



Leaf



Notes



The Newsletter of Lee County Master Gardeners

Presidents Message

Dear Gardening Friends,

My deepest thank you to all who have supported all our Master Gardeners efforts during the recent months. You all are so very special. Lee County Master Gardeners have had booths at the Home and Garden Show, Opelika's Garden in the Park and Auburn's City Fest; held two mulch sales; and given out educational grants to Auburn University, 4-H Camp, Loachapoka 4-H club, and to Sunny Slope, the new home of Olli. Over the recent weeks and in to the fall, MG answer gardening questions from anyone who calls the MG Help Line. Call 877-252-4769 to leave a question or talk to a Master Gardener about any gardening issue. Our demonstration gardens are beautiful. If you work at a garden, thank you, if you have not visited one of the gardens, I encourage you to stop by for a fabulous view of these gardens.

Special thank you for supporting our newest event, The Twilight Garden Tour. It was a wonderful magical evening and so very much fun to see the gardens and visit with friends and enjoy the gardens. All reports indicate this was something we will want to continue.

It has truly is joy to serve as president of such an exciting organization. Special thank you to all who give so much to allow us to serve the community.

Sincerely,
Nancy
Nancy Golson

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Quarterly Quote

The secret to excitement is discovering new paths, and having the courage to take them.

Lawren Leo

Special Show

64th Annual Fall Flower Show

Calling all Gardeners and Photographers

Yes it's early--the Alabama National Fair and Flower Show in Montgomery, Alabama aren't until October 27-November 5, 2017. **However**, this is the time to be thinking and planning what plants and flowers to have ready to enter. Spring and summer are the perfect time to take pictures for the Photography Division. This year the Photography Division will have a special Section for youth ages 12-18. Remember--- it's free to enter any Division. Contact Rose Winkler, General Flower Show Chairman, for information and forms. 334-270-0884 or rmwinkler45@yahoo.com



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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.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

The June program was Dan Ballard of the Auburn Water Board talking about "Where we get our water, and other issues", and Thomas Weintraut of the City of Auburn Planning Department discussing landscape requirements for homes.

This meeting is the first of a series of 4 programs on Natural Landscaping. Even this early in the season (and summer has not officially begun) Auburn is under a Phase I Drought Watch issued April 19, 2017. This program on June 7 was especially timely.

<http://www.auburnalabama.org/ocm/PressRelease.aspx?PRID=2037>)

Future programs in the series:

July 12 (note that this is the 2nd Wed of July!) new advances in turf grass

August 2 - trees and shrubs for residential landscaping

Sept 6 - Developing a natural landscape plan for your home

Quarterly Quiz

Can you name this flower?



Answer on page 14



Intern Program far more than a Horticulture Class

by Bill Kimber

Probably every adult who enjoys gardening began that enjoyment in childhood, whether they grew up on a farm with vast expanses of crops or in a city with a small garden spot or a patio container garden.

In my case, my mom had a green thumb and always had an array of house plants thriving, as well as a small vegetable garden and fruit trees that provided tasty and healthful foods as well as hours of sometimes tedious and sometimes back-breaking enjoyment.

My favorite chore was tilling. I loved the smell and the soft feel of the fresh-tilled soil. I was never fond of picking the rocks out, or of shelling peas.

As an adult, I have dabbled mostly in trying to keep lawns and flower beds pretty, often tilting at windmills with little actual knowledge or information on what I was doing.

It was my dream for a number of years to join the Master Gardener Program so I could learn everything I needed to know to be a self-sufficient gardener with a yard that would turn people's heads (in a good way) when they passed by.

The opportunity arose in early 2016. My night work schedule freed me up to be in class from 9 to 2 over 12 Thursdays from February to May.

It was just like a college class, taught by subject experts on everything from tree identification to growing herbs, from growing worms to propagating plants. The textbook was huge – more than 600 pages of information specific to gardening in Alabama, along with a detailed explanation of the program itself.

Weekly quizzes provided a guided tour through the book, showing us interns how to refer back later to access knowledge that may not have stuck on the first reading.

As with any college course, the biggest thing I learned was the vastness of that which I don't know. But the most important thing I learned was what the Master Gardener program is and what it isn't. It's not a horticulture class designed to teach me to be a self-sufficient gardener. The class is the first step in becoming a lifelong volunteer dedicated to disseminating research-based information to others to improve the health of flora and fauna in the state. What I found in the class was a group of enthusiastic people – most with more knowledge than me, but a few with less – who learned and grew together as we heard lectures, enjoyed lunch together, took field trips and made lasting friendships.

My volunteer work so far has included helping to maintain public gardens, selling mulch, working on the Master Gardeners Help Line, and serving as a guide during last year's Garden Tour.

My mom would've been proud that night in January at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Auburn when my classmates and I received our plaques designating us as Alabama Master Gardeners. We also received lapel pins that we can wear to show the world that we're part of this group that's dedicated to making Alabama better through knowledge and community service.



LCMG King and Queen of Mulch

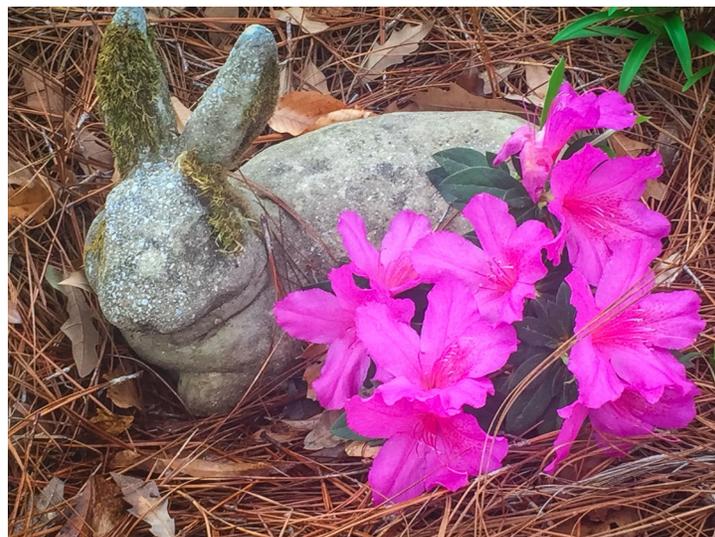
Steve and Carol Carter



Azalea Photo Contest



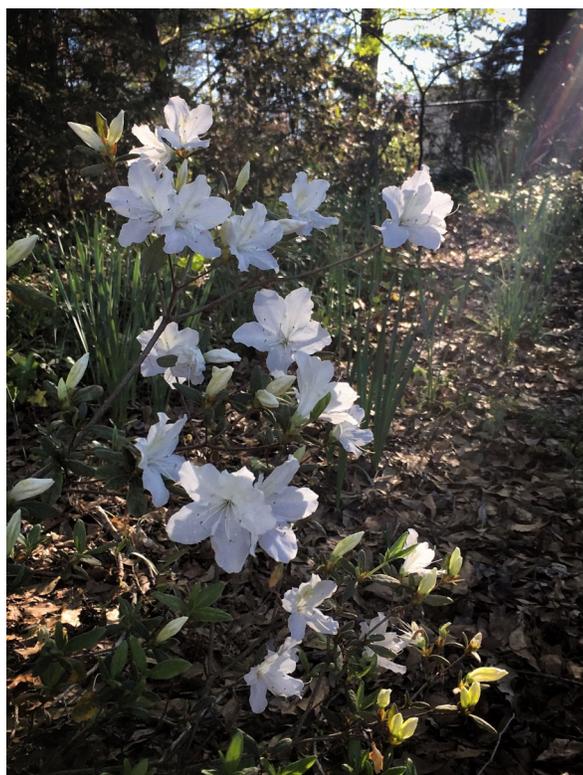
Steve Carter—Winner



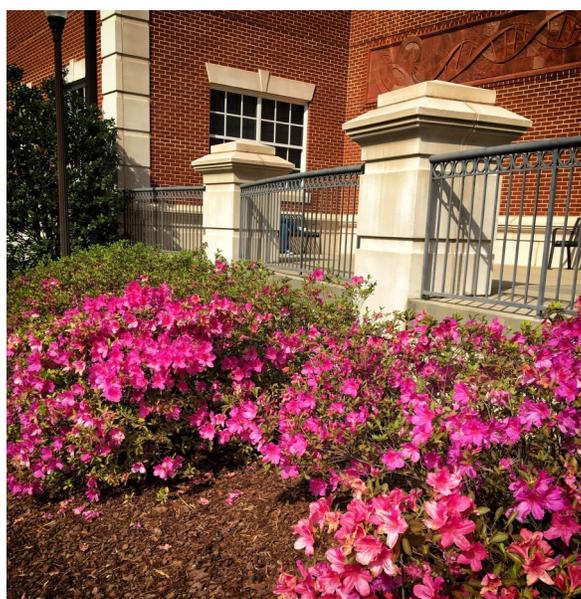
Nancy Golson—Winner



Bill Sauser



Charlot Ritenbaugh



Pat Giordano



Twilight Trilogy Tour 2017

Southern Charm Photos

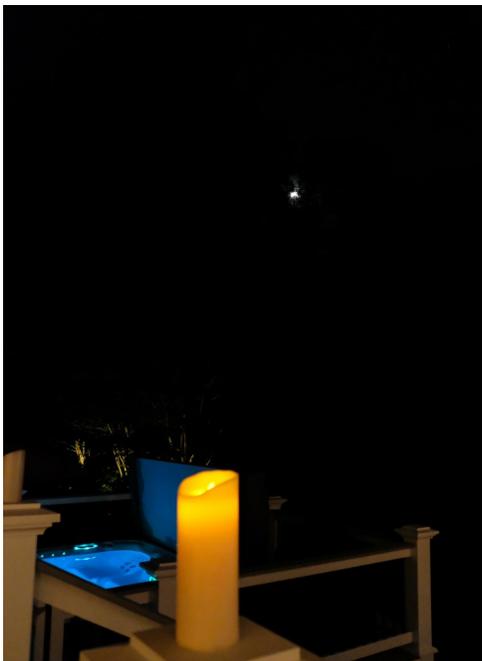
A short interval of time between sunset and moonrise, twilight is characterized by a soft glowing light from the sky when the sun is below the horizon. And LCMGA took advantage of the magical time to celebrate the Twilight Trilogy Tour on Tuesday, May 9, 2017. 141 tickets were sold, and counting the 9 tickets that were given to homeowners, we met our goal.

The weather was perfect for our first evening in the gardens. Under a cloudless sky, the warmth of the spring day lingered. As Master Gardeners, friends and family gathered in three gardens, each with a unique theme complemented by the food and beverage served.

At Chris and Stephanie Huff's garden, the Caribbean vibe was evident in the energy, food and especially the ocean blue beverage. Nancy and Jim Golson celebrated Southern Charm with mint juleps. They enhanced the garden plantings with creative lighting in all corners of their backyard. Guests were greeted with live music at Susan and Marvin Price's elegant garden where the space felt expansive as the dusk deepened.

At each home, the warmth of the hosts welcomed the guests. All guests seemed torn between lingering at a garden and heading to the next location to experience a different theme.

—Pat Giordano





Photos from Twilight Trilogy Tour 2017

Caribbean Vibe



Under the Tuscan Moon





Raw Honey VS Artificial Honey

Taken From Baba Mail

For the past 2,500 years, honey has been an essential ingredient, used by countless cultures all around the world. Perhaps one of the reasons why, even today, honey is so widely consumed, is due to the variety of ways it can be eaten: You can eat a spoonful of honey directly, or spread it on bread like a jam, you can mix it with juice or tea for a sweeter taste, or simply add it to warm water. No matter how you use it, honey has become an extremely useful and versatile ingredient. It is also becoming increasingly recognized not only for its amazing taste, but its medicinal properties. To reap its benefits, selecting the right type of honey is key.

Knowing the Difference between Pure and Artificial Honey

When purchasing honey, bear in mind that raw honey (honey in its purest form) is best. Raw honey hasn't been filtered, strained or heated above 115°F (46°C), unlike many of the commercial varieties we find lined up in our conventional grocery stores. In fact, most of the commercial kinds have been processed to the point that many (if not all) of the beneficial enzymes, nutrients and antioxidants have been completely destroyed.

But, how can you identify the difference between the two? These 4 tests will help you determine whether the honey you purchased, is pure or not:

1. The texture test

Unlike artificial honey, pure honey is solid. A spoonful will remain intact and will not drip off or spread easily.

2. The water test

Artificial honey, dissolves easily in water. Pure honey, on the other hand, will lump and settle at the bottom of a glass that is filled with water.

3. The shelf life test

Pure honey will crystallize over time, while imitation honey will continue to look like syrup, no matter how long it has been stored.

4. Light a fire

If you dip the tip of a matchstick in honey, then strike it to light, natural honey will light the match easily and the flame will burn off the honey. Artificial honey, though, will not light due to the moisture that it contains.

To get the most out of this beneficial food, purchase a raw, organic honey from a whole food shops, a farmer's market or specialized food stores.

The Key Nutrients Found in Pure Honey

Raw honey is loaded with many essential vitamins and minerals. It is packed with essential B vitamins, including B1 (Thiamine), B2 (Riboflavin), B3 (Niacin), B5 (Pantothenic Acid) and B6 (Pyridoxine), all of which function as coenzymes that help the body attain energy from food. The B-vitamins are also important for normal appetite, good vision, healthy skin and nervous system function, as well as red blood cell formation. Honey is also a good source of vitamin C, which benefits the body by holding cells together through collagen synthesis (a connective tissue that holds muscles, bones and other tissues together).

Honey also contains minerals like magnesium, potassium, calcium, sodium chlorine, copper, iron, manganese, sulphur, zinc and phosphate - most of which aid in body metabolism, water balance and bone health, among many other beneficial qualities.





10 Ways Pure Honey Can Benefit Your Health

Taken From Baba Mail

1. A great source of energy

Carbohydrates in the form of glucose and fructose supply the body and mind with energy, which can boost endurance and reduce muscle fatigue. In fact, honey is used by many athletes as an instant, yet sustained, energy source.

2. An excellent source of antioxidants

Besides containing a full spectrum of vitamins and minerals, honey also contains the flavonoid pinocembrin - which is unique to honey. This supports and promotes healthy enzyme activity.

3. Slows down the aging process

The slow depletion of enzymes in the body partly contributes to the aging process. Raw honey, however, is one of the few foods that helps slow the depletion of enzymes through the ingestion of amylase - an enzyme that breaks down sugars and carbohydrates. This has the ability to restore damaged skin, giving a softer, younger look.

4. Supports good bacteria

Honey supports Bifidobacteria, which is present in the gastrointestinal tract and is essential for efficient digestion and good health. Honey also contains pre/pro-biotics, which helps growth and activity of Bifidobacteria. Honey doesn't ferment in the stomach and can be used to counteract indigestion.

5. Treats allergies and supports a strong immune system

Honey contains antibacterial and anti-fungal properties that can treat allergies by supporting a strong immune system. Using honey often can also strengthen the white blood corpuscles, which help fight bacterial and viral diseases.

6. Promotes better blood sugar control

Experimental evidence suggests that consumption of honey may improve blood sugar control and insulin sensitivity compared to other sweeteners. The body's tolerance to honey is significantly better than its reaction to sucrose and glucose sourced from other foods.

Individuals with greater glucose intolerance (those with mild diabetes and Type 1 diabetes - a chronic condition in which the pancreas produces little or no insulin) showed significantly better tolerance to honey than sucrose.

7. Helps lower high cholesterol

In a series of experiments involving healthy subjects and those with high cholesterol, honey has been found to be the healthiest sweetener. However, the study also found that in patients with high cholesterol, artificial honey increased LDL (bad) cholesterol, while pure, natural honey decreased total cholesterol by 8% and LDL cholesterol by 11%.

8. Helps suppress a cough

In children and teens aged between 2 and 18, honey has been found to be more effective than cough suppressant *dextromethorphan*. Buckwheat honey, has been shown to be an especially successful cough medicine.

9. A beneficial wound healer

Raw honey applied topically to the skin, has been revealed to contain a number of wound healing benefits. Because honey is composed mainly of glucose and fructose (two sugars that strongly attract water), honey absorbs water in the wound and dries it out so that the growth of bacteria and fungi is inhibited. Studies have also discovered that Manuka honey decreases the surface pH level of wounds so that germs can no longer survive and bacteria is kept out.

10. Potentially prevents low white blood cell count

Honey may be a promising and inexpensive way to prevent low white blood cell count caused by chemotherapy. In a small study, 40% of cancer patients who were known to be at risk of neutropenia (very low blood count) had no further episodes of the condition after taking 2 teaspoons of therapeutic honey each day during chemotherapy.



10 Facts to Know About Dogwood Trees

Posted on April 14, 2017 by Shane Harris Alabama Extension

Loved for early spring blooms, dogwood trees are features in many Alabama landscapes and celebrated in festivals throughout the South. The white flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), plentiful across Alabama, is an ornamental deciduous tree native to the eastern half of the United States.

10 Dogwood Facts to Know

1. Dogwood trees sport white or pink flowers. However, the true petals are not the four showy blossoms. The tightly packed cluster in the center form the real blooms. What appears to be petals are actually bracts, which is a type of leaf.

2. Flower color of the native dogwood is a creamy white. A naturally occurring variety of the native dogwood, *Cornus florida rubra*, has pink blooms. Many cultivated varieties are available in nurseries and landscape centers. Dogwood trees often appear in brilliant shades ranging from soft pink to deeper cherry reds. As a result, these showy bracts can attract pollinating insects to the flowers. 1. Dogwood trees sport white or pink flowers. However, the true petals are not the four showy blossoms. The tightly packed cluster in the center form the real blooms. What appears to be petals are actually bracts, which is a type of leaf.

3. In addition, there are 17 species of dogwood native to North America. Gardeners are most familiar with the flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*). According to Kerry Smith, Master Gardener program coordinator for [Alabama Extension](#), another common species is the Kousa Dogwood (*Cornus kousa*), or Chinese Dogwood. Kousa thrives in either full sun or shade and is much tougher than the flowering dogwood.

4. Many towns enjoy dogwood trees so much, they host annual parades or dogwood tours once the trees open their blooms in the early spring. North Carolina, Texas and Atlanta each host popular Dogwood Festivals each year. Vestavia Hills celebrates Alabama's oldest Dogwood Festival and Trail.

5.. Dogwood trees are often a preferred choice for planting because they are low maintenance.

Depending on the species planted, you might have a short, stout bush or a 25-foot tall tree. If carefully treated, a mature dogwood tree species may reach up to 30 feet in height as a result.

6. Since dogwoods grow in nature as understory trees, they prefer afternoon shade to shield them from blazing sunlight. According to [Alabama Extension](#) regional agent Sallie Lee, dogwoods are pretty versatile as a small tree. "It can be planted where larger-maturing trees would be a nuisance or a hazard," said Lee. However, dogwoods still need room to grow. Lee advises planting dogwood trees at least 25 feet from structures to give the roots plenty of room to grow.

7. In the Southeast, the dogwood typically begins blooming in early March in the southern portion of Alabama and two to three weeks later in northern areas of the state. The bloom duration can last from two to four weeks.

8. Dogwood branches droop as the tree grows, and may need pruning to clear pedestrian or vehicle traffic. Pruning dogwoods can help shape them and improve their health. Prune if needed anytime after blooming. [Alabama Extension](#) regional Agent Mike McQueen said "since dogwoods bloom in early spring before May, wait until after they bloom to prune." 7. In the Southeast, the dogwood typically begins blooming in early March in the southern portion of Alabama and two to three weeks later in northern areas of the state. The bloom duration can last from two to four weeks.

9. Dogwoods have been used medicinally for generations. Since the bark is a rich source of bitter-tasting tannins, dogwood leaves often treated pain, fevers, backaches, dizziness, or weakness. According to McQueen, "dogwood bark was one of many barks used as a fever medicine before quinine came into general use." Tea made from the bark was used to treat pain or fever.

10. Blooming by Easter, the tree and its flowers have inspired legends of their part in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Legend says that the bracts of the dogwood are set in the shape of a cross and bear nail marks of the Crucifixion, while the red leaves in autumn point to Jesus's blood on Calvary.



Avoiding the Garden Itch

By Mallory Kelley
Regional Extension Agent
Home Grounds, Gardens, Home Pests

Beware of those poisonous vines while working in the yard this summer. Each year many Alabamians come in contact with poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac while in the outdoors, but it is not only summer when you have to be careful so always be on the lookout. Even in the winter when the vines look brown and dead they still contain oils that will cause allergic reactions. These plants can cause a great deal of discomfort, itching and pain from contact on the skin and even greater if the oils get in your lungs or eyes so never burn these vines as the oils can get in the air and be inhaled.

All three of these poisonous plants are easily found throughout the Southeast, but they look very similar in appearance and are often confused with each other and other plants such as Virginia creeper, box elder or fragrant sumac, all of which are nonpoisonous.

Poison ivy is often found climbing high on trees, walls or fences or trailing on the ground. This woody vine has hairy looking aerial roots and can grow to more than 10 feet tall, says John Everest, Extension Weed Scientist of Auburn University. All parts of the plant are poisonous and poison ivy always has three leaflets. Flowers and fruit form in clusters on slender stems attached to the leaf limbs. Poison ivy has toxic oil in the stems and leaves that many people are highly allergic to and develop a rash. The rash usually starts with itchiness and swelling, followed by a reddish inflammation of tiny pimples. The rash can vary in severity from person to person and can begin as early as an hour after contact or up to five days after contact. The oil can even be transmitted from a pet's fur or from smoke of burning poison ivy.

Poison oak is very similar to poison ivy, but it does not climb. Its leaves are thicker, are a dull green and are hairy on both sides of the leaves. Poison oak is found in dry, sunny sites in woodlands, thickets and old fields.

Poison sumac is a shrub and can grow to 25 feet tall. Leaves are 7 to 15 inches long and have 7 to 15 leaflets to a central stem, with one leaflet at the end of the stem. It is found mostly in swamps or moist bottomlands. Poison sumac also has ivory or white berries that form in clusters. Same as the poison ivy, never burn these plants and poison oak and poison sumac also have toxic oils that can cause an allergic rash on the skin.

All of these irritating plants range in appearance as leaf shapes will vary even on the same plant and they will also vary in form from rough, woody vines to erect woody shrubs or trailing shrubs that run on the ground. Never base your identification on one or two leaves, but look at the overall plant and many leaves and compare size and shapes to determine the plants identify and if ever in doubt, leave it alone.

May and June are the best times to apply control measures to these poison plants, but it can be done any time of the year. Spraying the foliage with products that are listed with the active ingredient: glyphosate is recommended. To kill poison ivy on trees, cut the vine right above the ground, then treat any leaves coming from the vine on the ground with glyphosate. More than one application may be necessary, but eventually this herbicide will kill the roots and prevent sprouting. Always follow directions on the label when using this herbicide. Glyphosate will kill almost any plant when it comes in contact with the green plant tissue and does not remain active in the soil.

To prevent these plants from poisoning your summer, become familiar with how the plants look and avoid them. If you come in contact with one of the plants, wash your skin with strong soap and hot water immediately, and remove and wash all clothes, including shoes and socks in a strong detergent and warm or hot water. Also, keep your hands away from your eyes, mouth and face.

If you develop a rash, don't scratch it. You can apply calamine lotion, zinc oxide ointment or a paste made with baking soda and water to the rash. If these measures don't work, call your doctor.

Some people have severe allergic reactions to these plants and can have swelling in the throat, breathing problems, weakness, dizziness and bluish lips. Some people even fall into unconsciousness. If any of these reactions occur, seek emergency medical care.

SOURCE: Dr. John Everest, Extension Weed Scientist, Alabama Cooperative Extension System,

(See leaf drawings of poison oak, sumac and ivy on page 12)



Pruning Perennial Salvias

Taken from Joy US garden

Salvias are popular all the world over. I've seen them growing in England, the Canary Islands, Mexico and in many different places here in the US. These plants are so versatile because they can comfortably fit into many styles of gardens from old fashioned cottage right up to modern simplistic. They grow well here in California where our Mediterranean climate suits them to a tee and they are loved because they have a long bloom time. Their non thirsty ways just plain make sense given our lack of rainfall for the last 3 years.

I was a professional gardener in the San Francisco Bay Area for over 15 years. This is where I first learned all about perennial salvias. The nursery where I worked in Berkeley sold many different species and varieties of them. This post is all about sharing what I know about pruning the two most popular types of perennial salvias which you probably have in your own garden. *Salvia officinalis* (lavender flower) or Culinary sage which is perennial here in Santa Barbara but an annual in colder climates. It is a semi-shrubby (or shrublet if you prefer to call it that), woody salvia which falls into the pruning category 1. It's smaller than the greggi below so I would only cut it back by 6-8" after flowering. Then, you can dry the leaves to use for cooking.

I'm going to talk about pruning them here in coastal California. You can tweak the process for your climate zone if they're perennials where you live. The first type are the herbaceous salvias with woody stems. These are the shrubby salvias. A few which fall into this category that you may know are *Salvia greggii* (there are so many of these!), *S. chamaedryoides*, *S. coccinea* and *S. microphylla*. There are quite a few microphyllas too ". These you prune back after flowering but not all the way.

Below (next page) you see *Salvia greggii* which is a common landscape plant. It has woody stems & also falls in the 1st pruning category. I would take it down by at least a foot after each flowering cycle.

Take them back to at least where the first set of foliage starts on the flower stem – this could be a pinch or a You can take them down further if you'd like. I learned the hard way on an established plant to not cut it down to 3". It never fully came back and out it came.

With these types of salvias I thin out what I want in the middle and then shape the plant so it's pleasing to the eye. They usually go through 3 bloom cycles through out the year here. We have a long growing season. I would give them a mild pruning in the Fall and then a more intense one in the late Winter or early Spring if need be. There's the whole Fall pruning versus Spring pruning debate. I personally like to leave plants with a little more substance over the Winter and then do the early Spring haircut and shaping.

Be sure to take out any growth which has died over the winter. If you don't give these salvias some type of pruning they will get extremely woody and won't repeat bloom like you want them to. In my years working with salvias I found that some needed to be replaced before or around the 5 year mark. This is especially true with this type. Perennials don't live forever after all. They tend to get straggly over time. No worries though because they grow fast especially if you purchase a 1 gallon plant.

Pictured on the next page is *Salvia leucantha* or Mexican Bush Sage. They're deciduous salvias with soft stems & fall into the 2nd pruning category. Once the stems have flowered & died off, cut them down to the ground.



Pruning Perennial Salvias

Continued

Second up are the deciduous herbaceous salvias. The old growth eventually dies out and the fresh new growth emerges from the base of the base. They have softer stems which either die off and/or freeze. Plants that fall into this category are *Salvia elegans*, *S. guaranitica*, *s. leucantha*, *s. waverley* and *s. patens*. These salvias are very simple to prune.

When it is through flowering, simply cut those stems all the way down to the ground. It needs to be done once or twice a year. They will still flower if you don't but you'll get more blooms and the plant will look 100% better if you do. Here in Santa Barbara the leucanthas and the Waverleys get huge. Many of them are not cut back leaving a tangle of dead twisted stems and they look like a ratty mess. Best to give them the shearing back they need. You'll see the soft new growth appearing at the base. Another thing to know is that these salvias tend to spread as they grow so you might have to do a bit of dividing.

Salvia spathacea or Hummingbird sage is also a deciduous perennial, pruning category 2. In the left foreground is the new growth. Cut the flower stalks (the old growth) in the back all the way down to the ground after they're completely spent.

It's best to know which kind of salvia you have before springing into action with the pruners. Both of these types of salvias really benefit from a good haircut. You'll get much better bloom and shape if you do so. No ratty looking plants in my garden please! Do you have a favorite salvia?



Salvia Leucantha



Salvia Greggii

Photo by SttanShebs



A Conversation with St. Francis

Submitted by Margaret Hollar

GOD to ST. FRANCIS:

Frank, You know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on the planet? What happened to the dandelions, violets, milkweeds and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But, all I see are these green rectangles.

ST. FRANCIS:

It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers 'weeds' and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

GOD:

Grass? But, it's so boring It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees, only grubs and sod worms. It's sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

ST. FRANCIS:

Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

GOD:

The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy.

ST. FRANCIS:

Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it, sometimes twice a week.

GOD:

They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?

ST. FRANCIS:

Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

GOD:

They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

ST. FRANCIS:

No, Sir, just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

GOD:

Now, let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so it will grow. And, when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

ST. FRANCIS:

Yes, Sir.

GOD:

These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

ST. FRANCIS:

You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it, so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

GOD:

What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn, they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life.



A Conversation with St. Francis

(Continued)

ST. FRANCIS:

You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

GOD:

No!?! What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

ST. FRANCIS:

After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

GOD:

And where do they get this mulch?

ST. FRANCIS:

They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

GOD:

Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

ST. CATHERINE:

'Dumb and Dumber', Lord. It's a story about...

GOD:

Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.

Answer to Quiz on Page 2:

Palmer's penstemon (*Penstemon palmeri*)

PEN-steh-mon PALM-er-eye

Genus: **Penstemon**

A native of the Southwest, Palmer's penstemon sports sharp, prickly, gray leaves and thrives in the harsh conditions. Snapdragon-like pale pink flowers boom in late spring or early summer, and their sweet-honey scent attracts bumblebees. Toothed, sage green leaves skirt the upright stems for the rest of the gardening season. This perennial wildflower is one of the largest penstemons. It looks good in the back of a border or as a focal point, perhaps near a path where its fragrance can be enjoyed or in an informal grouping with other native penstemons and grasses, or with other plants that have similar maintenance and water requirements. -Katie Nicolich, *Plants to know and grow*, *Fine Gardening* issue #120



Presentation of landscaping funds for OLLI's new home "Sunny Slope"

Receiving the check is Linda Shook-
OLLI at Auburn Director

Pictured (left to right) are Susan Price, Linda Shook and Nancy Golson