

The Bloomin' News

April, 2021, Vol. X, 3

Alan Howland, Chairman

Thomas Perez, Editor

Member of FLORIDA FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS



Chairman's Message

Fellow Gardeners,

April is a great time to start thinking about gardening. Gardening in April in zones 9 & 10 is great because of the variety of crops that you can choose from! Members at the tree farm are growing green beans, squash, tomatoes, a variety of peppers, kale, celery, onions okra and herbs.

The mist house is done and filling up fast with plants and cuttings. It seems like everyone participated in the construction, design and planting going into this house. Thank you to everyone.

Again, congratulations on the successful spring plant sale. All members worked hard to make the sale the best it has ever been. People are recognizing how important the club is to the community for reasonably priced plants and trees. Just a reminder dues have to be paid by May 1st to continue being a member.

Regards, Alan

APRIL IN THE GARDEN

April is a busy month in the garden. Most plants are growing well. By mid-month, day temperatures will be up in the 80's and most nights will be above 65 degrees.

Replenish mulches to conserve moisture and keep weeds down.



AZALEAS have about finished blooming. Now is the time to continue a care program to assure good blooms next year. Feed each AZALEA with a good, acid-forming fertilizer at the rate of ½ cup per plant per month. Prune and trim large

AZALEAS, and pinch back branch ends until mid-June. AZALEAS, unlike most other plants, will branch wherever you cut them.

DAY LILIES are ready to start blooming. ROSES are growing rapidly. ROSES are heavy feeders and require frequent watering. Regular fertilizing every 2 weeks in our sandy soils is not excessive.

CRAPE MYRTLES already have extensive new growth. An application of a Bloomer fertilizer every 2 weeks will assure more and larger blooms. Mildew is a common problem on both leaves and blossoms, even in full sun.

LAWNS should be fertilized now if you did not fertilize in March. Plug sod or seed to fill in bare areas in your lawn or to start new lawns. Provide sufficient irrigation, within water restrictions, to give your lawn an inch of water in any week your lawn gets less than an inch of rain. Cut Bahia and St. Augustine grasses 3 to 4 inches high. If grass clippings are left on the lawn, the grass should be mowed more frequently than when clippings are removed.

Move ORCHIDS to shady outdoor locations and feed every 2 weeks. Move tropical plants outdoors. Feed all container-grown plants.

Bulbs for April planting include ACHIMINES, AMARYLLIS, AGAPANTHUS, BLOOD LILIES, CANNAS, CALADIUMS, CRINUMS, DAHLIAS, GLADIOLI, GLORIOSA, GINGER and RAIN LILIES.

Warm season plants that will perk up flowerbeds include AGERTUM, ASTER, BEGONIA, BLUE DAZE, COLEUS, COSMOS, DAY LILIES, IMPATIENS, MARIGOLDS, PENTAS, PERIWINKLE, SALVIA, VERBENA and ZINNIA.

Garden Club Web Sites

National Garden Club: www.gardenclub.org

Florida Federation of GC: www.ffgc.org

TGC site: <http://www.nbbd.com/npr/tgc/>

TMGC site: <http://www.nbbd.com/npr/tmgc>

THE PINEAPPLE – Steve Korpacz

Have you ever tasted homegrown PINEAPPLE? It is usually very sweet, much better than grocery store fruit. You can start by cutting the top off a PINEAPPLE, wait a day or two for it to harden off, then plant an inch or two deep in a rich, slightly acidic organic soil. You can leave some of the fruit on the edges of the top; the plant can use this for food until it becomes established. I like to start with a 6" x 6" pot, since the roots are not deep. I fertilize lightly and monthly with a liquid fertilizer like Miracle Grow or Peter's. Just pour onto plant and in crown too. Once the plant has become established, you can move it to a 3-gallon size pot, after 6-7 months.

In a 3-gallon size, you can fruit the plant once it has some size (18" – 24"). At 1 year old, I like to take a small

piece of apple or banana and force it into the crown. As this decomposes, it emits ethylene gas and forces the plant to fruit. You can harvest your first PINEAPPLE a few months later. You will know it's ready when you can smell it from 2 – 3 feet away. Just twist the fruit and it will detach from the plant, then you can start all over again. The PINEAPPLE can be propagated several other ways: slips, suckers, rations and crowns (described above). Slips arise from just below the fruit, suckers from the axils of the leaves and rations, which grow from the base. Slips and suckers are the preferred method of propagation.

A 5-gallon is all the plant will ever require as they don't have deep root systems. I like container growing mine; it's easier to weed and to protect from cold weather. The PINEAPPLE is not cold tolerant at all. They will need protection. Give growing PINEAPPLES a try. The flavor of a homegrown PINEAPPLE can't be beat. **Keep it Green.**

Review of "The Mini-farming Guide To Composting" by Brett L. Markham

If you are trying to garden in Florida, you MUST understand the value of making and utilizing compost. Your soil can, and does, vary biologically immensely from one spot to the next in your backyard garden. This one fact alone dictates the value of raised beds where you as the gardener can mix your soil for maximum nutrients. By consistently adding organic matter, you will build the soil season after season, thus requiring less and less fertilizer, fungicides, and pesticides.

Nature is on your side. It's really hard to mess up compost so badly that you will get no compost at all. Nature loves compost and will turn anything that was once alive into compost all by itself.

So, while most books only cover "aerobic" composting made at relatively high temperatures (thermophilic), Mr. Markham has chapters on anaerobic (without oxygen), aerobic (using oxygen), indoor mesophyll composting, vermicomposting, biochar, and more. This book is chock full of references from many sources for those who seek more in depth information.

In chapter 2 entitled "Starting With The Soil" he states "counting earthworms is the easiest and least expensive method of assessing your soil's biological activity." We have, therefore, been devoting a good bit of time and energy to raising red wiggler earthworms. By utilizing the castings to produce "worm tea" for use as a foliar spray or as a drench, we feel we have seen a significant improvement in our garden. The worm castings can also be spread in the beds for a wonderful organic fertilizer. By feeding the worms our kitchen compost materials, we also reduce the amount going to a landfill. For information on making your worm bin and raising earthworms, there are many videos on U-tube, or you

can contact us and we will share the information we have accumulated. We have a large number of ornamental and vegetable starts to trade or share. What do you have? We hope you will look forward to future articles about other aspects of our garden experiences such as Keyhole Gardening, Chokedamp, Living Walls, ideas for more sustainable living, and Hydroponics or Aquaponics.

TREE FARM NEWS -

Thanks again to all the folks who help weed and tend to plants trees and landscaping on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

We have also been propagating in our new mist house, and request cuttings from your home; plants that we could be planting vs. buying. Mulberries from our tree are ready to enjoy! Try some!

"Looking Back" - Rosie

We have been given the opportunity to spend wonderful hours at the Tree Farm alongside friends who share the common interest of learning to grow and nurture plants. Everyone seems to put all social media behind them as they enjoy the fresh, plant-scented air, when the pollens aren't being a problem. The birds make the music and the cool breezes are so welcome to the sweat on our brows. I am very grateful for the fellowship I enjoy with each member as I get to know them. I don't think a price can be placed on this wonderful opportunity to get to know and appreciate our fellow gardeners and friends.

Florida Native Plant Society- Sea Rocket Chapter

The Sea Rocket Chapter's meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of the month; 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Enchanted Forest, 444 Columbia Blvd (Hwy 405). The public is welcome. For info: 264-5185 <http://www.nbbd.com/npr/SeaRocket/>





Just a Friendly Reminder!!!
Our yearly Membership Dues are
Due by May 1st, 2021!
Please give to Treasurer
At the Tree Farm on Tues or Thurs or
At April's meeting!!

The Bloomin' News
Titusville Men's Garden Club
Tom Perez, Editor; 240-285-6189
Email: tntsservice@gmail.com

**Please send your articles to Tom to be included in
next month's Bloomin' News.**

New Members! YOU are welcome!

We have opportunities for learning at our monthly meetings, at the Tree Farm and at special events. There are facilities to start plants from seed/clippings. We have a membership meeting at 10:00 am on the 2nd Tuesday each month at the Tree Farm, behind Stuart Park. For more information, call Rose at 321-289-8388.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

April "Spring Fever in the Garden", 2021 is cancelled <http://www.springfeveringarden.com/>

April 24th - Brevard Tropical Fruit Club –
Fruit Tree Sale. (8am to 4pm) at Melbourne
Auditorium, South-East lawn
625 E. Hibiscus Blvd., Melbourne

May The 2021 Annual Orchid Sale has been
cancelled due to COVID (608-575-6005)
www.platinumcoastorchidsociety.org

For more information on local events this
month see: <http://nbbd.com/events/>

Titusville Men's Garden Club

Meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 10 am.
"At the Tree Farm" next to Stuart Park
1230 Thoreau St

The public is welcome to join us.

Our next meeting will be
April 13th, 2021

The Titusville Garden Club Tree Farm

Titusville Garden Center, 5275 Sisson Road, Titusville, FL 32780

Next Meeting: Second Tuesday of the Month, -- 10:00 a.m.
(at "the Farm" Behind Stuart Park)

INVITATION TO JOIN THE TITUSVILLE GARDEN CLUB TREE FARM

Who We Are: A non-profit club that enjoys gardening and contributing to our City's beautification and our environment.

What we Are: As a part of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, we are a partner of the Titusville Garden Club.

What We Do: We educate and help each other to enjoy gardening, teach and learn to enjoy plants. We assist others to propagate, grow and distribute trees and plants to non-profit organizations. We participate in voluntary efforts to help Titusville's "Tree City" initiative to plant 2,000 trees per year.

Where We Meet: We meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at our Tree Farm near the Titusville Water Maintenance Facility, next to Stuart Park. Members adopt trees and plants to grow and enjoy.

How We Operate: We presently sponsor a March and an October Tree and Plant Sale. The sales receipts are used to support the Club, purchase materials, and donate plants to the City and other worthy non-profit causes. Some members grow plants to landscape their own homes (all are welcome to do so). With permission from a plant's adopter, members may take plants for personal use. Dues are \$25.00 annually, due in April.

Send application below to Titusville Men's Garden Club, P. O. Box 1783, Titusville, FL 32780.

For more information, please phone Rose at 321-289-8388.

Name: _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____ **Cell:** _____

Street: _____ **City** _____ **Zip** _____