

LPMGA
GENERAL MEETING

April 2nd, 12 PM
Down Town
Regional Library
West Congress

Board Meeting
April 15th, 1PM
IRA NELSON
2206 JOHNSTON ST.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is here. FINALLY!

We did have a light frost here last week, but hopefully that's it, and it's time to take off our meteorologists' hats and start gardening. We endured record cold temperatures and snowfall, now we assess where we are and what survived. Is that pineapple guava going to sprout, or is it a goner? Do I replace that satsuma for the third time, or put in a native fruit tree in its place? (I'm thinking black cherry?) What perennials have survived, and which should I add?

Spring is also the time of rebirth, of germinating seeds and putting out bedding plants. It's a great time for gardeners to dream, to imagine how the things we put down now will look in the summer.

It's also a busy time for master gardeners. So many plant sales around the state, including our local Festival de Fleurs on April 5. Many other opportunities to volunteer and serve our gardening community, including pine straw distribution on March 29, and seed swap on April 12. We also have our Spring Social on May 5. Get out there and get involved

John Hebert
LPMGA, President

MEETINGS

**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

APRIL 2	APRIL 15
MAY 7	MAY 20
JUNE 4	JUNE 17
JULY	JULY
AUGUST 2	AUGUST 15
SEPTEMBER 3	SEPTEMBER 16
OCTOBER 1	OCTOBER 21
NOVEMBER 5	NOVEMBER 18
DECEMBER 2	DECEMBER 16

**We have an orphan...won't you
adopt it?**

This demo bed is ready for you! It measures a small 3' x 15', in full sun with good soil and irrigation. A perfect opportunity for those who work and need to earn volunteer hours on their own schedules. Recruit a partner and make it a visiting time. The season is right for sowing a mass of zinnias for cut flowers, or a wildflower mix for pollinators. Contact Gail Wakefield at gailwak@cox.net for more information.

PINE STRAW SALE



**Saturday, March 29th, 2025
at 8:30 am – 12 pm.**

**Pick up your pine straw
at the demo beds located
at
Ira Nelson.
Enter from Johnston
Street and Exit on
Coliseum**

**SUSAN CAN BE REACHED AT
337-523-0323.**

Newest Louisiana Super Plants - Southern Indica Azaleas: 'George L. Taber', 'Formosa', and 'G.G. Gerbing'



The newest Louisiana Super Plants, Southern Indica Azaleas (*Rhododendron indicum*), are a staple in Louisiana landscapes, thriving in our warm, humid climate. The varieties which received the "LSP" designation are 'George L. Taber', 'Formosa', and 'G.G. Gerbing'. The Indica type of azalea is native to Japan. These evergreen shrubs typically grow to 6 to 8 feet tall and nearly that wide. Indica azaleas are widely planted in a variety of landscapes for their showy spring blooms and hardy nature. Southern Indica azaleas are very well adapted to Louisiana's climate, benefiting from the mild winters and long growing seasons. This winter was far from mild, but I've been pleasantly surprised by the plentiful displays of azalea flowers this spring.

These azaleas perform best in:

- **Well-Drained, Acidic Soil:** Azaleas require a pH between 5.0 and 6.0 for optimal growing. Amendments such as pine bark mulch or peat moss help maintain soil acidity.
- **Partial Shade to Filtered Sunlight:** While these varieties can tolerate some sun, they thrive under dappled light or morning sun with afternoon shade. Too much direct sun can scorch leaves, while deep shade may reduce blooming.
- **Moisture and Mulching:** Azaleas prefer moist, but not wet, soil. A layer of mulch helps retain moisture, suppress weeds, and regulate soil temperature.

Azalea pruning is a common question received by Extension agents. Azaleas should be pruned immediately after flowering to shape the plant and remove dead or weak branches. Since these azaleas bloom on old growth, late pruning may remove next season's buds. Pruning recommendations for popular reblooming azalea varieties such as 'Encore' are identical to the Indica types. Southern Indica azaleas are relatively low-maintenance but can be susceptible to lace bugs and spider mites. Regular inspection, proper spacing for air circulation, and mulching help prevent these pests.

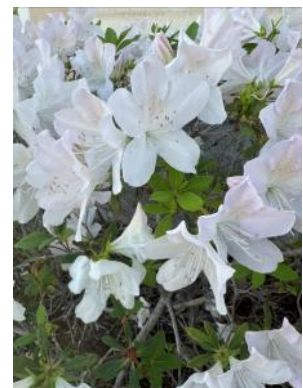
As "tried and true" plants in the Louisiana landscape, it was only a matter of time before these azaleas became recognized as designated as "super plants". Since these azaleas are commonly planted in our area, you may now be able to count an additional "Louisiana Super Plant" in your landscape. The azaleas are a great reminder that Spring is here and is one of the best times to be a plant lover and horticulture enthusiast. Happy gardening!



INDICA AZELEAS



AZELEA GEORGE L. TABOR



AZELEA GG GARBING

WHAT PLANT IS THIS?

This somewhat woody, herbaceous perennial is a native of eastern Asia, Europe and North Africa, especially in areas with abundant rainfall. It is now found all over the world in Zones 3 to 9. It was brought to America by early colonists and has naturalized here. It prefers limestone soil but tolerates many conditions: roadsides, waste places and other disturbed places. Because of its low basal rosette of leaves, it can survive in lawns. It usually does not enter undisturbed natural areas.

In its first year, it puts forth a rosette of green leaves that resemble dandelions. Then it begins to develop a long taproot, which can be dried, roasted and ground into a coffee-like beverage, or added to coffee. The leaves are deeply lobed or toothed. They are edible. Boil them to reduce the bitterness, throw the water,

and eat as a vegetable, or eat them raw. In the second year, it sends up a tall, tough, hollow stem, which produces a milky sap when cut. Growing up to five feet high and three feet wide it develops a branching form. The large taproot,

leaves and flowers are all edible. This plant usually lives up to 8 years.

This plant's daisy-like flowers are usually a bright blue or lavender but rarely can be white or pink. Blooming from March to October, they are often used to decorate cakes.

The medicinal properties claimed for this plant are numerous. It is said to be anti-fungal, anti-bacterial, anti-viral and anti-parasitic. It contains inulin (a prebiotic) which may support a healthy gut, and has been used to treat joint and muscle pain. Pregnant women and nursing mothers shouldn't use this plant. And people who react to histamine may experience itching, hives, nasal congestion, headaches and digestive issues.

Pests which attack this plant are snails, slugs, rabbits, anthracnose, and downy mildew.

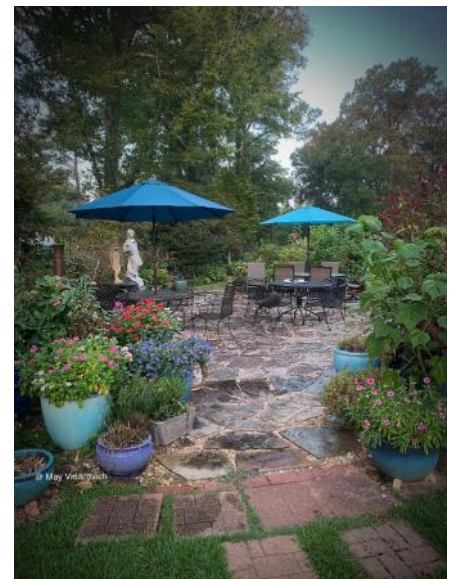
Do you know what plant this is?



**WHAT PLANT IS THIS
ANSWER**

Cichorium intybus: Chicory

MAY VIDACOVICH TO HOST SPRING SOCIAL



THANKS TO MAY FOR OPENING HER LOVELY GARDENS TO THE LPMGA FOR OUR SPRING SOCIAL !

MAY 7TH



Make good use of an old wooden ladder to help take your plants to new heights. A wooden ladder is the perfect country chic accent to showcase your flowers, herbs and other plants in a rustic fashion. The ladder's cross-sections make for a great multi-tier surface to hold a variety of plants. Additionally, the openness of the ladder's design helps to give a pop to plants of any color, even basics green shades



Linda Beyt, Gail Wakefield, Judy Corne and Susan Wilhelm attended the CENLA MG Symposium in Pineville, LA titled "Color in the Garden." Susan won the raffle of a very well equipped handmade potting table!



NOT EVEN FREEZING TEMPERATURES KEEP OUR PROPAGATION TEAM FROM SHOWING UP FOR WORK!



Rainwater Harvesting: An Eco-Friendly Way to Water Your Garden

By: Mandy Hatman

Rainwater harvesting is a sustainable gardening practice that allows you to collect and store rainwater for irrigation. It helps conserve water, reduce reliance on municipal systems, and provide your plants with chemical-free water. Louisiana's frequent rain is an effective, sustainable resource for gardeners.

Setting Up a Rainwater Harvesting System:

A rainwater harvesting system is simple and cost-effective. Basic components include a storage container (like a rain barrel) and a way to collect rainwater from your roof.

Rain Barrels: These containers are placed under downspouts to collect water runoff. Barrels with lids can prevent debris and mosquitoes.

Gutter Systems: Clean gutters allow smooth water flow. A diverter can help direct water from the gutter to the barrel.

Filtration: Use mesh screens to filter out debris before water enters the storage container.

Benefits of Using Rainwater:

Chemical-Free Water: Rainwater is naturally soft and free of chemicals like chlorine and fluoride, making it gentler on plants, especially those sensitive to chemicals, like herbs and vegetables.

Cost Savings: Rainwater reduces reliance on municipal water, saving money on your water bill.

Environmental Impact: Rainwater harvesting conserves freshwater resources and helps reduce stormwater runoff, which can contribute to flooding and water pollution.

Irrigation: You can easily connect a drip irrigation system to your rainwater collection setup for more efficient watering.

Rainwater harvesting is a simple, sustainable way to nourish your garden while conserving water. By using natural, chemical-free rainwater, you'll help your plants thrive, save money, and contribute to water conservation efforts. With Louisiana's abundant rainfall, harvesting rainwater is a practical and eco-friendly choice for gardeners.

Happy planting!

The Art of Garden Meditation: Creating a Space for Reflection and Peace

By: Mandy Hatman

Gardens are more than just spaces for growing plants – they are sanctuaries for the mind, body, and spirit. The calming effects of nature are well-documented; gardening itself has long been a meditative practice. Spending time in nature has been shown to reduce stress, enhance mood, and improve cognitive function. Research shows that immersion in natural environments can lower cortisol levels while increasing feelings of relaxation and mental clarity. In today's hectic world, creating a space in your garden for reflection and peace can be an invaluable part of your self-care routine. Blending mindfulness and nature, garden meditation offers a way to nurture your mental and emotional well-being.

Creating a garden space conducive to meditation involves more than just planting flowers. Some elements to consider:

- The gentle sound of flowing water from a small fountain or pond can have a calming effect on the mind, making it easier to focus and reflect.
- A comfortable bench or chair placed under a tree or near a flowerbed offers a quiet spot for contemplation or simply enjoying the scenery.
- Incorporate aromatic plants such as lavender, chamomile, and jasmine to engage your sense of smell and promote relaxation. Their soothing scents are known to alleviate stress and anxiety.
- A harmonious design with balanced plantings and spaces for breathing and movement will help maintain a tranquil environment.

Mindfulness can be as simple as walking through your garden, taking deep breaths, focusing on the sensation of your feet touching the ground, the sounds around you, and the colors of the plants. Most importantly, allow yourself to clear your mind and be present in the moment.

Gardens are natural sanctuaries that can offer moments of quiet reflection and inner peace. By designing a meditative space and practicing mindfulness, your garden becomes more than a place to grow plants—it becomes a place to nurture your well-being.

Happy planting!



The Dans Le Jardin Conference is set for June 13, 2025, at the Lafayette LITE Center. Cindy Jensen and Cindy Wiley are organizing a silent auction and are seeking new or nearly new items valued at \$25 or more, as well as door prizes worth between \$10 and \$15. Donations can be dropped off at Propagation on Wednesday mornings.

Cindy Wiley



Cindy Wiley and Cindy Jensen volunteered to work the Lafayette Parish Employee Health Fair.

The ladies handed out information from the LSU AgCenter and answered questions on growing healthy food.

LSU AGRICULTURAL CENTER
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APRIL 2025

**GENERAL MEETING,
 DOWNTOWN LIBRARY , WEST CONGRESS
 APRIL 2ND, 2025. SPEAKER ALLEN OWINGS**

**FESTIVAL DE FLEUR APRIL 5TH BLACKHAM
 COLISEUM**

BOARD MEETING, IRA NELSON, APRIL 18TH

**DAN LE JARDIN, LITE CENTER, JUNE
 13TH 2025**

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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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.