

**LPMGA APRIL  
 GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday**  
**April 6, 2016 - 6 pm**  
**Southside Library**

**LPMGA BOARD**

**MEETING**  
**1 PM MONDAY,**  
**APRIL 25, 2016**  
**IRA NELSON HORTICULTURE**  
**CENTER (INHC)**

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Our speaker for the April Lafayette Parish Master Gardner meeting will be **Kyle Patton**. Kyle is a Louisiana native. After high school he attended the University of Louisiana Lafayette where he has a bachelor's degree of animal science in the Department of Renewable Resources and Masters' degree in the department of Biology. He is currently an instructor in the Department of Biology at ULL. His primary interests include Ecology, Evolution, and Diversity. His presentation will be about mushrooms found in Louisiana. The meeting will be held at the **SOUTH SIDE BRANCH** of the Lafayette Parish Library located at 6101 Johnston St. on Wednesday, April 6 at 6:00 p.m.

The spring **LPMGA Plant Sale** will be held April 9, 8am—1pm at Ira Nelson Demo Beds with a theme of wild and native. A seed swap will be held at the plant sale from 9-11 (see page 5). The 25th anniversary of **Festival de Fleurs** takes place April 2-3 at Blackham Coliseum (see page 4 for more information). The Southern Garden Festival is scheduled for April 15-16.

A **Garden Stroll** at the home of Dr. Richard Howes will take place Saturday, May 7, 1—3:30. The stroll is at 104 Allée des chênes in Lafayette. Please come and bring a friend. This is a beautiful setting, and Dr. Howes has worked so hard to make his garden beautiful. You will also be able to see miniature horses! Directions: From Lafayette, take Evangeline Thruway North to I-49. Take Pont des Moutons exit and go right (east) to light at Moss Street. Take left on Moss then right on Maryview Farm Road. Go 0.2 miles and take left at first street sign- Allée des chênes. Go to THE END OF THE BLACK TOP and turn right through gate onto gravel drive.

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**



Watching his last presentation for LPMGA at Garden Talk yesterday reminds me why Gerald has been such a gift to this organization. His passion, enthusiasm, integrity, humor, and vast knowledge were evident as soon as he began to speak, and continued well after he was supposed to be finished; but that was fine by us. It's hard for him to stop sharing his knowledge and passion. Since he began working in Lafayette Parish 6 years ago, Gerald has always been there to support our needs and to be our advocate. We love you, Gerald! You will be missed! Come back and share whenever you want.

**Linda Beyt**

## GERALD'S CORNER



Hello Master Gardeners,

April presents us with more opportunities to expand our gardening activities. April affords us additional warm or hot-weather vegetables to plant. April allows us to plant many vegetables that will be more productive if planted this month instead of waiting. The earlier certain vegetables are planted, the more productive they are. Especially if they can avoid very high temperatures when they are at the peak of their productive cycle and also if they are less challenged by insect pests. Vegetables that are recommended to be planted in April are cantaloupe, collards, corn, cucumber, eggplant transplants, snapbeans, Southern peas, squashes, watermelon and tomato transplants. Tomatoes are staked to keep the plants from sprawling on the ground where the fruit would be more likely to rot. Wait for the first flowers to appear, and place the stake on the opposite side of the

plant's stem. All of the flower clusters will grow from the same side of the stem and this will keep developing fruit from getting caught between the stake and the stem.

For those who love to plant herbs, basil, sesame, lemon balm, mints, lemon grass, lemon verbena and rosemary can be planted in April. Excellent hot weather vegetables that can be planted in late April include eggplant, peanuts, pumpkin, Southern peas, hot pepper, lima beans, luffa gourds, and okra.

Pruning of spring flowering shrubs such as spirea, viburnum, quince, azalea, camellia, jasmine and mock orange can be done as soon as they complete their blooming period. Remember though, that pruning should be the result of a specific purpose. Unless you are trying to achieve a clipped formal hedge, pruning should be done to preserve the natural shape of the shrub. Clipping or shearing creates a hedge look, but if you're trying to lower the height of a shrub, selective pruning should be done by taking the tallest branch or shoot and lowering it by cutting down into the shrub. Then take the next longest and continue this procedure, moving on to the next tallest branch until the shrub is lowered to the desired height. By selectively pruning, you preserve the more natural shape of the shrub instead of shearing across the top making it look more like a hedge.

Be sure to mulch newly planted beds or shrubs or bedding plants with a 1 -2 inch layer of leaves, pine straw, pine bark, or other organic material. The benefits of mulching include suppression or control of weeds, conservation of moisture, reduced soil compaction, and improved soil structure. As mulch decomposes, it provides nutrients to the plants and moderates soil temperatures.

Generally, during hot dry weather spider mites become active and the damage may show up on many vegetables and ornamentals. Spider mites are not easily detected by the naked eye. Using a magnifying glass to inspect the plants, look for tiny red or green eight-legged mites. The foliage of infested plants appears dull, dusty and unhealthy, and eventually turns brown. The spider mites are located primarily under the leaves. Spray with a horticultural oil, insecticidal soap, Malathion or a miticide called Kelthane.

Plant caladiums this month. Caladiums are excellent for shady areas and combine beautifully with ferns, begonias, liriopse, impatiens, hosta and coleus. Some outstanding perennials that many nurseries have available at this time of the year in gallon containers include perennial salvia, bee balm, butterfly weed, chrysanthemum, coneflower, coreopsis, four - o'clock, gaillardia, gerbera daisy, daylily, mallow, Goldsturm rudbeckia, sedum, Shasta daisy, stokesia, verbena, yarrow, and violets. Even though some nurseries may still have cool season annuals for sale, think twice before purchasing those for transplanting since cool season annuals will struggle in hot temperatures. Even though petunia will tolerate some heat, even the heat-tolerant ones like the Wave series may last longer but still tend to struggle in the intense heat in late June and into July and August.

Azaleas with leaves that have tiny light spots all over them have been attacked by the azalea lace bugs. Treat with Malathion or Orthene (acephate) as needed through the summer and fall. Any damage that has already occurred will not go away, but insecticide applications will prevent further damage. Spray crape myrtles with mancozeb, chlorothalonil, or other labeled fungicides to control powdery mildew. Powdery mildew appears as a white powdery material on the leaves. Unlike many fungus diseases that are worse during rainy weather patterns, this disease is favored by humid, warm weather without rain. Powdery mildew can also be a problem on a variety of other landscape plants such as dogwood, euonymus, gerbera daisy, rose and hydrangea.

Master Gardeners, the time has come for me to bid you all good bye. Beginning in 1976 immediately after college, I began going to work every day hoping make a difference in the lives of people. As a young person beginning a career in a profession that serves people, I was told by someone older and wiser than myself to always remember that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Thank you all for caring, and I hope my attitude with each of you individually and collectively reflected how much I cared. The Lafayette Parish Master Gardeners Association will continue to serve and thrive because of each of you. Your passion for serving others speaks volumes for how much you care. Let us all look ahead with the greatest amount of optimism possible, and never look back with regrets. Thank each you for making me better as a person. I'm light years ahead of where I was when I came to you all in January of 2010. Thanks also to the LSU/Southern Universities AgCenters for giving me a chance. To the Evangeline, St. Landry, and Lafayette Parish Extension Staffs, I hope I've given you all as much as you all gave me. I feel that you gave me all the support and encouragement that a person could ever expect. FAREWELL!!!

Gerald P. Roberts, Horticulturist/Master Gardener Program Coordinator  
LSU AgCenter, 1010 Lafayette Street, Suite 325, Lafayette, LA 70501  
GRoberts@agcenter.lsu.edu, Office (337) 291-7090, Fax (337) 291-7099





**EVENTS, REPORTS, AND BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS**

2016 LPMGA Meetings: (First Wednesday Except in July) Daytime—noon/Evening—6 pm	2016 LPMGA Board Meetings, 1 pm: (Fourth Monday except for July & Dec.)
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APRIL 6, 6 pm	APRIL 25
MAY 4, 6 pm (Social)	MAY 23
JUNE 1, Noon	JUNE 27
JULY No meeting	JULY No Meeting
AUGUST 3, 6 pm	AUGUST 22
SEPTEMBER 7, Noon	SEPTEMBER 26
OCTOBER 5, 6 pm	OCTOBER 24
NOVEMBER 2, Noon	NOVEMBER 28
DECEMBER 7, 6 pm (Social)	DECEMBER 12

# 3rd Saturday Garden Talk

Master Gardener Juan Nieto will be giving a presentation about watering the home garden at the Third Saturday Garden Talk on Saturday, April 16th at 10:00 A.M. at the Ira Nelson Demo Beds. Garden Talks are free and open to the public.

**Southern Garden Fest—April 15 and 16  
at Sarah's  
Benefitting Family Promise  
3502 E. Simcoe, Lafayette**

**Don't forget Sarah has asked for help in  
her garden and the day of event  
Call her at 288-0426 to volunteer**

Dinner & Dancing Under the Stars w/ reservations only  
Friday: \$75 per person \$100 per couple from 6—8 pm  
Saturday: \$10 at gate, 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

*See article in Community Chronicles' April Free Monthly*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

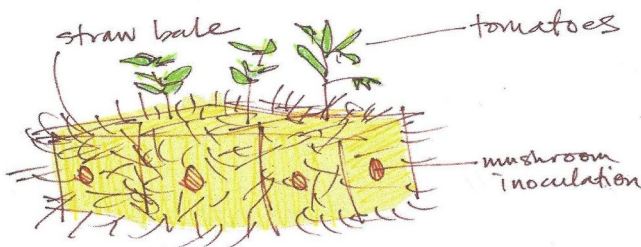
### ALABAMA TOUR

Tuesday May 17 – Thursday May 19, 2016

PAYMENT and FORMS DUE BY April 25, 2016  
MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO  
LAFAYETTE PARISH MASTER GARDENERS  
ASSOCIATION. SEND TO **LINDA BROUSSARD,**  
**803 CANBERRA ROAD, LAFAYETTE, LA 70503.**  
**PLEASE NOTE:** DRESS SHOULD BE CASUAL WITH COMFORTABLE  
WALKING SHOES.

### PINE STRAW SALE

New location this year. Pick up will be a drive thru  
entering at the INHC entrance on Johnston street  
across from Ground Patti. You will follow the gravel  
road to the MG gardens and we will offload hay onto  
your truck etc. as you drive thru and you will exit on  
Coliseum road. Please do not leave your car if you are  
in line to pick up hay. **April 16, See pg. 6 for details.**



## COOL THINGS WE HAVE SCHEDULED AT



### Saturday, April 2

- 10:00 "Chipping Bulbs to Propagate New Plants" by May Vidacovich
- 11:00 "Home Propagation" by Becky Taylor
- 1:00 "Propagating Roses" by Juan Nieto
- 2:00 "Saving Tomato Seeds" by Louann McClelland-Long AND "Seed Propagation" by Gail Wakefield & Dale Oglesby

### Sunday, April 3

- 11:30 "Composting" by Becky Taylor
- 1:30 "Propagating Roses" by Cindy Wiley

**EMBRACE THE CHALLENGE**

**BRING YOUR REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE TO MASTER GARDENER FUNCTIONS!**



UPCOMING EVENTS

# 25th Annual



Wagons and Carts Welcome!

## Garden Show and Sale

April 2-3, 2016

Saturday

8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sunday

11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Blackham Coliseum

Entry Fee: \$5

12 and under Free

Door Prizes!

pottery!

Tools!

Garden Accessories!

Garden Supplies!

Exhibits!

Garden Gifts!

plants!

Food Trucks!

**FREE PLANT**  
for all who enter  
on Sunday, April 3!

**60 BOOTHS**  
**FEATURING THE**  
**BEST IN PLANTS &**  
**GARDEN PRODUCTS**

*Displays by:*  
Lafayette Garden Club  
Acadian Orchid Society  
Bonsai Society of Acadiana

**Free Childrens Activities**  
**on both days**

### SPONSORS

THE ACADIANA  
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Custom Supplier of Landscape  
& Building Stone

LAFAYETTE PARISH  
MASTER GARDENERS



UNIVERSITY  
LOUISIANA  
Lafayette

Lafayette  
Garden Club

Propagation Demonstrations  
given by the  
Lafayette Parish  
Master Gardeners  
on both days

[www.FestivaldesFleurs.org](http://www.FestivaldesFleurs.org)

For information call 337-482-5339



Festival des Fleurs de Louisiane



## MG SEED SWAP

LOUISIANA

Master  
Gardener™

An educational program of the LSU AgCenter

LAFAYETTE PARISH MASTER GARDENERS

SEED SWAP

Lafayette Parish Master  
Gardener Association

# SPRING SEED SWAP

Saturday, April 9th, 2016

AT THE LPMGA PLANT SALE

Ira Nelson Horticulture Center

Across from Blackham Coliseum on Coliseum Road

It's Our First Seeds Only Swap

9:00am to 11am

This will be an open hosted swap.

Drop your seeds at the swap table starting at 8am. Seeds will be organized into categories then set out to be traded starting at 9am. Swapping will continue until 11am.

Get there early for the best selection.

Bring as many bags as you like-its even trade

Don't Forget To

**BAG 'EM AND TAG 'EM**

**ALL SEEDS MUST BE IDENTIFIED**

Please label with type, variety, color, germination hints or any other helpful information. There will be small bags and labels available for you to use at the Swap.

*The more interesting the seed, the more interesting the Swap!*

The public is always welcome.

For more information, or to include a seed request, contact  
Louann Long at [mglouann@gmail.com](mailto:mglouann@gmail.com)

Seeds that do not find a home will be donated to School Gardens,  
Jr. Master Gardeners or LPMGA.

Like Lafayette Parish Master Gardeners on Facebook and visit our website:  
[www.lpmga.org](http://www.lpmga.org)

Mark Your Calendars-

*The Spring Plant Swap will take place at 9am on May 7th.*

For the latest  
research-based  
information on  
just about anything,  
visit our Web site:  
[www.lsuagcenter.com](http://www.lsuagcenter.com)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Trip Registration Form
LAFAYETTE PARISH MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION
ALABAMA TOUR
Tuesday May 17 - Thursday May 19, 2016

Name:
LAST: FIRST:

MAILING ADDRESS:

CITY STATE:

E-MAIL:

PHONE: HOME: CELL:

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION :( DESIGNATE A PERSON THAT WILL NOT BE TRAVELING WITH YOU)

NAME: RELATIONSHIP:

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER:

FOOD ALLERGY/DIET RESTRICTION: PLEASE NOTE I WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO HONOR YOU RESTRICTION, BUT I CAN NOT GUARANTEE YOUR REQUEST WILL BE AVAILABLE.

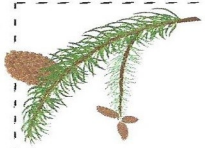
TRIP FEE: \$180.00

PAYMENT DUE BY April 25, 2016

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO LAFAYETTE PARISH MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION. SEND TO LINDA BROUSSARD, 803 CANBERRA ROAD, LAFAYETTE, LA 70503.

MEDICAL CONDITION: DO YOU HAVE ANY PHYSICAL OR MEDICAL CONDITION THAT WE SHOULD BE AWARE OF OR REQUEST HANDICAP ACCOMMODATIONS? NO YES PLEASE SPECIFY:

PLEASE NOTE: DRESS SHOULD BE CASUAL WITH COMFORTABLE WALKING SHOES. .



Pine Straw
Spring Sale

Saturday April 16th, 2016
\$8.00/bale with a maximum of 15 bales
Pickup between 8-12 Noon

To order contact: Colette Anzalone 288-0283
Colette@louisiana.edu

Make checks payable to: LPMGA to be paid upon pickup.

\*\*\* Please have your hay picked up by noon.



## UPCOMING EVENTS



*Demo Bed  
Chairman, Gail  
Wakefield,  
recently gave a  
tour of the MG  
demo beds and  
the INHC  
Conservatory to  
the Bud  
Watchers  
Garden Club.  
Included as  
members of this  
group were:  
Holly Curtis  
(MG '13) and  
Peggy Taylor  
(MG '08).*



Green T. Lindon students  
show off their spring  
harvest.



## What Plant Am I?

Late at night while you're sleeping  
I will come a'creeping around.  
A common cold'll fool ya  
And whooping cough will cool ya  
But ( I ) Lord will make you itch.

I'm a dioecious deciduous vine, a native of North America and Asia, unloved by all except wildlife. Whitetail deer, migrating birds such as warblers, vireos and thrushes depend on my fat content. I'm in the same family as mangoes, cashews and pistachios.

I'm disliked because of my irritant called urushiol. Although about 30% of people have no reaction to me, I can be really dangerous to those who are allergic to me. Urushiol is produced in great quantities by a close relative of mine, the Chinese lacquer tree. For centuries, it has been cooked, colored, and used as a hard, glossy coating for bowl, pens, jewelry, bar tops, and musical instruments.

Do you know what plant I am?  
See page 10 for the answer

## USING MEDICINAL PLANTS WITH MARY ANN ARMBRUSTER



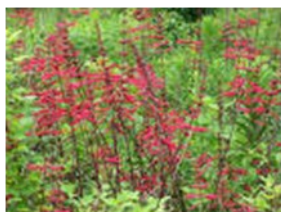
We learned that this will be the last column of *Between The Rows* that Mary Ann will be sharing with us for a while. The Master Gardener Newsletter team extends a hearty thank you for the wealth of knowledge and witty humor that she has shared over the years. This month we provide part two of her submission on medicinal plants as we savor the final *Between the Rows* (at least for now).

**Medicinal Plants of Acadiana**

OK, last month we talked about infusions; this month we're going to find out what plants were used, how they were used and what they were used for.

When we give tours to the general public at the Healer's Garden at Vermilionville we often learn more than we teach. Especially when talking with older visitors we hear of herbs used routinely in their younger years. The ones we hear about most often are Mamou, Manglier and Mauve. So let's start with those.

**Mamou** (*Erythrina herbacea*) is a small bush, quite open in form. In addition to its scientific name it has three common names: Mamou, Coral Bean and Devil in the Bush. Mamou is probably of Native American origin - because it definitely isn't French. Coral Bean is an obvious description of the color of the seed, which is a bean that is as brightly red as the beautiful flowers that grace the bush in spring. Then it earns its other name because of its recurved thorns. These thorns all curve toward the center of the bush, making it easy to get your hand into the bush, but very difficult to bring it out again, thus, 'Devil in the Bush'. Medicinally, Mamou was known for treating respiratory problems, as well as for relieving cramps and reducing fever. The root and seeds were used to make a tea or syrup. When used as a tea, the instructions were of the 'take three small cups a day' sort - how many ounces in the cup? Who knows? But the root/seed infusion was used to treat symptoms of pneumonia, bronchitis, colds, pleurisy, flu, even whooping cough and tuberculosis. A tea made of the leaves was used for fever and cramps. Interestingly, recent studies have shown that Mamou seeds contain anti-inflammatory compounds capable of reducing the inflammatory compound TNF- $\alpha$  by more than 50%.



Mamou



Manglier



Manglier



Mauve



Mauve

The next of the trinity of well-known medicinal plants is **Manglier** (*Baccharis halimifolia*) also known as Groundsel Bush. It is found everywhere along fence lines and in open fields. It is a large bush growing to 10-12 feet. It is very unnoticeable until it blooms, but in the fall, when hardly anything else is blooming, you can't help but notice the Manglier, along every field edge and fence line you see, literally covered with white or very light gold flowers. Before the presence of physicians and pharmacies was common in this area, three cups of Manglier tea a day was considered to be the standard treatment for cold and pneumonia-type symptoms, like congestion, fever and chills.

The last of the trinity is quite literally a weed. We pull it from our gardens regularly, spring through fall - or in the case of a light winter like the one we just had - year round. **Mauve** (*Modiola caroliniana*) is commonly called Bristle Mallow. It is a small vine that roots at every node and reproduces by seed from a rather pretty, 1/2 inch, orange/peach-colored, mallow-type flower (see photo). The roots of Mauve were made into a syrup to be used for whooping cough. Stems and leaves were ground finely, mixed with corn flour and pig grease then used to treat pimples, boils and sties. It was sometimes mixed with other plants and used as a poultice to treat inflamed skin or sties. *Cornucopia II* says on page 148:

"Cajuns make a refreshing drink by soaking a handful of the leaves in a quart of water for two or more hours. Many drink it every day." Dr. Daniel Austin in his huge tome, *Florida Ethnobotany*, says on page 442, "it was used as a gargle for sore throats, tonsillitis and diphtheria; as an emollient and sedative, and to treat edema". Whether it was used that way here is unsure.



**BETWEEN THE ROWS: USING MEDICINAL PLANTS WITH MARY ANN ARMBRUSTER**  
**Continued from Page 8**

One of my favorite plants in the Healer's Garden is **Lizard's Tail**, (see right) named for the appearance of the flower spike, which, especially when dry, resembles a lizard's tail. This is a low-growing plant that is happy anywhere from full sun to full shade as long as it has enough water. It is a tender perennial that grows 12 – 18 inches and spreads slowly. Lizard's Tail, the entire plant, was used to treat wounds both topically as a poultice and internally as a tea. Today's science has shown that it contains potent anti-inflammatories that suppresses inflammatory compounds, like interleukin 1-  $\beta$  (IL1-  $\beta$ ), cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2) and *inducible* nitric oxide synthase (iNOS) by more than 90%, 50% and 50%, respectively. Believe me, this is POTENT. So, when they used this plant as a tea, it would reduce fever and inflammation which would reduce pain, and when they used it as a poultice, it would reduce inflammation, and therefore, pain. We're waiting to learn whether it had antibacterial properties. If it does that would provide a double whammy, similar to Yarrow.



**Yarrow** (*Achillea millefolium*) is also known as the Battlefield Herb or, in French *herbe à dindes*, *achillée millefeuille* or *persil à dinde*. It has been collected before battles for thousands of years. Why? Well, wouldn't you want to have a product that stops bleeding, reduces pain and inflammation, speeds healing and prevents infection handy before a battle? The Greeks, Romans, Native Americans and many others did, too. But why did it work? Yarrow contains sesquiterpene lactones that stimulate the immune system; achillein, a proven hemostat (stops bleeding) that reduces inflammation and prevents the entry of bacteria and viruses; and azulene, which reduces inflammation and fever. Yarrow has been found in caves more than 60,000 years old. In myth, Achilles heel was healed using yarrow.

Now let's at least discuss **vegetable gardening**. If you do it quickly, you can still plant kohlrabi and radishes. Starting mid-April you can plant sweet potatoes. All month long you can plant bush and pole snap beans, bush and snap limas, cantaloupes, cucumbers, eggplant from seed or transplant, okra, peanuts, Southern peas, hot peppers from seed or transplant, bell peppers from transplant, pumpkin, summer squash, winter squash, tomatoes from transplant and watermelon.

The varieties of **winter squash** recommended by the Ag Center are Bush Delicata (PM), Cream of Crop, Golden Hubbard (OP), Honey Bear (PM), La Estrella, Sweet Mama, Sunshine, Table Ace, Table Queen, Tivoli Spaghetti, Ultra, Vegetable Spaghettia and Waltham Butternut. The **summer squash** varieties recommended are - for Zucchini types: Cash Flow, Declaration II, Gold Rush (AAS), Justice III (PM), Payroll (PM), Senator, Spineless Beauty and Tigress; for Straightneck types: Enterprise (PM), Liberator III, Multipik and Patriot II (PM); for Crookneck types: Destiny III, Dixie, Gentry, Medallion, Prelude II (PM); for Scalloped types: Patty Green, Peter Pan and Sunburst.

Until next month,

Happy Gardening

MaryAnn Armbruster, PhD

Disclaimer: This information is offered for historical and educational purposes only. It is not to be interpreted as treatment or diagnosis of any disease or condition. Pregnant women, in particular, should always consult a health care professional before starting any treatment.





At our March meeting, guest speaker and special guest Buddy Lee presented Joel Robideaux, Lafayette "Mayor President" with the certificate designating Lafayette as obtaining status as an Azalea City. The plaque reads: AZALEA CITY CERTIFICATION is hereby conferred upon the City of Lafayette in recognition of its continuing efforts and programs promoting azaleas as valuable landscape shrubs within its boundaries. Conferred with great pleasure by The Azalea Society of America this 2 day of March, 2016, The certification is signed by Buddy Lee, President of the Azalea Society of America. March 19 was the kick-off of the Azalea Trail by Scenic Lafayette and a lovely day it was.



The linear park along Mall Street provides a breathtaking view during the peak bloom season of Lafayette's azaleas.

"Scenic Lafayette would like to express gratitude to the Lafayette Master Gardener Association for supporting the efforts of the Azalea Trail revitalization. Hosting azalea expert Buddy Lee and offering volunteer hours for the azalea inventory down the trail is of tremendous value to the future of the trail."

Sincerely,  
Cheryl Broussard Perret

# WHAT PLANT AM I? ANSWER:

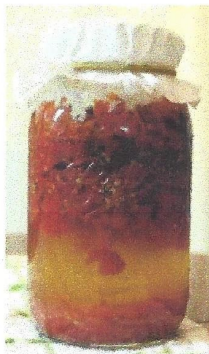
**Toxicodendron radicans:  
Poison Ivy**



PHOTO © 2005 JAMES H. MALLER, USDA FOREST SERVICE. USED WITH PERMISSION.







## A SIMPLE AND EASY WAY TO SAVE HEIRLOOM TOMATO SEEDS

According to the USDA, about 90% of Americans that grow edible gardens include tomatoes in their plantings. Saving the seeds from your tomato crop can save you money and time spent finding your favorite “go to” tomatoes. It allows you to produce your favorite varieties year after year, and can provide enough seed to share with fellow gardeners, seed saving organizations, or to donate to school gardens or community gardens. This article will detail a simple, affordable and easy way to save tomato seed. The process will also work with cucumber seeds.

Regardless of whether you choose to save heirloom or hybrid tomato seeds, (more about hybrids later), the process to harvest, clean, and package them is the same. You don't have to grow a separate crop of seed tomatoes; simply choose the best example of the variety you want to save, and allow the fruit of that plant to ripen on the vine (almost to the point of being over ripe) before harvesting. This allows the seed more time to mature.

You can also save seeds from purchased heirloom tomatoes, but there may not be as many mature seeds.

A gel-like sac covers tomato seeds; this covering helps to protect the seed and inhibits germination. The purpose of this method of seed saving is to ferment the seeds, allowing microorganisms to eat away the gel casing. The seeds are then dried and packaged.

### Materials needed:

Tomatoes (any variety, wash and cut in half)	Cheese cloth (enough to fold 2-3 layers over top of container), fine screen, plastic wrap or solid lid	A large rubber band to secure the covering (With Mason Jar use sealing ring)
Large bowl, spoon, fine mesh screen or strainer (to rinse seeds)	Clean container for fermenting seeds (a glass Mason jar works well)	Wax paper, freezer paper or paper plate Fold a crease in the paper before using
Container with 1-2 cups water	Envelopes or bags to store dried seed	Labels to identify seed packets and jar

- ❖ **Gather your materials**, wash the tomato(es) and cut in half on their equator. Start with 1-2 tomatoes of the same variety while you become familiar with the process. Once you see how it works, you may wish to use different containers or coverings, or do larger batches. (Note: Cherry, pear and grape tomatoes usually produce about 50 seeds; larger tomatoes usually have 100 or more.)
- ❖ **Squeeze the seeds into a bowl**. It's ok to have pulp along with the seeds. Spoon out any remaining seeds, then pour from the bowl into your seed saving container. **Add water** if seeds are not covered by at least 2 to 4 inches of liquid.
- ❖ **Cover the top of the container** with fine screen or cheesecloth that has been folded over into 2-3 layers. If using plastic wrap, cover with a double layer and cut several small slits. Secure cover material with rubber band or outer lid ring of Mason jar. This will protect the contents from debris or insects while allowing air circulation. You may also use a solid lid. **Label container with tomato variety**.
- ❖ **Place the container in a warm, dry place to ferment**. This process can take several days to a week depending on light and temperature. **Check the container in 2-3 days**. Seeds will collect on the bottom of the container and mold will grow on the top of the liquid, there may be an odor. This means that the microorganisms are doing their job, eating away the gel sac. The seed at the bottom is mature and viable. When you see separate layers appear-mold and pulp on top and clean, gel-free seeds settled on the bottom, it's time to prepare them for drying. Floating seed is immature and not viable; spoon these off, along with the mold, and dispose of.
- ❖ **Rinse your seeds** by pouring the remaining contents (the liquid and mature seeds) into a fine sieve, hold under a gentle stream of water to clean off seeds and rinse away debris. Be careful not to wash away your seeds.
- ❖ **Dry the seeds** on a paper plate, wax paper or freezer paper. **Allow them to dry completely**; this may take several days to a week. (Avoid using paper towels; the seeds will stick and can be difficult to remove.)
- ❖ **Label envelopes or bags** with the variety, date the seeds were packaged and any additional notes (color, flavor, best uses, where you got them, planting instructions, determinate or indeterminate, days to harvest, etc.) Pour the dry seed in the package and seal. Store as you would other seed packages. Your saved seeds should be viable for 3-4 years or more.

### A note about saving hybrid seed:

There is a risk of negative or “surprise” results involved in saving and then using hybrid seeds. Each gardener can decide for himself or herself whether to take that risk, but simply put:

Heirlooms are basically “stable” seeds. If you plant Cherokee Purple, it will produce Cherokee Purple. Seeds from your crop will produce Cherokee Purple; their seeds will produce Cherokee Purple.

Hybrids are products of crossing two different varieties. They are created to, hopefully, exhibit the best qualities of both parent plants; some examples would be improved disease resistance or more flavorful fruit. The first crop of seeds saved from a hybrid will usually resemble the parent plant that provided the seeds with few differences. These differences could be positives or negatives (such as sturdier stems or smaller fruit). Each subsequent generation will vary from the original more and more. You may lose qualities that you grew the original plant for, or you may produce a plant that you like better. **Please remember that there are a lot of variables, and that hybrid seeds may be sterile and not germinate at all. It is a gamble.** However, if you have the space and time, saving and using hybrid seeds might be an interesting experiment.

### To Gerald, with Love!

We've gathered today to honor, Gerald, our friend,  
Whose daily aggravations just may be coming to an end.  
You've tolerated each one of us all so extremely well,  
Though there were days that had to be beyond hell.

Thank you for your honest approach when it was needed,  
And do forgive us if ever your advice went unheeded.  
The commitment you've shown won't ever be denied,  
We can't thank you enough; however, we've tried.

Working with numerous committees for many a year,  
Makes one wonder if you'll commence with yet another career.  
A (long winded) preacher could easily be your next calling,  
Or perhaps teaching others to twirl and dance without falling.

Such a positive influence you have been in our community,  
Just one passionate request can bring about instant unity.  
Dedication to the job you've shown with such intensity,  
Community & commitment have always been your propensity.

Gerald, you have been known to be quite a ham,  
But not everyone knows that in '05, you were "Mr. Yam".  
Your talents are many & with all you so willingly share,  
Especially when for your parents you so lovingly care.

You've taught us well, more than you will ever know,  
It is with extreme regret now that we must let you go.  
Realizing that outside of Master Gardeners, you do actually have a life,  
Here's to the future with your family and beloved beautiful trophy wife.

By Christy Adams



Thank you to all the Master Gardeners who planned, set up, and made the delicious desserts for our Picnic in the Garden with Gerald. You did an awesome job! What a success!  
Linda Beyt



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# LPMGA Calendar APRIL 2016

- April 2-3: Festival de Fleurs
- April 6: General Master Gardener Meeting, Southside Library, 6 pm
- April 9 : Spring LPMGA plant sale, 8am—1. Seed swap, 9-11
- April 15-16: Southern Garden Festival
- April 25: LPMGA Board meeting, Ira Nelson Center, 1 p.m.
- April 25: Due Date for Spring trip payment
- May 4: Master Gardener Social, 6 pm
- May 7: Garden Stroll
- May 12-14: Louisiana Master Gardener Convention
- May 17-19: Master Gardener spring field trip



*Gardener's Gazette* is issued to all members of the Lafayette Parish Master Gardeners' Program. All members are encouraged to submit news, educational features, and photographs. The deadline for all submissions is the 17th of each month for publication in the next month's issue unless otherwise noted.

Please send newsletter items to:

Theresa Rohloff [thescottherald@aol.com](mailto:thescottherald@aol.com) Please include:

"MG NEWSLETTER" in your subject bar.

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It is the policy of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability.

If you have a disability which requires special assistance for your participation in our meetings, please call 337-291-7090

Please note: All meeting and event dates, times, and locations are subject to change.

