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Gardener's Gazette

A LAFAYETTE PARISH MASTER GARDENERS PUBLICATION

VOLUME 26 ISSUE 11

December 2024

Louisiana Master Gardener

LPMGA
SOCIAL
December 4th, 6 PM
River Oaks
Napoleon Ballroom
Lafayette, LA

Board Meeting
December 17th, 1PM
IRA NELSON
2206 JOHNSTON ST.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Let me begin by saying that we are honoring members who have been Lafayette Parish Master Gardeners for 20 years (or more) at the December social. I hope you will all join us for the December social and toast the commitment of these 10 members. Members being recognized are the following:

2001 Nancy Anne Rowe
2002 Susan Gosnell
Andrea Pate
2003 Jo Ann Pugh
Kathy Troyanowski
Ellen Grote
Christy Adams
Cheryl Perret
Genee' Foley
2004 Christine Butts

Secondly, I want to thank the people who ran for office for the 2025 calendar year and those current officers who are continuing in their positions. To run an organization of this magnitude, it takes qualified, dedicated people who to keep us from becoming a "disorganized" organization. Our officers and voting board members for next year are president, John Hebert; vice president, Colette Anzalone; treasurer, Yvonne Lanoux; corresponding secretary, Meagan Stogsdill; recording secretary, Kevin Besse; volunteer coordinator, Rusty Petitjean; and member at large, Sarah West.

Also, elsewhere in this newsletter, you will see that we are searching for someone to be assistant treasurer. During the past year, the board established the position of assistant treasurer to take on some of the many tasks for which the treasurer is responsible. If you have experience with QuickBooks and/or bookkeeping, please consider volunteering for this position. It is especially suitable for someone who wants or needs to work from home to get volunteer hours. This is not a voting board position and is a one-year appointment. It is not an automatic step-up to treasurer but can serve as training for someone who is qualified and willing to take on that office.

Happy gardening and Happy Holidays!

Bootsie Durand

MEETINGS AND PLANTFEST

2024 LPMGA General Meetings
First Wednesday Monthly
Daytime: 12:00pm
Evening: 6 pm

2024 LPMGA Board Meetings 1pm on Third Tuesday

Dates, times, topics, and locations are subject to change

GENERAL MEETINGS	BOARD MEETINGS
December 4	December 17

LEGENDS AND LORE

Forget-Me-Nots

The forget-me-not moniker has some of the most interesting legends behind it. One describes a German knight who was strolling with his lady along the banks of the Danube River. The lady saw pretty blue flowers, but they had been pulled loose by the rivers flow and were about to disappear downstream.

She wanted to save the flowers, so her chivalrous knight jumped into the water. He could not fight the strong current, so he tossed the flowers onto the bank, and he was carried out to sea. He called out, "vergiss mein nichi", which ia German for "forget-me-not.

Forget-me-nots symbolize true love and respect. The are also considered a symbol of fidelity and faithfulness.

A LOOK AT DECEMBER'S BOARD MEETING

We heard from the handbook committee and they have some changes coming in the near future.

Louann McClelland-Long has applied for a second grant from the Thistlewood Foundation,

Ed Wilhelm reported that Susan's pine straw sale was a great success. Everything went smooth and the new class was a BIG help.

There will be a survey coming out please take the time to respond to it. Your board needs your input for an upcoming decision.

Plants of the Holiday Season – Hollies

Hollies are wonderful plants that have a festive appearance during this time of year. The deep green, spiny leaves accompanying the bright red berries is some of the most iconic holiday foliage around. Botanically, hollies belong to the genus *Ilex* and are the sole members of the Aquifoliaceae plant family.

Ilex spp. are evergreen woody perennials that have proven themselves as reli able plants in the Louisiana landscape. Some of the smaller hollies such as Dwarf Yaupon and Inkberry are great alternatives to problematic boxwoods. Although most hollies are classified as shrubs, some hollies can grow much larger and may be considered trees in the landscape. Some excellent hollies which will grow into large specimens include the Burford holly, American holly, and Savannah holly. These larger hollies can be utilized as standalone specimens or as privacy screens. Once established, hollies can exhibit a great degree of drought and heat tolerance. Most hollies performed well the past couple of summers through exceptionally hot and dry conditions.

Hollies grow best in well-draining soil with a slightly acidic pH but are tolerant of various soil conditions including heavier clay. They are best suited to areas that receive either full sun or part shade. As is the case with all landscape plants, be sure to choose species or cultivars for a particular space with the mature size in mind.

Ilex spp. are dioecious which means that individual plants are either male or female. The only holly plants that bear the red fruit are females. Interestingly, without male pollinizers in the vicinity your female plant will not bear fruit. These excellent plants provide a food source, red berries, for wildlife during the winter months. Birds can often be seen snacking on the red fruit or building nests in the canopy.

As is referenced in the popular holiday song, “Deck the Halls”, hollies are some of the most significant plants of the season. Hollies can be used for wreath making or in festive fresh-cut floral arrangements. Consider planting a holly for festive foliage and red berries during the holiday season, as the time between October and February is one of the best to plant cold hardy trees and shrubs. Deck the halls with boughs of holly and ‘tis the season to be jolly!

I’m excited to celebrate a wonderful year of LPMGA accomplishments with our class graduates and membership at the upcoming Christmas social on December 4th at River Oaks!

-Maddox Miller, LSU AgCenter

YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS THE LPMGA

DECEMBER SOCIAL!

DECEMBER 4, 2024

6 PM

RIVER OAKS

NAPOLEON BALLROOM

SHOUT OUT TO OUR GUY SQUAD FOR THEIR HARD WORK IN HELPING OUR LADIES REVAMP THE ROSE GARDEN.

Ed Wilhelm

Marc Wiley

Kevin Besse

Chris Amazon

Botanica Exhibit in New Orleans

By Erin Bass

"Botanica: Gardens, Landscapes, and Plant Medicines in South Louisiana" is on display at The Cabildo in the New Orleans French Quarter through May 10, 2026. Exploring the cultural meanings of Louisiana medicinal plants and how historically based understandings of them are evolving under the threat of climate change and land loss, the exhibit is a must-see for master gardeners and those interested in plant medicine.

Guest curators Rachel Breunlin, a cultural anthropologist, and Monique Verdin, director of the Land Memory Bank and Seed Exchange, collaborated with herbalists, artists, gardeners and scholars to present stories of historical and contemporary gardens and natural environments. As part of the Bayou Cultural Collaborative, the pair conducted interviews to document cultural traditions in the garden.

The exhibit features beautiful, collaged maps of garden sites around New Orleans and the co-ops and networks that tend them. Medicinal plants like those found in the Master Gardener Healing Garden at Vermilionville are on full display. Viewers will read about uses for everything from manglier to maypop, yarrow, mugwort and mushrooms. There are event accounts of Marie Laveau's uses of herbal medicine and the newspaper articles that followed.

Eunice native Ashlee Wilson has a display on life everlasting (*Pseudognaphalium obtusifolium*), an old herb that was thought to be a lost plant. She offers her account of a patch that appeared at her home in St. Landry Parish and how she went from three volunteer plants to over 200.

Paintings from Louisiana State Museum's Collection accompany the exhibit.

After viewing, visitors are invited to take a book off the exhibit's library shelf and sit down at an old wooden table to learn more about Louisiana's landscapes and the special plants within them.

LPMGA ROSE GARDEN GETS A FRESH LOOK

Recently, MG Cindy Wiley put out a call for volunteers to assist with a big project for her rose garden. I was more than happy to assist because roses, especially the old varieties, are amongst my favorite flowers. Volunteering in the demonstration gardens always offers opportunity to learn some new skills, and help to beautify the garden for future visitors.

The day began with the removal of old, rotted railroad ties that had long served as the rose garden border. Those ties, while functional for some 20 odd years, had deteriorated badly and were no longer suitable. Once they were pulled out of the beds, it was clear that the process was not just physical labor, but a necessary step to revive that part of the garden. We were so happy to be able to help Mrs. Wiley realize her dream of getting this project done.

Once the old ties were tossed aside, we transitioned to the laying of limestone gravel material that would become the base for the new bricks. I'm not sure how many wheelbarrows that job required, but that was some strenuous work! We had to shovel the material from the back of a volunteers pick up truck into one of several wheelbarrows, and then navigate the garden path to the back of the garden where the rose garden sits. The limestone apparently provides good drainage, as well as a solid foundation for the brick boundary. Mr. Wiley, a former engineer, calculated the number of bricks we needed to a nearly exact amount.

Throughout the day, which started early, I couldn't help but be struck by how well everyone worked together. Each person brought a different level of expertise or help, and we got the job done in spite of*the ever present threat of flooding rains. MG"s are passionate about their love for everything garden related, and during a heavy labor job like this, it shows.

The end result was simply beautiful. After a few minor adjustments, a bit of leveling, adding or subtracting limestone, the border was completed. We made it home before the rain.

Whenever I am fortunate enough to volunteer, I try to absorb the knowledge and advice given, and hope that I will one day able to help someone discover the beauty of a garden.

At the end of our project, we were tired and a bit sweaty, but in awe of the transformation we'd made with our 3-brick high border. I think it's safe to say, we all felt a tremendous sense of accomplishment, knowing that the rose garden will be truly something to behold come spring.

This volunteer experience with the MG's was a perfect blend of hard work, learning and community spirit!

Counrney Allis, Karen Sexton, Cindi Wiley and Billy Maylord

CHRISTMAS CACTUS MEANS CHRISTMAS IN LOUISIANA

Karren Sexton

As the holiday season takes shape around us, many households are busily setting up festive decorations both inside and outside of the home. For most, having a Christmas tree adorned in colorful ornaments and lights is the highlight of the Christmas season, or bunches of red, white or varicolored poinsettias to brighten a doorway or tabletop.

Here in Louisiana, we are fortunate to have a climate that allows us to grow a wide variety of plants. One of my favorites for this time of year is the Christmas Cactus, Christmas cactus or Schlumbergera x buckleyi. This "cactus" blooms in late fall or early winter, setting a flower at the end of a serrated type leaf.

Common Name Christmas cactus, holiday cactus, crab cactus
Botanical Name Schlumbergera x buckleyi
Family Cactaceae
Plant Type Succulent, cactus, perennial
Mature Size 6–12 in. tall, 12–24 in. wide
Sun Exposure Partial
Soil Type Moist, well-drained, loamy
Soil pH Neutral, acidic
Bloom Time Fall, winter
Flower Color Pink, red, white, purple, orange
Hardiness Zones 10–12 (USDA)
Native Area South America

You can find Christmas cactus in big box stores or nurseries now, often presented in a small plastic pot wrapped in a mylar foil for decoration. However, this type of cactus prefers a porous clay or terra cotta pot, or something with a lot of drainage holes. You won't want the roots of this cactus to sit in water, so it's also very important to have a well-prepared soil. Choosing something like a prepared cactus mix is a good idea, or you can mix a bit of perlite in with a plain potting soil.

Christmas cactus prefers bright filtered light, or if placed outside, a semi-shaded area. That might seem odd given that this is a cactus, but too much direct sun on this plant can cause it to wilt or burn. If you plan to grow this plant inside your home, you will want to ensure that the soil dries between waterings, and that you provide the plant with a period of darkness to encourage it to bloom. You can mist the plant between waterings to provide some humidity.

If you want to propagate your Christmas cactus, it's as easy as taking a stem cutting. I've cut off a segment or two, and allowed them to rest a day or two, them stuck them in a moist mixture of prepared rooting mix soil. No need to water, just spray with water every few days and gradually the stem will root. Note: never repot or take a cutting while the plant is in bloom. Wait a few weeks before doing either to avoid damaging the plant.

Christmas cactus is not cold hardy or frost tolerant, so you will definitely want to cover them well or bring them inside when the temperatures drop below 40 degrees or more.

So, when you are choosing your plants for the holiday season, consider the lovely Christmas cactus which when well cared for, can give you many years of beautiful winter blooms! Merry plant-mas!

Winter Blooms: Flowers That Thrive in Louisiana's Cool Season

By: Mandy Hatman

Louisiana gardens can continue to showcase vibrant colors throughout the winter months. With the right selection of plants, you can enjoy a colorful and lively garden even in the coolest part of the year.

Camellias: The Queens of Winter

Camellias are synonymous with Southern winter gardens, and for good reason. These evergreen shrubs produce stunning blooms from late fall through early spring.

Plant in partial shade with well-draining, acidic soil

Water deeply but infrequently

Prune after flowering, Protect from harsh winds

Pansies and Violas: Colorful Groundcover

Plant in full sun to partial shade, Keep soil consistently moist

Deadhead regularly to encourage continuous blooming

Fertilize monthly with a balanced, water-soluble fertilizer

Cyclamen

Prefer cooler temperatures and partial shade

Great for containers or sheltered garden spots

Hellebores (Lenten Rose)

Evergreen perennials with long-lasting blooms

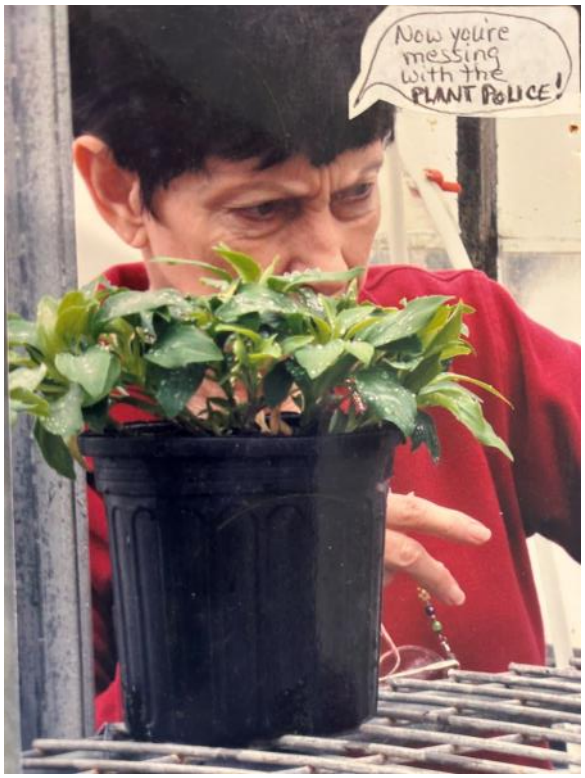
Plant in partial to full shade

Paperwhites

Fragrant narcissus that are easy to force indoors

Can also be planted outdoors in Louisiana, Plant bulbs in fall for winter blooms

By incorporating these winter-blooming plants into your landscape, you can ensure your Louisiana garden remains a colorful oasis even in the coolest months. With proper care, these hardy blooms will provide a cheerful display that brightens the short days of winter and hints at the spring to come.



OLD MEMORIES

Judy Corne found some snapshots of times past. Top Left: Judy Corne, Dale Oglesby, Gail Wakefield, Christine Guillory. Top Right: Ellen Grote. Bottom Left: Norisha Marti and Becky Taylor. Bottom Right: Candy Bienvenu, Becky Taylor, and Yvonne Domas.

NOTE THAT NONE OF THESE LADIES HAS AGED ONE BIT!

LPMGA IS LOOKING FOR AN ASSISTANT TREASURER

Do you have some bookkeeping experience? Do you think of money as numbers? Are you tech-savvy, have some knowledge of QuickBooks? Have a strong work ethic? Are you a team player with good communications an problem solving skills?

If your answer to these questions are mostly yes, this is the volunteer opportunity for you!

LPMGA is looking for an assistant for our treasure, who could have the opportunity to run for treasurer in the future.

PLATINUM MEMBERS WILLL BE RECOGNIZED

2001 Nancy Anne Rowe
2002 Susann Gosnell
Andrea Pate
2003 Jo Ann Pugh
Kathy Troyanowski
Ellen Grote
Christy Adams
Cheryl Perret
Genee' Foley
2004 Christine Butts

Sustaining Membership is an acknowledgement of 10 years of volunteer service. To be eligible, a member must have been active for a minimum of 10 years. These 10 years do not have to be consecutive.

We will recognize these folks at the Christmas Social.

2025 EXECUTIVE BOARD

RECORDING SECRETARY
KEVIN BESSE

COORESPONDING SECRETARY
MEGAN STOGSDILL

VICE PRESIDENT
COLETTE ANZALONE

CONGRADULATIONS TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

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DECEMBER 2024

JANUARY 2025 BOARD MEETING, IRA NELSON, JANUARY 8TH, 2025

BOARD MEETING, IRA NELSON, DECEMBER 17TH

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.**

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

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