

# THYMES MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER

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MAY, 2021



**President: Ron Drechnik**

Hi Fellow Master Gardeners,

Here are the latest happenings at the Drechnik's' house. I picked up the plants that we ordered from PDG's plant sale; and, luckily, Rosie was not with me or she would have had to sit on the roof of my truck. I had my entire extended cab truck filled with plants! After removing many irises, rototilling, and raking the soil, I planted a variety of shrubs (23 in all) around the periphery of our 14 by 32 foot shed. Now, just lots of watering and laying down mulch are left to be done. We have not decided where we are going to put the irises in the yard, but we may bring some to the meeting to give away. We also planted our peppers and tomatoes we purchased at the plant sale, as well as, the tomatoes we started

from seeds for Dr. Natalie's garden trials. We plan on finishing planting the remaining seeds and plants in our square foot garden this weekend.

Now as to what is happening with the club: I attended the umbrella committee meeting on Monday, and we received great news. UT has given the ok to proceed with the Fall Festival! The umbrella committee has been moving ahead with the plans, hoping we could proceed. The speakers and vendors are lined up and we are going to get bigger tents this year, so we can give attendees more space. We are going to need your help. **We are going to need you to volunteer.** I will bring a sign-up sheet with positions that need filling to the June meeting. We are working on how to handle sign-in so there is not as much congestion at the sign-in tables. We are looking at possible pre-registration to lessen the lines.

So far, the plant sale has made \$1500 with about \$2000 in plants left to sell. Our tomatoes and peppers have sold around \$520 with a lot more that need to be sold. We are now selling the tomatoes and peppers for \$1.00 each. Please pass the word to anyone and everyone that we still have plants for sale.

We also discussed classes at the garden. Gregg and I will determine the specifics, such as when to start, and will be in contact with the people that have taught before to see if they are willing to teach again.

I just found out that the Covid test site is moving back to the health department. I will be looking into when we can start meeting back at the Community Complex for the board meetings and our regular monthly meetings, so keep an eye on your emails.

That about wraps it up. See you at PDG outdoor classroom on June 1 at 5:30 for social hour, 6:00 for Carol Burdett's talk, and 7:00 for our meeting. Hoping for good weather and looking forward to a fun enjoyable get-together.

## VICE PRESIDENT: LINDA FERRIS

Carol Burdett will be our speaker at our first face-to-face meeting in over a year at The Gardens. Looking forward to seeing you there!

## CAROL BURDETT: GARDEN SPEAKER

Hi all my MG buddies and new people. Won't it be grand to FINALLY get together in person on June 1 for our first outdoor meeting of 2021? I've been asked to kick off this Master Gardener year with a presentation of what ornamentals grow best here on the plateau. Some you already know from your own experience, and some you may have thought about and just need that little nudge to make room for in your garden or planned garden. In this PowerPoint presentation, you'll see my favorites, actually growing, and know what they will look like a year or 10 years after planting.

I'll also bring along a list of the various plots here in the Discovery Gardens that still need someone to *love* them. That means to keep them weeded, pruned and generally beautiful. Because I work 6 days a week, I seldom can get there on regular work days and love being able to just work on my plot at odd hours, generally 5 AM to 8 AM, once or twice a month. Love these cool mornings!

We'll probably also have some of the beautiful plants on hand from our annual plant sale. I just put some of these in the ground and they're growing happily. There are still some left over, and especially note the tomatoes and peppers that have been reduced to just \$1.00 each.

I look forward to seeing you, next Tues, 6 in the evening.

#### SUE PARTCH: More on Weeds – Fleabane



Fleabane is an unlovely name for a rather pretty little daisy-like wildflower. It comes from early settlers hanging bunches of flowers and leaves in their houses and stuffing it into mattresses to discourage fleas. Another tactic was to burn the plant, with the idea that the plant's smoke would act as a repellent. Some also made an ointment from the roots and leaves to reduce the itch. There's no record of any of it working (though smoke itself IS a repellent) but the name stuck. And, at least the bane part is valid: it's a sturdy, herbicide-resistant weed that grows most anywhere sunny, spreads easily, and is almost impossible to eradicate.

Given how tough fleabane is, it's a good plant as a pioneer species for a newly created prairie or meadow area, naturalized spaces and recently razed places. For flower gardens, there are now some well-behaved hybrids that may do well in poor soil. Wherever you plant or find it, fleabane as a cut flower is pretty in big sprays or as a filler. And, while they may not be good repellents, they are good pollinators.

As an edible, fleabane is mostly a survivalist food, though there are claims that the cooked leaves taste like spinach. Raw the leaves and stems can be used in salads but the small hairs are not very palatable. Because some deem it quite aromatic, it may be better as a flavoring herb. Its essential oils are sometimes used in the candy making and soda industries.

There are extensive medicinal claims from natural medicine advocates and a long history of such uses among Native American tribes. Fleabane does have caffeinic acid in its leaves which has been shown to have antioxidant and neuroprotective properties. Herbalists use all parts of the plant, but the leaves and flowers are the most beneficial. Both fresh and dried plant parts are used for teas, tinctures, extracts and essential oils.

I will continue to include fleabane in my occasional flower arrangements and enjoy it along the roadside. I will also continue to pull it out of my gardens and mow it with a clear conscience. I'm not sure I'll tell

my husband about the most interesting use I read about: Florida Seminole males rubbed it on themselves to rid themselves of an unwanted wife.

Information for this article came from the following on-line sources: Gardens All, Better Homes & Gardens, Museum Confidential, and [diegobonetto.com](http://diegobonetto.com)

## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW

JEWELL WILHOITE

For the first time, my wild Indigo is blooming. Think bottlebrush with tiny yellow over purple florets. Yea!

LINDA FERRIS



I have had progress on the cherry tomato seeds I dried & planted (see photos). Not sure if I will get tomatoes at this point, but next month will probably give me a good idea!

My Lungwort looked very sad in the ground. I couldn't seem to keep up with its water needs, so I replanted it in a pot & it looks much happier. The other plants I purchased from the Plant Sale are doing well. I purchased a few sad little plants that were on sale at Lowe's, and we'll see how they do. The Swedish Bluebells did well but are finished (always a sad day). The bottle brush daylillies are big & strong and look good! The peonies are doing well, but I see I need to deadhead some of them. Some of my azaleas have finished, and others are just getting started. One doesn't look too good at all and I have cut it back drastically & fertilized well. Hope to see progress there too.

JAN RICE

This floral arrangement graces the front lawn of Jan's home. It will be nice to see a follow-up picture after all the plants mature and fill in the spaces. Very colorful eye catcher, Jan.



*Greenest state in the land of the free-- with plenty of color, as well. Lucky us.*