



The Vine Line

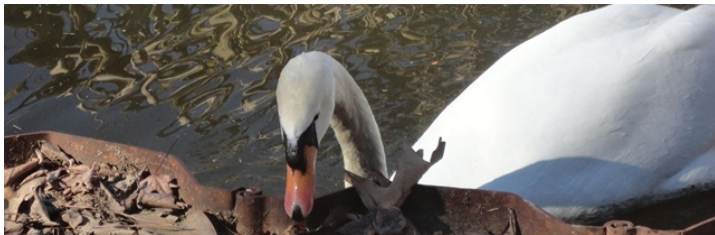
July 18, 2015

Here's hoping that all of you are having a great summer!

The weather this year has been pretty typical of a Memphis summer, except for all the rain. I can't remember not having to water outdoor containers every day in July...no complaints about that. Many of the summer flowering perennials have benefited from the extra moisture as well. As usual, both lawns and weeds are lush and need constant attention.

The majority of the hydrangeas have passed their moment of glory, but *Hydrangea paniculata* are just starting to put on a show. They usually look good until Labor Day or later. The new Crepe Myrtle scale has been a big problem for many, though so far we have been untouched by it here at MBG. I am hoping that a realistic treatment can be found before it becomes more widespread.

I was in Illinois in early June, and there is evidence of the Emerald Ash Borer everywhere. There are dead and dying trees and signs about not transporting firewood to keep from spreading the problem. I can see that happening with Crepe Myrtle, if a simple, environmentally-friendly treatment isn't found soon.



We have had a lone female Mute Swan on our Japanese lake for many years. She was joined by a handsome male a couple of weeks ago, compliments of the Tennessee Safari Park in Alamo, Tennessee. Next time you visit, be sure to go to the Japanese Garden and see the happy couple. They make a great photo opportunity as they glide past the new Red Drum Bridge.

If you have never been to The Safari Park, it is definitely worth the drive. You can stay in your car and see dozens of species of antelope, deer, bison, wildebeest, ostrich, and much more, all from the comfort of your car. The animals are in herds, as they would be in the wild. They also have an area you can see on foot and a petting area for children. The park is on about 500 acres, less than a half hour drive from Jackson.

As usual, we have a full schedule of events planned for the summer. Take advantage of some of our adult educational programs or attend a wine tasting or concert. Maybe I will see you there!

Happy gardening,

Rick Powell

Summer Time and the Gardening is not Easy

Growing up in central Ohio, I was blessed with relatively cool summers. Highs in the 80's, lows sometimes down into the mid 50's, relative humidity at about 70%. To work in the garden during the summer was quite a treat; sun tans and summer breeze come to mind.

It wasn't until about 4 years ago when I moved to Memphis that I truly learned what summer was. High's in the 90's, sometimes 100, lows never below 70 and humidity that can suck every ounce of water out of you. Gardening during the summer in Memphis is not easy, but it is possible. If you have read my previous Vine Lines, you should know that I am a firm believer that gardening is a reflection of your life. There are highs and lows, successes and disappointments, sharing, caring, and loving in both. But the aspect which I would like to highlight in regards to the summer time gardening blues is planning.

Like most successful people in life, successful summertime gardeners have a plan, not only for their garden, but also for the time they spend in it.

Here are a few tips for being a more efficient and cooler gardener:

- Plan more laborious tasks, such as planting, transplanting, mulching, for the morning. You will be cooler and happier at lunch knowing your hardest tasks are done for the day.
- Work sunny areas in the morning, shade in the afternoon. It's called common sense for a reason, don't fight it.
- Keep a wet rag or bandana around your neck. There are a couple major blood vessels and arteries that run up and down the neck. Having a chilled cloth around your neck cools that blood down as it courses through your body.
- Have a watering schedule and stick to it. I like to start my sprinklers first thing in the morning and let them run all day, moving and adjusting them throughout the day.
- Make a list. There are numerous studies that show that people are about 10X more likely to accomplish their goals if they write them down. With that said, have realistic goals; probably not the best idea to try to move a tree during the summer.
- Take breaks, because who doesn't love a break?
- Have water with you at all times. Dehydration and heat stress can set in quick, so make sure you are drinking water often.
- Have a reward for yourself at the end of the day. One way I treat myself at the end of a hot day is a Flavor Ice, the skinny plastic tubes filled with frozen sugar water. It's quick and easy and gives me a chance to mull the day over and think about the next.

By Nick Esthus, Japanese and Asian Garden Curator



Herbal Work Study

We had the very first Herbal Work Study on Saturday, July 11. I don't know for certain about the work/studiers, but I had a blast!

Seven hard-core volunteers showed up: Barry McCalla, Linde Brocato, Glenda Peterson, Debbie Robinson, Sandy Stacks, Jo Gibbons, and Cela Lou.

We spent the first 30 minutes in a sunny area, weeding the Native American phlox bed. After 30 minutes, we ran for the shade. We took turns running cold water over our necks and arms at one point to cool down and it helped, along with bottles of ice cold water. We had four summer weeds on our weed death list: mulberry weed, pokeweed, knotweed, and wild strawberry. We spent the last portion of work time finding these in the shaded areas. These weeds were dispatched into garbage bags-no compost for them!

When we finished the work portion, we harvested the herbs we wanted to taste and then went back to the Horticulture building. Once inside, we drank herbal water which had been brewing and chilling while we worked and made a batch of English Rose Tea. Everyone left had a chance to make a cup and relax while enjoying the aroma, then flavor.

English Rose Tea: ½ cup dried Red Rose petals, 2 Tablespoons dried Lemon Balm, 1 Tablespoon dried Rosemary. Mix together. Use 1 teaspoon per 1 cup boiling water. Steep 5-8 minutes. (Use a fine mesh tea ball, strain before drinking, or – we wrapped our serving in a paper coffee filter then just remove the entire bit out and pressed out the liquid to reserve every aromatic drop).

Everyone got to take home a bag of fresh herbs along with a handout that included recipes and instructions. Glenda, Debbie, and Barry even went back to the Herb Garden to help clean up!

Thank you to all who came out to help.

The next Herbal Work Study is scheduled for Saturday, August 8, 8am-1130am. The topic is Preserving Your Herbal Harvest. This learning opportunity is "purchased" via a barter system: you must work the first 2 hours (8:30-10:30) to attend the last hour of class (10:30-11:30), making this a free event! I will have cold water and bug spray, you bring your favorite hand tools for weeding and grooming (soil knives, Cape Cod weeders, trowels, pruners, gloves, etc. – no hoes needed.)



If you have any questions, please call me (Sherri McCalla) at the Horticulture desk at (901) 636-4134.

By Sherri McCalla, Herb Garden Curator

Container Garden Care Through Late Summer



90% of the effort for your summertime

Poison Ivy

Recently, I was on Channel 3's Live at 9 to talk about poison ivy. The discussion centered around the effect of increased carbon dioxide due to climate change. Studies have shown that poison ivy increased in growth by 149% when carbon dioxide was introduced to poison ivy plants.

I have not noticed an increase in the growth of poison ivy plants in the woods behind my house but I really do not go in

showing is determined by your spring planting season. You should choose your plants by the type of sun exposure the area the container will be set on is getting. Is it a full sun area? You should have drought-tolerant plants. Is it a shady area? Your plants should be shade tolerant.

Your soil within the container should be of a medium that is not too sandy, so as to allow all of the water to drain immediately, and not too dense as to hold all the water and encourage root rot.

Another aspect of container planting is the number of plants per container. The container depth and circumference or width should be able to easily handle the amount of plants that are in competition for space within the container. Too many plants will be shaded out by the plants that are growing faster and sunlight and nutrients will be starved from some plants until the strongest plants win and you will have an uneven looking container.

Organic soil medium is encouraged, as it tends to hold more moisture and nutrients. This allow you to not use as many chemicals, which is good for the environment overall. 10% of the care of your garden is watering the containers. Following a strict daily watering routine will increase the chances of a successful container garden season. The 90% set up in the first paragraphs will dictate how often and how much watering your containers will need.

Because of the added watering towards the end of the season in July and August, an additional fertilizer may need to be applied to keep your plants blooming and producing radiant color.

By Jeffrey Reynolds, horticulturist

search of it either. Time will tell if changes in climate will have good or bad effects to the plants around us.



Brett Marshall, Sault College, Bugwood.org

If you do come in contact with any part of the poison ivy plant, you have approximately ten minutes to wash the affected area with soap and COLD water. You may be wondering "Why cold water?" Because it keeps the pores of the skin closed, which helps discourages the oil from absorbing into the skin.

Even clothing, pets, etc. that come into contact with the plant will have the oil on them, which could cause an allergic reaction when transferred to your skin. The oil can remain active for a very long time, so it is wise to wash anything that comes in contact with the plant as soon as possible. Personally, I have a very mild reaction to poison ivy, while my wife has to seek medical treatment, including a round of steroids, to get rid of the reaction.

Whatever your reaction, it is best to remember "if it has leaves of three let it be."

By Kyle McLane, horticulturist