



# THE LEAFLET



November/December 2009

A NEWSLETTER FOR, ABOUT AND BY ROBERTSON COUNTY GARDENERS

## UPCOMING GARDEN EVENTS

**Dec.10—MG Club Meeting and Christmas Party @ County Ag. Extension Office (7pm)**

Thursday 7:30pm or Sunday 9:30am on NPT Channel 8: "Volunteer Gardener"

Saturday 5-5:30am on WTVF Channel 5: "P. Allen Smith Gardens"

Saturday 7-8am 1430 on WPLN-AM: "You Bet Your Garden"



## MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

By Ursula Otto

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday we did not meet in November. Our Christmas party is December 10<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Please bring a covered dish or dessert and a \$10 garden related gift for gift exchange. I hope to welcome our new gardeners who have not finished their classroom instructions to next year's Christmas Party. I wish you and your family a safe and happy holiday season!

## FROM THE LEAFLET STAFF

By Lynn & Lisa

'Tis the season to shop for the gardeners on our list and to compile our list for Santa. To that end Leaflet staff visited several well-stocked garden stores, poured over newly arrived "seed" catalogs and web sites, and solicited advice from our fellow Master Gardeners. Results are included in this Leaflet. Thanks for all the excellent suggestions and best wishes for a wonderful holiday season!

## WHATS ALIVE IN YOUR GARDEN THIS WINTER?

Plan to add interest to the winter landscape of your gardens by including some perennials that grow and thrive in the winter months.



**Arum** – Available from practically every mail-order bulb catalog, *Arum italicum* grows in shade and three-season interest in the garden.

Shortly after you plant the tuber in the fall, arrow-shaped silver veined leaves appear and generally persist throughout the winter. In spring a flower similar to Jack-in-the pulpits appears followed by colorful spikes of red-orange berries. The leaves last a long time in arrangements if picked when they are mature.

**Helleborus** – Also called Lenten Rose, the availability and popularity of *Helleborus orientalis* has increased in recent years. *Helleborus* are available in local garden centers, by order, and (if you are lucky) from gardening friends who are

transplanting seedlings from around their mature plants. Best planted in shade in early spring, *Helleborus* blooms in late winter; the flowers come in many colors including green, cream, pink, and burgundy. Once you plant Lenten Rose, you will have it in your garden forever because it reseeds (though not aggressively).

## MASTER GARDENER MEETING

Thursday, December 10th 7pm @ Ag. Ext. Office  
Master Gardener Christmas Party



Young Jerusalem Artichoke



Jerusalem Artichoke in bloom

## THE JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE— USEFUL PLANT OR PERENNIAL PEST?

By Doug Buck

A member of the sunflower family, the Jerusalem Artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosa*) is a perennial that easily grows six to ten feet tall and yields a bounty of edible tubers. The yellow flowers provide butterflies and bees a good source of nectar and pollen from July to late summer. It can be grown into a quick hedge, tolerates any soil, and does not succumb to insect pests.

Tubers of *Helianthus tuberosa* can be ordered from most of the major seed and flower catalogs. They can be planted early in the season and require no special soil preparation. A location with full sun is preferred, but I've found that chokes will grow in areas of light morning or afternoon shade. Since chokes grow wild in the eastern U.S., they require no special care. However because of their height,

staking is necessary to prevent blow over during storms.

Butterflies, especially skippers, will frequent the medium-size blooms. Native bees and various species of beetles also favor the Jerusalem Artichoke as a source of pollen. Pest insects, notably aphids, can sometimes be observed on the underside of the eight inch oval leaves, but this perennial is resistant to such pests and infestation usually requires no chemical intervention.



The tubers of this plant (pictured here) are edible and sold in some stores as “sun chokes”. They are

often touted as a good potato substitute and can be eaten raw in salads. Tubers are far more perishable than potatoes, and it’s recommended that they be left in the ground until needed. Indeed, it is claimed that leaving them in the ground until after the first frosts enhances the flavor. I’ve tried the tubers both cooked and raw, but I find the taste to be a bit too earthy for my palate. There are numerous recipes on the Internet for sun chokes. The chokes are supposed to have a “nut-like” flavor; so perhaps I failed to properly prepare them.

A major drawback in introducing *Helianthus tuberosa* to your property is its tendency to spread rapidly. It’s not a plant for the vegetable or flowerbed but can be incorporated into a landscape as a border plant or deciduous hedge. It’s great for out of the way areas of pool soil.

To keep this plant under control, it’s vital to dig the tubers and discard those you don’t want. Failure to be thorough in removing the tubers will result in this plant’s becoming a pest rather than a valued addition to your landscape.

### LEAFLET STAFF SHOPS FOR GARDEN GIFTS

*Leaflet staff visited three garden supply stores in the area to get ideas for locally available Christmas gifts for gardening family and friends. Items listed below are not indicative of the variety of merchandise at the locations nor necessarily exclusively available at any one location, rather it is what store management highlighted and/or what captured our attention and imagination at the time.*

#### **Dorris Milling Company**

5 North Main Street  
Springfield, TN 37172  
Phone 615-384-5401

Carol Hosteltler at ►  
Dorris Milling Company



Along the banks of Sulfur Fork Creek, the Dorris family has milled and/or sold grains (and more) at this location since 1844. While Dorris Milling Company

specializes in feed and equine supplies, it is “the feed store with a whole lot more!” You have missed their Ladies (only) Night Christmas Sale (on December 4<sup>th</sup>) this year, but on Customer Appreciation Day (Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>) you can enter to win the “Horse, Hound & Human Giveaway” and a Dorris gift certificate or \$1000 cash.

Dorris Milling has books, wind chimes, garden-related products and agriculture-themed Christmas cards. For the bird-lover, Dorris Milling Company has a great selection of birdhouses, feeders, birdbaths, and accessories such as heaters for the birdbaths.

Further information is available at their web site [www.dorrismillingco.com](http://www.dorrismillingco.com). Dorris Milling sponsors 4H group projects and has several classes and seminars including horse, cattle, and deer seminars; a chick day is held around Easter when the baby chickens are in-house. Robertson County Master Gardeners especially enjoy the bird seminar each year, and it will be scheduled after the first of the year.

#### **Worm’s Way**

707 Rivergate Parkway  
Goodlettsville, TN 37072  
Phone 615-851-6262 or  
800-397-4153



*Geoff Henderson, Store Manager  
Worm’s Way in Goodlettsville*



Worm’s Way is located in the Rivergate Mall area beneath the Vietnam Veterans Parkway Bridge but not for long; around February 1<sup>st</sup> the store will move to a new facility in East Nashville at 901 Main Street. You can browse or order from their web site [www.wormsway.com](http://www.wormsway.com) for ideas and products or pick up a catalog at the store.

“Garden Anywhere, Anytime” is the mantra of Worm’s Way. They stock a variety of hydroponic products, grow lights, and plant propagation products. Snapdragons, tomatoes, and other plants bloom and thrive under lights in the store. While shopping for garden related gifts such as a counter-top sprouter, a table-top hydroponic grow lamp, aqua shuttle kit, garden books (a composter or an order of red worms for your vermicultural bin), you can checkout the variety of organic additives and pest control products.

Worm’s Way holds several seminars on subjects of general gardening, hydroponics, and plant propagation. You can pick up informational flyers at Worm’s Way on composting (general and worm), plant propagation, and pest control. All employees at Worm’s Way are gardeners with hands-on gardening experience as well as having knowledge of the products they offer.

## All Seasons

924 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Nashville, TN 37203  
Ph.615-214-5465 or 800-790-2188

Emily Thompson at ▶

All Seasons Gardening Supply



All Seasons Gardening Supply Company is located a few blocks north of the Interstate 65 Wedgewood exit. You can browse and order their products on their web site [www.allseasonsnshville.com](http://www.allseasonsnshville.com), or better yet, visit their store to experience their garden related offerings.

At All Seasons you'll find yard art, clever plant markers, pottery, hydroponics, kneeling pads, pond supplies, and birdhouses. They stock the Hori Hori knife (a perennial knife for separating clumps of perennials that was recommended by the Nashville Herbal Society); holsters for your pruners; hand cultiweeders and angle weeders; homes (cells) for Mason Bees; and a variety of gardening gloves, including "breathable" ones with reinforced fingertips. All Seasons has several racks of seed packets (largely flowers and herbs) in stock, ready for stocking stuffers or Christmas card enclosures.

All Seasons sponsors the Riverside Village community garden, projects at the Lockland Elementary School, and The Nashville Herbal Society. They hold classes on organic gardening and plant propagation; you can sign up for email notification on their web site.

### DECEMBER GARDENING "TO DO" LIST

**Anybody's ashes:** Save your cooled fireplace (wood) ashes in the basement or garage (or outdoors in a container that has a lid). You can use them next spring or summer to deter slugs. Place a ring of ashes around annuals; slugs don't like to slither across the ashes.

**Bulbs:** Yes, you can still plant tulips, daffodils, and other bulbs outdoors, as long as the ground isn't frozen.

Try to get it done by the end of December; otherwise, blooming may be delayed.

**Garlic:** If the ground isn't frozen, you could plant garlic, since it needs a long growing season, beginning in winter.

**Shrubs:** Except for removing dead, diseased, or damaged wood, put off shrub pruning until at least late winter. You may, however, cut holly, nandina, and pyracantha stems to provide berries for holiday decorations. Cut the entire stem back to where it joins a branch, back to the ground, or just above a bud.

### RCMGA COMPLILE CHRISTMAS LISTS

*Master Gardeners share their ideas for 'dandy' garden gifts below. (Copies of this Leaflet are being delivered to Santa as a special Christmas service.)*

Garden cart to carry my pots and flats around, a large selection of heirloom flower and vegetable seeds; several large bags of worm castings; a garden tractor with all the attachments. *Carol*

Gloves (latex tipped and thermal); loppers; Felco pruners; garden sprayer; Off's battery operated insect repellent; waterproof clogs/shoes/boots. *Julee*

A purple martin house and attachment to our riding mower for picking up leaves. *Mary Linda*

Ph meter; leather holster for pruners; arbors for vines and roses; acres and acres of landscaped gardens, i.e. a Cheekwood Botanical Gardens membership. *Lynn*

Heated birdbath; a screened gazebo with twinkling lights that outline every angle; the gazebo interior will have a firepit and benches with loads of squishy pillows for lounging. *JoAnn*

A BIG truckload of well-rotted, weed free manure (and someone to help spread it) *Dee*

A Kawasaki 2010 Mule 4x4 with a dump bed and a John Deer Tractor with every possible attachment. *Lisa*



M ichelle & JoAnn scout gardens for 2010 tour  
(Ablely assisted by future-master-gardener Elizabeth)



Ro. Co. Thanksgiving roses



Jan & her worm composting system (Oct. MG meeting)

### CONTACT LIST

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RCMGA Web Site: [rcmga.org](http://rcmga.org)

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