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Holiday Greeting to all,

This has been an Autumn season of extremes. After an extremely dry and very hot September and October we experienced more seasonal temperatures and rain in early November. This was followed by lots of rain and the temperature plunging to 18 degrees. I was not expecting this and neither were the plants. Nothing had the time to gradually harden off with gradually falling temperatures. This is the most freeze damage I have seen to shrubs and trees in an early fall freeze since I have lived in Memphis.

When leaves turn brown over night and do not drop from the plant it is not a good sign. I am sure there is quite a bit of damage to Hydrangeas, Roses, Japanese Maples and a large number of other species. Anything that forms buds during the summer for the next spring probably will be affected. Sasanqua Camellias which are fall blooming were hit badly. The Japonica Camellias which bloom later in the winter were probably spared because their buds are still very tight and should bloom normally depending on what low temperatures there are the balance of the season. The best thing to do is wait and see what happens over the winter. When leaf and flower buds start to swell in February and March, you will be able to tell what is alive and what is not and that will be a good time to prune off the dead twigs and branches.

We are currently in the midst of bulb planting. Early December is the best time to plant tulips in our area. We could have planted daffodils earlier, but between weather and many other reasons we are doing it now. As long as we finish by Christmas it should not affect spring bloom. Usually daffodils planted in the fall bloom a little later than daffodils that are already established in the garden, which extends the season a little. Daffodils are the best bulb to perennialize in the garden. They like our climate and since the entire plant is toxic, rodents and deer leave them alone. Have you ever noticed naturalized daffodils blooming in a cow pasture and wondered why the cattle left them alone ? Now you know.

During the months of November and December, we have made an effort by our Greenhouse and Nursery team to have a "Gifts of Green" area in our Visitor's Center where you can purchase gifts for the holidays with a more Horticultural slant. We have potted Paper White Narcissus, Amaryllis, Terrariums, Planters, Magnolia wreaths, Topiary animals, Hand Crafted Soaps and many other gift items for gardeners on your list.

We always have some indoor plants for sale in our Visitor's Center and during most of the year except winter we have outdoor plant material for sale as well. This is in

addition to our Spring and Fall Plant sale at the Nursery area.

The day after Thanksgiving marked the beginning of our "Holiday Wonders" event which runs through the end of December. It is a wonderful way to spending a winter evening enjoying the light display with family and friends as you walk through the garden.

In this issue Sherri McCalla has selected two recipes that you make for your holiday enjoyment. The herb that she chose to feature is Rosemary. She has so much information in her head about herbs that I know she has a hard time just featuring a single species.

Charley Donnelly who started out as a volunteer in our Japanese Garden is now a full time employee in our Greenhouse and Nursery complex. He will tell you about his experiences as a volunteer at MBG.

Jill Maybry is our new Curator of the Delta and Butterfly Gardens. She comes to us with a formidable amount of experience and knowledge in both Horticulture and butterflies. She was a long time Horticulture employee at the Memphis Zoo.

I am pleased that both Charlie and Jill have joined our staff.

Wishing everyone a safe, happy and blessed Holiday Season!

Rick

Using Winter Herbs for Holiday Treats



When the thought of winter holidays comes to my mind, I think of mistletoe, pine, cedar, and magnolia, nuts in their shells, oranges, rosemary, vanilla, cinnamon, oranges, chocolate, peppermint, cloves, nutmeg, sage, roasting meat, and logs burning in fireplaces and bonfires. The thought conjures visuals, as well as fragrance. Thinking of fragrances brings the emotions connected with them: love, comfort, safety, joy, happiness, and often a bittersweet sorrow. Sorrow? Yes, sorrow for loved ones far away as well as the ultimate distance: for loved ones that have passed from this world.

Rosemary Walnuts:

This recipe is adapted from "Growing and Using the Top 10 Most Popular Herbs" by Jim Long

(Book is available for purchase at the Memphis Botanic Garden booth)

2 cups shelled walnuts
2 ½ tablespoons butter, melted
2 teaspoons ground Spanish Rosemary (from Penzey's)
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground Chipotle (from Penzey's) Chipotle is smoked jalapenos, but you could use any hot pepper you wish, or even leave the peppers out if you don't like heat...

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix ingredients. Pour into single layer on a baking sheet. Roast in oven about 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally until lightly browned. Store in airtight container until ready to serve.

Angela Mullikin was one of the founding members of the Memphis Herb Society. She has many recipes included in the two cookbooks produced and sold by the

I could run with any of the plants, herbs, nuts, or seeds I just listed and bring them to you in an herbal twist, but I will restrain myself and give you just one of the above: rosemary.

Rosmarinus officinalis, more commonly known as Rosemary, is an herb steeped in history. Rosemary is native to Eurasia from southern Europe to western Asia. In its native habitat it grows in dry, scrub brush areas of the Mediterranean region. Its name give us an idea of the conditions it likes to grow: *ros* is Latin for dew and *marinus* is Latin for sea. Dew of the Sea: a pretty name for this plant! This may have referred to the plant's ability to grow on rocky cliffs overlooking the sea. *Officinalis* refers to the fact that rosemary was used medicinally as well as in herbalism. The language of flowers, used to pass messages to others, speaks of "rosemary for remembrance" and was used in nosegays (tussie-mussies) to pass on sentiments, and/or as a protection from the plague and bad smells. In the 15th century there is a story of four thieves that used rosemary in a recipe with a few other herbs and spices and made an oil that protected them from disease. The story says that the four thieves used this formula as protection against the plague as they robbed the sick and the dying. Well, rosemary does have an amazing chemical makeup that makes it a wonderful antioxidant. Medicinally, it is purported to help with maintaining a healthy inflammation response, healthy digestion, and is said to support liver health.

Memphis Herb Society. Angela was a lovely friend of mine who passed from this plane a few years ago. I am including her recipe here in remembrance:

Angela's Rosemary Shortbread Cookies:

2 Tablespoons fresh chopped rosemary
2 sticks butter at room temperature
2/3 cup powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups all-purpose flour
Dash salt
2/3 cup toasted chopped pecans.

Mix all except pecans in food processor until smooth. Remove, and stir in nuts. Roll dough into small balls (I made mine about Malted Milk Balls size) Flatten to ¼" using a jar dipped in granulated sugar. Bake at 350 degrees F for 15-20 minutes or until light brown. Cool. Store in an air-tight container. Makes about 75 cookies.

By Sherri McCalla, Herb Garden Curator



Volunteering to Become a Gardener

Getting stuck is a part of life. When stuck, cultivating a new interest like gardening can be intimidating. Gardening is one of those fields where a question is typically met with more questions, then followed by more answers than hoped for (like how mother-in-law's tongue is also a snake plant and more pointedly a sansevieria trifasciata. By the way, how much are you watering it?). So what's a good starting point? How do you pare it all down to even find a starting point?

That aforementioned "stuckness" was remedied for me by volunteering. Volunteering at the Memphis Botanic Garden allows you to partner up with a resident horticulturist or seasoned volunteer to essentially do a ride-along. Pressure is low and nobody gets pushed to



do more than he or she is comfortable with. Anxiety may be a factor when taking the initial leap to sign up, but it'll undoubtedly dissipate once busy in the mix with a task at hand. Your fellow gardeners tend to be helpful, welcoming, and open - you're helping them do work for free, after all! The guidance received when working side by side with a professional can equip you with the confidence that you're doing it right, both in the moment and in the future.

Work is not all there is to be gleaned from the volunteer experience, however. There's a palpable benefit from the social nature of getting together to garden. I've regularly enjoyed enlightening conversations with people from all walks of life. These interactions while weeding or watering have often improved my day, and also many times improved me as a person. This inspiration is a foil to anxiety and will always be available to draw from somewhere in the garden, all

you have to do is show up.

Put that way, it sounds pretty easy. And it is! Feel free to come join us any time convenient for you and mill around for the day. Our volunteer coordinator, Brianna Siebert, is available at 901-636-4102 or by e-mail at brianna.siebert@memphisbotanicgarden.com to pencil you in for a visit.

By Charlie Donnelly, Greenhouse and Nursery employee at MBG

More Than Just a Butterfly Garden

You may not be thinking of the Butterfly Garden this time of year. After all, the Monarchs and Gulf Fritillaries (and other species that migrate), have moved on, in search of warmer climates. The several butterfly species that overwinter as adults in the Memphis area, including the Mourning Cloak, the Question Mark, and the Comma butterfly, have sought shelter in the crevices of logs or under the loose bark of trees, and have entered a type of hibernation called diapause. Their body processes will slow down while they ride out our cold season, and prepare to re-emerge in early spring. On warm, sunny winter days, they may come out of their hiding places to bask in the sun, and to feed on winter-blooming shrubs and trees, but for the most part, they'll stay tucked away for the next few months. Other butterfly species are spending the winter as eggs, affixed to twigs of their host trees (the Banded Hairstreak is an example). Others are overwintering as caterpillars, buried deep in leaf litter or loose soil to stay protected, or curled up in a tree inside a dried leaf, affixed to a tree branch with silk thread (Tawny Emperors and Red-Spotted Purples do this). Yet others (such as Tiger Swallowtails and Black Swallowtails) will survive as pupae, hanging in sheltered spots such as tree bark, under building overhangs, or within clusters of leaves deep within shrubs.

But all is not quiet in the Butterfly Garden. Far from it! It is one of the best locations within the MBG for bird-watching. Take a simple stroll through the garden, and you'll be aware of a bustling bird population calling out to one another and moving eagerly throughout the foliage. Squirrels scamper through the trees, and evidence can be found nearly daily of nocturnal racoon activity. Many of the shrubs and trees, planted for their nectar-producing

flowers or because the leaves are larval food plants for a particular butterfly species, also produce fruit that are important winter food sources for birds and small mammals. The purple chokeberry (*Aronia x prunifolia*) is a larval food plant for the caterpillar of the Coral Hairstreak. In winter, the red berries are enjoyed by songbirds. Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), which produces ball-like clusters of white flowers adored by Swallowtails in mid-summer, holds onto its small dark seeds well into the winter, until they are picked out by birds.



Hackberry trees (*Celtis occidentalis*) are a larval host for many butterflies, including the Mourning Cloak, Hackberry Emperor, Snout, and Question Mark. These prolific trees make small dark fruits that are eagerly eaten by birds and mammals. The Mockernut Hickory (*Carya tomentosa*) is a host for the beautiful Luna Moth and Regal Walnut Moth, and its hickory nuts are devoured by foxes, squirrels, rabbits, and mice. American Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), also a host to the Luna Moth, produces fruits (those much-detested gumballs of lawn enthusiasts) which have been reported to feed 25 different species of birds and animals. Perhaps the most important and showy of the plants in our garden, when it

comes to winter food production, are the hollies. Several species of native holly can be found throughout the Butterfly Garden, especially across the wilder, northern end. When these hollies bloom in spring or summer, their flowers buzz with pollinators. The pollinators obviously do their job well, because the shrubs then produce bumper crops of nutritious berries, eagerly gobbled up by songbirds and small mammals. Blue Jays and Mockingbirds seem to be especially fond of the shiny red fruits of our Yaupon hollies (*Ilex vomitoria*). The winterberries (*Ilex verticillata* 'Winter Red') growing along the western edge of the garden will likely hold onto their beautiful red berries a little longer, until the birds make it to them a little later in the winter. Possumhaw holly (*Ilex decidua* 'Sentry') rounds out the holly berry buffet.



Many of the perennial plants that are nectar sources for pollinators also provide winter food for wildlife. The seedheads of Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida*), Brown-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia triloba*), perennial Sunflowers (*Helianthus* species), and other related species are still standing tall on their dried stems, ready to be eaten by songbirds. Purple Coneflower seeds are especially beloved by goldfinches. Our native grasses also benefit winter wildlife. Sea oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*), Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum* 'Northwind'), various Sedges (*Carex* species), and Purple Love Grass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*), all larval hosts plants for various butterflies, provide seed, shelter, and nesting material for song birds, game birds, and small mammals.

The vines in the garden add to the feast. The Passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*) growing on the Living Gazebo is an excellent larval food plant for the colorful Gulf Fritillary butterfly throughout the summer. Many of the fall-produced fruits, the size and shape of chicken eggs, remain on the vines into the winter, and are being regularly torn open and consumed by small mammals. The seeds inside these fruits are popular with songbirds. Native Trumpet Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) is the woody vine in the center of the gazebo, and is a plant truly worthy of a spot in any wildlife garden. The leaves provide a larval food source for the clearwing sphinx moth and the Spring Azure butterfly, the flowers are frequently visited by Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, and the attractive winter fruits are eaten by songbirds.

So come on out on a sunny winter day soon. Take a stroll down to the Butterfly Garden. Enjoy the birdsongs, the flutters of wings, and the scampering activity of squirrels. See if you can spot our boisterous blue jays, mockingbirds, cardinals, goldfinches, and our resident redtail hawk. And on an especially bright, warm day, you may even catch one of our winter butterflies out and about, basking its wings in the sun.

By Jill Maybry, Delta and Butterfly Garden Curator at MBG

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