

THYMES

MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER, 2021



President: Ron Drechnik

Hi Fellow Master Gardeners,

Not much going on at the Drechnik gardens this month. Been picking and freezing a ton of beans from Dr. Natalie's UT garden trials. Our squashes and zucchini did not do so well, as we lost a lot to some kind of fungus (powdery mildew?). We still had more than enough for freezing and zucchini bread. We did plant lettuce, spinach greens and radishes for Fall.

This week's board meeting was short (one hour long), only the second time in two years. It's unreal how much stuff we wind up talking about at these meetings. You are welcome to join us at any time. We discussed FLAG and agreed with Mike that we should raise the entrance fee to \$5.00.

We talked about speakers for next year's classes. Linda Ferris sent me info on Ag Agents that might be willing to give a class. Rosie and I will start calling MG speakers to schedule classes; so if you would like to teach a class, please call me with your proposed subject and date. As Gregg has said many times, there is no better way to stretch yourself and learn than to teach a class!

We discussed the nominating committee and how they are doing, as well as possible board members for next year.

After discussion, a decision was made to **increase membership dues to \$15**. This increase will include a new directory with photos and will supplement the awards banquet so the tickets can remain around \$10.

Plans for the awards banquet along with details are in process, and we will keep you updated as the information comes in.

Upcoming meetings:

Umbrella which meets Monday, **September 27, at 1:00 in the outdoor classroom at PDG.**

The next **board meeting** is on Thursday, **October 22, at 2:00 at the Country Store.**

And finally, the **membership meeting** which is **Tuesday, October 5, starting at 5:30 at the Country Store.** We will be back to our potluck with the main dish being ham on a bun, as we have a lot left from our picnic (it was frozen after the picnic, so no worries). Please bring side dishes and desserts, as you so wonderfully have done in the past!

We will demonstrate how to log your hours onto the web site at the meeting.

Enjoy this wonderful weather and Happy Fall!!

Vice President: Linda Ferris

This month we will be looking at a slate of officers to lead us into 2022. Please do say "yes" if you are asked. This office (Vice President) is very interesting because you arrange the speakers for each month's meeting. There are lots of resources for getting speakers, and many people will give you ideas.

The program for October's meeting will be Bill Morgan who will do a presentation on plants that grow in dappled light.

I am currently putting my garden to bed for the winter. It's a sad day for me when this happens, because I know cold weather is on the way. I did get a decent crop of tomatoes this year and they were delicious. Even the little cherry tomatoes that I started from dried seeds produced a good crop. As of this writing, I'm still getting tomatoes.



UT Gardens Seasonal Decor: Connie Farley

A team of Master Gardeners, including Connie Farley, Susan Partch, Linda Engel, Mike Engel and Julia Wood, got together to put up some fall decorations for the Fall Festival. But, much to everyone's disappointment, the Fall Festival was canceled.



In spite of the cancellation, we went forward with creating displays, and they now provide seasonal decor in the gardens. A *Farmer's Market* is set up by the front parking lot. A male scarecrow, designed and made by Susan Partch, keeps watch over all the baskets of fruits and vegetables. Agnes Bosze lent the gourds and Fred Mullen donated the garlic. Also, a cute replica of a rooster and hen patiently sit nearby in a crate. A beehive box, complements of Toni Loshbough, a local bee keeper, sports the slogan *Bee Haven in the Garden*. Linda Engel hand-painted many bees on the box to bring the inspired slogan to a fine point .

Over by the swing, Mike Engel added a raised garden bed. Also, Linda Engel refinished the *Swing into Fall* sign. Together, they tied the fall theme very well into that site.

In front of the new bathhouse, a female scarecrow, designed and made by Susan Partch, brings new color and interest to the area. Now, Susan is wondering what to wear when she works in her own garden! Twin boy and girl scarecrows take a break from protecting their pumpkin in the garden cart made by Jim Farley. Further on, two repurposed ladders display corn stalks, potted plants, pumpkins, garden tools, and a few signs. The Master Gardener sign, made by Connie Farley, and the welcome sign,

made by Linda Engel, finish off the site.

So, take time to come out and enjoy the celebration of fall throughout the garden, and don't forget to also stop and appreciate the décor crafted by Linda Glenn and Vickie May.

Ladiesthumb, Smartweed: Sue Partch

So named because the dark spot on each leaf looks like a thumbprint, Ladiesthumb (Smartweed) loves my vegetable garden. It grows up my fence and crawls along the ground. Supposedly, it prefers damp places. So why does it thrive in my NOT damp garden?? I pull it up by the handful and throw it away. But, there are alternatives, i.e., ways to make it useful.

Like most of the other weeds I've written about for this newsletter, Ladiesthumb is edible, though not very palatable. Stems, flowers and leaves can all be eaten cooked or raw. Depending on the variety of smartweed, the taste ranges from bland to very hot, peppery. Seeds from the hot varieties have been used as a pepper substitute. Sprouted seeds or young seedlings can also be used as a garnish or in salads. They are reportedly high in antioxidants.

Seeds of Ladiesthumb also provide an important food source for songbirds, waterfowl and small mammals. Though not a preferred food by deer and other grazers, they may eat the leaves and flowers. Plus, the small flowers attract pollinators, such as certain beetles, flies and bees. The foliage provides cover for small creatures, and it is a good ground cover for disturbed, moist areas. In addition, one plant-related site claims it puts nitrogen into the soil.

Ladiesthumb



Smartweed

Among the several medicinal uses, the ones most frequently mentioned are poultices or leaf rubs for poison ivy relief and as insect repellents, leaf tea for stomach pains, and as a diuretic. The leaves contain rutin, a substance that helps reduce or prevent bleeding.

A final use for those jointed, reddish stalks might be to make a yellow-gold dye.

Two folklore oddities to finish this off: 1. A bit of smartweed tucked under the saddle was said to keep a horse from feeling hunger or thirst. 2. Spreading bruised smartweed on a shallow water surface might paralyze the fish so they would float to the surface for easy *fishing*.

Information for this article came from the following on-line sources: farms.com, bio.brandeis.edu, ucdavis.edu, naturalmedicinalherbs.net and edible wild food

Thank you to all who contributed to this month's newsletter. It's really Fall.