

THE LEAFLET



October 2010

A PUBLICATION BY THE ROBERTSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

“A MASTER GARDENER TREASURE”

A member of the 2009 class of Robertson County Master Gardeners has proven that there are no barriers to continuing to perfect a beloved hobby. There is always more to learn, more to share, more to offer your community, and certainly more friendships to “grow”.

Dorothy Briggs joined the 2009 intern class for fun, to learn correct pruning methods, and to learn the correct way to plant certain plants. She joined Master Gardeners having already learned more than many will forget in a lifetime. Her gardening skills were fine tuned when her husband was away. While her husband worked shift work, she was self taught through trial and error. Dorothy has a vast array of plants and flowers that she either began herself from seed or were divided and given to her the way many receive their plants, through plant swaps. Her own Master Gardener Project is the restoration of her family cemetery off State Line Road. Dorothy had a variety of entries in the 2010 Robertson County Fair. With 26 entries, she received 24 ribbons. Certainly Dorothy Briggs is a great addition to the Robertson County Master Gardeners.

**Robertson Co. Master Gardener Meeting
October 28th, 7:00 p.m.**

Program:

**“Roses” presented by Ron Daniels
October Refreshments provided by
Lonnie Gezley and Jo Ann Slate**



Q: HOW LONG CAN YOU LET LEAVES LAY BEFORE RAKING?

A: The general consensus is that more than 3 to 4 days is unwise. Are the leaves thick? Are they matted down by rain? The thicker or wetter the leaves the sooner you should remove them. One factor to consider is the method you will use for removal. A mulching mower is quick and can be used again if you have many deciduous trees and expect more leaves to fall. If you use a leaf blower properly, this method should be faster than raking. Leaf removal is necessary as lawns need to “breathe”. A layer of unshredded leaves can even cause mold. Blessed with sufficient sunlight, nutrients and water, and enjoying temperatures that are neither too cold nor too hot, cool-season grasses revitalize themselves in fall. If you don’t have the time or energy to rake every last leaf, mowing a few times to completely shred the leaves will go a long way to keep your lawn healthy.

Thanks to Ursula Otto for her presentation at our September meeting on "European Gardens"



TIM BEST and South Central Growers made extra mums available for our projects this month. Our sincere thanks to TIM for his efforts "beyond the call of duty" for our RCMG's!

WATER CONSERVATION

By Catherine Henning

Last week I attended a very informative seminar on water conservation presented by the Cumberland River Project. Many issues were discussed and many solutions were suggested.

Springfield's main source of water is the Red River watershed from which we take 5 million gallons per day. We waste a lot of that water. The water that is on this planet right now, today, is all we will ever have. There is no more. By the year 2013, it is estimated that 36 states, Tennessee included, will face a very serious water shortage.

I know it's hard to imagine a water shortage after the historical flooding we had this year. But consider that we have now gone 34 days consecutively without a good measurable rain.

With these facts in mind, here are some helpful hints for us all to implement, if you are not already doing so.

*Watering should be done early morning or late evening, preferably using a soaker hose. It may also be a great idea to try some of the new moisture sensors if you water your lawn.

*Water conservation and reuse should also be at the top of your list.

*Using rain barrels and other containers to catch rain is an excellent idea and easy to do. (This of course is not potable water but good for the gardens!)

*Building a cistern is a thought.

*So is under building water storage containers.

* Some other ideas include creating more pervious surfaces.

The idea that most caught my attention was making a rain garden. This proposal is wonderful for a spot in your yard that just seems to catch all the run-off or maybe is a catch-all for the extra water after a storm. The rain garden should not be under the tree drip line nor should it be closer than 20 feet from the foundation of your house. It cannot be used to grow vegetables but can be nice to plant those beautiful native Tennessee plants we like to use.

Planting trees is preferable to planting and nurturing grasses. Did you know that one hour of mowing leaves the same carbon footprint as driving four hours to Knoxville? Even the most efficient mower is guilty of this offense.

And of course we all know about what we can do in our homes to help conserve water.

For further information on this, have a look at the following sites:

www.cumberlandrivercompact.org

www.niagraconservation.com

www.watersense.com

www.epa.com

Moneysaving Tips For Fall Garden Needs

- 1. Fall is a good time to buy from nurseries** because they have terrific sales. You may not get a huge selection, but there will be some great bargains — even on trees. For even better deals, buy in bulk with a friend, or try negotiating with your local nursery if you have a long list of plants to buy. After you've seen what's on sale, and before you buy, look up plants in books, catalogs, and online plant-finder tools so you'll have some idea of what they will look like next season.
- 2. Need a new rake, spade or hoe?** Look for yard sale bargains if you need tools. Estate sales especially may be clearing out entire gardening sheds.
- 3. Save on necessities like mulch and compost** by buying from sources other than the nursery. You may even try purchasing mulch from a local woodcutter. It's much greener than the packaged mulch.



2009 Interns receiving their Master Gardener Badges for completing over 40 hours of community service to date in 2010 include Denise Arnold, Carolyn Donoho, Catey Henning, Dorothy Briggs, and Ann Couch. Not pictured are Lonnie Gezley and Laurie Hinkle.



Planting bulbs is almost synonymous with fall, but don't let your eyes get bigger than your fingers. Count the bulbs in each package so you know what you will be up against. If you have a lot of bulbs to plant, don't plant them individually. Dig a broad trench to the proper depth, place the bulbs throughout the area and fill it back in. It will be easier on your back and you will still get a beautiful swath of color in the spring.

How to Garden Wiser as We Grow Older

The list of fall chores can be daunting, but savvy gardeners know not only how to accomplish fall maintenance with a minimum of fuss but also how to get a bonus payback with a shorter "to do" list in the spring. Fall is a great time to take a long hard look at your garden with an eye to making your life easier next spring. Start with your perennial border. Go right through and look at the plants that are causing you the most problems. Get rid of the ones you had to work hardest to maintain. Healthy plants you no longer want can be given to civic associations, shelters or shared with fellow gardeners. Other clean-up work includes pruning shrubs — except those that bloom in the spring, like forsythia and lilacs. Keep a large tarp by your side as you prune, and throw debris right on top. Then you can simply gather up the corners and drag the tarp to the brush pile — or bundle up branches and carry them out to the street if you have fall pickup.

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