weeping habit. In my backyard, I have a true dwarf crape myrtle, called 'Chicksaw'. It was introduced to the trade in 2000 by the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. The plant is less than 2 feet tall and has bright pink flowers.

Even though we are in period of drought, and so many of are plants look very bad or have even died, maybe we can use this experience to educate ourselves on the plants that are not so water dependent or that are much more adaptable to dry conditions.

For more information, 40 photographs of beautiful colors and varieties—even in pots and containers, and some beautiful pictures of dwarf crape myrtles, go to— <http://www.crapemyrtles.com> [Above photos are from the Cardell garden.]



Earth Kind Roses

By Janet Deal



America loves the rose. For many gardeners, there are fears of high demand plants and failure surrounding rose gardening. There is a long term research project out of Texas A&M that is giving hope to “would be” rose gardeners and also to our environment. This project has identified roses that require little to no care to thrive. There are numerous resources to help educate us on earth friendly roses. Some of the links are as follows.

Earthkind.tamu.edu type this in with no www) Earthkindroses.tamu.edu (type this in with no www) – There is a step-by-step **PowerPoint** presentation on this website prepared by the Texas A&M researchers.
www.walterreeves.com (search on earth kind roses and find a great article)

What is Earth Kind? - Earth Kind is based on research-proven techniques to provide plants for our landscape and most important preserve and protect our environment. The objective of Earth Kind “is to combine the best of organic and traditional gardening and landscaping principles to create a new horticultural system based on real world effectiveness and environmental responsibility.”

Earth Kind is a trademark. It is a designation given to select roses by the Texas A&M University Agriculture Program. These are roses that have been through statewide testing and evaluation by a team of horticultural experts. Based on that testing and evaluation the roses demonstrated high levels of landscape performance and disease and insect tolerance. While these roses were tested in the tough Texas landscapes, they have potential for our gardens. The roses do well in almost any soil type from well-drained acid sands to highly alkaline clays. Earth Kind roses are not immune to pest but are highly pest tolerant. From the earthkind.tamu.edu website

“Growing Tips for Earth Kind Roses:

For these roses to be as carefree as promised, it is crucial that they receive the following basic care:

Planting Site:

Be planted in locations where they receive direct sunlight for eight hours or more each day.

Have good air movement over their leaves (i.e. do not plant in enclosed areas like courtyards or small backyards which are ringed by 8' fences). No overhead irrigation during the evening hours or at night.

Bed Preparation:

Roses really respond to well-drained soils. Thus, here are the bed preparation recommendations for the 2 major soil types: Sandy and loam soils: Incorporate 3-6 inches of organic matter such as compost. Clay soils: Incorporate 3 inches of organic matter (e.g. compost) and 3 inches of expanded shale. Plant on raised beds that are at least 4-6 inches above the surrounding soil.

Fertilization:

Roses also like high levels of fertility, especially nitrogen. Thus, they need to be fertilized in March, June and lightly in late August. Base your selection of fertilizer analysis on the results of a soil test. For the March and June feedings, utilize fertilizers in which at least half of the nitrogen is in the slow release or slowly available form. In late August, apply fertilizers in which the nitrogen is readily available.

Maintenance:

Regardless of soil type, roses need to be protected year-round with a layer of organic mulch (e.g. cypress bark, tree leaves) 3-4 inches thick. In areas of the state plagued by salty irrigation water, it is very important to drip irrigate roses. Salty water applied to the leaves can burn the foliage badly. “

Some of the varieties that are recommended by the Texas A&M research are the following. You can find these recommendations as well as growing tips on the website at earthkind.tamu.edu.

Dwarf – Marie Daly, The Fairy **Small Shrub** – Caldwell Pink, Perle d’Or

Medium Shrub – Belinda’s Dream, Carefree Beauty, Else Poulsen, Knockout, Matabilis

Climbers – Climbing Pinkie, Sea Foam

After the first year of planting, these earth kind roses are meant to thrive and produce without spraying, pruning (other than deadheading) and additional water. I can vouch for that since my knockouts have bloomed despite the drought. The Douglas County Master Gardener Association has an active Rose Garden Workgroup. If you would like to join, please email jdeal@bellsouth.net or call 770 489 7551.

Douglas County Master Gardener Association

www.dcdirt.org

President: Sharon Morton 770-949-4797
Vice President: Jan Thomas 770-489-9276
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Secretary & Archivist: Rachel Hendee 770-577-3493
Yard of the Month: James Kirkwood 770-942-1663
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Douglas County Court House

Your input is needed.

For newsletter articles, tips, hints, anecdotes, recipes, book reviews, website reviews, gardening and/or shops or online sources, and ideas: Email: MJ_Cardell@yahoo.com Newsletter deadline is the 20th of each month.

Did you know this newsletter is also posted at our web site in full color, so you can get your dirt online?

GMGA Mission Statement:



To stimulate the love for and increase the knowledge of gardening, and to voluntarily and enthusiastically share this knowledge with others.

Hello All!

Please call Randy with questions on the Cultural Arts Center 770-920-2193, Jan for the greenhouse 770-489-9276 and James for the veggie garden at 770-489-4680 or MaryJane at 770-944-2780 Thanks everyone! Jan

Calendar Creation

We are in the process of creating a yearly calendar of events that DC gardeners would want to participate in or attend. For example, May is our plant sale month. The first Thursday of each month is our regular pot luck dinner and meeting.

If you know of other specific events that need to be on our calendar, please email them to Melanie Cardell at MJ_Cardell@yahoo.com.

August Meeting Program:
Thursday, August 2, 2007
Organic Compost & Soil Enhancement by
Wayne Seabolt



Putting Knowledge to Work