Hello Fellow Master Gardeners,

I know you are all wondering just where your new president is, but know I have been working behind the scenes to bring myself up to speed on the happenings and workings of AAMGA! I just finished the requirements to become current again as a Georgia MGEV with the latest class of trainees. I am visiting project sites, meeting with other officers, committee chairs, and project chairs and asking LOTS of questions!

I was thrilled to have dinner with Dr. David Gibby, Sherri Dorn and Amanda Tedrow after the Georgia Master Gardener 40th Anniversary celebration. There has been a request for Athens to host the GMGA State Meeting in 2020 so watch for more news on that. I just met with Jenny Sanders, Director of SBG, and discussed how our group can be more involved at SBG. She spoke about the Connect to Protect program and it sounds like a great opportunity for the group and individuals to spread the mission of this project all over the state. Check out the info at http://botgarden.uga.edu/conservation-science/connect-to-protect/. Guide to Propagation and Characteristics of Favorite Georgia Natives: Part I—Thirty Perennials for Pollinators by Heather Alley, Conservation Horticulturalist is an especially good publication on this site.

Pam Bracken and Mike Sikes are working to put together a great group of presentations for our meetings this year and I encourage you all to bring a friend who might be interested in a specific program or in becoming a Master Gardener. Dr. Michael Dirr will be our featured speaker on St. Patrick’s Day 2020!

We have a new group of trainees who will hopefully begin attending our meetings. They are an enthusiastic group and I hope you will welcome them and get to know them!

I am excited to get to know everyone and get involved with the projects of the group. Let’s work together to move AAMGA forward!

See you (finally) at the May meeting!

Lori Carson, President

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**President’s Perch**

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Members: Barbara Turner, Shirley Baker

By-laws: George Watson, Chair
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Members: Mike Sikes, Bob and Carol Wolf

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Members: Andrea Fischer

Hospitality: Heather Gray Jordan, Chair
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Members: Anne and Bill Walker

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Marigold Festival Plant Sale
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Piedmont Pollinator Garden
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Treasurer
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Athens-Clarke County
Extension Agent
Amanda Tedrow
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AAMGA

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AAMGA May 21st Meeting

Specific Meeting Information to Follow

Unless otherwise notified, our meetings will take place at 6:00 pm for a potluck supper and at 6:30 pm for the meeting. They are held on the third Tuesday of each month and in the Gardenside Room downstairs below the Conservatory level.

March 14-April 12, 2019

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Submitter by
Glenda Owens, Treasurer
On April 16, 2019, AAMGA convened in the SBG Gardenside Room at 6pm for a potluck supper. At 6:30 a program about The Beachwood Project and The Young Conservation Stewards Program was presented by Nat Kuykendall and Krisztian Varsa of the Athens Land Trust. In the absence of the president, Barbara Turner called the meeting to order.

**Business:**

*Secretary's Report* - There were no additions or corrections to the March minutes as published in The Garden Dirt online newsletter.

*Treasurer's Report* – There were no corrections or additions to the Treasurer's report as published in The Garden Dirt online newsletter.

**Projects:**

*Clarke Middle School Plant-a-Row* – Merry Anderson reported that Tuesday, April 15 was a work afternoon. Volunteers moved compost and planted tomatoes. The next workday will be April 17, 4-6pm. Volunteers are now needed on a weekly basis.

*Oconee Plant-a-Row @ Thomas Orchards* - Gary Wade reported: We have had two work days so far and a third one is planned for Wednesday, April 24. So far, we have planted 3 rows of Irish potatoes, two rows of lettuce, a row of onions and radishes, two rows of sugar peas, two rows of bush beans, two rows of southern peas, and four rows of tomatoes. On April 24 we will plant a row of yellow squash, a row of zucchini squash, two rows of peppers, one row of cucumbers and two rows of okra. We will plant two rows of corn in the Thomas garden elsewhere on the property. This will complete the planting of the summer garden. The Oconee garden is at Thomas Orchards on Hwy. 441 in Watkinsville. Starting the week of April 22nd, volunteers can sign up to work at the garden on the Sign-up Genius web site created for the garden. We will need 6 volunteers each Monday at 9 am to harvest and manage the garden.

*Pollinator Garden at Piedmont-Athens Regional* – The Piedmont Pollinator Garden will have a work day May 4 to clean up spring weeds and make sure all of the plant labels are correctly identifying the plants. Pictures will be included in the next month’s issue!

*Bulb Sale* – Shirley Baker reported that about 50 orders have been received for a total value of $5000.

*Plant Sale* – Heather passed out plant labels and flyers about the sale Saturday April 26/27 at the Clarke County Cooperative Extension office. Drop-off is 3-6 on Friday. Anyone who needs to drop off plants early should place them under the pines. Heather passed up a sign-up sheet for volunteers. Everyone was reminded to price plants in even dollar amounts on markers that are provided. Do not use popsicle sticks. Everyone should park in the Long Horn parking lot on Friday. On Saturday everyone is encouraged to park in the Doctor's office lot behind the Extension office. Volunteers are needed: First shift will be 7:30 – 11am, and second shift will be 11am – 2:30pm. Yard art is welcome. Plants will be sold on Friday, but no change will be given and IOU's will not be accepted.

**New Business and Announcements:**

*State Botanical Garden News* – Andrea Fischer reported that the SBG plant sale during Plantapalooza grossed (not including tax) $61,000. This was the highest sales ever. She thanked those who volunteered at the sale and those who continue to volunteer at the SBG Children's Garden. She reminded everyone about the upcoming Piedmont Garden Tour. Tickets are available in the SBG gift shop.

*Cooperative Extension Update* – No report

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosemary Stancil
Secretary
I have never been a plant collector for several reasons. First of all, I have limited space and just can’t plant and grow all the plants I’d love to have. A collector’s landscape can also look hodge-podge where plants are displayed without regard to a plan and how they will mesh with other plants. I also associate plant collectors with impulse buyers who just have to own a certain plant just because it was bragged about in a garden lecture or magazine. Sadly, without a plan to provide the plant its optimum growing environment in terms of sunlight exposure, soil texture and drainage, that expensive ‘gotta-have-it’ plant often never quite looks like the one pictured in the PowerPoint.

Even though I don’t collect plants and try to avoid impulse plant purchases, I’ve gotten hooked on remontant-flowering bearded irises. The word remontant means flowering more than once during the growing season. It all started about 5 years ago when Alice Zwaagstra, an Oconee Master Gardener, shared with me a rhizome from her Immortality (pure white) bearded iris. The first season in the ground it bloomed 3 to 4 times, then subsequent years it has bloomed repeatedly 6 to 8 times from April to November, even during the heat of summer. It also multiplies vigorously and has some of the most handsome blue-green foliage I have ever seen on an iris. An added bonus is deer resistance!

I planted ‘Immortality’ in a low swale in my landscape where it stays moderately moist and gets about 5 hours of full sunlight each day. That must have done the trick because the plant has grown vigorously and multiplied rapidly. I have divided the clumps each year for the past 3 years, shared them with friends and even put a few in the AAMGA plant sale.

So there they were, two cousins of ‘Immortality’ staring me in the face at the State Botanical Garden’s plant sale! Even though I have avoided buying them over the internet, and it wasn’t too difficult since prices + shipping are exceedingly high, at the SBG plant sale I could see them, feel them and take them home with me without paying shipping costs. After all, I had to buy them so my ‘Immortality’ iris would not be lonely! Even though they were priced at $16 for a quart container, if they grow and multiply like ‘Immortality’, I will realize a return on my investment many times over.

At the plant sale I purchased ‘Harvest of Memories’, a pure yellow with ruffled petals and ‘Cordoba’ with mango orange flowers and bright-red beards (the fuzzy part on the mid-rib of the lower petals). Both plants are remontant-flowering hybrids. I was surprised to learn on a google search that there are over 20 remontant-flowering irises on the market today, and more are being developed each year. So if my two recent purchases perform as well as ‘Immortality’ then I’ll have to get ‘Pink Attraction’ and ‘Misty Twilight’, two of the most beautiful bearded irises I have ever seen, at least in their glamour shots on the web.

Although I’ve been smitten by remontant-flowering irises, if I limit myself to growing only five of them when there are over 20 selections on the market, I’m not a plant collector…..YET! That’s my opinion and I’m sticking with it!
Ramblings, continue

Tall Bearded Remontant-flowering Irises

(Source: National Gardening Association’s Learning Library)

'Champagne Elegance' (zones 5-10): champagne standards, muted pink falls.
'Clarence' (zones 5-10): white wash over violet falls.
'Cordoba' (zones 4-10): mango orange with red beard.
'Earl of Essex' (zones 4-10): white edged with stitching of medium blue-violet.
'Eternal Bliss' (zones 5-10): very pale violet with light tangerine beards.
'Feed Back' (zones 5-10): medium blue-violet with yellow beards.
'Harvest of Memories' (zones 5-10): medium yellow.
'Immortality' (zones 3-10): white.
'Matrix' (zones 4-10): cream with cinnamon stitching.

'Misty Twilight’ (zones 4-10): pale violet-blue with misty green in center of falls around pale blue-violet beards.
'Pink Attraction' (zones 5-10): ruffled pale pink.
'Silver Dividends' (zones 6-10): ruffled silver-white.
'Summer Olympics' (zones 4-10): yellow with large white blaze around orange beards.
'Sunny Disposition' (zones 5-10): light yellow.
'Violet Music' (zones 5-10): violet.
'Witch of Endor' (zones 5-10): dark burgundy bitone.
'Zurich’ (zones 5-10): ruffled white with yellow-tipped beards.

Dwarf Bearded Remontant-flowering Irises

'Baby Blessed' (zones 5-10): yellow.
'Plum Wine' (zones 5-10): plum-red.
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Athens-Clarke Plant-A-Row for the Hungry

What a week it was! On April 15 (Could there be a better way to “celebrate” Tax Day?) and April 17, 14 volunteers hauled compost into the beds, tilled the compost in, raked it down, and planted all the beds at our Plant-A-Row for the Hungry at Clarke Middle School. Work continued during the next two weeks to finish hauling in the compost, check out and repair the irrigation, work on trellising the tomatoes and cucumbers, and putting pine straw on the newly planted vegetables.

We also took our first harvest of the year to the Athens Area Emergency Food Bank—2-1/5 pounds of onions and 3-1/2 pounds of radishes. The snow peas and sugar snap peas look very healthy, and, if we can continue to convince them to climb the lines we have strung, we should have a substantial harvest over the next few weeks.

Pam Bracken will be sending out a request for volunteers. Please sign up for as many weeks as you can to work in the garden. You can work early or late, and now that Milestone testing has been completed, you can work during school hours. Just remember to check in at the Clarke Middle School front office on Baxter Street and get an identification badge. If you are a newbie to the world of vegetables—yes, we all had to learn the difference between an okra plant and a weed—we will try to pair you up with an experienced gardener. If you would like for me to meet you there and go over the basics with you, I’ll be glad to do so.

The work that we do at the garden is a huge benefit to the people in our community who need the fresh fruits and vegetables that we provide. We’d love to improve on the 1,500 pounds of produce that we provided in 2018, and, with your help we can.

Oconee Plant-a-Row Update
Gary Wade and Bob Quinn, co-coordinators

The Oconee garden at Thomas Orchards in Watkinsville is completely planted now with the summer crops. We have three rows of Irish potatoes. They are about 12 inches tall and looking good. We also planted tomatoes, peppers, squash, cucumbers, southern peas, bush beans, and okra. A spring crop of lettuce, onions and radishes were harvested and delivered to the SOS (Serving Our Seniors) program in Bishop. Jerry Thomas is preparing a garden adjacent to their home on the property specifically for corn, so we will be planting 3 rows of corn along with their corn for better cross pollination which produces better kernel fill on the ears. The raccoons have devastated our corn crops in the past, so having the corn adjacent to their house may deter these varmints.

We will need six volunteers each week to tend and harvest our Oconee garden. A Sign-up Genius web site will be available for volunteers to sign up for work days beginning April 29th. We work on Mondays at 9 am so we can harvest the produce and get it to Sheila Jackson, coordinator of the SOS program in Bishop, early in the week so she has time to get it distributed to the seniors on her list. The recipients of the produce are low-income seniors who either do not have the space to garden or are physically unable to garden, yet appreciate fresh produce to supplement their diets. Many of the recipients preserve the produce by canning and freezing so they can enjoy it all year long.

To sign-up to volunteer at the Oconee garden, go to:
https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f044caca72da4f94-oconee
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

*Pollinator Garden at Piedmont-Athens Regional* – The Piedmont Pollinator Garden will have a work day May 4 to clean up spring weeds and make sure all of the plant labels are correctly identifying the plants. Pictures will be included in the next month’s issue!

David Giordano sent in some photos below of the early Plantapalooza sale at the State Botanical Garden and some photos of the Tahiti daffodils from the bulb sale planted by his wife in pots.
May Gardening Chores

• Treat for azalea lace bugs if you've had problems in the past. Insecticidal soap, horticultural oil and synthetic insecticide chemicals all work well, sprayed under the leaves.
• Look for tiny "toothpicks" on the trunk of your Japanese maple, Kwansan cherry and other small landscape trees. The Asian ambrosia beetle is spreading death-dealing fungus inside the trunk.
• Plant begonias, coleus, geraniums, petunias and vinca for summer-long color in your landscape.
• Apply Bacillus thuringiensis to cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower to ward off cabbage looper caterpillar damage as these plants mature.
• Snip off sprouts from the base and lower trunk of crepe myrtles that are being trained to grow in an upright tree form.
• Remove leafless limbs from shade trees. If they don’t have leaves by now, they won’t be coming back.
• Dig, divide and transplant your crowded irises to a better location, if needed, after they bloom.
• Prune early-flowering azaleas now that they have finished blooming. Remove tall sprouts at their base, inside the shrub.
• Pinch out the growing tips of rhododendron limbs now that flowers are gone. You'll get many more flowers next year.
• Plant rosemary, basil, oregano, dill and other herbs for savory summer meals.
• Place a newspaper mulch 10 sheets thick under tomato plants to prevent leaf diseases. Cover with pine straw.
• Plant corn, squash, beans and peas now that the soil is quite warm. Make another planting of corn in two weeks.
• Drill a one eighth inch hole in the cap of a two liter soft drink bottle. Fill the bottle, cap it and upend it in the soil of your patio plants to slowly water them during the day.
• Get in the habit of wearing a hat and sunscreen whenever you work in the sun. Skin cancer cases are on the rise.
• Plants need an inch of water per week. What’s an inch of water? If rainfall or irrigation fills an empty soup can to a depth of one inch, that’s just what plants need.

AAMGA:  www.caes.uga.edu/extension/clarke/anr/amga.html
GMG:  www.georgiamastergardeners.org
Pulmonarias brighten a shady spot

Last fall, I received a box with a dozen shade loving plants to try. I immediately put the little guys into pots to establish strong root systems before they moved into the garden a few weeks later. I was so excited about receiving new varieties of my favorites (toad lily, coral bells, foamflower) I pretty much ignored the three pulmonarias. Well, there is no ignoring these little gems this spring! I never had grown pulmonarias before, so imagine my delight to find clusters of pink and blue flowers dancing above evergreen foliage that had sprung back to life.

Pulmonaria has spotted leaves, usually a silvery cream splashed onto deep green, but they're being bred to have more and more interesting foliage. One of my plants, “Silver Streamers,” has almost pure silver foliage, a great plant for brightening up a shady garden. Common names for these European natives include lungwort, since early Renaissance herbalists thought the foliage looked like a diseased lung and therefore used this plant for the ailment. Other common names include Bethlehem sage.

The flowers are charming, with several little flowers in clusters rising above the foliage. Often pink flowers age to a blue color, creating a two-tone flower cluster. Others come in stable blues, pinks or white. As charming as the flowers are, it is the mottled evergreen foliage that makes them so useful in the shade garden.

The plants mature at about 1-foot high by 2-feet wide, spreading by creeping but not too aggressive rootstocks. The plants can be divided in spring after flowering and used to create a low mass planting or groundcover. Re-plant the newest crowns about a foot apart. This is a very easy plant to propagate by division.

Lungwort is a great plant for looking at from above or lining a woodland path. The best spot for lungwort has afternoon shade, fertile soil, plenty of moisture and good drainage, it can handle full shade.

‘My planting is about 5 years old and looks great all through the summer” Jane Noe, an Athens area Master Gardener told me. “They’ve been very happy planted in partial shade with a blue hosta astilbe, and low golden hostas.”

Pulmonarias also combine well with ferns, Lenten roses, burgundy heucheras and pale pink tulips.

References warn plants can brown or even go dormant in summer without sufficient water, but there seems to be hardly any pest or disease problems. Numerous Internet sources list pulmonarias as deer-resistant. The deer have not yet browsed the garden where I have planted my pulmonarias. As long as pansies bloom there, I consider that garden untested.

As with most perennials, the planting looks best if faded blooms and older leaves are taken off the plants. You'll discover the leaves have a bristly feel, which make that deer-resistant claim believable.

I am very happy these three pulmonarias have moved into my garden. I can't imagine a shade garden without them now.

Well, there is no ignoring these little gems this spring! I never had grown pulmonarias before, so imagine my delight to find clusters of pink and blue flowers dancing above evergreen foliage that had sprung back to life.
Celebrating the Master Gardener interns for completing their classroom-based phase of the year-long training program. UGA Extension Georgia Master Gardener Program. On Tuesday, April 2, 2019 the interns took their final examination, and on Thursday we celebrated with the mini reception.