LSU AgCenter Research · Extension · Teaching

Gardener's Gazette

A LAFAYETTE PARISH MASTER GARDENERS PUBLICATION

VOLUME 26 ISSUE 8

September 2024

Louisiana Master Gardener

LPMGA General Meeting
September 4th, 12 Noon
Southside Library
Lafayette, LA
Melissa Dardar

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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It never fails. Every time I sit down to write a President's Message, the weather is the first thing that comes to my mind. Well, we do all have that in common and it's always with us. Last month, when I wrote the message, we were getting more than enough rainfall and this month, not! As gardeners, it stands to reason that we all pay attention to the weather, but you sure don't need me to tell you what's going on outside your door. So, on to other news.

The big news in August was the beginning of the new class. Anyone who has been to a gathering of the class will attest to the fact that they are a fun and enthusiastic group. Many of them have started attending Propagation on Wednesday mornings, a welcome addition because Plant Fest is right around the corner.

Speaking of Plant Fest, if you haven't already volunteered to work at the event on September 28, please consider doing so. Even a couple of hours that day will help and assistance is also needed for set-up the day before. If you see a publicity posting for it on Facebook, please help spread the news by sharing the posting and spread the news via any other means at your disposable.

As previously promised, the first 2024 revision of the handbook has been completed. After a few tweaks at the board meeting on August 20, it was sent to Meagan for posting on the web site. Also, an email listing the major changes was (or will be) sent to members after it is posted.

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
September 4	September 17
October 2	October 15
November 6	November 19
December 4	December 17

SAVE THE DATE
September 28,2024

PlantFest™ is coming soon!

This is one of our biggest fund raisers and none of our projects get done without MONEY!

Our chairperson this year is Collette Anzalone. Collette needs each of you to let her know what you did last year and if she can count on you again this year.

If you have never worked this event consider doing so. It is a great way to help the organization, learn about the plants we grow and sell plants to and meet the local community gardeners.

Highlighted Look At LPMGA September Board Meeting

The Board selected the date of January 8, 2025 for the first Board meeting in 2025.

It was noted that the Louisiana Iris Conservation Initiative donated 20 one gallon pots of "Big Blue' iris's to the LPMGA.

Meagan Stogsdill stated the new LPMGA roster will be out before the end of the month.

The Board approved the updates to our handbook and it should be posted by the end of the month.

Highlighting LPMGA Programs

With all of the great work that LPMGA members do, sometimes we need to brag about ourselves! The Louisiana Master Gardener program has begun the implementation of an Overview of Programs document to be completed annually. This document highlights a few of our many programs and activities. The idea behind this is to increase awareness of the many great programs that LPMGA sponsors each year.

Extension programming efforts, whether 4-H, Master Gardeners, or other content areas, are often referred to jokingly as "best kept secrets". Although this may be a foreign idea to many of us, many in our community do not understand the scope of the LSU AgCenter's programming and impact.

Small steps, whether through digital media or publicly-available documents, assist in "getting the word out" about our programming impacts. This year, we have highlighted 4 of our wonderful committees in the Overview of Programs: Demonstration Gardens, Plant Fest, Dans le Jardin, and Ask A Master Gardener. A special thank you goes out to all committee chairs who provided information and pictures for the publication. The finalized document can be found here on LSU AgCenter's website

: Overview of Programs – Lafayette (2024) (lsuagcenter.com) and in PDF format here:

LPMGA Overview of Programs (lsuagcenter.com)

Our plan is to highlight a few committees each year in the Overview of Programs and one outreach effort in more detail via a Focus Project document. Please continue to document the great work you all do by taking notes and pictures to include in future informational material. The work being done by LPMGA is impressive and deserving of recognition – and I hope to assist in doing just that!

LAFAYETTE

The Lafayette Parish Master Gardener Association, LPMGA, serves the parish of Lafayette with additional programmatic representation in Acadia, Iberia, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Vermilion Parishes. This report highlights but a few of our annual projects. Additional programs and activities will be highlighted in future reports.

Demonstration Gardens

The LPMGA Demonstration Gardens are located on the property of Ira Nelson Horticulture Center in Lafayette, LA and are open to the public. More than 40 Master Gardener volunteers regularly maintain the nearly twenty themed garden beds ranging from an Antique Rose bed to a Tropical bed. Each themed bed has a chairman and co-chairman who maintain the beds and identification signage. The Demonstration Gardens are a cooperative educational effort between LSU AgCenter and University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Master Gardener volunteers lead school groups through the garden and impact approximately 350 students annually.

LPMGA Demonstration Gardens.

The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs and employment.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT PLANT THIS IS?

The best way to describe this plant is "Beautiful but dangerous". It is a perennial hydrophyte, brought to Louisiana in 1903 to the Cotton Exposition in New Orleans. A Category 1 invasive, it displaces native plants, clogs waterways and limits boating, recreation, and flood control. It is found in bayous, lakes, and drainage canals. Given nutrients and a mild climate, it can double in size in 6 to 18 days. Because it floats, it can easily reproduce by seeds produced in capsules at the base of each flower, or by vegetative sprouts. These sprouts remain attached to the parent plant until broken off by wind or other physical damage such as being ripped off by a boat. If you should encounter these plants while in a boat, be sure to wash your boat and trailer thoroughly. Also, call the Division of Boats and Waterways (DBW) at (888) 326-2822, or email: ais@ parks.ca.gov.

The leaves of this plant are shiny, leathery and green, with an oval shape that curves inward and stand erect on thick spongy stalks, sometimes as much as 3 feet tall. They shade out other aquatic plants which die and decay. This process depletes the amount of oxygen in the water, killing fish and other aquatic plants. They also absorb contaminants in the water, such as lead, mercury, nickel, and cadmium. This makes them toxic to humans, although if growing in clean water, they can be eaten.

The showy flowers of this plant are produced on tall stalks and are about 2 inches wide and long. They are bluish-purple or lavender and are funnel-shaped. Their beautiful appearance causes people to plant them in water gardens, often to their eventual dismay.

Methods to control this plant include manually removing them, 2,4-D (which is used in Bayou Teche, and glyphosate. It can also be turned into biochar by pyrolysis, the use of heat in a reduced oxygen environment.

Do you know what plant this is?

ANSWER WHAT PLANT IS THIS?

Eichornia crassipes:

Water hyacinth

SOUTHERN GARDEN SYMPOSIUM

LETURES-WORKSHOPS-CHARM

OCOTBER 18 & 19 2024

thesoutherngardensymposium.org

SOUTHERN GARDEN FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 5, 2024

3502 EAST SIMCOE STREET

Familypromiseacadiana.org

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION LIAISON

Electronic Communications Liaison Responsibilities include

: □ Maintaining a master roster of members provided by the Corresponding Secretary to be used for sending emails to members

□ Emailing the monthly newsletter "Gardener's Gazette" to members

□ Forwarding all appropriate email communications to the membership as requested by the LSU AgCenter, the Extension Service, the Board, or individual Master Gardeners.

Our Organization needs someone to undertake this important role, one that keeps us all informed and up to date on LPMGA specific activities and events.

LPMGA member, Jeanell Menard, has held this position for many years and done an excellent job. Jeanell will step down at the end of September. In this position you will need to monitor the LPMGA Gmail account and forward incoming messages to the appropriate party or parties. That is really all there is to it. Jeanell tells me that she can show her replacement what they need to know in a few hours.

Please give Janell a call to discuss this position and its demands with her. She tells me this is a position that can be done at any hour of the day or night from any place. The time required is not excessive and the job is easy to keep up with.
Mary Gladney

NEW FALL PINESTRAW CHAIRPERSON

Sue Wilhelm has volunteered to take over the organization and sale of the fall pine straw event. So look for more information to come on our sale from Sue.

Thanks Sue for stepping up for this important and valued distribution of p;ine straw to our members.

OUTSTANDING MASTER GARDENER

It is time to choose the 2024 Outstanding Master Gardener. The committee seeking nominations from the membership is comprise of: Mary Gladney, Colette Anzalone, Juan Nieto, Ed Wilhelm, Dan Devenport, Gail Wakefield and Cindy Wiley. The form needed to submit a nominee can be found on the LPMGA website, lpmga.org, under members only resources. Then form must be returned to me (MARY GLADNEY) before October 1, 2024.

The Criteria used to select the Outstanding Master Gardener of the year will include the following:

- ☐ Be an active member of LPMGA (as outlined in the Volunteer Handbook)
- ☐ Possess positive attributes such as dependability, enthusiasm, and cooperative spirit
- ☐ Demonstrate leadership skills that have strengthened the LPMG program
- ☐ Make unselfish cont:
- ☐ Contributions that have benefited the LPMG program

This person does not have to be a long time member, it may be someone who has worked quietly in the background of projects, and it does not have to be someone who was in a leadership position,

Remember dependability, enthusiasm and cooperative spirit can be demonstrated in many ways. Cooperative sprit can be simply providing help or advice to others, being that person always willing to make blue water at propagation or assist with washing up dirty pots, it can be shown by something as simple as stepping up to handle something when know one else did. Dependability can be nothing more then showing up when you say you will and enthusiasm can be shown by spending time on a particular activity or subject and sharing your gained knowledge with others.

This is an important honor and I ask and encourage each of you to attempt to find someone you know and have worked with to nominate for the 2024 Outstanding Master Gardener,

Mary Gladney

Adventures in Vermicomposting…

"Worms. I was afraid of worms, Roxanne."

My first worm bin was made from cedar fencing. This was quite a few years ago, and as wood tends to do, it eventually "decomposed." A favorite memory is of my preschool daughter inviting one of her friends to see "my mamma's worm collection". And the name has stuck.

For this most recent collection, I utilized my daughter's old tack trunk. After doing a little research, I drilled a lot of holes in the bottom of this lidded Rubbermaid container. Then added about 5 inches of dry leaves (mostly oak), then a 4-5 inch layer of torn up paper and cardboard. The cardboard was the rough type such as egg cartons, and he paper was mostly ad circulars and newspapers. All newspapers now use a soy-based ink, so nothing toxic.

Then a number of sacks of composted cow manure and a few bags of compost, up to a few inches from the top of the bin. My bin is about 3.5 cubic feet—it may be time to up-size soon.

I found a local source for a few buckets of starter worms—red wigglers are the type most recommended for composting. At first, I found a lot of ant activity in the bin; a local gardening group recommended both additional water (ants don't like that!) as well as stirring up the soil mixture several times a day. Both of these methods worked to drive the ants away.

I had investigated the life cycle of typical earthworms, so I knew that they formed a cocoon after mating. Worms are hermaphrodites, and after mating one or both will slough off the "collar" that is typical of worms, and this can develop into anywhere up to 20 eggs; 5-6 is typical. The collar turns into a very small, red, lemon-shaped cocoon that will hatch about three weeks later.

When I saw some weird, grub-looking things in the bin, I thought these were the worm cocoons—nope, they are the larval stage of the Black Soldier Fly. These will appear when they detect a food source, and work symbiotically with the worms so long as there is enough food. One of the worms favorite meals is Black Soldier Fly "frass".

Now, after less than a year, the worms have reproduced enthusiastically. I keep a 1 gallon lidded bucket in the kitchen, and my "worm collection" can consume a week's worth of kitchen waste almost overnight. This is primarily coffee grounds and their paper filters, banana peels, fruit peelings and vegetable scraps. I do not use any citrus, meat, dairy or onion waste.

Most notable about composting with worms—there is really no odor from this bin; in fact, the only smell is a fresh, earthy one. I can periodically take out a few scoops of the contents and place it in the garden, where the worms will live happily and aerate my soil as well as reproduce.

In addition to kitchen waste, I also add the cardboard from egg cartons and any junk mail that doesn't have a shiny finish. This has given the garbage disposal a nice break as well.

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SEPTEMBER 2024

September 4th, 12 Noon, LPMGA General Meeting, Southside Library,

September 17th LPMGA Board Meeting, 1 PM Ira Nelson

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:
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The Louisiana cooperative extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. Louisiana State University and A&M College, Louisiana Governing Bodies, Southern University, and the United States Department of Agriculture A State Partner in the Cooperative Extension System.
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 the LSU AgCenter 291-7090

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