



2016 President's Message

Dear Master Gardeners,

It is with pride, appreciation and excitement that I write this first letter as president of Lee County Master Gardeners. Pride comes from the many comments of support I have received from you. Thank you so for your encouragement.

Appreciation is for all that Dennis has done during his six years as president. He has moved us to a well-organized and financially sound association. When Dennis started as president we had a negative financial balance and now we operate with a \$28,000 budget this year to assist our community with horticulture education and beautification. We have become a 501-C3 organization. Dennis established our by-laws and a group of officers to manage the work. Dennis personally conducts the native plant sale we have every spring and does home visits at community request to help homeowners know what to do with their gardens. Dennis certainly is a "Master" Master Gardener. Thank You Dennis! Dennis will continue to represent us on native plant education and serve as the alternate representative to the state organization.

Excitement is for the wonderful group of officers we have this year and the plans we have for the upcoming years. We will continue to emphasize our demonstration gardens, showcase the Garden Tour and the many projects we presently have, and continue our educational programs and field trips. Our specific goals for the next two years are:

- Increase horticulture outreach in the community.
- Increase membership participation in meetings and projects.
- Increase community awareness of the work of Master Gardeners.

Over the next few months you will be hearing and seeing some of the things the board has planned to achieve these goals.

To support these goals, one new feature of Leaf Notes will be a "Getting to Know You" article. Learn some facts about our fellow MG and share when it is your time. I hope you will check out this article each quarter

I look forward to working with each of you and encourage your involvement. Working together we can help others see the beauty in gardening.

Happy Gardening,
 Nancy Golson
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Rose at Garden Tour Home

Winter 2016

Lee County Master Gardeners Assn
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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.

Susan Price - Wanted

I wanted to remind you all that I'm looking for nominations for "the award of the month". It could be something as amazing as finding a new recipe for zucchini, as sweet as naming a person who has shown someone random kindness, to most hours in some area like gardens, Help Line or community outreach. Thank you for your suggestions.

Susan prsm@aol.com (701-725-0189)

Quarterly Quiz

Name this flowering plant

(Answer on page 15)





Meet your 2016 Board

Nancy Golson—President

Hi, Nancy Golson, MG class of 2010 here. I am an educator. I presently provide training and support to school districts on school improvement and accreditation through my company Red Crayon Associates. I have served as curriculum director, special education director, and principal at Dean Road Elementary in Auburn. Jim and I moved from Charlotte North Carolina where I was a teacher, college professor, curriculum director and principal in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Both Jim and I grew up in Alabama and met when we were students here and welcomed the chance to return. Jim and I are both retired from full time work enjoy travelling. We have two wonderful sons with fabulous wives who have given us five beautiful granddaughters. So one of the places we travel is to San Francisco where they all live.

My mom was an avid gardener who taught me the beauty of hard work in the garden. She frequently won garden of the month in Talladega where she lives for so long. When we moved to Auburn in 1998 I wanted to take the Master Garden course, but working got in the way so when I retired full time work, I immediately called Chuck to see when the next course would be offered.



Susan Price—Vice President

Career: clinical social worker, general contractor building both houses and an office complex, owned a gift shop specializing in collectables.

Family: celebrated 50 years of marriage to my beloved husband Marv last July. Son Seth, his wife and their two children live in Boise. Daughter Becky, her husband and her two girls and twin boys are here in Auburn. They are the reason that after living in Virginia for 42 years we moved here.

Interests: community involvement. Member of The Garden Club of Virginia for many years. Chairman of garden tour, major state wide effort to fund restoration and preservation of historic homes and gardens. Board member of Local Habitat for Humanity. Will be receiving AAHA, 2015 Affiliate Leader of the Year, Auburn/Opelika from the Alabama Habitat for Housing Assn. this month. Have done years of musical theatre including the role of Dolly in Hello Dolly, and served as a volunteer hospital Chaplain for many years. Joined LCMG because Chuck Brown assured me there would be a class in flower arranging. Haven't seen many flowers but I have met some of the most wonderful, talented, gracious people on the face of the planet!

Jubilate! Susan





Garden Tour Update

Scenes from Tour Gardens

Greetings from the Tour Committee,

At the meetings and through Leaf Notes you have heard us report the great plans for the spring tour. Our plan is to raise about \$15,000 for Master Gardeners to use for our demonstration gardens, educational projects, trees for the schools, and scholarships to Auburn University and to 4-H Camp. Without the funds from the Garden Tour many of these projects would not be possible.

- We have identified the gardens.
- Jim and his committee are working to get sponsors.
- Pat and her committee are working to have the gift certificates and tickets to sell.
- Charlot, Dianne and their committee are working for publicity.
- Beth and the coordinators are planning the tours of each of the gardens.
- Chicken-Salad-Chick will be providing a meal for the ticket holders.

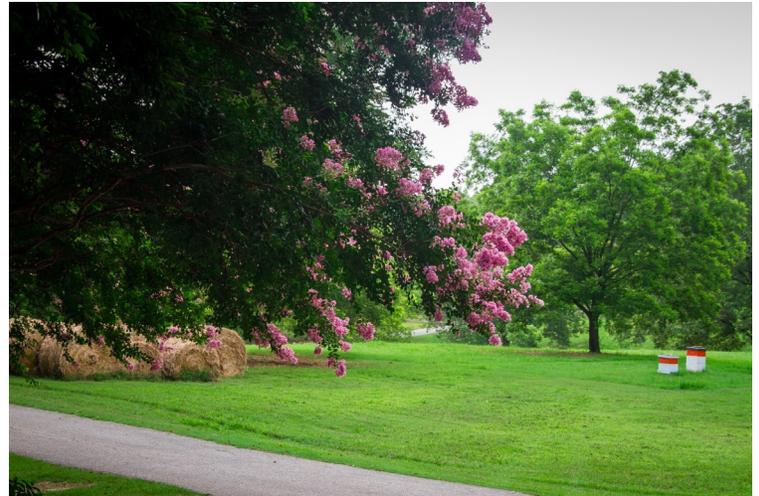
NOW is time for every Master Gardener and Friend to help. We must sell Gift Certificates now and tickets in the spring. Dennis and the board have asked Each of You to purchase or sell at least 5 Gift Certificates now or 5 tickets in the spring. That is a total of \$125 of sales for each Master Gardener to support our planned budget.

Gift Certificates are available through our webpage and by contacting Pat Giordano [334-329-7099](tel:334-329-7099), Susan Price [703-725-0189](tel:703-725-0189), or Nancy Golson [334-728-5064](tel:334-728-5064).

This is a project for all Master Gardeners and Friends. We are counting on your support! Let us know how many Gift Certificates you plan to purchase or sell.

Nancy and Susan

Co-chairs for 2016 Garden Tour



Photos by David Peterson



Dennis Pinkard President LCMG 2010—2015



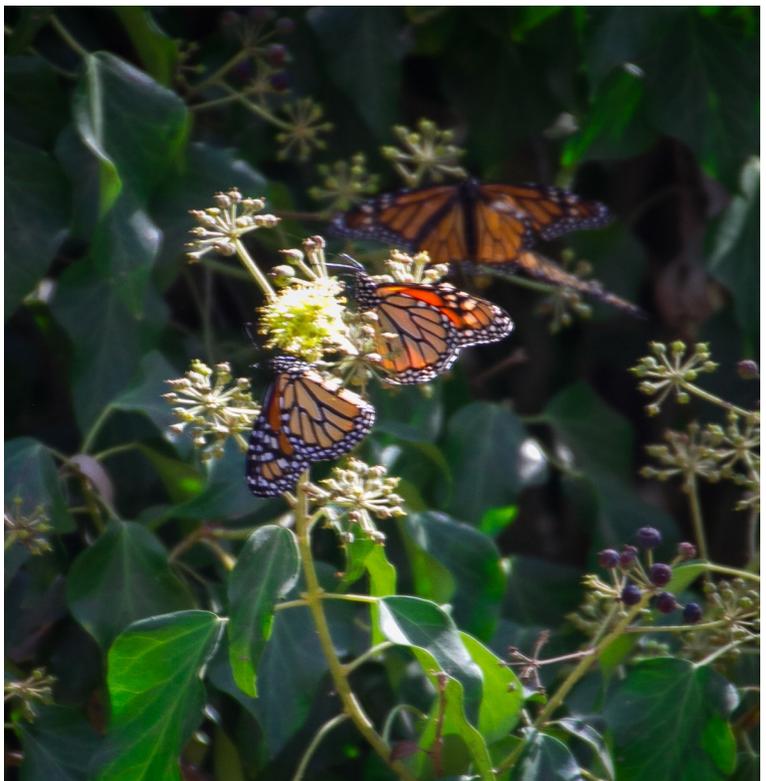
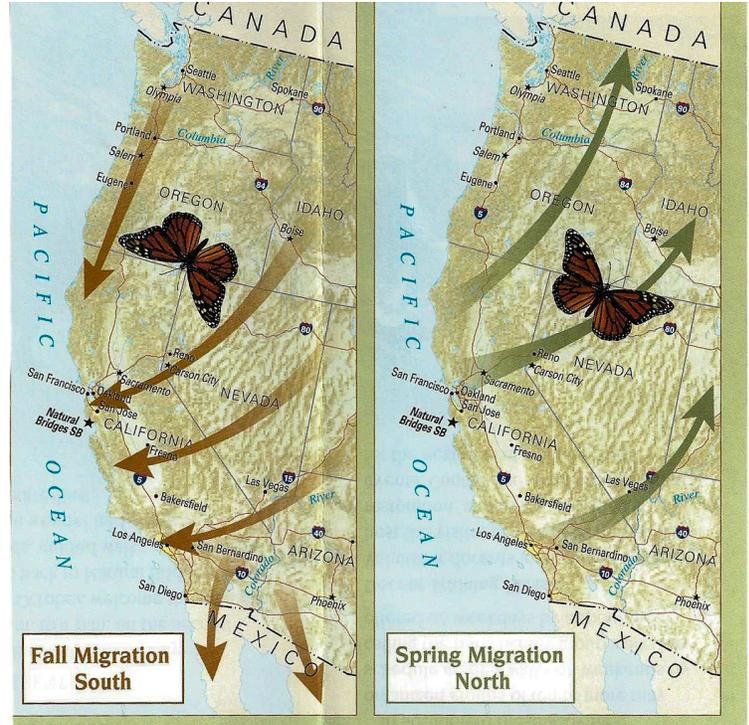


Monarch Butterfly Natural Preserve Santa Cruz, CA

Natural Bridges is home to one of the largest monarch butterfly over-wintering sites in California. Each fall, the migratory butterflies arrive on the coast from across the western United States to seek sanctuary from the winter's cold. They roost in the monarch preserve from October to mid-February, with the greatest numbers from November to mid-December

The monarchs cluster in rings of trees, intertwining their legs to avoid being dislodged from their companions by the wind and rain. With their tan undersides, the clusters resemble clumps of dead leaves. When the air temperature rises above 55 degrees, the butterflies burst from their clusters, floating through the trees and into the surrounding area in search of flower nectar and dew.

In January and February, the monarchs begin a daring 1,500 mile migration—a journey that spans five generations—as they spread out across the Western United States. Monarchs lay their eggs on milkweed plants inland—from the Bay Area to the eastern Sierra Nevada and the Rocky Mountain foothills. Each generation hatches and travels further inland, where another generation fans out even further. The final generation returns to California, where their great-great grandparents originated. Monarch lifespans vary from two weeks to nine months. Those that migrate to the coast in autumn live longer; the last generation at Natural Bridges live as long as nine months and begin the cycle once more.





In Loving Memory of Kelly Haynes MG

Lunches with Kelly

How to Grow a Friendship by Charlot Ritenbaugh

I can't begin to calculate the number of lunches Kelly and I shared in the past 25 years. We would meet at various venues, in and out in 45 minutes when we were working, lingering at the table 90 minutes or more after retirement. We shared with abandon, knowing our stories would always remain confidential.

You know that Kelly was a very special person. Here is my short list of the qualities Kelly perfected to be a great friend and a successful gardener.

1. Do It

Kelly planted a lot of things, dozens of daylilies, lilies, Hosta, Texas stars, containers of succulents, numerous hydrangeas of every species, Encore azaleas, Japanese maples, dogwood trees, iris, Mondo grass. Everything was planted in large sweeping beds. Inside her home there were African violets and orchids in bloom, and flats of cacti growing from seed.

With people Kelly was the friendly smile, introducing herself to a newcomer, and pursuing a conversation. Kelly took the initiative to visit my mother in assisted living whenever I did some traveling.

2. Do it well

Kelly planted, weeded, fertilized, applied weed pre-emergent, watered, mulched, pruned and tended her garden plantings with the utmost care.

As our LCMGA secretary she took on a tough job, made it her own, raised the position to a new level, and carried out all of the duties faithfully for many years.

3. Be creative

Kelly's garden design is full of color, plants for every season, plants with variations in texture, plants placed in interesting groupings, plantings spread among her garden in repetition, all accented with unique garden art.

Kelly was so supportive of all the LCMGA projects. She'll always be remembered for her smart style and welcoming personality at Garden in the Park and the Garden Tours, greeting new MG interns, and serving at Soup Bowls for Hunger.

4. Be kind

Long before Kelly became a Master Gardener she was a gardener. We always talked about growing things; she had a beautiful perennial bed beside her driveway when our sons were young and sharing play dates on weekends. In 2010, I had dying centipede grass and overgrown hollies. She was so kind to encourage me to take the MG class.

All of Kelly's life she championed those without the same opportunities for success. Kelly's caring heart was the thing that captured all of us who met her.

Cheers my dear friend. Thanks for listening, Charlot





Scenes from Christmas Party



Photos by David Peterson



The Chuck Browne Award Presentation

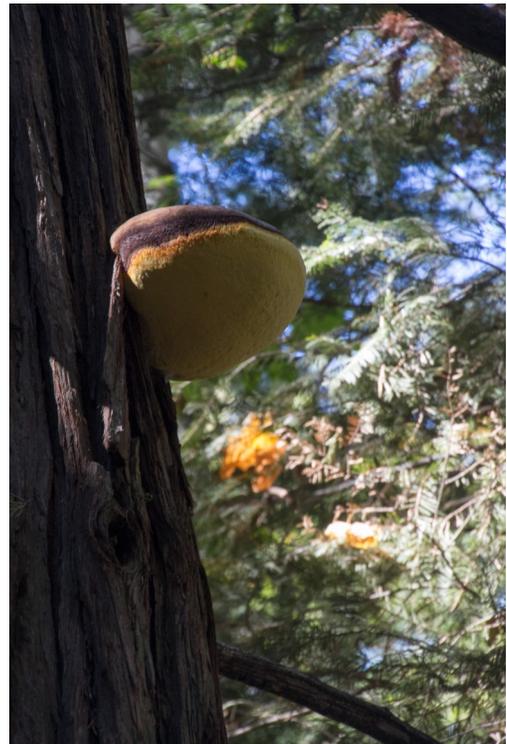
Quarterly Quote



Let go of certainty. The opposite isn't uncertainty. Its openness, curiosity, and a willingness to embrace paradox, rather than choose up sides. The ultimate challenge is to accept ourselves exactly as we are, but never stop trying to learn and grow.

Tony Schwartz

4H History Seekers and club President Elizabeth Jordan receive The Chuck Browne Award check from Lee County Master Gardener President Dennis Pinkard.



Natures hamburger

Photo by David Peterson



4 H History Seekers Receive Chuck Browne Award

Our 4H History Seekers club began meeting at Pioneer Park in Loachapoka 3 years ago. We are supported by the Lee County Historical Society, in that they provide for us a place to meet and an extensive group of members that regularly contribute to our meetings. Since our beginning, we have met on the first Saturday of every month.

Typically, we have a guest speaker that comes and talks to us about various subjects of club membership interest, and then these subjects become our meeting topics. We try to study these topics in a way that relates current concepts to a historical past. We have about 30 club members ranging in age, primarily from fourth to eighth grade, and about as many parents that attend each meeting.

Many of our past and ongoing projects involve "gardening". Two of the current 4H History Seekers club advisors are Lee County Master Gardeners (Dr. Charles Mitchell and Betsy Jordan), and the remaining club advisors are ones with strong gardening interests and backgrounds. In addition, retired Lee County Extension Director Chuck Browne continues to serve as an advisor to our 4H History Seekers club. Most of us initially met while joined in a common goal through Richland Elementary School's Junior Master Gardener 4H program or share a past in 4H groups that have utilized gardening as a learning opportunity. So, to say the 4H History Seekers share common interests in the "teachable lessons of a garden" would be an understatement.

Some of the gardening projects that we have done in the past include: the "King Slaw" Cabbage Competition, the George Washington Carver Commemorative Greens Bed, the Plant Propagation Workshop, and the Multi-varietal Garlic and Sweet Potato Beds at Pioneer Park. Other garden affiliated projects that we have had include our participation in the national Cooperative Extension sponsored "Chick Chain" program, and beekeeping. For the Chick Chain project we researched and constructed a chicken coop and pen, raised 2-3 day old chicks to adulthood, participated in a countywide chicken show, and retained heirloom breeds for a permanent exhibit at Pioneer Park. Our members continue to provide ongoing care of the flock by taking turns caring for the chickens, feeding them, attending to their health needs, collecting eggs, etc. We also established an active teaching beehive at Pioneer Park following our study of bees as important pollinators. Our colony is still young and developing, but soon we hope to have both eggs AND honey to enjoy at Pioneer Park!

Last year our club was the fortunate recipient of The Lee County Master Gardener Chuck Browne Award. With the award money we received, we bought sweet potato slips of 12 different heirloom and improved varieties from George's Plant Farm (Vinson and Donna Dellinger, 1410 Public Wells Road, Martin, TN 38237, (731)587-9477, www.tatorman.com). Many other nurseries market heirloom sweet potato slips (ie www.sandhillpreservation.com, www.southernexposure.com, etc) but Donna at George's Plant Farm was able and willing to accommodate our May 4H meeting planting schedule. Our slips arrived in excellent shape and were planted in The Crops Garden at Pioneer Park.

This year our sweet potatoes seemed to grow much better than they did the previous year. Dr. Charles attributed the improvement to the installed irrigation and our better soil fertility. We harvested our sweet potato crop in October. Part of the crop was harvested at our October 4H meeting, while the remainder of the crop was harvested under the watchful eye of Ms. Dani Carroll as a community educational experience during Pioneer Day at Loachapoka. Our sweet potato crop and its harvest ended up seeing a lot of folks! Dr. Charles was instrumental in compiling our final crop performance data, and for those that are interested, we have that data available. After several weeks of curing, our sweet potatoes were ready for market and to eat!

David and Christin Bancroft of The Acre restaurant (210 East Glenn Avenue, Auburn, AL 36830, (334)246-3763) offered assistance in the marketing of our sweet potato crop by hosting a sweet potato farmer's market. This was a great way to finalize our 2015 sweet potato project. It provided us an opportunity to participate in community education, as well as, an opportunity for us to market our crop to generate money for The Community Market. The Bancrofts featured The 4H History Seekers on their Facebook page, provided advertisement of the sale and personally purchased sweet potatoes for use in their restaurant. The farmer's market at The Acre allowed us a convenient, visible location to sell our potatoes and a chance to educate the public on ALL things sweet potato!



4 H History Seekers Receive Chuck Browne Award - Continued

On the day of the farmer's market, each club member had an assignment to research and a station to attend. Most club members were dressed in our Pioneer Park period attire. Some club members were responsible for weighing the potatoes; others responsible for calculating the purchase price based on the weight of the potatoes. Other 4H members were prepared to provide information on the various varieties, or to share information on sweet potato propagation, sweet potato nutrition, and sweet potato recipes. Club members were available to field planting, growing and harvesting questions. Ms. Elsie Lott, The Community Market Coordinator, was also on hand during the farmers market to provide additional information to shoppers about The Community Market.

Information on three different ways to grow sweet potatoes was also shared. After we had planted our slips at Pioneer Park in May, there were some left over. These slips were divided between The Louise Kreher Forrest Ecology Preserve and Nature Center (Lee County Master Gardener Ms. Margaret Holler) and Richland Elementary School (4H Faculty Advisor Ms. Jennifer Mesman). These slips were grown either in containers or raised beds. Ms. Margaret and Ms. Jennifer provided posters that showed how sweet potatoes could be grown in containers and raised beds, as well as in conventional in-ground gardens. Growing an edible crop in a smaller space, such as a container, seemed to be of considerable interest to many who shopped at the farmers market.

And, during the farmer's market, who should show up, but Lee County Master Gardener President Dennis Pinkard ... bearing gifts! He arrived to support our project and purchase sweet potatoes, but also to announce and deliver this year's installment of The Lee County Master Gardener Chuck Browne Award. All of the 4H History Seeker club members and their parents were thrilled!

Our sale was a huge success in so many ways! We enjoyed having the opportunity to share what we had learned about sweet potatoes with the public. Plus, we earned \$323.39 from the sale of the sweet potatoes, and collected an additional \$226.61 in donations without potato purchases from those wishing to support The Community Market. So, on December 23, the 4H History Seekers were able to present to Ms. Elsie at The Community Market a total of \$550.00 as our "Spirit of the Season" donation.

So, what is next for the 4H History Seekers? This coming May 14th and 15th, The Lee County Master Gardeners Tour of Gardens is coming to Pioneer Park. 4H History Seekers will be there to demonstrate the proper planting of several different varieties of heirloom sweet potatoes. At that time, we anticipate harvest of our multi-varietal garlic crop. Our garlic was planted this past October with the intent to share information about its planting, growing and harvesting with garden tour participants. We may also have some heirloom garden seedlings available to share. 4H History Seekers will also be on-hand to introduce visitors to our Pioneer Park chicken flock and bee hive residents. So, here's hoping to see all you gardeners at Pioneer Park this coming May for The Lee County Master Gardeners Tour of Gardens!

Article written by 4H History Seekers Grace Cheng and Halia Lehr



Great Results of their Hard Work!!!



4 H History Seekers Sweet Potato Growing Project



Photo taken by a 4H member

Answer to quiz on page 2

A small red morning glory, scarlet creeper, *Ipomoea coccinea*. It's relative is the Scarlet Cypress vine, *I. quamoclit*, which has narrowly divided leaves



J.O.'s Stump

By Angie Conway

We had been enjoying the lovely roots of a downed tree on our neighbors yard, the John Burgass property.

Thinking vines, etc. would look interesting on the roots, we learned that the roots had an 8 foot cedar trunk! The roots provided life for the cedar tree and now (after JO replanted the stump) they provide life for our Tillandsias (plants that need no soil). The moss and air plants are unique to our garden.

J.O. says he is not going to plant anymore stumps! This was his first and last!



J.O.'s Stump



Tillandsias close up on
J.O.'s Stump

Outdoor Pot Hanging Idea

In J.O.'s Garden





Demystifying Tillandsias

No wonder potential customers have questions when they meet their first air plant-s-growing a plant that needs no soil and isn't watered conventionally can be a conundrum. Tillandsia collectors Hugh 50110 and Allan Smesaert, owners of the Acorn Markets garden business in Kankakee, Illinois, have fielded many queries about these unconventional plants.

If an air plant grows without soil, how do you water it?

It's easy. Simply immerse the plant in a bucket of water for three seconds, swish it around lightly, and then let it drain. Turning the plant upside down to drain will ensure that water isn't lodged in its crevices. Most air plants prefer water twice a week. However, some tillandsias from drier regions-such as *T. xerographica*-require water only once a week.

How much light does an air plant need?

If you're growing an air plant with available light, find a place with indirect sunlight. If you're growing under fluorescent lights, eight hours of light daily will do the trick.

Air plants come from the jungle. do they need high humidity in a home?

No, these amazingly adaptable plants will thrive in a normal home atmosphere.

Do air plants need fertilizer?

Allan and Hugh wait until a tillandsia has drained, and then they give the air plant a spritz with a diluted ammonia-based (check the label) fertilizer after each watering.

Will a tillandsia die after flowering?

No. Although each rosette produces only one flower spike, it continues to live and produce progenies, which take over when it eventually withers.

When air plants form pups, what then?

The most dramatic specimens result from leaving the progeny together with the mother plant. However, feel free to dislodge progenies and display them separately.

Can air plants go outdoors in summer?

Absolutely, feel free to display them outdoors in indirect sun in summer. Remember to immerse them in water during a drought. And be sure to bring them safely back inside before frost. You won't want to lose your easiest houseplant ever.

How do you grow air plants from seed?

Watch for a very small, milkweed like pod. Wait for it to mature (it can take months). When it begins to explode like a milkweed, shake it onto a dampened window screen and mist the screen often until the plantlets form. The whole process can take a year before the seedling resembles its parent.

Country Gardens Early Spring
(January) 2015



Wikipedia

Tillandsias Photos



Cardinal Airplant by Hans Hillewaert



Wikipedia



Wikipedia



Tree Planting at Lochapoka and Beulah Elementary Schools

On Monday November 30th, Master Gardeners Nancy Golson, Gene Galloway, Pat Giordano with Jan Newton assisted students from Mr. Harlan's 3rd grade classes in Lochapoka, planting three trees. Trees planted were White Oak, Persimmon, and Magnolia. (Of note was that almost none of the students knew what a Persimmon was).

Then on Thursday December 3rd, we visited Mr. Jenkins 5th grade class at Beulah Elementary planting four trees - all Red Maples.

LCMG donated the trees and Master Gardeners will follow up, checking on the plantings in Spring 2016.

Tree Planting at Lochapoka





Tree Planting at Beulah Elementary School



Photos by David Peterson



Potpourri

By Charlot Ritenbaugh

Gardeners worldwide share serious concern about the noticeable decline in the numbers of pollinators in our natural environments. With respect to that continuing concern, I like to plant new additions of pollinator attracting species each spring. Some of the frequently found plants listed as attracting pollinators simply do not grow well for me. Those reasons are best left unexplored.

In my search for less common but highly qualified pollinator attracting plants I found a few worth sharing.

RED flowering plants are very good at attracting pollinators. Here are three that are readily available in seed catalogs and possess a tendency to reseed. Those volunteer seedlings you don't want can be readily removed when they are young.

First is *Ipomopsis rubra* or *Gilia rubra*. *Ipomopsis* means 'like a morning glory' but this plant is of the Polemoniaceae or phlox family. This plant has many common names, standing cypress, scarlet trumpet, scarlet gilia, or skyrocket.

Standing cypress is native to southern regions of the United States and can be found in the wild growing in sunny, dry, sandy soils. The scarlet blooms are known for being extremely attractive to hummingbirds. It is a biennial so will put out a rosette of leaves the first year after planting and become a 2' tall tower of scarlet blooms the second season. It is not attractive to deer but will be found quite attractive to hummingbirds.

Two members of the morning glory family, Convolvulaceae have the brightest small red flowers that attract bees, butterflies and birds. They are vines of the genus *Ipomoea*,

I. quamoclit and *I. x multifida*. Common names include cypress vine, cardinal climber and hummingbird vine.

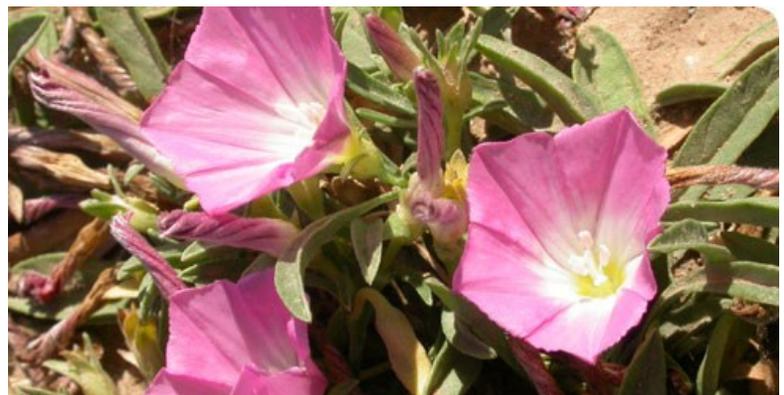
You can easily distinguish the two because *I. quamoclit* has the finer, feathery foliage. Research indicates that seeds sold as *I. quamoclit* are often *I. x multifida* since there is unbridled cross-pollination among the species. Not to worry, either one will be frequented by hummingbirds and other pollinators.

I am always interested in other plants that have been tried and enjoyed. Let me know what's growing.



Gilia Rubra

etsystatic.com



Convolvulus—lineatus

nhm.ac.uk