

Leaf



Notes



The Newsletter of Lee County Master Gardeners

CHRISTMAS Shopping Idea

With less than 12 weeks until the Holidays, have you done your shopping for those special stocking stuffers for your neighbors, friends, and gardeners on your list?

Master Gardeners' can help. Purchase a Gift Certificate for garden tour "Wandering Through Wondrous Gardens" May 14-15, 2016.

You can purchase a Gift Certificate ticket during October, November, December, and January. These beautiful gift cards include information about the tour, how to redeem the gift certificate for a ticket as well as a to/from section where you can write a note to that special friend you know will enjoy the tour in May. This is a wonderful way to have a lovely gift for a friend, your child's teacher, neighbor, or that person who has everything.

Gift Certificates can be purchased for \$28 or groups 10 or more are \$25 and can be purchased at the Master Gardener meeting or at www.LeeMG.org.



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Fall 2015

Lee County Master Gardeners Assn

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And Why?

Native American Indian

You shall ask
What good are dead leaves?
And I will tell you
They nourish the sore earth.

You shall ask
What reason is there for winter?
And I will tell you
To bring about new leaves.

You shall ask
Why are the leaves so green?
And I will tell you
Because they are rich with life.

You shall ask
Why must summer end?
And I will tell you
So that leaves will die.

Submitted by Gita Smith

Leaf Notes



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.

Quarterly Quiz

Name this fruit

(Answer on page 15)





The Perfect Fall Garden

Dr. Charles Mitchell

Dr. Mitchell's presentation at the Lee County Master Gardener's was a discussion of basic principles for vegetable gardening, and more specifically for gardening in the fall season, the best time of the year for gardens in Alabama.

Two essentials for successful gardening are:

- A. Full sun and
- B. Water

Both of the essentials are important in selecting a site for your garden.

If the soil isn't well drained, then a raised bed should be used. A simple test for drainage is to dig a small hole, then fill it with water. If it takes an hour or more to drain, a raised bed should be used. If it takes less than one hour to drain. When testing soil, do not test soil when potting mix has been added, and be sure to test for the most important things

- A, Soil PH (should be 6-7) and
- B. Phosphorus level

If necessary, add Dolomitic lime. This adds Ca and Mg, and is important in AL since most AL soils are deficient. AL soils tend to be acidic (PH<7).

However, good soil is a lot more than chemical content alone but also includes physical and biological content. There are numerous benefits to organic content in the soil including;

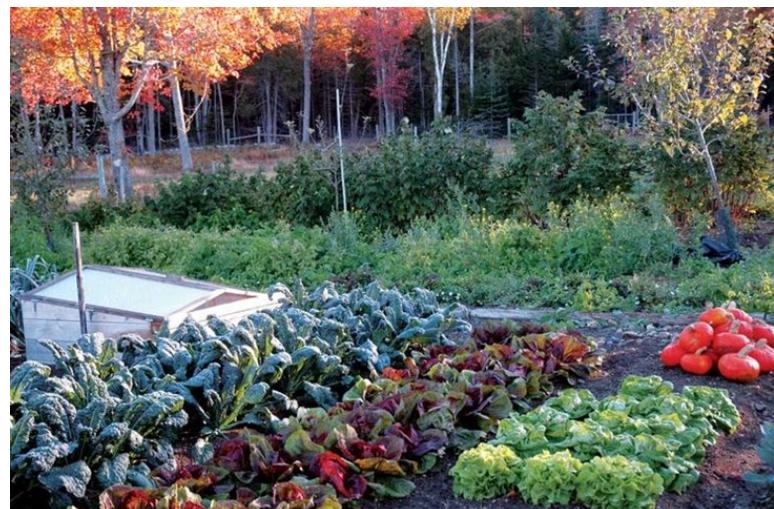
- A. Soil aggregation
- B. Increase in aeration
- C. Increase in water penetration ability
- D. Insures moisture holding
- E. Helps to hold nutrients
- F. A source of nutrients

Dr. Mitchel made the case for cool season gardens vs warm season's garden with the following points for cool season vegetables:

- A. They are hardy and frost resistant
- B. Seeds germinate at soil cooler temperatures
- C. They have a more shallow root system
- D. Plant size is smaller
- E. The fruits and produce can be stored at temperatures near 32 degrees

Some of the vegetable recommended for the fall garden include broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, radish, kohlrabi, cabbage, rutabaga, turnips, collard greens, kale, chard, onions, shallots, garlic, Chinese cabbage, lettuce, arugula, mustard greens, etc.

Dr. Mitchel then discussed the importance of proper tillage, and states that the less you till, the better the soil texture.





2016 Garden Tour Update

The Garden Tour Committee has made significant progress in plans for the 2016 LCMSA's presenting "Wandering Through Wondrous Gardens" May 14-15, 2016.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! Each and every member and friend is vital to the success of this project.

This exciting and educational two-day tour offers private gardens with ideas for seasoned gardeners or those just beginning to seek inspiration. The 2016 tour provides opportunities to wander through the latest in landscaping innovations, new and unique plants as well as old southern favorites in a variety of settings. Gardens have been selected in Auburn, Opelika, and Lochapoka to provide a wide range of beauty and thought provoking educational experiences. Presently we have secured over ten private and public gardens for the tour, giving attendees two full days enjoyment.

The tour will include several exceptional features including two gardens "back by public demand". Sunset Farm and a long time Master Gardener Dr. Bill Shell's garden featuring Japanese maples and camellias have rave reviews in past years. Another feature is the inclusion of two recently developed gardens. These gardens will provide an excellent demonstration on planning and establishing a garden.

Pioneer Park at the Lee County Historical Center in Lochapoka will be open as another special attraction of this tour. Lee County Master Gardener's maintain Grandma's Garden at this location. There is also a fascinating early century medicinal herb garden, museum of old garden tools and tractors, and a general store. Many child friendly activities are being planned along with food to taste. No ticket required to enjoy this venue during the Garden Tour weekend. Children welcomed.

One stop along the way will be a stop at Chicken Salad Chic, 1345 Opelika Road in Auburn. A sandwich, side item, pickle, and cookie meal plus an iced drink are included in the ticket price of the Garden Tour this year. This location will offer a cool respite for resting and planning your next stop on the tour.

Tickets will be for sale at our March 2016 LCMGA meeting. Pre-tour tickets purchased for groups 10 or more are \$25 each; pre-tour tickets are \$28. Tickets purchased the weekend of the tour are \$32. Gift Certificates are available at the same prices.

Tickets are available two ways. First, you can purchase a Gift Certificate ticket during October, November, December, and January. These beautiful gift cards include information about the tour, how to redeem the gift certificate for a ticket as well as a to/from section where you can write a note to that special friend you know will enjoy the tour in May. This is a wonderful way to have a lovely gift for a friend, your child's teacher, neighbor, or that person who has everything. Secondly tickets will go on sale at our March Master Gardener's meeting. Tickets will be available publicly beginning April 1st from our ticket outlets. All locations have not been finalized yet.



2016 Garden Tour Update

Your tour committee has been working very hard since the January kick off meeting. Charlot Ritenbaugh, Dianne Wages and their committee are working diligently outlining plans for publicity and securing photos of the gardens.

Pat Giordano, Jim Disque, and the ticket committee are securing the capability for point of sale credit card or PayPal for those purchasing gift certificates now or tickets later. They have developed a unique ticket that parts can be "torn-away" at each garden.

Beth Dorman is securing garden coordinators and will be getting her team together now that all sites have been selected. Jim Disque and the sponsorship committee are well on their way to increase business and individual sponsorships.

Sarah Fair maintains the LCMGA website, www.LeemG.org as the advertised source of information for the 2016 tour and will continuously update our site to answer questions about the gift certificate process in detail. Jolly Roberts maintains our Lee County Master Gardener Facebook page and is frequently posting information and pictures.

This is the Lee County Master Gardeners' largest fundraiser. The funds we make every other year have allowed us to support our demonstration gardens, give trees to schools, provide funds for horticultural educational activities and support throughout the community. We staff a Help Line during the growing season to assist regional gardens with concerns and questions, and provide funds for scholarship for at Auburn University and for 4-H students to attend summer camp. We hope to make \$16,000 profit from the 2016 tour to support these efforts.

How can you help? We knew you wanted to know. Two ways, first, we need you to help staff the gardens the weekend of May 14th and 15th. Next, we need you to purchase and sell tickets. If every master gardener and friend purchased or sold 5 tickets we would easily reach our goal and be able support our club initiatives. We need your help.

Check out www.leemg.org on our Master Gardener Web Page or the Lee County Master Garden Facebook page for updates on how you can be involved or purchase a gift certificate and tickets.

Happy Gardening

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Fall Caterpillars Can Be a Nuisance

Posted on September 1, 2015 by Shane Harris , Posted in Agriculture, Home & Garden

All sorts of caterpillars can be found in late summer feeding on trees and shrubs and other plants around homes. This is really just a minor problem since it is very unlikely that they will kill the plants they are eating on. But the results of their feeding – the unsightly defoliation of the plant or the shower of fecal droppings – could be categorized as pure nuisance.

Azalea Caterpillars

If you find caterpillars on azaleas, more than likely the culprits are azalea caterpillars. These caterpillars are about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long and red to brown with white or yellow stripes. Full grown, they are two inches long with a red head and legs with broken white stripes. They almost always feed in groups. Oddly enough, they rear their heads and tail ends up when disturbed.

Azalea caterpillars can really eat up the leaves of an azalea if nothing is done to stop them. Use the insecticide Sevin, Dipel, or spinosad to chemically control them but this method is only effective on the small caterpillars. Remove the larger caterpillars by hand and put them in a sealable bag or in a container of soapy water. Don't worry about picking them off, azalea caterpillars do not bite or sting.

Another group of caterpillar pests are the oakworms and mapleworms. They are found in bunches chewing up the leaves of trees. In just a brief walk in the yard, one might soon notice groups of orange-striped oakworms or pink-striped oakworms or green-striped mapleworms. These caterpillars can potentially defoliate the entire tree in a few days.

For most homeowners, the concern lies with the defoliation, large numbers of caterpillars, and the falling frass (droppings). On the smaller planted landscape trees, any major defoliation will probably be detected. On the much larger trees, the presence of caterpillars and damage may not be noticed. If deemed feasible to take action and control them, Sevin, Dipel, or spinosad is the recommended insecticide. Otherwise, don't worry too much about it; they shouldn't kill the tree.





Fall Caterpillars (continued)

Fall Webworm

One of the most noticeable species of caterpillar is the fall webworm. They attack many deciduous trees and shrubs, but are most commonly found in pecan, black cherry, persimmon, and sourwood trees. Their webs enclose the foliage on ends of branches and are seen in summer and fall. Treat with Sevin, Dipel, or spinosad when the webs are first noticed and saturate thoroughly. As an alternative to spraying, webs and larvae can be removed and destroyed by hand late in the day.

Fall webworm is not usually a serious pest in natural forest stands. Infestations are of greatest concern on shade, ornamental, and urban forest trees. Here, loss of foliage and unsightly webs seriously reduce the aesthetic and environmental values of the trees. The natural enemies of fall webworms, such as birds, assassin bugs, parasitic wasps, and disease typically keep their population and potential damage at low levels and under control.



Japanese Beetle Damage to Bradford Pear

By David Peterson

Six years ago, living in Crystal Lake, Illinois, we had a terrible infestation of Japanese beetles.

They can be voracious eaters, and love the leaves of some tree species, shrubs and roses.

The picture below was taken across the street from my townhouse, and shows the damage these beetles can do. Although it didn't kill the tree, it sure was not able to show off its fall glory that year.

Another destructive insect to invade Northern Illinois was the green ash borer. Two years ago, the city of Crystal Lake removed over 1000 dead green ash trees, planted along residential streets.



Posted in Agriculture, Home & Garden

Photo by David Peterson



11 Common Gardening Mistakes

Gardening is not rocket science. If you can dig a hole, open a water tap and pull out weeds, you can care for your own garden. Despite that, many people make mistakes simply because they don't know how to take care of their garden: knowing how much water a plant needs, how much sunlight, if a pot is deep enough for a root vegetable, etc. These are the 11 most common mistakes people make in their gardens.

1. Thinking too big

You may want to plant all the vegetables and fruits right now and stop buying them in the store, or you might want some pretty flowers to decorate your garden. However, if you decide to cultivate it all at once for the first time without any experience, you might discover that it's quite difficult and bothersome, which can frustrate you and make you give up on your dream.

To avoid confusions such as when to water which plants, and where to plant them, start by thinking small. Choose one vegetable or plant to begin with and stick to it. Your garden will enjoy the attention and love, and you'll feel more confident and satisfied. Once you've mastered one plant, start moving on to more, but be sure to plant seasonally.

2. Not preparing the soil for planting

If the earth you want to use is infertile, your plants will never thrive. Preparing the soil must be done before you begin the planting process, because once the seeds start rooting – any changes to them will damage and maybe even kill them.

The best time to prep your garden is in the spring when the ground is not too muddy. Most plants need about a 6 to 10-inch (15-20cm) depth to root well. If you plan on growing root vegetables (carrots, potatoes, etc.), dig deeper – one foot (30cm) should be enough. This is the best time to add compost or manure.

3. Forgetting the sun

Our plants need sunlight to grow and that's something most of us know. However, different plants have different solar needs, which should be taken into consideration when deciding what to plant and where. Make sure you know how much direct sunshine each plant needs, and plant accordingly. Seed packets will often include that information:

- **Full sunshine** – 6 or more hours a day.
- **Partial sun/shade** – 3-5 hours a day.
- **Full shade** – less than 3 hours a day.



11 Common Gardening Mistakes (continued)

4. Over / under fertilizing

Using too much, too little, or no fertilizer at all will result in sickly, slow-growing plants. Most plants need nitrogen, and a good fertilizer will help them grow big, which is something you'd want for vegetables like lettuce or cabbage. However, if you give them too much nitrogen, their growth will be so intense that they'll take longer to be ready for eating. With root vegetables, you'll get overgrown tops with small roots.

A good rule of thumb is a 50/50 ratio of fertilizer to soil.

5. Over / under watering

Just like people, plants need water for their metabolism and growth, but different plants need different amounts of water. Too little can result in wilting and dying, and too much can kill the plant by rotting the roots. Once the roots are damaged, the plant is done for.

Most plants need to be watered about 1-3 times a week. If you don't water the ground enough, water won't seep down to the roots and the plant will dry out, or grow roots closer to the top soil, which will force them to compete with each other.

6. Planting too deep or not deep enough

When it comes to seeds, the bigger the seed – the deeper it should be planted. However, planting a seed too deep in the ground will prevent it from growing because it will not get enough sunlight when it needs it. If the seeds are too close to the surface, it can cause them to dry out and wilt, or culminate in a plant that cannot stand straight because its roots aren't strong enough.

Some types of seeds (like lettuce) prefer to be planted closer to the top of the soil in order to get sunlight to trigger their growth. Since every plant has its own "rules", read up on it before you plant it in your garden.

7. Planting too close to other plants

If your seeds are too close to each other, they will compete for resources, which means weaker and smaller plants. Read the instructions on the seed packet to know what the recommended planting distance is and try not to stray from it.

Remember: not all seeds will sprout, and not all plants will mature, so if you see that some plants are too close together – uproot them.



11 Common Gardening Mistakes (continued)

8 Allowing weeds to grow freely

Weeds compete with your plants for resources, so they should be uprooted as soon as possible. Furthermore, the weed's roots can intertwine with your plants' and uprooting them then may damage your plants' roots. Try and stay on top of the weed situation in your garden.

9. Forgetting the weather

Some plants prefer one type of climate over others. When you're choosing the plants you want for your garden, make sure that they are suited to the local weather and the time of year. Some vegetables (such as corn, beans, cucumber) prefer warmer soil, and should be planted in the late spring, while broccoli, kale, leeks, etc. prefer to be planted in the winter.

If your winters are particularly windy, you can cut a milk bottle in half and use it to cover young plants. During the summer, it's better to water your plants in the early morning or early evening, because, during midday, the intense sunlight can reflect from the water and damage your plants.

10. Not taking care of pests

No matter where you are, there are creatures that are just dying for you to finish so they can start feasting on your plants. This includes insects, rodents, and birds. If you don't want to use pesticides, consider using a scarecrow, or hanging old CDs on strings so that they'll blind and scare away unwanted pests. Another effective deterrent for pests is spearmint oil – soak cotton balls in it and place them around the garden. The powerful scent messes with rodents' sense of smell and ants hate it too. If your problem is slugs, sprinkle some salt around your plants.

If you've got insect problems (such as aphids), get a spray bottle and fill it with water and very little dish soap, then spray your plants once a week. The solution kills any insects that are already on the plant, and deters others from trying to eat it. (Just remember to wash your veggies before you eat them.)

11. Not knowing which plants “play nice” with others

Certain plants, when planted in tandem, can be very beneficial for each other by deterring pests, protecting each other from the weather, improving soil fertilization, etc. In other cases, some plants simply don't play well together and should not be planted in close proximity. Potatoes do particularly well next to cilantro, beans, corn, or cabbage but wreak havoc on pumpkins, squashes, cucumbers, tomatoes, etc. Consult with the salesperson, or Google it online.



Potpourri

By Charlot Ritenbaugh

In early September the blooms of the Butterfly Senna or Winter Cassia, *Cassia pendula*, were covered with cloudless sulphur caterpillars. Last year it was green caterpillars. This year the caterpillars started out as the tiniest of a yellow sliver.

As they grew, brown dots emerged for camouflage eventually outdone by gorgeous dark stripes. One source speculates the caterpillars that feed on the foliage are green in color. If they eat the flowers they are yellow. Talk about a successful disguise.

Caterpillars face a 2% survival rate, for every 100 eggs laid, only two will survive to become butterflies. Hiding among their host plants with this type of coloring allows just enough to escape becoming a predator's tasty meal and continue their species life cycle.

Thank you Carol Griffin for securing this shrub for our gardens.

Lois Chapman's feature, *Alabama Gardener*, appears monthly in the magazine NEIGHBORS by the Alabama Farmer's Federation. Her October article describes how to make your own seed tapes to corral those tiny seeds of early spring annuals for planting. Create a "glue" of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cornstarch to 1 cup of warm water. Place your seeds onto little dots of the mixture along a strip of paper towel. Use a second strip of paper towel to cover these attached seeds. When dry, locate your seed strips in your garden and cover with a light layer of pine straw. It also helps to periodically provide some moisture. I am getting ready to make some with larkspur and poppy seeds hoping they will give a great showing in early spring.

I received a copy of the 2014 Annual Report for ACES. It was handed out at the AU Board meeting on September 25, 2015. In 2014 "Extension Master Gardener volunteers represented 97 full-time equivalent employees valued at \$3,646,422." Let's not forget our roots, get out and share some valuable hours in our LCMGA demonstration gardens. The report is available at <http://www.aces.edu/impact>





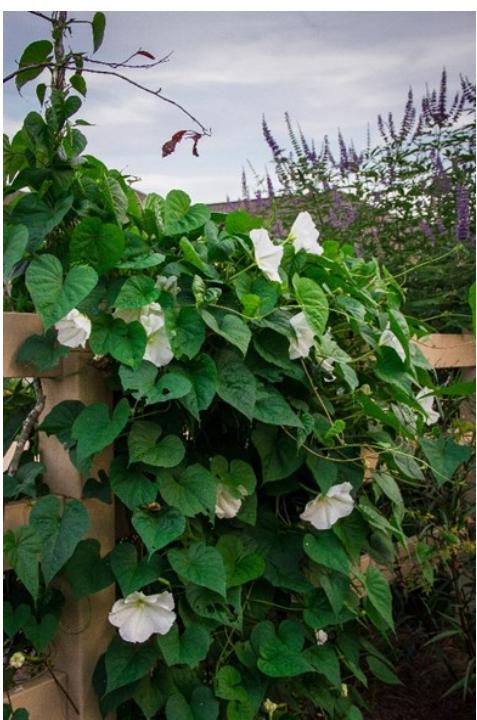
Interesting Plants for Your Backyard

Moonflower Vine

By Cindi Pierce (posted on garden.social)

The Moonflower Vine is my absolute favorite plant. It is a gorgeous vine comprised of heart-shaped leaves that, at maturity, serve as a lovely background to a nightly display of huge (6-inch), beautiful, white blooms. In addition, the scent of the Moonflower Vine permeates the night air with the most heavenly of fragrances!

The Moonflower Vine is a relative of the Morning Glory Vine. If you look closely and compare the two vines, you'll find their flowers are very similar in shape, although the Moonflower generally has larger blooms and is strictly white in color. The most notable difference between the two relatives is the Moonflower Vine blooms at night, while the Morning Glory, as its name states, blooms in the mornings! Incidentally, you will find most night blooming plants produce flowers that are white in color - a trait that lures nocturnal pollinating insects like Sphinx Moth. Sphinx Moths can grow as large as hummingbirds and are quite interesting to observe. .



Photos by David Peterson

The Castor Oil Plant

Ricinus

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Ricinus communis, the castor oil plant, is a species of flowering plant in the spurge family, Euphorbiaceae. It is the sole species in the Ricinus, and subtribe, Ricininae. The evolution of castor and its relation to other species are currently being studied using modern genetic tools.^[2] It reproduces with a mixed pollination system which favor selfing by geitonogamy but at the same time can be an out-crosser by anemophily or entomophily.

Its seed is the castor bean, which, despite its name, is not a true bean. Castor is indigenous to the southeastern Mediterranean Basin, Eastern Africa, and India, but is widespread throughout tropical regions (and widely grown elsewhere as an ornamental plant).

Castor seed is the source of castor oil, which has a wide variety of uses. The seeds contain between 40% and 60% oil that is rich in triglycerides, mainly ricinolein. The seed also contains ricin, a water-soluble toxin, which is also present in lower concentrations throughout the plant.





Cahaba Lily

L. J. Davenport, Samford University

The Cahaba lily (*Hymenocallis coronaria*) is an aquatic flowering plant native to the major river systems of Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. A type of spiderlily belonging to the amaryllis family, the Cahaba lily is noted for the striking beauty of its three-inch-wide white flowers. The lily requires a very specialized habitat—swift-flowing water over rocks and lots of sun—and thus is restricted to shoal areas at or above the fall line. In Alabama, the Cahaba lily is restricted to the Black Warrior, Cahaba, Coosa, Tallapoosa, and Chattahoochee river systems. Plant bulbs and seeds spend the winter buried in the rocky riverbed. There the water's current securely wedges the seeds and bulbs into the rock crevices. Leaves begin to emerge above the water line in mid-April, following the spring floods (dates are approximately two weeks later in eastern Georgia and South Carolina). Flower stalks develop after the leaves are fully emerged, with each stalk capped by six to nine buds surrounded by protective casings called bracts. Flowering commences in mid-May, reaching its peak in late May and early June, with sporadic flowering until late June.

Pipevine Swallowtail Flowers open in the early evening at a time when they are most fragrant and full of nectar. The six petals surround a membranous corona, which connects the lower portions of the stamens. The lily's scientific name, translated as "beautiful crown-like membrane," accurately depicts these characteristics. The development of the individual flower buds on a stalk takes place in a set sequence, and a fresh flower opens each day for pollinators. Both nocturnal and diurnal pollinators have been observed visiting the flowers, notably the Plebeian Sphinx Moth (*Paratrea plebeja*) and the Pipevine Swallowtail (*Battus philenor*). Following fertilization, the ovaries gradually expand until they split, and the oblong, olive-sized green seeds complete their development outside the ovary wall. The heavy seeds bend the flower stalk down into the water, and the mature seeds drop to the stream bottom and are swept into rock crevices by the current.

Germination follows in about a week, resulting in small bulbs with strap-like leaves. Cahaba Lily Festival A number of human activities threaten the survival of the Cahaba lily, and lily populations have been completely destroyed in some areas. Historically, the major threat has come from the damming of rivers for navigation and power generation. Alabama's largest populations of Cahaba lily, however, remain in the Cahaba River, which has no high-level dams. More recently, the lily has become threatened by increasing levels of sediment from development, logging, and mining. In addition, Cahaba lily bulbs are sometimes "poached" and sold to nurseries, a practice that has decimated smaller populations. In May 1990, the town of West Blocton, in Bibb County, established the annual Cahaba Lily Festival. Activities include presentations about the lily and other local wildflowers, the crowning of the Cahaba Lily Queen, and the opportunity to view the lilies in their best-known natural habitat, the shoals of the Cahaba River. - See more at: <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-967#sthash.3yBs7Vpl.dpuf>





Chuck Browne Speaks at LCMG September Meeting

Chuck Browne, retired Lee County Extension Agent, returned to describe his recent activities.

He has enjoyed working with the AL Scenic River Trail, The Hatchet Creek and Tallapoosa River Canoeing project.

Tying into 4H, Chuck works with the Kayaking Kamp in Dadeville.



Photo by David Peterson

Of special interest to LCMG is his work with Spencer Roy on preserving the Cahaba Lilly. (see page 13)

Spencer has learned to propagate the Lilly, and helps establishing it in local streams and rivers. Although the environmental requirements are stringent, He has had success in establishing it locally.

Photo to right and below by
Jolly Roberts



Spencer shows off bulbs ready for planting



Dennis, helping with the planting



Bulb planting.



Quarterly Quote

The Anyway Affirmation

People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centered.

I will love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

I will do good anyway.

If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies.

I will succeed anyway.

The good you do will be forgotten tomorrow.

I will do good anyway.

Honesty and frankness will make you vulnerable

I will be honest and frank anyway.

People who really need help
May attack you if you help them.

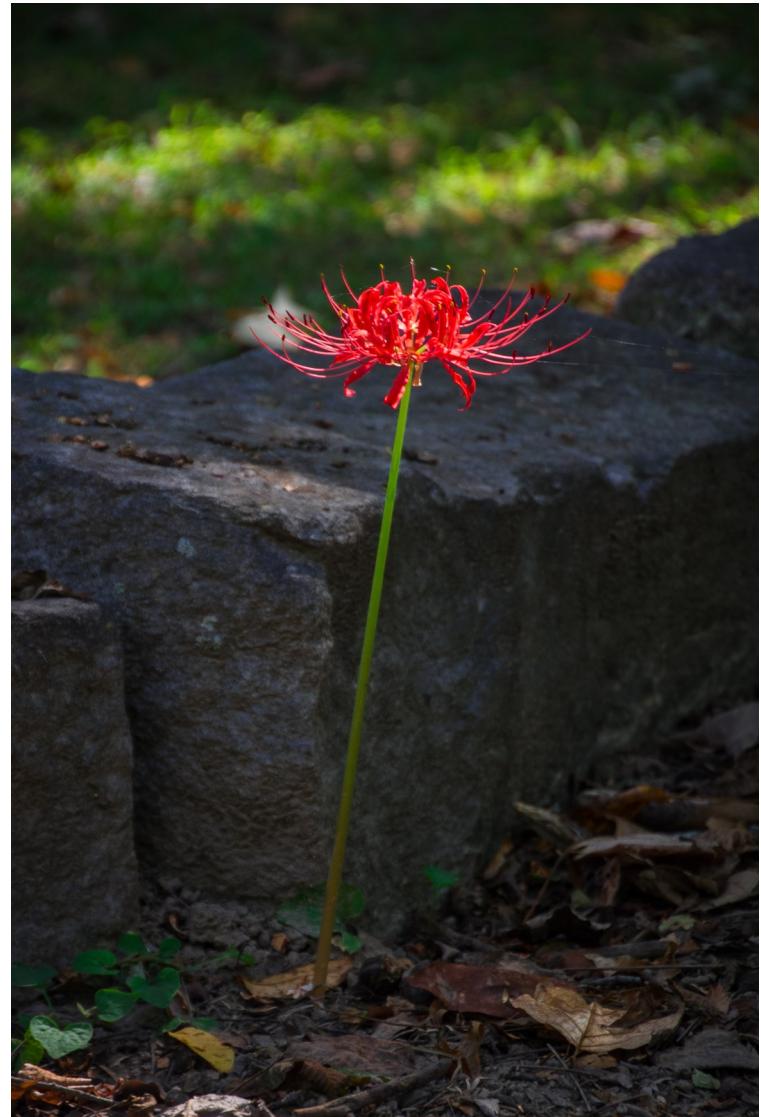
I will help them anyway.

If you give the world the best you have, you may be punished.

I will give the world the best I've got anyway.

Adapted from a sign on the wall of Shisu Bhavan, a home for abandoned babies in India established by Mother Teresa.

From "God has no Religion"



Surprise

Answer to quiz on page 2

The cashew apple

The cashew tree is a tropical evergreen tree that produces the cashew seed and the cashew apple. It can grow as high as 14 metres,

Scientific name: Anacardium occidentale

Biological classification: Species

Belongs to: Anacardium