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# Over the Garden Gate

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## President's Corner

by Mindy Wade

### Inside This Issue:

When I look back at past editions of Over the Garden Gate to get the gist of other Spring messages, I find I don't have to go very far back - two years - to see one that starts, "The drought continues!" How far we have come from that point. I heard that Lake Lanier is at a near a record high, and when I was in the Extension Office this week many of the calls pertained to "what is happening to my ground cover/lawn/plants/fill in the blank yourself." Oddly enough, most of the answers started with, "Wet feet, too much water, they need to dry out some!"

The one thing that is constant is change. Thank heavens we are starting to see some weather change. Many of the spring blooming plants are out in full force and there is a glimmer of hope! That same glimmer of hope seems to be alive in the Extension Office. We are all enjoying the fact that we have a new class of Master Gardeners involved in the program. I know I speak for many when I say we are enjoying having an active, enthusiastic ANR Agent in the office. We are looking forward to soon having a Program Assistant as well. Good times are happening.

I remind everyone who struggled to get those last few hours in last year to start early. Remember my challenge from the January meeting - Try to give 2 hours this year to working in the office answering those questions about struggling plants or working at an Ask A Master Gardener Booth!!!! Spring Expo is the perfect time to do so. Many other opportunities are available. Have you considered working in one of the fabulous

gardens to be featured on our June 1, Garden Walk? Do you know that there is always work to be done at Wilshire Park? (Contact Sally Wise or Sharon Van de Water). Help is always welcome at Redbud (Margaret Rasmussen), Gardens on Green (Rose Barton) or Atlanta Botanical Gardens Gainesville (Diane Korzeniewski or Helen Jackson). If you read my bi-weekly newsletters you will find other volunteer opportunities. Start early!

Speaking of change, I welcome suggestions for change in our organization. Do you have an idea for a way to make things better? Share them with me. Email [wademelinda@bellsouth.net](mailto:wademelinda@bellsouth.net) or [hallcountymgpresident@gmail.com](mailto:hallcountymgpresident@gmail.com) or you can reach me via phone at 410-960-4241.

In the meantime, try a change in your garden. Plant a new perennial. Try a new annual. Give a container a fresh look! Enjoy Spring!

*Mindy Wade*

HCMG President 2019

### Write for Us!

Like to write? Have something to say? Your fellow master gardeners want to hear from you!  
Email Rick at [rsfreeland@charter.net](mailto:rsfreeland@charter.net) for details.

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### Contributors:

Mindy Wade; Hugo Kollmer; Marcia Tague; Robbie McCormac

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Perennial vines can provide a range of landscape uses. While most prefer well drained soil and lots of sun, some do well in light to moderate shade, and there are a few which tolerate wet soil. The growth habit of these vines can be trailing, climbing or low-growing. The flowers of several species have varying degrees of fragrance, and many are evergreen.

Based on how they are equipped to grow, climbing vines are divided into three general categories; **clinging, twining and tendril**.

Some of the twiners include Hybrid clematis, Carolina jessamine, Honeysuckle and Confederate jasmine. Cross vine, Armand clematis, and Coral vine are examples of species equipped with tendrils. The clinging class of vines includes Boston ivy, Creeping fig and Climbing hydrangea. They have fibrous aerial roots growing from their stems which become attached to vertical structures and tree trunks.

I recommend against planting vines which have invasive tendencies such as Japanese wisteria, English ivy, Sweet Autumn clematis, Cypress vine, Trumpet vine and Oriental bittersweet.

Climbing vines need sturdy durable structures to adequately support them. These supports can be trellises, fences, walls, arbors or pergolas.

All vines prefer rich, well drained soil, with a neutral to slightly alkaline pH. Several vines are deer resistant and many, particularly some of the evergreen species, are disease and insect resistant.

Some of my favorite climbers are:



**Trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*)** - a deciduous vine that bears pretty, non-fragrant flowers attractive to hummingbirds and butterflies. It prefers a sunny location. Its primary enemies are deer, leaf spot and powdery mildew.



**Gold Flame honeysuckle (*Lonicera heckrottii*)** - in many ways this vine is similar to Trumpet honeysuckle. However, it is tolerant of light shade, and its blossoms are both long-lasting and fragrant.

Every garden deserves to show off **Hybrid clematis**. This popular deciduous vine encompasses several species and numerous varieties in a wide range of colors and blossom sizes, produced at various times from spring to fall. Some are fragrant species, and even a few repeat bloomers. While resistant to deer all are, to a varying degree, susceptible to powdery mildew.



A fast growing, lengthy evergreen vine, **Armand clematis (*Clematis armandii*)** requires lots of space and a sunny location to perform well. Clusters of its highly fragrant white blossoms appear in late winter to early spring. It is drought, deer and pest resistant, but its rapid growth needs to be controlled with frequent pruning.



Despite its name, **Confederate jasmine aka Star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*)** is an import from the Far East. This fast growing evergreen vine bears intoxicatingly fragrant blossoms. It is drought and deer resistant and virtually disease and pest free. Its growth can be controlled by pruning in late winter and again in late summer.

Vines suitable for use as a ground cover include Vinca major, Vinca minor and Asiatic jasmine.



**Asiatic jasmine (*Trachelospermum asiaticum*)** is a favorite of mine. It is evergreen with glossy green and bronze foliage, grows in full sun or partial shade and produces a dense, weed-deterrent mat. This vine does well under tall deciduous shade trees whose lower limbs have been removed to create dappled shade. It is drought, deer, disease and insect resistant. Asiatic jasmine looks its best when trimmed a couple of times a year, beginning in the spring. Shallow-rooted, it can easily be contained with solid edging. Although attractive, variegated varieties are not winter hardy in our area.

## What the Heck?

### Quote

“There can be no other occupation like gardening in which, if you were to creep up behind someone at their work, you would find them smiling.”

Horticulturalist  
Mirabel Osler

*M*aking the future the cause of the present.

What? What does that mean? It means that we work on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In an environmental sense, in order to maintain ecological balance for the world our grandchildren will inhabit, we must avoid depletion of the natural resources we are using today. These are definitions and ideals of **sustainability**.



Sustainability is a lifestyle. It is thinking and planning ahead of 'right now'. It is making as little negative impact on earth as possible and at the same time, making the earth better than how we found it. For starters, as gardeners, we know we must respect and embellish the soil in an organic way.

Composting is the best-known method of doing this. Raking fallen leaves over the garden in the fall recycles natural material and enriches the soil. When cover crops are tilled into the garden, nitrogen and other nutrients are added back into the soil. The soil is more friable after compost is added, which results in water soaking in instead of water being wasted in runoff.



Sustainability mimics natural processes. We can add beneficial insects instead of spraying pesticides; use drip irrigation instead of sprinklers. Use no herbicides; pull weeds by hand (good exercise!) or use a hoe which will aerate the soil at the same time. For a successfully sustainable landscape plan, choosing climate-appropriate natives will use less water, effort, and additives. The research will take extra time, but it will be a great benefit to learn which plants will tolerate the rain, wind, drought, and temps in your area.

Using native plants attracts the insects that are native to the

area which in turn will attract the birds and other fauna that depend on those insects. It's a cycle, wonderfully interdependent! If a landscape plan includes walls and walkways, recycled materials like salvaged stone or broken concrete can be included.

Water is precious. We can protect water quality by not using herbicides or pesticides that could contaminate the

water supply as it drains through the soil. Rain gardens can be created to hold excess runoff; rain barrels also do this. Mulching is an excellent way to avoid evaporation of valuable moisture.

As master gardeners, we are aware of the limited resources nature provides. Using sustainable practices will reward us with healthier gardens and increased yield now; plus, at the same time, we are conserving nature's resources for the next generation of gardeners. This is how we are "making the future the cause of the present". Share your knowledge.... **Pass it on!**

## Myers Junior Master Gardeners

by Robbie McCormac

In 2007, while working with a group of fourth grade students at Myers Elementary School, I helped them enter a contest sponsored through Virginia Tech. The task was to design a historic garden to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Jamestown, Virginia. We were notified that we were the national winners of the contest, and were awarded a trip to Virginia, to visit Jamestown and Williamsburg.



Two months later, at a regular monthly meeting of HCMG's, it was announced that our county would be launching the Junior Master Gardener curriculum. For that first year, a handful of schools were chosen to start the program, and since Myers Elementary had already introduced gardening to their students through the Anniversary Garden project, it was one of the original schools chosen to start. I teamed up with seasoned teacher and friend, Ginny Barber, and school gardening began!

Now halfway through my 12<sup>th</sup> year of teaching gardening to schoolchildren, the many adventures and challenges remind me to be flexible, and

adjust to constantly changing situations. Myers JMG classes are taught during the school day, every week, August to May.



This schedule is necessary since most of the students at Myers are bus riders, and a program after school is a hardship on parents for transportation. That means 430+ lessons about insects, IPM, plant parts, vegetables, the water cycle, composting, monocots and dicots, gardening methods and planning, photosynthesis, camouflage, habitats and the food chain.



The school gardens grow year-round, always providing a learning opportunity. We plant 2 times a year – September and May. Through the years we've probably planted 250 different varieties of vegetables and flowers. Most are standard vegetables – radishes, pumpkins, carrots, corn. But even standard vegetables can have an additional twist! "Carnival"

carrots are purple, red, orange, yellow and white. "Lumina" and "Jarrahdale" pumpkins are white and green respectively. "Dakota Black" corn seeds produce black corn for popcorn. "Easter Egg" radishes are round and come in white, pink and purple. Gardening with kids is fun and exciting and always an adventure.



The garden is always changing. We have raised beds for vegetables and herbs, a butterfly garden, a bog garden, a native garden, blueberry and beautyberry bushes, bee houses, bird feeders, bird houses, benches, picnic tables and it keeps going from there. We compost 4 ways, (including vermicomposting), share our bounty with the teachers and students, and answer lots of questions.



What's next? Only Mother Nature knows!