



# Leaf



# Notes



The Newsletter of Lee County Master Gardeners

## Presidents Message

I hope you are enjoying this weather. I love working in the garden, putting away winter clothes, wearing sandals, and spending time with Master Gardeners. I know many of you are eager to get your hands in the dirt and to see green shoots emerge.

These are very busy months for Master Gardeners as we continue to support horticulture education throughout Lee County. Please check the calendar of events and be sure to participate in all the events possible. We have three (3) garden shows, mulch sale, native azalea sale, and our new event, a night garden tour.

Twilight Trilogy our first ever night garden tour will be May 9<sup>th</sup>. The tour will include three themed gardens with finger foods and drinks to complement the theme. Tickets will be available at our April meeting and we ask that MG members sell as many tickets as possible. Tickets will only be available through MG, so let your friends and neighbors know that you will have tickets. It should be easy to sell tickets to help support our educational efforts.

Congratulations to our Master Gardeners who have graduated after finishing the class and their volunteer hours. We enjoyed their celebration graduation dinner so very much. The food was outstanding and so much fun to welcome them officially into our association.

I hope to see you all for our April 5<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Harris Center, Speaker Beth Hornsby of Hornsby Farms, Topic - Farm to Table Movement

Happy Gardening,  
Nancy Golson, President

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## Quarterly Quote

Do not plant your dreams in the field of indecision, where nothing ever grows but the weeds of "what-if?" - Dodinsky

## Spring 2017

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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.

### **An Interesting Read for LCMG**

The March 2017 issue of "Alabama Gardener" has an excellent article showcasing Lane Sauser's garden.

The article is titled "Mastering the Art of Gardening" and can be found on pages 58 - 61.

### **Quarterly Quiz**

Do you know this leaf?

Answer on page 14





## Master Gardener Spring Schedule

**Help Line** -- Every Tuesday, All MG are asked to please sign up to help

**March 25<sup>th</sup>** - Mulch Sale -- Lawrence Farm

**March 18<sup>th</sup>** 10 to 12 Plant propagation workshop by Carol Griffin, ACES

**March 31** – April 2<sup>nd</sup> Horticulture Plant Sale - corner of College St and Samford Ave. Auburn

**April 6 & 7** Earth Day 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Demonstration at Town Creek Park, Auburn

**April 8<sup>st</sup>** -- LCMGA Native Plant Sale -- Dean Rd. Recreation Center, Auburn

**April 29** - City Fest 9-4 Kiesel Park, Auburn

**April 5th-** MG Meeting, Harris Center, Speaker Beth Hornsby of Hornsby Farms, Topic - Farm to Table Movement

**May 3** - MG Meeting, Davis Arboretum Speakers - Morgan Beadles and Patrick Thomas Topic - Pitcher Plants of Alabama

**May 7<sup>th</sup>**— Garden in the Park, Opelika

**May 9<sup>th</sup>** -Twilight Trilogy – 6-9 Master Gardeners First night garden tour

## Upcoming Field Trips

1. Eufaula Pilgrimage: March 31 and April 2
2. Dr. Tommy Chase's Bonsai greenhouse:  
April 23, 26 and May 3.
3. Shoal Lilies at Flat Shoal Creek: mid - May

## Announcing a Photo Contest

The Subject is Photographing Azaleas, Spring 2017 in Lee County

Two Divisions:

Single azalea plant or flowers

Azaleas in the landscape

Eligibility:

LCMGA- Master Gardeners, Friends of MG and immediate family members

Deadline—April 20, 2017

JPEG images should be from 1 MB to 6 MB, but smaller than 1 MB could work too. Smartphone photos are acceptable.

send JPEGs to David Peterson  
[\(davypeted@gmail.com\)](mailto:davypeted@gmail.com)

Judging:

Judging by David Peterson; decisions of judge will be final

Prizes will be sets of greeting cards presented at our May 2017 meeting



## Honoring our 2016 Interns

At a special dinner on January 26, 2017 held to honor the 2016 Interns for their successful completion of the Master Gardener Class.

Shown below are photographs of the participants by Pat Goridano.



## 2016 Grant Recipient Opelika Grows

One of the major objectives of Master Gardeners is education and as a part of our outreach we give grants to worthy local organizations. One such organization is Opelika Grows, the recipient of one of our grants in 2016.

The vision of Opelika Grows is: "As an effort in localism, Opelika Grows seeks to model and approach to civic engagement that relies on local capital and capacity to address local needs. School reform, hunger relief and city beautification are not specific to any one city but every city has the potential to leverage the learning potential of gardens in service of community need."



Sean Forbes of Opelika Grows

The goals of the LCMG grant are:

1. Install a drip bucket hydronic system.
2. Provide students with greater instructional variety at the community garden.
3. Increase the produce donations to the community market and expand our farm-to-table partnerships with local restaurants

So far they have increased production, (7000 lbs donated in 2016). Had sustained sales to Zazu's Gastropub, and now allowing for Farmers Market Sales in 2017.



## Twilight Trilogy

### **Lee County Master Gardeners Night Garden Tour**

**May 9, 2017 6 pm to 10 pm**

Some say that the twilight hours are the best time to enjoy gardens; a time when the spirit of the place really comes alive. Few things are more relaxing than a peaceful walk through multi-sensory, luminous, fragrant twilight gardens designed to be at their best at dusk, when natural light is fading.

Lee County Master Gardens are presenting Twilight Trilogy, May 9<sup>th</sup>. This multi-sensory experience will provide an opportunity to leisurely explore three themed gardens, Southern, Italian, and Caribbean, while enjoying cuisine and drink appropriate for each garden. Gardens are within quick driving distance.

Tickets for the three-garden tour, food and drinks will be available at our April and May Master Gardener meeting for \$30 each. We encourage each MG to let their friends and neighbors know of this special event and provide them an opportunity to purchase tickets. Funds from this event will go to support our horticultural educational activities in the community.

Please mark your calendar and let your friends know of this special evening to explore the fragrances, color, lighting, and design crafted to inspire everyone to transform tier outdoor spaces into a twilight paradise.

Questions and inquiries can be sent to [leemastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:leemastergardeners@gmail.com) or 334-728-5064



Garden No. 1



Garden No. 2



Garden No. 3



## **Secret Gardens Only Open One or Two Days Each Year**

America is adorned with some beautiful public gardens worth viewing. But if you are in the mood to do a little exploring of gardens less well known, here are 8 secret gardens that open their gates to the public a mere once or twice a year.

The Garden Conservancy saves and shares outstanding American gardens for the education and inspiration of the public.

[www.gardenconservancy.org](http://www.gardenconservancy.org)

### **1. Stone Acres: Stonington, CT**



image: The Garden Conservancy, [source](#)

With over a quarter mile of manicured hedges, this traditional English-style garden is a wonder to walk through. It even boasts a rose arbor, and what has been termed a 'ha ha' - a recessed garden wall that doesn't block views.

### **2. Murray Gardens: Glastonbury, CT**



image: The Garden Conservancy, [source](#)

Once you've walked pass the stone gate, two private acres of twisting garden paths, sculptures, beds of daylilies, as well as a waterfall surrounded by Japanese maples, and much more await you

### **3. Garden at Elm Tree: Chicago, IL**



image: The Garden Conservancy, [source](#)

Garden at Elm Tree is a stately piece of land, filled with spring flowering bulbs. It has undergone extensive renovation since 2006 and has recently introduced a rose garden and an outdoor fireplace.

### **4. Alice Platt: Taghkanic, NY**



image: The Garden Conservancy, [source](#)

You'll happen across this glorious garden at the end of a country lane. The garden features bridges and paths that embrace the natural vegetation, rather than competing with it.



## Secret Gardens Only Open One or Two Days Each Year

Continued

### 5. Garden of Jane Garmey: West Cornwall, CT



image: The Garden Conservancy, [source](#)

It is hard to look into this dramatic scene from the outside, as centuries old sugar maples block the view. But, if you are lucky enough to step inside, you will find a birdhouse village and a home that dates back to 1827.

### 6. Kennelston Cottage: Far Hills, NJ

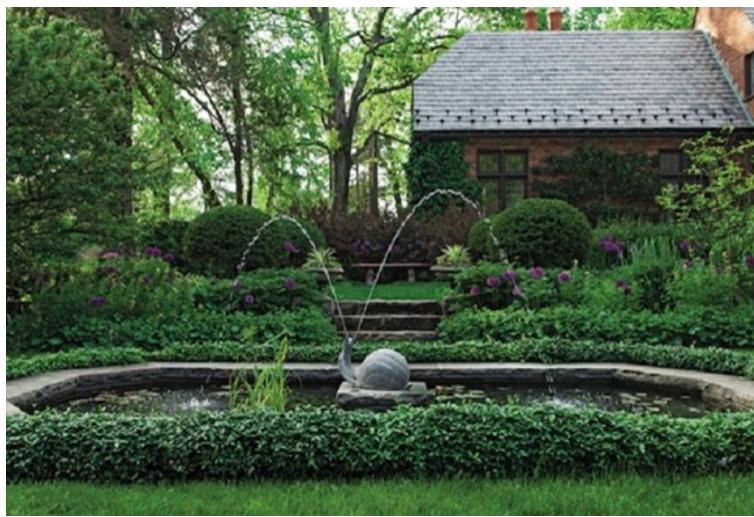


image: The Garden Conservancy, [source](#)

This pretty garden has a European feel to it. The garden features a courtyard space with a reflecting pool. It also features a sunken garden with a stone foundation.

### 7. Arthur Garden: Fuquay-Varina, NC



image: The Garden Conservancy, [source](#)

This garden's foundation was originally a tobacco field. The current owner of this suburban Raleigh garden uses it as a food-growing laboratory.

### 8. The Gardens at Ball: Chicago, IL



image: The Garden Conservancy, [source](#)

This secret garden is set on 10 acres of land. The gardens are typically open to wholesale horticultural customers. Once a year the thousands of annuals, perennials and shrubs can be seen by the public.



## Veggies with Vision: Do Plants See the World Around Them?

By Marta Zaraskal Scientific American January 2017 Issue

### **Don't look now, but that tree may be watching you.**

Several lines of recent research suggest that plants are capable of vision-and may even possess something akin to an eye, albeit a very simple one.

The idea that plants may have "eyes" is, in a way, nothing new. In 1907 Francis Darwin, Charles's son, hypothesized that leaves have organs that are a combination of lens-like cells and light-sensitive cells. Experiments in the early 20th century seemed to confirm that such structures, now called ocelli, exist, but the concept of a "seeing plant" fell by the wayside-only to reemerge in the past few years.

In a recent issue of *Trends in Plant Science*, Frantisek Baluska, a plant cell biologist at the University of Bonn in Germany, and Stefano Mancuso, a plant physiologist at the University of Florence in Italy, layout new evidence for visually aware vegetation. To make their case, the researchers first point to the 2016 discovery that *Synechocystis* cyanobacteria, single-celled organisms capable of photosynthesis, act like ocelli. "These cyanobacteria use the entire cell body as a lens to focus an image of the light source at the cell membrane, as in the retina of an animal eye," says University of London microbiologist Conrad Mullineaux, who helped to make the discovery. Although researchers are not sure what the purpose of this mechanism is, its existence suggests that a similar one could have evolved in higher plants. "If something like this is already present at the lower level of evolution, it is most likely kept," Baluska says.

Recent work also shows that some plants, such as the cabbage and mustard relative *Arabidopsis*, make proteins that are involved in the development and functioning of eyespots-the ultrabasic eyes found in some single-celled organisms such as green algae. These proteins specifically show up in structures called plastoglobuli, which are famed for giving autumn leaves their red and orange hues. "This discovery suggests that plastoglobuli in plants may act as eyespots," Baluska says. Other observational research reveals plants have visual capabilities we just do not understand yet. For instance, as reported in 2014 in *Current Biology*, the climbing wood vine *Boquila trifoliolata* can modify its leaves to mimic the colors and shapes of its host plant.

Although the evidence for eyelike structures in higher plants remains limited, it is growing. "I had never heard about plant vision, and I would have dismissed it as unlikely until my own discovery of cyanobacteria acting as a camera eye," says biotechnologist Nils Schuergers, co-author of the 2016 study on *Synechocystis*. The next challenge is to confirm the early 20th-century experiments showing that plant cells themselves can act like lenses-and researchers still need to figure out all the ends to which plants put their rudimentary sight.

*This article was originally published with the title "Veggies with Vision"*



## Plant Asparagus and Be Rewarded for Many Seasons

Posted on February 8, 2017 by Shane Harris



Asparagus may be one of the most costly vegetables at the supermarket. However, this perennial vegetable may be one of the easiest to grow. Perennials are plants that live for many growing seasons. Perennial plants dieback in the winter and come back in the spring from the same root system. Asparagus plants will produce for 20 years, if not longer, providing the tender green spears every spring. It will take 2 – 3 years before the asparagus reaches full production. So, before you begin planting, choose the perfect site and prepare the bed well, it's going to be there a long time.

### Variety

There are several varieties of *Asparagus officinalis* to choose from. Most have heard of Mary Washington. This is an older variety that has been a standard for many decades. It is a female variety. No, you do not need more than one variety, and it doesn't matter if you have male or female plants. I really like some of the newer male hybrids such as Jersey Knight and Jersey Gem. Often, they produce more spears. The male plants do not produce seeds which can lead to seedling asparagus that may become a nuisance in the garden. There is also a purple cultivar of asparagus that grows well here, Purple Passion. Once cooked, it will turn green. Green, purple, blue, or yellow, fresh asparagus spears from the garden is hard to beat.

### Planting Time

Dormant asparagus crowns can be planted as early January through March in Alabama. Use one year old crowns or plants as it takes one to two years longer to produce asparagus from seed. Purchase the plants from a garden store, nursery or through a seed catalog. Set crowns out in the Spring. The most common planting method is to dig a trench 10 to 12 inches deep and just as wide. Incorporate rotted manure or compost in the bottom of the trench before setting the crowns into the trench.



## Plant Asparagus and Be Rewarded for Many Seasons

*Continued*

### Environment

**Set plants in the sun** – Asparagus, like most vegetable plants, needs full sun. Full sun means at least 6 – 8 hours of uninterrupted sunlight every day. Asparagus beds planted near trees may receive full sun at the time the bed was prepared. Remember the trees will grow and years from now, the bed may become shaded. Plan accordingly. Plant asparagus along the perimeter of the vegetable garden so it will not be in the way of garden equipment. .

**Soil**- Asparagus prefers a high organic soil. Most soils in Alabama will have to be amended to grow asparagus successfully.

**Fertility**– Asparagus has medium to high fertility requirements. A soil test is the best way to calculate fertilizer requirements. Before planting, incorporate 1 pound of actual nitrogen into the planting bed. Another pound of actual nitrogen can be applied after harvest. One pound of actual nitrogen per 1000 square feet is equal to approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb of ammonium nitrate per 100 feet of row.

**pH** – 6.0 to 7.0

**Moisture** – Asparagus requires a moist soil – about 1 to 2 inches of water per week (more on a sandy soil; less for a clay soil).

### Spacing and Depth

Set the crowns 12 inches apart in the trench. Asparagus beds or trenches should be at least 3 feet apart. Place the crowns on top of a small amount of loose soil in the bottom of the trench. Make sure the roots of the crown are spread out over the soil. The crowns should be covered with 2- 3 inches of soil. The asparagus will grow up and through this soil. When it does pull the soil in around the crowns and cover them up with a couple of inches of soil. Again, the asparagus plants will grow through. Cover them again and repeat until the trench is filled. Take care of the plants. Asparagus is a fern like plant. Let it grow until frost turns the asparagus plant brown. At that time you can cut down the brown ferns. Early the next year, use your soil test results to fertilize the plants.

### Harvesting and Storage

Early in the year, you will see the asparagus spears start to poke through the ground. But, be patient. Do not harvest any asparagus the first year, much like blueberries. Harvesting too much too early will result in a weak plant. The second year, you will be able to enjoy about 6 weeks of harvest...and maybe 8 weeks the next year. Harvest the spears daily when they are 5 to 7 inches tall. Snap off above the soil line. Harvest in the early morning and use or refrigerate immediately.

### Nutritional Value

Asparagus is low in calories and carbohydrates, and compared to other vegetables it is relatively rich in protein. Asparagus is an excellent source of potassium, vitamin K, folic acid, vitamins C and A, riboflavin, thiamine, and vitamin B6. It is also a very good source of dietary fiber, niacin, phosphorus, protein, and iron.

by [Dani Carroll](#)

Posted in [County Newsletters](#), [Home & Garden](#), [Uncategorized](#)



## Controlling Weeds in your Lawn

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



A weed can have many definitions, but its true definition is “a plant out of place” and in the case of your lawn, those plants can be hard to control and definitely an eye sore. Some even can be out right painful in the case of the lawn burweed.

When looking for control, the product label is the best source of information as to which lawn grasses can be treated with a particular product. Read the label carefully before purchase and use the information to ensure safety to the applicator as well as the home lawn setting.

Quickly, let's review a few terms that will help you when trying to control weeds in your turfgrass:

**Preemergence herbicide:** A herbicide that is applied to the lawn grass surface before problem weed seeds germinate and emerge from the ground. These herbicides must be applied before a weed problem is even noticed. **Postemergence herbicide:** A herbicide that is applied after weeds have emerged, but while they are small and actively growing. This type of herbicide is applied to the leaf and stem tissue of the problem weeds.

Generally, postemergence herbicides will not control weeds that germinate and emerge after the application. **Non-selective herbicide:** A herbicide that kills all vegetation treated. Typically, these products are applied to the foliage of the weeds. This type herbicide will also severely injure or kill desirable plants. **“Green-up” period (transition period):** A short period of time in the spring when desirable lawn grass is emerging from its dormant state. It is during this time that grasses are most sensitive to herbicides and, in many cases, the herbicide labels prohibit their use.

This year is going to be tricky when it comes to weed control in the lawn due to the crazy fluctuations of temperatures and the fact that we have barely experienced winter.

Our turf grasses went dormant, but many of them have been trying to come out of dormancy or “green-up” for weeks now. Generally, I would say February is the time to put out your pre-emergence products to control your spring weeds, but with the February we had, that would not have been a good idea and now March is upon us.

So this year I say skip your winter pre-emergence application and if you currently have weeds popping up you could spot spray with a non-selective herbicide if your extremely careful or use a labeled post-emergence product so you do not damage your turf. Then once your grass has fully emerged from dormancy apply a pre-emergence that will then help control your summer weed seeds that are sitting there waiting for the right temperatures to germinate.

Knowing what type of turfgrass you have is especially important when it comes to weed control. If you are not sure, you can always contact your local county extension office. Below is a link to the Homeowner Lawn Weed Control Manual that will be extremely helpful in choosing what product is right for you.

<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/I/IPM-0590/IPM-0590.pdf>

**When using Herbicides-Always read and follow label directions.**



## Recent Meeting Speakers



Dr. Louis Adams speaking on Heirloom Plants



Jason Powell speaking on Antique Roses



Jordan Graves speaking on Alabama Snakes

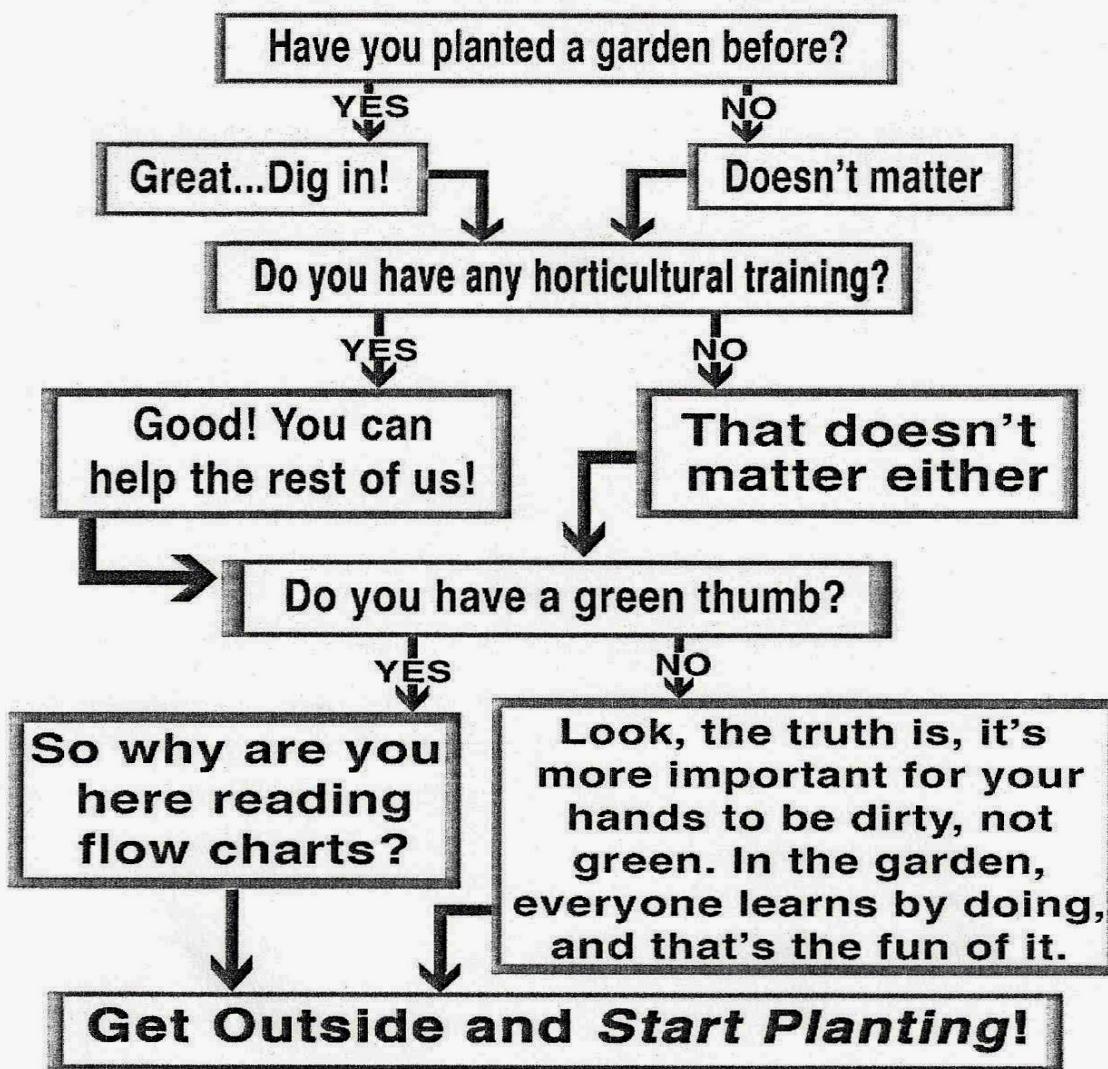
Quiz: Do you remember the difference between poisonous and venomous ?

And can you name the 6 \_\_\_\_\_ Alabama Snakes?



### Flow Chart for Gardeners

## Should I Plant a Garden?



C.L. Fornari, [gardenrant.com](http://gardenrant.com)



## A Master Gardener Question

What is this plant I see in a lot of the trees in our area?



That is mistletoe (*Viscum album*). It's parasitic which means it takes water and nutrients away from the host plant (in this case, a water oak). If at all possible it should be removed.

Alex Hedgepath

### ***Answer to Quiz on Page 2: Ginkgo biloba***

*Ginkgo biloba* is the oldest living tree species. A single tree can live as long as 1,000 years and grow to a height of 120 feet. It has short branches with fan-shaped leaves and inedible fruits that smell bad. The fruit has an inner seed, which may be poisonous. Ginkgos are tough, hardy trees and are sometimes planted along urban streets in the United States. The leaves turn brilliant colors in the fall.

Although Chinese herbal medicine has used both the ginkgo leaf and seed for thousands of years, modern research has focused on the standardized *Ginkgo biloba* extract (GBE) made from the dried green leaves. This standardized extract is highly concentrated and seems to treat health problems (particularly circulatory problems) better than the non-standardized leaf alone.

Ginkgo has a long history of use in treating blood disorders and memory issues. It is best known today as way to potentially keep your memory sharp. Laboratory studies have shown that ginkgo improves blood circulation by opening up blood vessels and making blood less sticky. It is also an antioxidant.

For those reasons, ginkgo may improve vein and eye health. Although not all studies agree, ginkgo may help treat dementia (including Alzheimer disease) and intermittent claudication, or poor circulation in the legs. It may also protect memory in older adults.

Ginkgo leaves contain flavonoids and terpenoids, which are both antioxidants. In your body, harmful particles called free radicals build up as you age, and may contribute to heart disease, cancer, and Alzheimer disease. Antioxidants like those found in ginkgo fight off free radicals, and stop them from damaging DNA and other cells.