



“PLANT INFO...”

Environmental Edition, Mary Lovings, Editor

Horticulture Edition, Gail Berthe, Editor

Landscape Design Edition, Jackie Fulmer, Editor

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Being a member of Garden Club of Georgia, Inc., Deep South Region, National Garden Clubs, Inc. is a VERY GOOD THING! I'm sure most of us who are members agree with this and are proud to learn and contribute to our various garden clubs. The last few weeks has given the “Happy Gardener” the opportunity to participate on a very limited scale the workings of organizing a Gardening School for 27 GCG members and friends. (My contribution was to suggest the UGA Research and Education Garden in Griffin as an excellent location to organize the two day course of study.) This is the first of four units of study relating to the Garden—both vegetable and ornamental. There will be three more two-day sessions at the Research and Education Garden leading to the ‘honor’ of being Garden Consultants! As a Garden Consultant you will have the opportunity to be more knowledgeable about your garden, advise fellow gardeners with appropriate garden information (if they ask for advice!) and to spread the good work about future Gardening Schools. It is great fun to participate in this activity. If you are interested in attending the last three classes contact Vickey Cooper, vickey1@bellsouth.net, coordinator of this class of Gardening School.



What Is a Garden!?

Goodness gracious—we all know the answer to that! But let's give this some thought: vegetable garden, flower garden, shrub garden, woodland gardens, shade gardens, botanical garden, wildflower garden, native plant garden...then I went to Google and discovered multitudes of different kind of gardens. How do we decide exactly what 'type' of garden is important for YOU. Maybe we have sufficient space to develop different flower/shrub beds. My point here is to help both the inexperienced gardener as well as the experienced gardener create the most appropriate garden for their situation. OK—how are we going to do that?

- Plan—(my personal opinion, not the professional opinion)
 - Read horticulture literature—
 - We GCG members know all about Allan Armitage and Michael Dirr and their excellent books dealing with specific horticulture categories. Both authors have strong connections to University of Georgia and to GCG, Inc. Their books give the reader understandable information about relevant books relating to horticulture.
 - Dr. Armitage primarily writes about annual and perennial plants.
 - Dr. Dirr's specialty involves shrubs and trees.
 - Many other authorities are available from the public library and for purchase from reliable authorities
 - Well written horticulture magazines offer excellent suggestions and ideas for maintaining your garden
 - The internet has many programs with horticulture topics
 - Observe local gardens—What makes a local garden '*special to you?*' Are the conditions similar to your garden ideas—it is impossible to have success with a shade plant if your garden is 100% sun! Or if your garden idea exists in Zone 3 but you live in zone 9! Check out what a zone 3 is compared to zone 9 etc.

- How much money are you willing to spend developing your garden?
 - Purchasing plants from *cut rate nurseries* can be time and money wasting. (frequently these cut rate nurseries are mail order organizations...that doesn't mean there are no good to excellent mail order nurseries—read the information included with the specimen—if the information is clearly stated and logical you will most likely be safe to use the nursery—just be cautious for the first few offers!
 - What constitutes a 'good nursery' be it mail order or local.
 - Reliable nursery workers who understand the appropriate care and location for the plants
 - Quality and well-priced nursery stock
 - Plants which are correctly labeled with genus and species specimens
 - Correct horticultural advice is available

■ How much time are you able to devote to your garden?

- Will volunteer or professional help be available to maintain the garden?
- Are top quality tools available—well maintained tools save time for garden activities and protect the plants from unnecessary damage

■ Whose garden is this?! Ideally it should be YOUR Garden!

- If you will allow me, I'd like to share some of my early life experience so that you may experience my journey becoming a 'happy gardener'. For almost 6 years I've written the horticulture information of the three specific goals of GCG, Inc... Landscape Design, Horticulture, and Environment.

- I'm a product of the dust bowl in western Kansas in the early 1930's. The picture tells you what "The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl" looked like. Read Timothy Egan's book "The Worst Hard Time" to have a more complete idea of the dust bowl. We were more fortunate than many people, but I still have memories of the dust storms and the effect they had on any one living through that time.



- One vivid memory was because of my father's profession, we moved a lot. Gardening was practical—vegetable gardens took precedents over flowers. After graduating from Oklahoma University in 1953 I married my naval aviator husband, Charles! Once again moving is the normal way of life! Not much 'fine gardening' occurred though we routinely planted vegetables and flowers, we just didn't always get to harvest them!
- Retirement from the Navy brought 15 delightful years in Buffalo but only a very small space for gardening—Twenty-six years ago my husband, completely retired, and we found nirvana in Williamson, GA! Eight acres of garden space! Why is the Happy Gardener telling you her life story?... to celebrate all the things I have learned in the 26 years of life in Williamson, Georgia and the opportunity

to be a member of Concord Garden Club, Redbud District, Garden Club of GA, and National Garden Club

■ Basic words of wisdom to help the new and the experienced gardener—

- Don't bite off more than you can chew—take small bites of garden beds especially if you are not as young as you used to be!
- Be patient
- Review everything your 'grandmother' told you about the garden and review everything you read in "What is a Garden"
- Acquire the best garden equipment available and maintain it in expert manner—don't lose it in a flower bed only to discover it a year or two later rusted and unusable!
- Use organic or acceptable procedures to make the flower/vegetable beds. Attend Gardening School as they are available in your district—Nov. 2 and 3 in Griffin for class 2)
- Mulch, compost, appropriate specimens, and patience will help make good flower beds
- Now comes the fun—subscribe quality gardening literature (books and magazines)
- devour garden catalogs,
- and listen to the advice of qualified gardeners
- Refer back to all the information sent to you in six years of horticulture information from the Happy Gardener!!! Good luck

That's all I have to say about that!

Happy Gardening,

Gail, the Happy Gardener