Fall 2018

Leaf Notes

The Newsletter of Lee County Master Gardeners

Inside This Issue

Presidents Message

Dear Gardening Friends,

Planting trees at Lee County Schools is one of our major outreach projects and our gift to the children. I hope you will join Gene Galloway, project coordinator, in working with the school on site selection, then return to teach a brief lesson to the children about tree planting and plant the trees. The children get very excited and take pride in watching their trees grow. This year we will be returning to Smith Station Elementary West and Beulah Elementary at the request of the principals. As former elementary principal, I am very proud of this project and our gift to the children. Sign up at up at our meeting or send Gene an email ggalloway4813@charter.net

and join him in this project.

A big thank you to our nominating officers who have been meeting and working to select our upcoming officers. They have done a great job. Thank you to those who have accepted new positions, we look forward to your leadership. The new slate of officers will be announced at the September Master Gardeners Meeting.

Also, a big thank you to our budget committee who have been great stewards of our funds. They will be reporting their recommended budget in September.

If you have not worked in one of our demonstration gardens, please check out New Weeds for times and dates and join one of these dedicated groups. Our gardens provide beauty, enjoyment, and education for our community. But the most fun is the fellowship time with fellow Master Gardeners. Hope to see you in one of the gardens.

Happy Gardening to All,

Nancy Golson, President

Quarterly Quote

What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly. - Richard Bach

Special Event

65th Annual Fall Flower Show

"The Land of OZ"

At the Alabama National Fair

Garrett Coliseum

September 28—October 8, 2018

For details see

www.alnationalfair.org

Or contact Rose Winkler at

334-270-0844

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The Master Gardeners Program educates volunteers in science-based gardening and landscape practices and helps them effectively extend research-based information to the public as Master Gardeners. The Master Gardener's role is primarily that of “educator.”

There are many different ways our volunteers in Lee County help the Alabama Extension System (ACES) expand outreach to the community. We construct and maintain community demonstration gardens and help implement community projects. A variety of garden-related programs and workshops are offered to the public.

Editors Column

I want to begin this column with a big thank you to all those who were involved in granting me an Honorary LCMG. It certainly surprised me and I consider it a great honor.

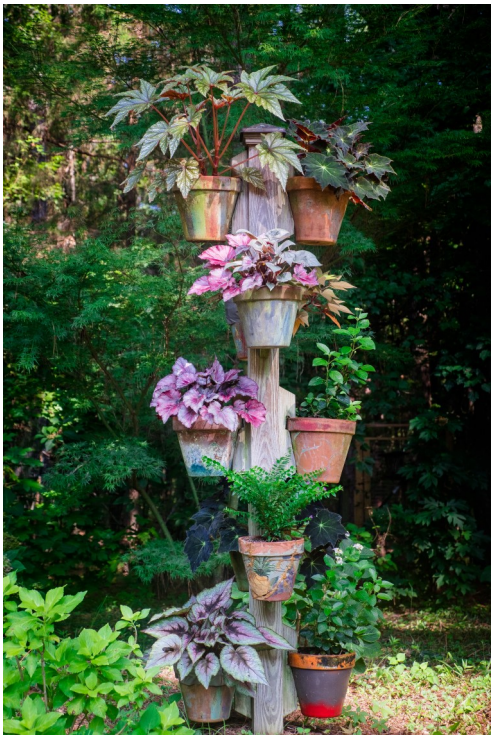
In this quarterly column I will discuss the contents of this newsletter and give some insight into some of the articles included within.

There are some personal interests noted so be prepared. While visiting my grandson in NYC this summer, I observed numerous landscaping plants on the roofs of buildings, and often on large patios. This included trees, bushes etc., so, when I came across an article about landscaping in and on buildings I wanted to include it in Leaf Notes because of it’s importance.

My grandson (Luke) surprised my wife and I with all the plants he was growing in his Manhattan apartment, many he had grown from seeds! We plan to encourage him to study horticulture, and the horticulture industry has an age related problem. See the article on pages 11-14 regarding this vital subject.

Also included is some rather interesting information on the use of baby powder in your garden. Enjoy!!

Photos from Angie Conway's Yard



***Quarterly* Quiz**

Can you identify this flower?
Answer on Page 10

Potpourri

—Charlot Ritenbaugh

Kerry Smith, Home Grounds, Gardens, and Home Pest program administrator for the Alabama Extension Services, does a nice presentation on **Principles of Landscape Design.** I have notes from April 2010 when she spoke to my class of MG interns. One slide in her power point was “the six main principles of design that can guide and enhance our design creativity.” The six mentioned are unity, simplicity (less is more), variety (just enough to be interesting), balance, proportion (relationship), and sequence (one after another).

More than eight years later, after “playing” master gardener in my own landscape, I appreciate those six main principles and face several challenges created by failing to use them. In search of solutions to the lack of unity, simplicity, balance, proportion and sequence, and an excess of the sixth, variety, I ordered **Five-Plant Gardens** by Nancy J. Ondra. As I moved through the book, my errors started to sort themselves and a doable plan of correction came into view. As part of this humbling discovery, of course I wished to share with others in our group.

So, on a very hot and sultry day in August, twenty-one bright and chatty folks gathered in a comfortable, air conditioned, and crowded space, to workshop about a shared passion, GARDENING. The topic that day was an overview, including concepts, examples and plant suggestions from Ondra’s **Five-Plant Gardens**.

The book features perennials, using multiple quantities of your chosen five plants in ways that follow those six principles. Perennials suggested complement each other and grow well together. There is variety in foliage and flowers, shapes and heights, and seasons for interest. The lists we discussed at the workshop were modified to our plant zone with alternative perennials that do well in Lee County. Information on providing choice growing conditions with the right amount of sun or shade, dry soil, wetness and other distinctions were covered.

I received several nice comments on the workshop. I believe additional workshop initiatives presented by willing members of our association would be as well attended and beneficial to our continuing gardening efforts.

Class in session

Garden Reports

Butterfly Garden

Margaret Holler

Jane, Betsy, Ray and I met today and planted 16 colorful zinnias, fertilized, weeded, watered and deadheaded some of the flowers. I was hoping to put up a container today which would hold Butterfly information but realized that a board would need to have about 1 1/2 feet taken off of it before it could be installed. So, I'd need someone with a saw. Soon after everyone left our Dear Faithful Volunteer, Arthur Herndon, showed up with his trusty chain saw - hooray!!! So together we got the container placed next to the trail as you'll see in the pictures below (open wide so you can see what the sign says).
Arthur and I where having a nice visit when about 10 or 12 children (ages about 8 and 9) and 2 adults came walking up to the garden. They were all dressed in the same t-shirt which stated the church camp they were attending. They were from a small town but I can't remember the name. They were fascinated by all the butterflies and caterpillars they were able to see and discover. I had told them about the pipevine caterpillar and where the pipevine plant was located but I didn't think the caterpillars were there at this time. One of the teachers let me know that she saw one so we all went over to look. There were many more than just one!!
They were even able to see them as very small caterpillars, as you'll see in the 5th picture. There were also many Pipevine Swallowtails flying today and they wondered if we gave each one a name. I told them that we didn't but that they were welcome to.
I was able to show them pictures in our favorite butterfly book and they were fascinated and asked so many questions. Those children really made my day !!

Another little girl came with her mom and she was taking pictures with her new Polaroid-like camera. She took several butterfly pictures but only one turned out pretty good. I thought she would want it but she insisted that I keep it. She was adorable! I showed them the new Butterfly Guide and the sheet available for them to take with them. She was very excited and said to her mom, "now we can plant our own Butterfly Garden!"
I couldn't have had a better day!!!

More Buildings Are Going Green. Literally.

By
Ken Wells JUNE 26, 2018

Most people, when they think of “green” buildings, take that to mean structures built with energy conservation in mind. But, increasingly, buildings are becoming literally green, as cities and companies around the world embrace biophilic design—the concept of surrounding buildings with nature, even on their upper floors, and bringing the outdoors indoors by including natural elements in their interior design.

Planted terraces that wrap around buildings, indoor man-made water features such as ponds and waterfalls, plantings that can cover entire interior walls, cascades of windows to maximize natural light—all are key elements of biophilic design, as are expanded views of nature itself.

Aesthetics are clearly a driver of the biophilic movement, but it is also motivated by the bottom line. Biophilic design can result in significant energy savings, and research indicates that employees in buildings designed with biophilic elements not only feel better about their workplace but perform better, too. For example, a landmark 2003 study of 100 employees in a call center of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District showed that workers who sat with views of nature handled up to 12% more calls per hour than those who had no view.

Clif Bar & Co.’s state-of-the-art bakery in Twin Falls, Idaho, is in the vanguard of the movement. Its profusion of windows, skylights and tubes designed to bring sunlight deep into building interiors bathe the facility in gentle natural light. Wall-size projections of nature bring images of mountains, rivers and forests into the bakery’s core. An imposing stone interior corridor is designed to mimic the Snake River Canyon, one of the most stunning geographic features of the West.

And there are plants everywhere: Low-maintenance plants decorate the light-filled common areas where workers gather, giving these indoor spaces an outdoor feel. Outdoors, a number of patios used by employees for breaks and dining are planted with or surrounded by drought-tolerant native plants, including more than 570 trees and 5,700 shrubs and grasses. The bakery also was sited to offer unimpeded vistas of the nearby mountains of the Sawtooth National Forest.

The idea behind the design of the $90 million, 300,000-square-foot bakery, completed in 2016, was to make it “the kind of place all of us would like to work,” says Rich Berger, vice president of engineering and food supply for the maker of organic energy bars and snacks based in Emeryville, Calif.

Bill Browning, a founding partner of Terrapin Bright Green, a New York-based consulting firm focused on sustainable development, is among America’s leading biophilic experts. He has been consulting with companies including Walmart and Marriott International ’s Westin Hotels & Resorts to bring biophilic design into their building plans.

Walmart teamed up with Mr. Browning as he first began to explore how bringing elements like abundant natural light into retail workspaces could improve not only productivity but also sales. From experiences with a prototype green store that featured abundant natural light, the company began to find that sales per square foot were significantly higher for departments located in the daylit sections of stores than in those with artificial light, according to a joint report by Mr. Browning and the company

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More Buildings Are Going Green. Literally.

At Westin, “we believe people have an innate need to interact with nature,” and so the company gears all of its design with biophilic principles in mind, says George Fleck, the chain’s vice president of global brand marketing and management. He points to one of Westin’s newest properties, the five-story, 116-room Westin Buffalo in Buffalo, N.Y. The hotel incorporates planted walls, soaring banks of windows and exposed wooden beams into its common areas and decorates its guest rooms with carpets, walls and art suffused with earthy tones and replicating patterns of nature.

The Khoo Teck Puat Hospital in Singapore was designed around a central garden courtyard at basement and ground level. Hospital managers say views toward a sprawling adjacent outdoor pond help in 'drawing nature into the hospital.'PHOTOS: RMJM(4)

A pivotal piece of research backing up the premise of biophilic design is a 1984 study published in the journal Science that found that a suburban Pennsylvania hospital’s gallbladder-surgery patients who had views of green space from their rooms had shorter recovery times than those who didn’t. Many other studies have since confirmed such health benefits.

Today, the Khoo Teck Puat Hospital in Singapore, completed in 2010, features vast indoor courtyards of tropical plants surrounding patient areas. Fins along the building’s exterior channel prevailing northeast winds into the building, enhancing airflow by 20% to 30% and reducing the need for air conditioning.

Singapore is also home to one of the pioneers of biophilic design, the architectural firm WOHA, founded by Wong Mun Summ and Richard Hassell in 1994. The WOHA-designed ParkRoyal on Pickering hotel in Singapore, part of the Pan Pacific Hotels Group, features almost 4 acres of lushly planted, self-sustaining terraces interlaced with waterfalls, ponds and other naturalistic features.

More Buildings Are Going Green. Literally.

-Continued

The 367-room hotel has been largely sold out since it opened in 2013, and suites go for more than $500 a night. “It’s a project that shows that an investment in green design can translate into real profit,” says Mr. Hassell.

WOHA is working on 14 biophilic projects in seven countries, according to Mr. Hassell. One of them is a park and classroom cluster as part of a new campus for the Singapore Institute of Technology that will cocoon campus buildings in an urban forest.

The ParkRoyal on Pickering hotel in Singapore has almost 4 acres of lush terraces, many of them with water features.PHOTOS: PATRICK BINGHAM-HALL(3)

Biophilic design has earned some prestigious recognition. The dual towers of the Bosco Verticale apartment complex in Milan are clothed in staggered terraces featuring about 800 trees—enough to cover a 3-acre forest. The project won Europe’s International Highrise Award in 2014 for the continent’s most innovative building.

While designing buildings with huge green spaces, green walls and terraced gardens can be challenging—using trees requires building in load capacity—some projects get around that by the choice of plants they use. At One Central Park in Sydney, hydroponic plants require no soil and minimal water to thrive, alleviating the issue of structural overloading. The mixed residential and commercial building features a series of hanging gardens that clad the exteriors of its two residential towers with more than 85,000 plants, and includes 22 interior green walls.

Green walls add only modest costs to new construction, since bringing in water and drainage is no more complicated than installing the necessary plumbing. As for maintenance, “our focus has been on building walls where there is minimal plant loss and therefore a lower cost of operation over time,” says Richard Kincaid, founder of Chicago-based Sagegreenlife, which specializes in green-wall construction

More Buildings Are Going Green.

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The Bosco Verticale complex in Milan won Europe's International Highrise Award in 2014 for the continent's most innovative building. PHOTO: DAVIDE PIRAS/STEFANO BOERI ARCHITETTI

In the U.S., biophilic projects are popping up across the country. Among the notable ones is a project by CookFox Architects of New York that has transformed a blocky five-story parking garage adjacent to the city's High Line elevated green space into a light-filled, 10-story office complex that is nearing completion.

With the High Line as inspiration, "the idea was to rethink the site for the biophilic workplace of the future," says Rick Cook, a CookFox founder. "Every single floor will have access to outdoor spaces and gardens.

"An outdoor garden begins on the second floor, north-face terrace and rises to connect the second-, third- and fourth-floor terraces with a wide stairway that features planting beds and integrated seating," Mr. Cook says. "Each floor above also features a terrace in varied locations," he says, and to top it all off, "there are rooftop gardens at the 11th and 12th floors."

Mr. Wells is a writer in Chicago. He can be reached at reports@wsj.com.

Appeared in the June 27, 2018, print edition as 'Green Buildings. Literally..'

Submitted Photos from 2018 Tour Gardens

Joseph Helm

Linda Nowlin

Joseph Helm

Answer to Quiz on page 2

Lagerstroemia /ˌleɪgərˈstriːmiə/,[1] commonly known as **crape myrtle** or **crepe myrtle**, is a genus of around 50 species of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs native to the Indian subcontinent, south-east Asia, northern Australia, and parts of Oceania, cultivated in warmer climates around the world. It is a member of the family Lythraceae, which are also known as the loosestrife family. The genus is named after the Swedish merchant Magnus von Lagerström, a director of the Swedish East India Company who supplied Carl Linnaeus with plants he collected. These flowering trees are beautifully colored and are often planted both privately and commercially as ornamentals. — Wikipedia

The Horticulture Industry's Age Problem is Bigger than You Think

By Adrian Higgins The Washington Post

Nora Palmer, 21, works at Hershey Gardens in Hershey, Pa., on July 19. "Everything you do in horticulture is wonderful," Palmer said. "Almost magical." (Jim Graham/For The Washington Post)

HERSHEY, Pa. — Nora Palmer is a gardener who toils happily in breezy Hershey Gardens, a playground of roses, herbs, old trees and leafy spaces that welcomes, among others, field-tripping grade-schoolers.

Palmer, 21, seems to have gotten off the roller coaster of young adulthood a long time ago, if she ever was on it. She decided in high school, to the bemusement of her guidance counselors, that she was going to be a professional gardener. All is going to plan.
In late August, she begins her last semester at Delaware Valley University, a private school north of Philadelphia, where she will graduate with a degree in horticulture. Next stop will be graduate school and, in time, a PhD related to plant science. She hopes to teach and at some point have her own fruit farm.
For now, she is working as a summer gardener at Hershey Gardens near her hometown of Palmyra, immersing herself in the practice of public horticulture by day and joining her mom, dad and two sisters for dinner at night.

Palmer spends the summer before her last semester at Delaware Valley University, where she is pursuing a horticulture degree, toiling at Hershey Gardens. (Jim Graham/For The Washington Post)
The Hershey visitor may miss this amid the aroma of shredded mulch, but Palmer is living her dream. "Everything you do in horticulture is wonderful," she said. "Almost magical."

There is something so timeless about Palmer's course that it's tempting to think of her story as a reminder that outside the chaos of the Washington political circus, life in this country goes on in its quiet, ordered fashion.

But horticulture is facing its own crisis. As older plant growers, nursery managers and groundskeepers reach retirement age, there are too few Nora Palmers arriving to replace them.
And to state something so apparent it seems forgotten: Everyone needs plants. Plants feed us, oxygenate us, heal us, shade us and clothe us. Plants are the stuff of legal booze and illicit drugs, and, perhaps more obviously, they simply delight us. Despite this reliance, most Americans are said to be able to identify no more than 10 species growing around them. This indifference seems to be one of the woes facing the green industry.

Palmer weeds, mulches and deadheads, among other tasks, at the property which has a rose garden with hundreds of flowering hybrid teas. (Jim Graham/For The Washington Post)
"There's an age gap in commercial horticulture, a drastic and obvious lack of people under the age of 40," said Cole Mangum, vice president of production at Bell Nurseryin Burtonsville, Md. The company furnishes millions of plants in the spring to almost 300 Home Depot garden centers in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest.

"Our largest concern," Mangum says, "is in finding that next generation of greenhouse growers." The grandson of the company's founder, he is, at 32, an outlier in his own field.
"We have more employers calling us than we have students to fill the jobs," said John Dole, associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University. "We aren't meeting the needs of the industry."
According to a 2015 study, nearly 58,000 jobs become available each year in agriculture-related fields, but only 61 percent are filled by qualified graduates.
The gulf between jobs and takers is so obvious and alarming to insiders that more than 150 green industry employers, colleges, -botanical gardens and others in April launched a national -initiative seeking to reverse the decline.

The Horticulture Industry's Age Problem is Bigger than You Think

By Adrian Higgins The Washington Post

-Continued

One selling point to teenagers: Horticulturists can directly work on a host of cool environmental and social issues, including the effects of climate change and extreme weather and the lack of access to fresh food in poor city neighborhoods.

"If you want to save the planet, one of the best ways to do it is through horticulture," said Angus Murphy, chair of the Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture at the University of Maryland at College Park.

The nonprofit group Seed Your Future has spent almost five years defining the problem and devising a strategic plan to address it. In focus groups, researchers for Seed Your Future found that no middle-schoolers they quizzed had even heard of horticulture. (The word comes from the Latin for garden, Hortus, and dictionaries generally define it as the art, science and practice of growing garden and orchard plants. The field overlaps with agriculture, with many horticulturists becoming farmers of specialty vegetables, fruits, cut flowers and herbs.)

Another problem went deeper: Many young Americans lack a basic awareness of plants and their value. "Kids aren't even going to consider a career in horticulture if they don't know the impact of plants in our world," said Susan Yoder, Seed Your Future's executive director.

Its new "Bloom!" campaign uses social media platforms and personalities to make the connection between plants and topics that interest sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders, including sports, fashion, food, cosmetics and wellness. The effort includes YouTube shorts featuring the head groundskeeper for the Baltimore Orioles and a horticulturist at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens in Florida. Other spots highlight the need for drone operators in horticulture, the value of florists and the cool life of a greenhouse grower, bathed in purple LED grow lights. (The group is avoiding one obvious growth area in the industry: commercial marijuana production.)

Organizers are also trying to reach parents and youth group leaders, believing that their misperceptions are steering kids away from an occupation that is more than pushing a lawn mower at minimum wage. Seed Your Future has produced a list of 100 occupations that rely on horticultural expertise, including ethnobotanists, hydroponic growers, arborists and landscape architects.

The industry divides into three tiers, said Scott Sheely, special assistant for workforce development in the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. The top level includes undergraduates and graduates who become scientists, experts serving large-scale greenhouse operations and entrepreneurs. The middle tier is one of technicians with two- or four-year degrees and the skills to keep operations running in an increasingly electronic environment. At the bottom are landscape crews and workers in production and distribution networks.

Many in the last group are foreign-born, and industry observers believe a number of them could move into the technical tier with training, Sheely said, but "we have a lot of issues at the federal government level about immigration," making it harder to employ foreign workers. "People we talk to in general agriculture are very concerned about it." He said there is an expected shortfall of 75,000 jobs in Pennsylvania agriculture, including horticulture, over the next decade.

Compounding the problem nationally has been turmoil and loss of horticulture programs in land grant colleges and universities in response to declining enrollment. Fewer than one-third of 54 schools surveyed in 2015 still had separate departments of horticulture.

Palmer said she and her classmates at Delaware Valley are so cloistered in their lectures, labs and hands-on gardening that she hasn't dwelt on the increasing rarity of what she does. "It kind of masks what's going on outside," she said. The university, founded as an agricultural school in 1896, has a 570-acre campus in Doylestown, Pa. Full tuition is approximately $38,000 a year.

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She said, 'Mom, I'm just walking around constantly opening doors.' And that's what you need to do, open those doors and see where they lead," Anna Palmer said.
Her daughter is also a musician and an artist as well as an outdoorswoman, into hiking, kayaking, fly-fishing and hunting with her dad, Andy Palmer.

For her father, it's not hard to connect the dots. Nora the artist and Nora the gardener are one and the same. "It's all about creating. I think the concept of propagating a plant or planting seeds and watching them grow, or drawing and music, it all ties together," he said.

But what about his daughter entering a field that has become not just unfashionable but forgotten?
"Education is about learning, and sometimes we are too focused on the end game, like getting a job that pays a lot of money," Andy Palmer said. "But when people are passionate about something, the job and the money will come."
To which his daughter added: "Money can't buy you happiness. You can be extremely wealthy and not be happy."

Climate change and environmental degradation are "big issues," said Nora Palmer, but her primary motivation is more basic, and comes down to a need to touch and nurture plants and watch them grow. When I asked her what facet of horticulture she likes most, she moved even farther from the madding crowd.
"Pomology," she said, conjuring the time-encrusted term for the science of fruit cultivation.
In a three-hour visit, she produced a smartphone not once.

But to think of her as a quiet, ordinary country girl is to misread Nora Palmer. Rather, she has clung to something that our hyperactive, hyperbolic, message-spewing digital age has lost, namely the virtue of a plain life based on knowledge, work and constancy.

Palmer has figured out what many of her age cohort may be missing, that through the humble act of cultivating plants, she has found a way to nurture herself.

The Benefits of Using Baby Powder in Your Garden

From BaBa Mail

Who doesn't like a good multitasking tool, especially one we probably have on hand anyway? This particular one we can guarantee is hanging out in your bathroom as we speak: baby powder. Whether you use it on your grandchildren or on yourself, you probably have some – and you probably have more than you need (after all, a little goes a long way)! Luckily, for us, this excess powder can be used to great effect in our gardens.

1. Keep Ants at Bay
Ants aren't the worst pest that you can find in your garden, but every home gardener knows that the more tempting your landscaping, the more likely it is that these little insects will find their way through it and into your home. Thankfully, baby powder can help here! Just sprinkle some around your foundation, doorways, and other points of entry. Ants hate this stuff, and they'll divert their path another way – and away from your house

2. Deter Aphids
Also known as plant lice, greenflies, blackflies, and whiteflies, these sap-sucking, plant-killing pests have a mutual relationship with ants. That's right, some species of ants protect and feed on the milk the aphids produces, and they even carry eggs from plant to plant. So, by keeping the ants away, you will keep the aphids away too. Simply sprinkle some baby powder around the flowers where you have noticed them.
3. Banish Beetles
The pest-deterring powers of baby powder isn't just limited to ants and aphids – another common problematic garden insect hates the stuff just as much – the Japanese beetle. Baby powder will prevent these leaf-destroying bugs from munching their way happily through your plants. Simply sprinkle some baby powder onto the leaves, and reapply after it rains until beetle season has finished.

4. Discourage Rabbits
Us gardeners don't only have to worry about insects attacking our plants - pests can come in a furry and adorable form too. Rabbits are some of the most persistent, hopping into flower beds to munch on whatever they can get their paws on. Baby powder will discourage them from eating the younger plants and seedlings. Simply shake some powder over them, and they will be off the rabbits' dinner menu.

5. Make Gloves Gentle
Your fruit, veggies, and flowers are not the only things that will benefit from the addition of baby powder to your gardening routine; your hands will thank you too! Have you ever noticed how at the end of a day of gardening, your gloves are hard to take off and/or leave your hands red and raw? Well, baby powder will help. All you have to do is sprinkle some inside the gloves before you put them on and go to work. They will slip off a lot easier at the end of the day, and will leave your skin feeling baby soft, too.
6. Make Tools Less Rough
Another way to protect your hands at work is to prevent your spades, shears, and shovels from giving you blisters. Not only will coating them in baby powder protect your hands from the roughness, it will add some gentle friction to prevent them from slipping from your grasp

7. Freshen up Your Footwear
During a long and hard day of gardening, it is obvious that you will end up sweating quite a bit. To freshen up your boots, just add some baby powder to the soles to soak up moisture and prevent both stink and mold.
8. Baby Your Bulbs
Tiny seedlings, just like tiny humans, can be babied with baby powder. Give any bulbs you are planning on growing a head start and extra protection from pests by giving them a baby powder bath before you plant them in the ground. All you need to do is place the bulbs in a plastic zip-top bag (5-6 at a time), add in 3 tablespoons of baby powder, and shake to coat. Source: tiphero

Bee Campus USA & Spigelia in the City

—Margaret Holler

The August 1 Master Gardener program was outstanding! It kept me, if not all of us, captivated and very proud to hear about the exciting and important projects AU professors and students are focusing on.

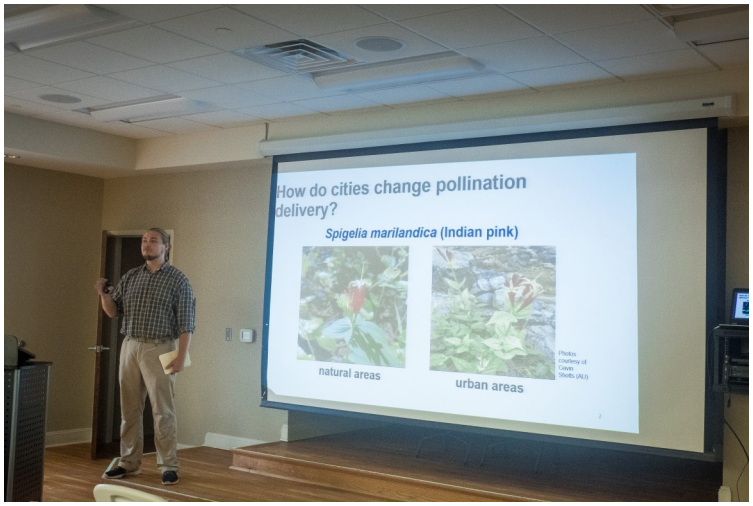
The program began when Gavin Shotts, Biological Science student shared his "Spigelia in the City" project. It's a citizen science endeavor to understand how cities change flowers. Plants grow differently in large cities vs small cities, urban vs rural. Those differences, as well as whether cultivated or wild often affect how and when certain plants flower. He and his team will provide "citizen scientists" in the Auburn-Opelika area a 3-ft X 4-ft raised bed, complete with compost and *Spigelia marilandica,* also known as Indian Pink. All they need from each participant is a relatively shady garden space and time. They will work with each person to study the plants between May and July 2019. For more information, you can email Gavin at citizenagriculture@gmail.com

Next up was Dr. Charles Ray, Entomologist in the AU Entomology and Plant Pathology Dept. Through Dr. Ray's efforts, Auburn University received the official Bee Campus USA designation in April, 2018. That designation made AU the 39th university in the nation and the first in Alabama to receive this honor. The Bee Campus USA logo reads, " **Making the World Safer For Pollinators One Campus at a Time".** To become officially designated they had to fulfill 7 commitments. By fulfilling those commitments, they aim to unite current efforts to raise awareness on pollinators, food production, native plant species, and integrated pest management. For additional information and/or if you'd like to get involved, we are encouraged to check this website: (http://wp.auburn.edu/sustainability/connect/) .

After Dr. Ray explained the exciting program he then shared some interesting facts and answered many questions from our group. One of the facts, which surprised many of us, was that agricultural crops, which depend on animal pollinators, only use .09% of Alabama's land. Self/wind pollinated crops account for 9.37%. Our forests, take up 69.75%, Livestock 7.04%, Urban areas 4.35%, and protected land 3.50%. But don't let that excuse the need to protect the animal pollinators, many of which are facing population declines - especially one of the best pollinators of all - bees!

Another interesting fact is that a very small portion of the pollen that a bee picks up is actually usable for pollination. The pollen balls we see on their legs is pollen they've cleaned off their legs by using their enzyme rich saliva. Only the loose remaining pollen on their bodies can do the pollinating. They then carry those pollen balls to their hive or nest to feed the colony.

Dr Charles Ray acknowledged for his program presentation by Lia Lofton. A book will be donated to the Opelika public library in his honor.



Gavin Shotts introducing "Spigelia in the City" project