

# GGG

## Granville Gardeners Gazette

Promoting Education and Recreation through Gardening Activities

Oxford, North Carolina

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

August 2024, Volume XIV, No.8



### **MEDICINAL NATIVE PLANTS FOR HEALTH AND STEWARDSHIP**

by Hannah Popish, Poppysol Farm, Pittsboro, NC

Monday, August 26 at 7 p.m., Granville County Expo Center, 4185 U.S. Hwy 15 S, Oxford, NC

#### **About the Program**

Hannah is excited for the opportunity to speak on the overlap of the utility and importance of growing native plants for the ecosystem and for ourselves. There is wonderful research on native plants' ability to nourish and survive our ecosystems at a deeper level. We will touch on some various ways of working with the plants both topically and internally as a way to understand how the plants can nourish us as well.

#### **About the Speaker**

Hannah Popish runs Poppysol, LLC - a one-acre permaculture inspired herb and flower farm and apothecary in Chatham County, NC. She is a clinical herbalist and farmer with a masters in Social Work who is passionate about encouraging people to be agents in their own healing. Her work is firmly grounded in connecting people with plants, knowing that each person has unique needs and that healing is non-linear. You can learn more about her at [www.poppysolnc.com](http://www.poppysolnc.com)

By Hannah Popish and Marty Finkel

Photos -- Left: Beth Schultz    Middle: Hannah Popish    Right: Jenny Midgett

## President's Notes

Greetings Members,

I hope all of you that attended the Ice Cream Social would agree it was a fabulous time. What a wonderful spread of yummy desserts. And we even had a full rainbow! The folks that participated in the Plant Swipe were able to go home with some interesting plants.

One of my favorite parts of our monthly *GG Gazette* newsletter is the end section of plants in bloom for that month. This always make me consider how I can improve my garden and where I could put new plants. My favorite routine for garden planning – and there are two – is very early in the morning walking the garden with coffee or late in the day with a glass of wine. Late fall / early winter is the time I make the big changes in the beds around the yard. I keep a project board in the basement beside my desk and it is already full for this year!

I hope some of you will be able to take advantage of one or more of the several currently scheduled club activities. Your club leaders work hard to put together fun and meaningful events.

Lastly, I want to thank those of you who have taken time out and are supporting the bi-monthly Post Office Wednesday maintenance events. Peter has done a great job leading this group, and having help every other Wednesday makes a difference. As Peter looks forward to his relocation to Arizona, we are fortunate that the Post Office Garden will now be in the capable hands of Vickie Johnson. I am grateful that Vickie stepped up to provide leadership for a very visible club project.

Enjoy Your Summer!

David Quinn

### Precautions for Summer Gardening

We are thankful that the drought has been dampened, but we still have some hot weather ahead. The National Weather Service has good information on how to be prepared for and respond to extreme heat:

[NWS: Heat Exhaustion/Stroke](#)

**Stay safe!**

Heat Exhaustion	Heat Stroke
<b>ACT FAST</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Move to a cooler area</li><li>Loosen clothing</li><li>Sip cool water</li><li>Seek medical help if symptoms don't improve</li></ul>	<b>ACT FAST</b> <b>CALL 911</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Move person to a cooler area</li><li>Loosen clothing and remove extra layers</li><li>Cool with water or ice</li></ul>
Dizziness Thirst Heavy Sweating Nausea Weakness	Confusion Dizziness Becomes Unconscious
<i>Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.</i>	<i>Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.</i>
	Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated, Stay Informed!

## JCRA Plants for Auction for August 2024

The plants Rob and Sophia have selected are designed to inspire plant lust even among Harley riders. Just wait until you see them! Meanwhile, have a look here and decide which ones you can't live without . . .

**'Shishi' Crested Bamboo Fern** (*Coniogramme jinggangshanensis* 'Shishi'): This fern with the unpronounceable name is a rather rare and unusual form of the Asian bamboo fern. The upright, dark glossy-green, 2' tall fronds are composed of large pinnae (fern leaflets), each ending in a fancy petticoat-like crest. Expect a 3' wide patch in 5 years, thanks to the spreading rhizome. Rich, moist soils result in the best growth, while very dry soils will slow its spread to a crawl...a dramatic and unique specimen in the garden! In mild winters, it remains completely evergreen, but when winter temperatures drop to single digits, it will be tardily deciduous.



←**Kay Parris Magnolia** (*Magnolia grandiflora* 'Kay Parris'): I couldn't believe all the raves in every source I found for this remarkable tree. Considered to be one of the very best of the evergreen magnolias, 'Kay Parris' is a relative newcomer. This small tree or multi-stemmed large shrub can stand up to any of its competition. It has a dense, compact habit with great limb structure. The leaves are a glossy, medium green with wavy leaf margins and an almost



velvet-like orange-brown underside. The extremely fragrant flowers appear from late May to late September. Plant in well-draining soil where it will get morning sun. It is drought tolerant once established but needs to be watered if dry conditions are prolonged. 'Kay Parris' magnolia should have a specimen spot in any sunny Carolina landscape. Expect a mature height of 20' and width 10'.



←**Chinese redbud 'Reznicek'** (*Cercis chinensis* 'Reznicek'): Here's another rare variety that resisted all my efforts to get information about. But Mark Weathington, director of the JCRA, came to my rescue again. Here's what he wrote:

A dwarf variety. Very cold tolerant...will grow in Michigan. From Trevor Duvall of Duvall Nursery in Michigan.



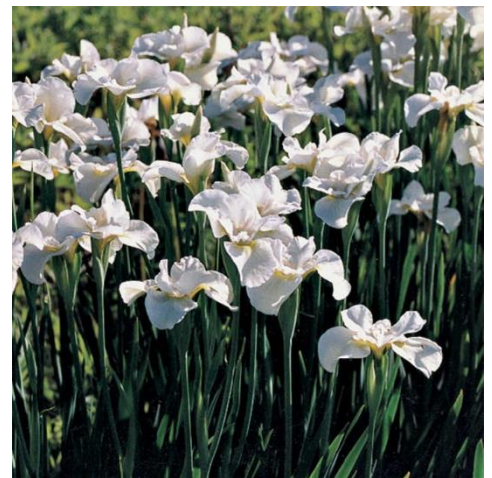
←I believe the plant you received may actually be *Cercis chinensis* 'Reznicek' ex. Meaning it is a seedling from the cultivar 'Reznicek' and not the clone so it may vary from the parent plant.

That's all we have, but from the photos it looks like a real winner!



↑**Mountain hydrangea 'O Amacha Nishiki'** (*Hydrangea serrata* 'O Amacha Nishiki'): This compact hydrangea cultivar has unusual leaves – they are heavily dusted gold with red stems, and the fall color is a showy red/burgundy. The lace cap flowers begin white and turn pink or blue depending on soil acidity. It grows to 3' to 4' tall and wide, **and doesn't need pruning**. A native of Asia, it will grow best in light to open shade – or full morning sun and afternoon shade. Soil should be high in organic matter and drain well. It will flower best with consistent summer watering. It attracts bees and butterflies.

**Siberian iris 'Gull's Wing'** (*Iris siberica* 'Gull's Wing'): One would think this is a Japanese iris, which it resembles. It is a stunning, tall, late-blooming Siberian iris with white flowers that have wide, flaring falls on rigid stems which rise high above a clump of arching, grass-like, blue-green leaves. It loves moisture and will thrive near a stream or the edge of a pond. In the southeast, it needs morning sun and light afternoon shade – too much shade causes it to fall over and produce fewer blooms. It grows from rhizomes, and over time you will have a clump of beautiful blooms perfect for cutting. It is easily divided, and the best planting time is fall. It will tolerate drought after it has been established with consistent moisture over two growing seasons. Expect it to get 2.5 to 3 feet tall and wide and bloom in May to June. It's great in rain gardens, and it attracts butterflies. As a bonus, it's less prone to the pests and diseases of other irises.



By Marty Finkel, Credits:

'Shishi' Crested Bamboo Fern description and photo from Plant Delights <http://www.plantdelights.com>

'Kay Parris' Magnolia: Description from NC Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox. Photo of tree:

Sutton, J. (2022) 'Magnolia Grandiflora' from Trees and Shrubs online ([Magnolia Grandiflora](#)). Photo of

flower: NCEGPT Doug McAbee CC BY-NC 2.0 **Chinese Redbud 'Reznicek'**: Description from Mark

Weathington, Photos: JCRA Photo Collection. **Mountain Hydrangea**: Description and photo on right

from the NCEGPT, Kathy Still CC BY 4.0, photos left and middle from JCRA Photo Collection

**Siberian Iris**: Description from Mo. Bot. Garden Plant Finder, photo from Kiefer Nursery, Durham.

## To Do in August

- Apply pre-emergence herbicide the **third week** in August to help control the weeds that always show up in late winter/early spring:  
chickweed, mulberry weed, annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*), wild garlic and onions, several thistles, wild mustard, shepherd's purse, Carolina geranium, henbit, black medic, and many more.  
Read more about weeds here: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook/6-weeds>  
Contact our horticulture extension agent, Johnny Coley for more information about using pre-emergence herbicides.
- Container plants are, by definition, under stress because the roots are confined. Keep them watered to reduce some of the stress.
- Plant seeds of lettuce, turnips, kale, spinach, mustard, and snap beans for a fall garden, plus transplants of cabbage, broccoli, and collards.
- Large trees require between 50 and 200 gallons of water/day in the summer, so most herbaceous plants under these trees will suffer if not watered (from Plants Delights Newsletter).
- Cut annuals back by half for bushier plants and more flowers.
- Strawberry and blueberry plants set buds in the fall, so fertilize now with a complete fertilizer. If you get any on the leaves, wash it off.
- Hot, dry weather favors spider mites – control with insecticidal soap.
- Keep an area of soil moist for butterflies, or set out watermelon rinds so they can drink the juice.
- Allow bell and jalapeno peppers to turn red for extra flavor & higher beta carotene content.
- Divide irises and daylilies this month.
- Check garden centers for fall-blooming bulbs to add to your garden.
- The week of September 1st is the recommended time to spray for peachtree borers. **Get prepared now:** Spray the trunk and major branches, paying particular attention to ground level. Follow label instructions. Note some products will recommend multiple applications. Peachtree borers may also attack apricot, cherry, nectarine, and plum trees. For more information on peachtree borers see: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/peachtree-borer>, and for a list of relative effectiveness and safety of pesticides for peach insects: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/north-carolina-agricultural-chemicals-manual/insect-and-disease-control-of-fruits>
- Clean up spent crops in the garden, and if you are considering a fall garden, see: [https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs\\_ext\\_vt\\_edu/426/426-334/426-334\\_pdf.pdf](https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/426/426-334/426-334_pdf.pdf) Also see: [www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/pdf/hgic1256.pdf](http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/pdf/hgic1256.pdf). Also, some seed sources have growing guides and other information on their web sites.
- If you are interested in extending your vegetable gardening season past the first frost, see: [www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-381/426-381.pdf](http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-381/426-381.pdf) or Jabbour, Niki. *The Year-Round Vegetable Gardener*. North Adams, MA.: Storey Publishing, 2011.  
Also see: <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/extending-garden-season/> and <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/floating-row-cover/> For a more comprehensive coverage of season extension with a resource list, see: <http://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/growingsmallfarms-seasonextension/>.
- Note that NC State Extension has a section of their website on Organic Production with individual sections on: Production Guides, General Organic Growing Resources, Use of Manures in crop Production, Pests & Disease Control, Season Extension and Greenhouse, Cover Crops, and more: <https://newcropsorganics.ces.ncsu.edu/organics/organic-production/>

By Marty Finkel

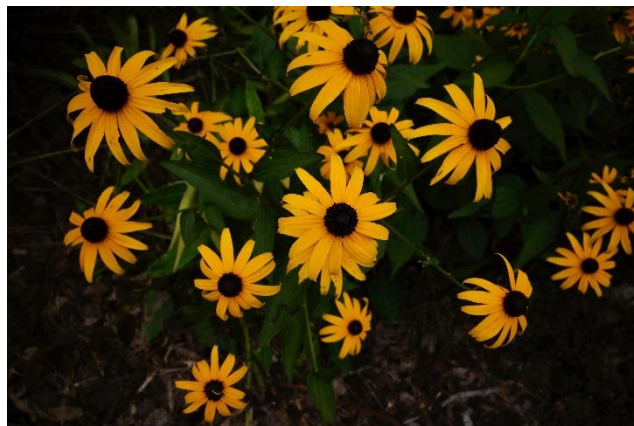
## My Buddy, Midnight

As some of you know, we live on College Street in Oxford. Since the purchase of our home, the two houses beside us have been unoccupied. During this time, we have observed various feral cats next door. Over a year ago, one specific black cat started frequenting our yard. The cat was soon a regular. With first encounters, the cat stayed at a distance. It would get close and then leave. A few weeks went by and the cat decided to move in – sort-of. Time has gone by and the cat is now a regular fixture in the family. The cat's name is Midnight.

During this time, Midnight has become my regular yard buddy. Whenever I'm working in the yard, the cat is never more than 10 to 15 feet away. If I'm sitting pulling weeds (and goodness knows I have many of them to pull) she will come and "inspect" every 15 or so minutes. "Inspection" follows a regular pattern. First, she positions herself directly below and in-between me and the weeds I'm pulling. The result is that I must stop. Rubs are expected. Next, she will get in my lap. More rubs. After a few minutes, she will get down and go off and lie down. Never far away. This process continues for as long as I am working in the yard.

In the beginning, this was annoying. These days I look forward to her company during my time in the yard. We have conversations (did I just admit that!) and I enjoy her supervision. I never thought I would have a cat as a yard buddy – but I do.

By David Quinn



*"Nature is painting for us, day after day, pictures of infinite beauty."* – John Ruskin

Photos by Kat Ravenel (first two) and William Ravenel (far right).

## Q&A

**Q: What is all the buzz about biochar? What is it? Should I be using it in my garden?**

**A:** I wrote to a few people at NCSU and elsewhere trying to get a handle on this subject with disappointing results – then I thought of Joe Lamp'1. In the 6-28-18 Joe Gardener podcast “Biochar Basics and More: Digging Deeper in the Science of Soil,” he and Mark Highland of “Organic Mechanic” discussed the subject.



Biochar



Top 3 plants grown with biochar blend,  
bottom 3 without



**What is Biochar?** It is carbon – pure carbon that is left after burning organic material at a high temperature (over 350 degrees C, or 662 degrees F) in the absence of oxygen (pyrolysis): everything that can burn does burn. Wood chips, lumber yard waste, animal manure, left-over field crops, invasives like kudzu and English ivy, or any other organic material can be used. The cooking for several hours at over 500 degrees C produces a light weight, fine-textured, negatively charged product. If you're buying biochar, all products aren't equal in quality – many contain ash, which will raise soil pH. A good quality one will help maintain soil in the neutral range.

Biochar isn't fertilizer. And it never breaks down – once in the soil it stays. It helps fertilizers work better because soil nutrients bind to it chemically and are thus more available to plant roots. The porosity of the particles improves aeration in poorly drained or compacted soil, and on the other hand it can help fast-draining sandy soils retain water. It has excellent water retention properties.

Biochar can improve soils that have lead, cadmium, and other heavy metals by tightly binding them, thus preventing their uptake by plants and soil life. As it attaches to these heavy metals, “. . . it sheds other bound ions, many of them plant nutrients. This process of ion exchange contributes to increased levels of available nutrients for plant uptake,” according to Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott, Washington State University Puyallup Research and Extension Center, in her 2014 Extension Fact Sheet FS147E titled “Biochar: A Home Gardener's Primer.” This highly readable document gives the home gardener all he/she needs to know about biochar.

Beneficial soil microbes (fungi, bacteria) are helped by the addition of biochar because its porous structure provides good habitat. Earthworms may suffer if it raises the pH beyond their tolerance, and they may become dehydrated.

Plants grown in biochar-amended soil nearly always out-grow those grown without the amendment (see center photo, above). There are a few cautions with using biochar, however. Using too much can injure

beneficial organisms like earthworms, it can reduce the effectiveness of soil-applied pesticides, and it can cause nitrogen deficiency when not used properly.

The Joe Gardener podcast explains it this way: “Biochar must be inoculated before you add it to your soil.” He compares it to an empty battery that needs to be charged with nutrients, otherwise it will suck up nutrients from the soil. Blending biochar with compost or an organic fertilizer for approximately a month will enable it to absorb nutrients – essentially charging it to full capacity – which it will release when added to the soil. For this reason, biochar is usually sold as a blend.

The podcast reports that a blend with a ratio of 5% biochar (by volume) to other ingredients (compost or other organic materials) is ideal for optimal benefits, so pay attention to ratios stated on the package. It continues “. . . One cubic foot of biochar blend will run you \$30-40 and provide just the right amount for a 3’ x 8’ garden bed (or 24 square feet). The blend is lightly mixed in to the depth of a shovel blade. When you consider that single amendment will last the lifetime of your garden, the cost doesn’t seem quite as daunting.”

Another article “Biochar – Does it Really Work in the Garden” in the Gardening Myths blog by Robert Pavlis points out that some studies comparing plant growth using biochar to that of plants without it gives mixed results: some show improved growth and some decreased growth. He explains that, as mentioned earlier in this article, biochar products differ greatly, and factors affecting plant growth are the composition of the original soil, amendments added, type of organic material used, pyrolysis conditions, ratio of biochar added, and whether straight biochar or a blend is added. Here’s the link:  
<https://www.gardeningmyths.com/biochar-work-garden/>

If you’re interested in experimenting, you can get Organic Mechanics Biochar Blend from their website <https://organicmechanicsoil.com/product/organic-mechanics-biochar-blend/> or through Amazon <https://www.amazon.com/Organic-Mechanics-Ready-Biochar-Blend/dp/B074Q2QPX2>

Photos: Mark Highland

By Marty Finkel from sources cited

For more detail about how biochar can help your garden, follow this link:

[Washington State University Extension Fact Sheet • FS147E Biochar](#)



“Coffee. Garden. Coffee. Does a good morning need anything else?” —Betsy Cañas Garmon



**Q:** I love having flowers in the house and would like to grow some that are long-lasting in the vase. Can you suggest some that bloom this time of year?

**A:** I looked at the September J C Raulston Arboretum e-Update and scrolled down to YouTube Channel Update where I found 5 programs that were recorded in August. One was “Cut Flowers from the Garden” by Tim Alderton (research technician) and Kathleen Thompson (volunteer), recorded 8-25. You don’t have to be a member or pay to watch, just click on the program and it starts. They are wonderful.



Sweet Laura



Koncajoli



Summer Breeze



Princess Fabiana

The 4 photos above are of alstroemeria, or Peruvian lily (the last 3 are sold at Plant Delights Nursery), and you can also find bulbs for sale in catalogs. ‘Sweet Laura’ and several others are growing at the JCRA. They last 2 weeks or longer in the vase.



← ‘Florida Sunshine’ is a yellow-leaf anise tree (*Illicium parviflorum* ‘Florida Sunshine’) and would be a bright addition to plant in your part-shade garden this fall. The photo was taken in Jan. at the JCRA, and the summer foliage is bright yellow. It was used as filler in the vase.



← Rudbeckia ‘Little Henry’ is a one-third shorter version of ‘Henry Eilers,’ which we had in the GG pollinator garden. It has rolled, or quilled petals and also has long vase life. ‘Little Henry’ matures at about 3’ and doesn’t split out like its larger relative. Tim used a couple of the hardy ginger flowers, ‘Cherry Baby’ and ‘Betty Hodges,’ → which are fragrant.





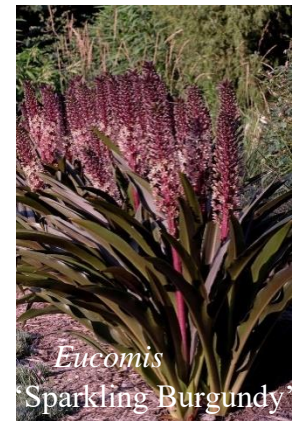
← The Ravenel's Swamp Rattlesnake Master is native, attracts many kinds of pollinators, and adds greatly to arrangements. This variety is sold at Plant Delights Nursery, and the species *Eryngium aquafolium*, can be grown from seed. You may remember that a cousin, Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) → was the UNC Botanical Garden's wild-flower of the year a few years ago. It's a great pollinator plant, too.



A couple of branched sunflowers, 'Suncredible Saturn' and another helianthus, a hardy asparagus fern filler, the stalked seed pod of a past penstemon (like Husker's Red), allium 'Millenium,' liriopse flowers, 'Miss Manners' obedience plant, and flowers of elephant ears were also used by Tim.



Kathleen does the arrangements for the Ruby McSwain building, and she brought some flowers from her garden, including *Eucomis*, or pineapple lily (these can last for months and even go to seed in the vase), which are easy to propagate in the garden by leaf cuttings. I grew 'Sparkling Burgundy' at my house and gave a plant to Tom and Dot Jordan, who really enjoyed it. There are many colors and sizes available.



Kathleen brought hardy begonia (*Begonia grandis*), which I also grew and gave away bags full. From the Arboretum, she cut stems of a pretty St. John's Wort that had small yellow flowers clustered at the top of the stem, but Tim couldn't recall its name. She brought sprays of goldenrod from her garden and 'Limelight' hydrangea. She picked three small-flowered burgundy dahlias to echo the red undersides of the begonia leaves.

By Marty Finkel, from JCRA e-Update September 2021 "Cut Flowers from the Garden" with Tim Alderton and Kathleen Thompson

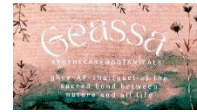
Photo credits: From JC Raulston Photo Collection: 'Sweet Laura' alstromeria, Anise tree 'Florida Sunshine,' Ginger 'Betty Hodges,' *Eucomis montana*. From Plant Delights Nursery, [www.plantdelights.com](http://www.plantdelights.com): last 3 alstroemeria photos on top row, Ravenel's Swamp Rattlesnake Master, 'Sparkling Burgundy' *Eucomis*. Courtesy of Terra Nova Nurseries, Inc.: Rudbeckia 'Little Henry'. From UNC Botanical Garden: Rattlesnake Master

"Don't wear perfume in the garden unless you want to be pollinated by bees." - Anne Raver

## Member Marketplace

### **Name: Brittnee Worthy (Geassa Apothecary)**

Location: Farm in Stem; Retail location in the Art and Craft Space, 125 Main St., Oxford.



General: Herbal products and botanical crafts, including herbal tinctures, bitters, and extracts, teas, salves, candles, hydrosols and soon I will have herbal honey, herbal latte powders, seasonal syrups, botanically dyed bandanas, botanically dyed yarn, botanical prints of my artwork, dried and fresh bouquets, and more!

This month: This month I will be bringing in a new wound healing salve, nerve pain and sciatica oil and salve made with St. John's Wort, many summer hydrosols, Summer Bloom Tea, Frolick in Daisies beeswax candles, new migraine and insomnia tinctures, in addition to my ongoing tincture line.

Look out for a fun line of autumnal products, including my Autumn Wander elixirs and candles, herbal infused honey, elderberry syrup, hydrosols, and seasoning salts in the Art & Craft Space this fall! We will also be selling all seasonal apothecary products as well as a plant sale at the Strong Arm "Sweater Season" pop-up (date TBD). Taste testers included!

Please follow me on Instagram [Geassa Apothecary on Instagram](#) and Facebook [Geassa Apothecary on Facebook](#) to stay up to date on events and specials. I am also available for contact via [geassaapothecary@gmail.com](mailto:geassaapothecary@gmail.com).

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### **Name: Judy McHugh.**

I have a backyard nursery for old-fashioned flowers and shrubs. At present I have:

- butterfly bush (purple, yellow, and lavender)
- snowball bush
- hydrangea (blue and limelight)
- bee balm
- purple coneflower
- spirea
- green dragon
- honeysuckle bush

I'm at the Oxford farmers market on Saturday mornings from 8 o'clock until 12 o'clock. If it's an old-fashioned shrub or flower you're looking for, I may have it. Prices range from \$5 to \$10. Plants can be picked up at the farmers market, or arrangements can be made for pick up by calling me at 919-691-4790.

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### **Name: Danny DeVito.**

My wife Cindy and I have been members of the Granville Gardeners for 10 plus years. We enjoy gardening and have turned our passion of edible gardening into providing us with tasteful treats and supplemental income. We sell our excess fruits, vegetables, and plants at the Oxford Farmers Market.

We grow many herbs including basil, oregano, various mints, pineapple sage, shiso, and rosemary. I sell the plants while Cindy dries them and sells dried herbs at the market for teas and flavoring. She also turns lavender into scrubs, bath bombs, sachets, and bouquets.

My true passion is growing fruits and vegetables that are uncommon and not found in local grocery stores. My favorite fruit is persimmon both Japanese and American. I have many different cultivars and sell the fruit at the local market in the fall. Other unusual fruits that I grow include many types of mulberries, che, pineapple guava, goumi berry, pawpaw, medlar, kiwi, pomegranate, various citrus (I have a small greenhouse), and jujube. I also grow the more traditional fruits such as blackberry, raspberry, blueberry, figs, pears, and plums.

As far as vegetables, I grow the usual (tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers) but I also grow the uncommon including Okinawa spinach, Malabar spinach, ground cherries, cucuzzi, tromboncino, Japanese turnips, and sunchokes.

My biggest challenges each year is finding new things to grow and where to put them, local wildlife (they eat well), insects of all types since Cindy does not allow me to use insecticide (bad for her cats) and weather (lack of rain, too much rain, and late frosts).

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**Name: Joyce Cifers.**

Our family-owned and operated Dalton Mill Nursery and Blueberry Farm sits in beautiful northern Granville County at [2566 Dalton Mill Rd, Bullock, NC 27507](https://www.google.com/maps/place/2566+Dalton+Mill+Rd,+Bullock,+NC+27507), just north of Oxford near Kerr Lake.

The U-pick blueberry farm and perennial nursery occupies a small portion of the historic fields that for decades hosted tobacco harvests. Two acres of blueberry plants produce hundreds of pounds of pesticide-free blueberries from mid-June through early August. The wet weather has shortened the end of our blueberry season, but we should have berries to pick through August 16, just call first to arrange a pick time.

While you're there, browse over 150 species of container grown perennials, grasses, and shrubs for your landscape. (Ask about the many native plants we have for sale.) Especially pretty right now is the Rudbeckia Goldsturm, Hosta 'Guacamole', Hosta 'Francee', Heuchera 'Palace Purple', Lantana 'Miss Huff', Pennisetum 'Cassian', Miscanthus 'Adagio' (Maiden Grass), Ajuga reptans 'Black Scallop' and 'Chocolate Chip', Echinacea purpurea 'Pow Wow White'. Our contact number is 919-482-9883. We look forward to sharing our nursery and farm with you.

...

**Name: Dean Richards (Bee Happy Farm)**

Location: 3102 Hester Road , Creedmoor. Phone: 919-452-8167

Primarily a Pick-Your-Own farm. Figs, eggplant, and pears currently available. Expect muscadines later in the month. Honey, canned goods, and plants are also available for sale. Call or check the Facebook page for latest: [Bee Happy Farm](#).



## Maria Kazmierski's Herbal Workshop on Saturday June 21, 2024

From the minute you enter Maria's front yard through the gate, you see many herbs planted in an English Garden style, with her bee hive visible to the visitor and easily accessible for the bees. GG members and friends met in the tree shaded backyard at the large pergola for the workshop.



At Maria's



Shaded backyard



Chicken coop – 1 chicken left



Gathering in back yard



Ingredients for golden milk



Many herbs to make teas

Maria gave an introduction and showed us a mask, not a KN-95, but one with a large nose that would be filled with an herb or herb combination. In ancient days, breathing in the scent of the herbs was thought to protect the wearer in the presence of disease or death, especially in the time of plagues. After the introduction, we were divided into 3 groups to learn how to make golden milk, how to make thyme syrup, and how to combine different herbs for teas. After these activities, we gathered in the house for the final tea ceremony.

Brittnee Worthy presented the workshop on making yarrow hydrosol using steam distillation. She told us that yarrow was used in ancient times to calm people and to treat the wounded on many battlefields. She explained the distillation process for making essential oils using a portable still, but since that process takes hours and a mountain of dried herbs, she showed us how to make a yarrow hydrosol instead. We each got a small spritzer of infused yarrow water.



In the photo on the left, Brittnee talks about yarrow, the difference between extracting hydrosol and essential oil and that she would make yarrow hydrosol. Middle: the basket of yarrow, the unassembled still, answering questions, and Evan ready to help. Right: adding water to the base of the still.

These three photos show the conclusion of this workshop:



Left: Finishing the still assembly. Middle: Positioning the hydrosol collection pot. Right: Taping the top securely – the final step. The water is heated on a burner using a propane cylinder.

Maria demonstrated how to make golden milk with turmeric. This is a drink that can help reduce chronic pain and inflammation. All participants had the opportunity to create their own blend of teas using herbs that would give relief and support the immune system.



Left: Maria explaining how to make golden milk. Middle: She's telling us how to make thyme syrup and how to blend herbs. Right: Station for making herb blends for tea.



Station for making thyme syrup. Bottling station for liquid products Instructional books

Our backyard activities concluded with tasty and good for you finger food and cold refreshing infused water, plus participation in the impressive Japanese Traditional Matcha Tea Ceremony. The first thing we learned was that matcha green tea is a powder compounded from the leaves of the tea plant, *Camellia sinensis*. Matcha is loaded with antioxidants and vitamins. It has a balance of sweetness and subtle boldness with delicate umami flavor. To make the tea, you need matcha powder, hot water and a whisk, but to really appreciate this special tea, follow the traditional method of heating the cup, testing the water temperature, and using the special whisk. Tea ceremonies are special.



Maria's cooking was phenomenal, as always, and the tasty fare was healthful and plentiful. During the meal, she explained and demonstrated making matcha tea. She made a cup for anyone who wanted to try it.

Each of us thanks Maria for her generosity, sharing her expertise in herbs, hard work in presenting such an organized, informative workshop, and her inimitable hospitality.

Maria's workshop was a great experience. If she holds her workshop next year, don't miss it.

By Kay Nutt and Marty Finkel

Photos: Marty Finkel

"There is nothing that is comparable to it, as satisfactory or as thrilling as gathering vegetables one has grown."

—Alice B. Toklas

"The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul."

—Alfred Austin

## Hunger and Food

As many in our community are struggling to make ends meet, amazing people in our community are finding creative ways to reach out and help. (Find several examples at the bottom of the Calendar of Events/Programs in this newsletter.)

These programs have been put in place to help those in need and to help others share their excess. Specifically, the library Farm to Fridge program and the Mobile Food Market provide food. Not listed in our calendar, but well known to everyone is ACIM, the local food bank. Please help spread the word about these resources to reach those who need it most. Links are in the calendar for the library program and Mobile Market. Find ACIM here: [ACIM Food Bank](#) or here: [ACIM on Facebook](#).

## Lavender, True and Other

Do you like the smell of lavender? It's never been one of my favorites, but if it's far enough away from my nose it's a little nice – it reminds me of my grandmother. I do like the color purple, however, and am always interested in learning about interesting plants, so on our recent trip to the south of France, Ray and I agreed we should find lavender fields. We spent one day around Sault in the Vaucluse and another in Coustellet and the Luberon Mountains.



We learned that there are about 47 species of lavender, all of which originated in the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. The most sought after is the true lavender, *Lavandula angustifolia*, also known as *Lavandula officinalis*, fine lavender, or English lavender (though it is not native to England). True lavender grows at an altitude of 2600 ft to 5900 ft. The higher the altitude, the higher the quality of the essential oils. This “fine lavender” is the species whose essential oil is sought after for pharmaceuticals, perfumery, and cosmetics because of the delicate fragrance in its essential oils. But fine lavender is a small plant. Each stalk has only one flower bud and it takes up to 150 lb. of flowers to distill one pound of essential oil. Bulgaria is actually the top producer of lavender, followed by France.

In the 1950s, to increase the yield of true lavender, growers bred it with *L. latifolia*, spike lavender, or aspic lavender, which grows from sea level up to only 2000 ft. The spike lavender plant is more branched than *L. angustifolia* and each stem has several flower heads, but it has too much camphor to be suitable for perfume or cooking. It is used to dilute oil paint.

*Lavandula x Intermedia*, or lavandin, the hybrid formed from crossing true lavender with spike lavender, can grow at altitudes up to 2600 ft. To distill a pound of essential oils from lavandin only requires 80 lb. of the flowers. Some of the difference is due to the purity of the true lavender oil meaning the proportion of the linalyl acetate (25~45%) and linalool (25~38%) to camphor (0.5%) is higher. The first two components of the essential oils (linalyl acetate and linalool) contribute the “lavender” scent to the oil. By contrast, the essential oil of lavandin has the proportions of 28~38% linalyl acetate and 24~35% linalool to a noticeably stronger 6~8% camphor. Additionally, the growth habit of the two plants – lavandin is taller, bushier and with more flowers per stem – means that one acre will yield much more essential oil from the lavandin. The higher yield of lavandin is attractive to farmers, and lavandin oil has uses in industrial and domestic cleaning products. A popular cultivar of lavandin which is slightly less



camphorated than most is ‘Grosso,’ and it is sometimes used in aromatherapy. There are many other varieties. France is the top producer of lavandin essential oil, followed by Spain.



At the lavender museum in Coustellet, we were able to sniff the essential oils of true lavender, spike lavender, and lavandin, to compare them. That’s when I realized it was the camphor that I didn’t like when I smelled lavender. We tasted true lavender in ice cream as well as lavender honey (the bees add the lavender – not a recipe!). Both were lightly scented and delicious!

Lavandin is easier to grow and more economical, and it has many uses. Unfortunately, it is sometimes adulterated and sold as true lavender. The price of true lavender has a draw for the unscrupulous! (In 2018, the international market price for lavender essential oil was \$100~178 per kg, while for lavandin essential oil, it was \$22 per kg.) You should be aware that Lavandin is also called ‘French Lavender.’

True lavender is pickier about its growing conditions, requiring excellent drainage, low humidity, high altitude, and a slightly alkaline soil. In our area, it might be more worthwhile to find a grower at high altitudes who ships it. Here we could try growing lavandin instead. I did find some websites of *L. angustifolia* growers in our western states that looked reputable and who ship their products.



By Kat Ravenel Sources: Lavender Museum of Coustellet, France; ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture publication: <https://ccsmallfarms.ucanr.edu/files/294700.pdf>; Herb Society of America: Essential facts for Lavender *Lavandula* spp., [Essential facts for lavender](#); S. Rathore and R. Kumar, ‘Essential Oil Content and Compositional Variability of *Lavandula* Species Cultivated in the Mid Hill Conditions of the Western Himalaya,’ [Molecules 2022, 27\(11\), 3391](#).

Photos by Kat Ravenel

## Calendar of Events/ Programs (Granville Gardeners items in blue boxes.)

### AUGUST

**August 7. Introduction to Foraging:** Join librarian, herbalist, avid forager, and member of the Granville Gardeners, Brittnee Worthy, on August 7 from 4-5pm at Thornton Library for a workshop on plant identification and local foraging. Learn some beginner basic botanical identification, how to forage ethically and safely, as well as a selection of local plants that you can harvest and eat! **(Free)**

**August 7. Post Office Garden Time.** 7-8pm. All Granville Gardeners and their friends are invited to help out at the Post Office garden. During the summer, we meet late in the day when the garden is in the shade and the day is beginning to cool down. **Be sure to sign up early to hold your spot!** We can only have up to about 6 people so we aren't bumping into each other. Once you sign up (tell Kat, Peter, or Vickie), you will get info on any helpful tools to bring if you have them. (In the case of rain, we will re-schedule.) Afterwards, let's go over to Tobacco Wood!

**August 8. Day One of Master Gardening Training** with NC Cooperative Extension. **Deadline to apply: August 1.** Classes meet Thursdays from 9-12 at Berea Volunteer Fire Dept, 1213 US-158 and run through November 21. Contact Johnny Coley: 919-603-1350, or [jwcoley@ncsu.edu](mailto:jwcoley@ncsu.edu). **(Class fee includes hardbound Master Gardener Manual)**

**August 10. National Farmers Market Week Celebration.** 8am to 1pm, at Vance Co. Farmers Market, 210 Southpark Dr., Henderson. Bring the family to celebrate farmers and a strong local food system. Games and activities for all. [Farmers Market Week Celebration](#)

### **August 13. Tour of NCSU Plant Sciences Building on Centennial Campus.**

For Granville Gardeners and their guests. Sign up by August 6.

When: Tuesday, August 13, at 11:00am (Meet at 10:50 in the lobby.)

Where: Plant Sciences Building (PSB), 840 Oval Dr, Raleigh

Transportation: You will receive a list of members who have signed up on August 7, so that you can make car-pooling arrangements

Parking: 860 Partners Way, Raleigh – a paid parking lot across the street from the building.

The tour is free of charge and will last one hour. The building has elevators and is air conditioned, except for the greenhouse on the roof. You do not have to go in the greenhouse if it is too hot. There are waiting areas. Read about the initiative here: <https://cals.ncsu.edu/psi/>

**August 14. Saving Seeds:** Got seeds? Join Johnny Coley, Extension, at Thornton Library on August 14 from 2-3pm to learn the what, when, where, and how of saving seeds from your own garden! **(Free)**

**August 21. Plant Walk:** Want to learn about plants and get some exercise too? Meet librarian, herbalist, and forager Brittnee Worthy on August 21 from 4-5pm for a plant identification and foraging walk at the Ledge Creek Conservation Trail to learn about how to spot and use edible plants in the area! *Attendance capacity is limited* for this event to ensure safe walking on the trail. Let us know if you are interested, so we can reserve your spot! **(Free, registration required)**

**August 21. Post Office Garden Time.** 7-8pm. All Granville Gardeners and their friends are invited to help out at the Post Office garden. During the summer, we meet late in the day when the garden is in the shade and the day is beginning to cool down. **Be sure to sign up early to hold your spot!** We can only

have up to about 6 people so we aren't bumping into each other. Once you sign up (tell Vickie, Peter, or Kat), you will get info on any helpful tools to bring if you have them. (In the case of rain, we will re-schedule.) Afterwards, let's go over to Tobacco Wood for refreshments!

**August 23-24. Great Southeast Pollinator Census (GSPC):** Started in 2017 in Georgia, now expanded to include SC, NC, and Florida. On these two days people will spend 15 minutes, in groups or individually, counting insects. The counts will be uploaded to the GSPC website [gsepc.org](http://gsepc.org). The program was begun to:

- create or add to sustainable pollinator habitat across the state
- increase entomological literacy– to know the importance of insects to our food supply and ecosystems
- generate useful data about our pollinator populations

Any Granville Gardeners interested in meeting to count pollinators together should contact Kat so we can choose a time and place that suites everyone.

**August 24. Pop-up Farmer's Market.** (Tentative date) Main Street in Oxford. Check for updates at: <https://granville.ces.ncsu.edu/> and <https://www.facebook.com/VisitOxfordNC/>.

**August 26. Granville Gardeners Board Meeting.** 6pm at the Expo Center. The board conducts the business of the club and is comprised of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, a past President, and six at-large board members. These 11 have a vote on the board. At least six are required to have a quorum. Committee Chairs attend the board meetings to report on their committee activity. Any interested club member may attend and provide input to discussions.

**August 26. Granville Gardeners General Meeting.** 7pm at the Expo Center. Hannah Popish of Poppypsol Farm will be giving a program on herbs (growing and selling) and native medicinal plants. (Read more about the program on page one.)

## **SEPTEMBER**

**September 4. Life on a Blueberry Farm:** Ever wonder about ins and outs of blueberry farming? Join local blueberry farmer Celine Koropchak on September 4, from 12-1pm at Thornton Library to hear about her experience owning and living on a blueberry farm in our area. (**Free**)

**September 6 and 7. NC Hot Sauce Contest & Festival.** Main Street, Oxford. [NC Hot Sauce Festival](#).

**September 28. Grow Greens Through the Winter: Microgreens and Home Hydroponics.** 10:30am – 12:30pm at Thornton Library in the large meeting room. Reuben and James will walk us through how to set up home systems to have fresh nutritious greens all winter. **Save the date!** Details at August meeting.

## **ON-GOING**

**Stovall Farmers' Market** at the Stovall Branch library every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday, 3:30-6:30 p.m. in their parking lot at 300 Main Street, Stovall, weather allowing. The Farmers' Market runs through Oct.

**Seed Library.** Thornton, Stovall, and South Branch libraries have seed libraries where you can donate, or find seeds to take home and plant. Click here to learn more: [Seed Library](#).

**Farm to Fridge.** A program Thornton, Stovall, and South Branch libraries have where you can donate your produce to help people in need. Click here to learn more: [Donate Produce](#). (Not shown, but Stovall Branch has a fridge.)

**Mobile Food Market.** Every Tuesday from 3-4:30pm at Tobacco Wood Brewing Co., 117 Wall St., Oxford: A mobile market, organized by non-profit Ripe for Revival, to distribute excess farm produce, and reach people in need. Cost of the produce is "what you can pay." Read more here: [Ripe For Revival](#).

## ICE CREAM SOCIAL AND ANNUAL PLANT SWIPE

You know the saying that a picture is worth a thousand words . . . since I had to miss one of my favorite socials, and so did Kat, we are grateful for Kay's pictures. However, as much as I appreciate words, neither they nor pictures will replace the tastes of ice creams, cakes, pies, and the other GG specialties.

I hope everyone ended up with the plant of choice. The plant swipe is always great fun even if you didn't! Its usual May date was switched to July since having our covered dish supper, the plant swipe, and the JCRA auction the same evening would make it too long.



By Marty Finkel

Photos by Kay Nutt

## PLANT OF THE MONTH: LESSER CALAMINT

(*Clinopodium nepeta* subsp. *nepeta*)



Although not a native plant, this lovely calamint has naturalized through the NC Piedmont. We had one in the GGG pollinator garden, and it made a perfect mound covered with small tubular white flowers for months starting in mid-summer and blooming until frost. It grows well in full to part sun in average soil and withstands dry conditions after establishing a good root system. In prolonged dry periods, it needs to be watered. It's native to the Mediterranean but has naturalized in Mexico and the U.S., primarily in the NC Piedmont. The leaves have a minty-lemon scent when crushed. It grows to 15 to 25" tall by 20 to 36" wide, and may root where stem nodes touch the ground. It attracts bees and butterflies.

### Also in Bloom this Month

Note that bloom times vary, depending on climatic and meteorological conditions, and many plants bloom several months in a row (and sometimes rebloom)

**\* denotes native plant**

Abelia  
Allium, many  
Canna-lily  
Coralbean  
Rain lily  
Hosta  
Lantana  
Salvia, many  
Blackberry lily  
River oats\*  
Hardy cosmos (orange)  
Crinum-lily\*  
Goblet flower  
Blanket flower\*  
Obedient plant\*  
Achillea\*

Hibiscus, many (some \*)  
Butterfly bushes, many  
Rattlesnake master\*  
Echinacea\*  
Daylily  
Crepe myrtle, many  
Rudbeckia\*  
Hardy begonias  
Desert willow  
Pampas grass  
Smoketree  
Cyclamen  
Datura  
Swamp milkweed\*  
Butterfly pea vine\*  
Anise hyssop\*

By Marty Finkel List source: JCRA plant collection and Debbie Roos' Pollinator Paradise

Photo: JCRA photo collection

Some other plants in bloom this month



Allium 'Millinium'



White Deutzia



Dahlia 'Gallery Cobra'



Hardy ginger lily



Hardy Dutchman's pipe



Alstroemeria 'Sweet Laura'



Sedum 'Back in Black'



Sweet hibiscus



Canna-lily



Double tiger lily



Ligularia 'Chinese Dragon'



'Forever and Ever' Hydrangea



Blue Prairie Flax



Salvia 'Hot Lips'

Photos: Sedum 'Back in Black,' Ligularia 'Chinese Dragon,' Prairie Blue Flax, and Salvia 'Hot Lips' from Plant Delights Nursery [www.plantdelightsnursery.com](http://www.plantdelightsnursery.com) All others: JCRA Photo Collection