



Over the Garden Gate

HALL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

President's Corner

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Master Gardeners,
This has been an exciting year, and we have accomplished much: two successful expos, a great garden walk, and dedication and service to several of our gardens, our JMG programs, Gardens on Green, Smithgall, our new web site...

It has been my privilege to serve as your president and now as my final act, I would like you to sit back, put your feet up and read the following...I think you will get a chuckle or two as you read it.

You know you're a Hall County Master Gardener when...

- * You consider naming your kids Rose, Violet, Daisy and Zucchini.
- * You take your kids' multiple vitamins and use them to supplement your garden fertilizer.
- * Your Hall County Master Gardener pin is your most important accessory.
- * Your idea of a Saturday date night is going out in the garden and hand pollinating the plants.
- * You think a cocktail is liquid fertilizer.
- * After the first frost, you are seen holding funeral services in your garden.
- * You rush home from work and go straight to the garden and hug your roses (Ouch!), then you go inside to see your family.
- * Every spring your family files a "missing persons" report. You remain missing all summer and mysteriously reappear in the fall.
- * You have an 8x10 of your tomatoes and peppers prominently displayed on your desk at work.
- * You've made wonderful gardening friends.

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HCMG Officers

President	Irene Michaud
Vice President	Sharon Vandewater
Secretary	Jennifer Stowe
Treasurer	Beverly Brinson
President Elect	Sarah Galshack
Directors-at-Large	
	Wanda Cannon
	Marsha Dickey

New HCMG Website

The HCMG Website Committee has been working diligently the past several months designing a new website for us. The goal of the committee was to create a user friendly site that provides up to date information for our membership and community.

Phase 1 will be rolled out and presented at our January meeting on Tuesday, the 21st. Be sure to

attend the meeting so the team can show you some new, easy to use gadgets. We hope that you will take some time thereafter to explore and discover more about the information available on the site and then spread the word in the Hall County community as well as refer people to it for Master Gardener event information and as a garden

resource. Phase II will focus on garden information for the specialized button pages. We hope that members will contribute to this content by submitting articles and news. The website is a work in progress and the committee will continue to make improvements on it until it is the best it can be for you all.

Notes from the Extension Office

By Wanda Cannon



White-breasted nuthatch
Sitta carolinensis

As I write this note, it is only 6 days before Christmas. For me, this time of year is a busy one. Master Gardeners are turning in their volunteer hours and are finishing getting all of their last minute responsibilities for the year out of the way! I appreciate all of you who get these things in to me in a timely manner. It sure makes my job easier.

There will be 18 new Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Trainees that start their classes on January 7th, 2014. They are

an excited and enthusiastic group of individuals.

2014 will bring in a new year filled with changes and new updates that will make all Hall County MG's life a little easier. There will be a new program for logging and turning in volunteer hours, which should make, the majority of you who know how to use a computer, logging hours a lot easier. There will be updates on this system so look for it in upcoming emails. This past year was a great year for the

Hall County Master Gardeners. There was the successful Spring Expo, Garden Walk and Fall Expo. Many volunteered at Gardens on Green, Smithgall Woodland Gardens, Wilshire Park, History Center Gardens, Habitat for Humanity, Elachee and Linwood Preserve. We never run out of places, projects and resources to tap into to make our lives in the Gainesville area productive and useful. UGA Extension warmly

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Growing Native: *Juniperus virginiana*

Tis the season to
Be aware
Of the tiny magic
Everywhere.

A native evergreen with a misleading name, Eastern red cedar is actually in the juniper family. The Latin name, *Juniperus*, comes from 'junio' meaning young and 'parere', to produce. It is the most widely distributed eastern conifer, native to 37 states. It is resistant to extremes of drought, heat and cold, making it a great addition to a garden.

It is an aromatic tree which varies in color from gray-green to blue-green. Plants can be monoecious or dioecious. It blooms in late winter with male flowers being yellow and the female's green. The fused cones appear as pale blue fruit on female plants which are eaten by birds. The dense habit of the eastern red cedar also provides birds such as

waxwings, quail, ruffed grouse, pheasant, turkey with good cover.

This is a useful tree for erosion control and windbreak areas. The heartwood, because of its aromatic odor and moth-repellant properties, has long been used for closet linings and wardrobes. It should be noted that it is an alternate host for the cedar-apple rust.



The Signature of All Things
Elizabeth Gilbert
512 pages

Book Review: *The Signature of All Things*

By Karin Hicks

Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat, Pray, Love*, is out with a new novel call *The Signature of All Things*. The book spans much of the 18th and 19th centuries and follows the Whittaker family across the globe from London to Peru, Philadelphia, Tahiti, Amsterdam and beyond. One

of the most memorable characters is Alma Whittaker, daughter of a British transplant who made his fortune in botanical pharmaceuticals. Alma grows up roaming the greenhouses and woodlands on the family estate. As an intellectually ambitious, 19th century woman she becomes a

botanist herself with a passion for mosses. Her research takes her deeper into the mysteries of evolution, but she falls in love with a man who paints orchids, who takes her into the realm of the spiritual, the divine and the magical. I read this book straight through. It is a page turner and a must read!

Raising Monarch Butterflies: My interview with Penny Stowe

By Karin Hicks

Recently, I sat down and talked with fellow HCMG, Penny Stowe, about her experience raising monarch butterflies.

When did you get interested in butterflies?

When I took the Master Gardener class in 2011, I learned about native plants and then butterfly gardening and I was hooked. I started growing milkweed to attract monarchs and then added other host plants like fennel and parsley for the black swallowtail butterflies.

When did you see the first monarch in your garden?

I waited a long time for any monarchs to show up but this past August I spotted a very ragged female hanging around the milkweed. I observed her curling her abdomen under the leaves laying eggs and when I turned over the leaf I saw eggs! It was very exciting and I began to take photographs to document my experience. A few days later I saw caterpillars munching the leaves.

So, when did you start raising monarchs?

Well, I watched the caterpillars grow from one instar stage to the next and then crawl off to find a place to form their chrysalis. I never could find their chrysalis in my garden and I wanted to watch this stage of the metamorphosis, so I took some caterpillars inside and put them in a butterfly habitat cage.

What happened next?

The caterpillars started to take their J shape and then make their chrysalis. After about 10 days butterflies began to eclose from the chrysalis but I kept missing the actual event. It happens so fast so I took the habitat cage and my camera into the bathroom while I showered and sure enough one began to emerge. I jumped out of the shower, grabbed my camera and started shooting a series of shots of the monarch emerging. It was amazing to see it cling on to the chrysalis as it pumped its wings with fluid, and then spread its wings to dry.

How many monarchs have you raised and released?

About 5 or 6 monarchs.

How did you end up with a super generation monarch?

I was really excited when I found some monarch chrysalises in my asters right before some predicted freezing weather. So I brought them inside and a few days later two of them emerged. Two beautiful males! (Males have the dark spots on their hind wings, females do not.) There were no flowers blooming at this time of year so I had to feed them. I started feeding them Gatorade (with the real sugar, not artificial sugar) but then moved to a honey solution of 1 tsp. honey to 10 tsp. water. I used a paperclip to unfurl his proboscis to help the drinking process along. Since butterflies taste with their feet I put the honey water in a

small petri dish where he would drink. One died about a week later and the other one lived until we had a break in the weather and I could release him when the temp was above 50 degrees. In early December, my husband found a monarch, near where I had found the others, laying on the ground with crinkled wings. I believe the wind must have blown the chrysalis out of its hiding spot and when it came time for him to emerge; he wasn't able to hang down and let his wings expand and dry in the proper shape. Since it is so cold now and he can only flap around, I knew he would die so I started feeding him the diluted honey water. He seems to enjoy sitting on my finger and being fed. He could possibly live for months since this generation would normally over-winter in Mexico and fly back to the United States in Spring to start their life cycle again. So, I may just have a pet monarch for a while!

What have you taken away from this experience?

This experience has transformed my gardening approach so that I now grow plants specifically for pollinators. This experience has awakened a curiosity of the natural world. There are so many things that you can witness in your own backyard if you just provide the right environment and create habitats for wildlife. The



Penny feeding her monarch

monarch lifecycle relies exclusively on the milkweed plant; from laying of the eggs to being the sole food source for the caterpillars. Adding several species of milkweed provides a diverse habitat for this species of butterfly. It was an incredible experience to witness the life cycle happen before my eyes. I created a photo book to document the whole metamorphosis and I must say it was a thrilling experience!



Monarch using proboscis to drink honey water



President's Corner (cont. from pg. 1)

- * You've helped youngsters learn about the miracles found in gardening.
- * You've supported and enhanced the beauty of our community.
- * You've freely shared your knowledge of horticulture with others.
- * You've made a difference!

With my best wishes to you and your families for a Merry Christmas and very happy and healthy New Year...

As always, happy gardening,
Irene



Notes from the Extension Office (cont. from pg. 2)

appreciates all of you who volunteer your time and efforts here in the office. Having that extra voice and ears is always needed. We appreciate all of you in the many endeavors that you get involved in. Spreading the knowledge and love of all things garden is a wonderful way to tap into your community and spread the fire!

I wish you all a great 2014! I hope to see many of you next year as we start a new year filled with exciting projects and events.

Sincerely,
Wanda Cannon

HALL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

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Seasonal "To Do" Reminders

By Hugo Kollmer

Be an observant gardener.

Recent weather hints that this winter may be harsher than what we've experienced in the recent past. While cold weather may deter some of us from getting outdoors to work in our garden, it is welcome and beneficial to plants species in order to set buds.



- Service equipment including tillers, mowers and trimmers. Add a stabilizer to prevent fuel from deteriorating.
- Cut pampas grass to ground level.
- Turn your compost pile, and add high nitrogen fertilizer to hasten decomposition.
- Collect evergreen foliage and mistletoe to use as decorations.
- Apply slow release fertilizer to pansies and snapdragons.
- Perennial weed grasses and other weeds in warm season grasses, when completely dormant, can be controlled with an application of glyphosate.
- Continue to water newly planted evergreen shrubs if soil becomes dry.
- Remove old foliage from Lenten Roses (*Helleborus orientalis*). Fertilize them when new growth appears.
- Start amaryllis and other flower bulbs in pots for gorgeous blooms within a few weeks.
- Remove any remaining dead vegetation from flower beds.
- Prune fruit trees, except peaches, and fruiting vines. Prune peaches in early March. Prune shade trees, roses and shrubs which bear blossoms on

new growth. Do not remove last year's stems from hibiscus until new growth appears. Premature removal of dead hollow stems creates a path from disease to enter and infect the plant's roots.

- Cut branches of forsythia, quince, spirea, crabapple and saucer magnolia. Place them in a vase of water to force blooming.