

Ask a Master Gardener

March 22, 2016

Phyllis King, Carroll County Master Gardener Extension Volunteer

### **DIY Landscaping for your home**

Q. Three years ago when my family moved here from Maryland we bought a house that needed quite a lot of renovation which we have almost finished; however, we have done almost nothing to the yard. Unfortunately, we have almost depleted the funds that we had budgeted for the project, and we need help. Where should we start?

A. Particularly when funds are limited, the most important concept is planning. It is a certainty that you should research carefully any options that you are considering. One guide that can give you a great deal of help is the results from a soil sample. If you need help in completing this process, contact a Master Gardener Volunteer at the Extension office at 770-836-8546 or [ccmg@uga.edu](mailto:ccmg@uga.edu). The cost is \$9.00, but it can save you much more than that by focusing on the soil amendments that you actually need and the proportions that will bring your soil to the levels that are needed for the plants that you are choosing to flourish. You will not spend money on products that you do not need and will use only the amount that is needed for the job.

Another effective tool in planning a landscape redesign is to take advantage of the knowledge and experience of Master Gardeners and the opportunities to learn about how to do your own DIY projects. Such an opportunity is planned for Saturday, April 2. The workshop will run from 10:00am – 4:00pm and will include some very interesting speakers who will share ideas to help anyone striving to improve a landscape.

One interesting twist in this workshop will be an emphasis on native plants; Elise Cormier will have illustrations and many reasons for choosing native plants. These are choices that have adapted to our environment as long as they are planted in the right place, for example, the beautiful buckeye tree. The site where you plant a native bottlebrush buckeye must have space; the buckeye also needs shade, and moisture. I planted one before I knew this, and it succumbed to the blazing Georgia sun even though I kept it moist. Like the dogwood it is an understory tree which means that it needs the shade of larger trees. I am attaching a picture of a beautiful one which has had the best of care; photography credit goes to Dorothy Rothbart, a fellow master gardener.

Also, in this DIY Landscaping workshop we will cover some basics about strategizing and planning which plants will work where. You will want to choose plants that will emphasize the style of your house. Is it formal, casual, modern, or a very traditional style? If it is modern, you will not want fluffy casual flowery shrubs, but there are beautiful plants that will show off your clean lines and architectural interests. Many modern designs employ sleek containers with palms or interesting ornamental grasses. Jim Harrington will discuss basics that can be adapted to any style and show us some interesting ways to capture and store rainwater.

One of our Master Gardeners, Barbara McCormick, will discuss and show some examples of beautifying salvage items to use in the garden. One of her items will be a door prize, and it will be worth winning.

Pruning is one of the most difficult tasks in gardening, but it is critical to maintain a garden. It is a science, but it is also an art. This is a statement that Randy Cooper has made many times, and I have found it to be true. Randy will illustrate some of the finer points of pruning, and he will have some examples for us using some plants at the Ag Center and in the Buffalo Creek Garden.

We are pleased to present these four knowledgeable and enthusiastic speakers, and we will break for lunch which is being provided by Billy Bob's Bar-B-Que. If you want to learn more about planning your DIY Landscaping for your yard, plan to attend this workshop on April 2. Call the office at the number below to register; since food is involved, we need to know how many are coming. For additional details or more information, you can contact us for questions about any gardening issues; contact a Master Gardener volunteer at the UGA Cooperative Extension Carroll County office at 900 Newnan Road, Carrollton at 770-836-8546 or via email at [ccmg@uga.edu](mailto:ccmg@uga.edu). Or for any other details go to <http://www.ugaextension.com/carroll/anr/MasterGardenerPage.html>