



The Vine Line

November 5, 2014

Dear Vine Liner,

Fall might be my favorite time of the year at the Memphis Botanic Garden. There is something about the way the late afternoon light filters into the Garden this time of year and the cool air seems to emphasize the smells that emit from various areas of our grounds. If you have not visited us during this time of year, you are missing a real treat.

Speaking of special treats, this week at Ducks Unlimited check out the following events:

- Duck Carving Demonstration by Kerry Smith, November 6 – 7, noon - 2 pm at Ducks Unlimited
- Duck Decoy Appraisals –Gary Cuyett, November 7, 9 am - 5 pm at Ducks Unlimited
- Lecture and Open Forum—Ellen and Doug Mille, November 7, noon - 1 pm at Ducks Unlimited

Have a great Thanksgiving season and enjoy the blessings that we have been given. And I hope you enjoy reading the three very varied submissions from Rick, Chris, and Sherri in this edition of our Vine Line.

I look forward to hearing from you about the Vine Line and any ideas or areas for improvement you may have.

Jim



Planning for the coming Garden Year and making assessments of the past Garden Season

Autumn is a busy time of year for gardeners. There are old annual plantings to pull up, spring flowering bulbs to plant and don't forget houseplants that have summered outdoors and doubled in size that somehow have to fit back in the house again. On top of this leaves start falling from the trees and need to be raked. This usually starts in early October and often continues until January.

I don't know why, but for as long as I can remember it has always been difficult to convince gardeners that fall is the best time to plant most trees shrubs and perennials. I know, after a long hot summer it is hard to think about doing soil preparation and digging holes, however the weather is usually good and the soil is easier to work at this time of year.

The big advantage is while the tops of the plants you are planting are dormant and won't show any new growth until spring, their roots are growing and getting established all winter long. They will have a head start on the new season and actually be bigger specimens at the end of their first growing season than their counterparts planted in the spring that have no choice but to grow roots and foliage at the same time.

If you have much landscaping to do, think of the time it will save you next spring, when you will have more than enough gardening tasks that need to be accomplished. The exceptions in the list of fall plantings are those species that are sometimes questionable if we have a bad winter. This would include Gardenias, Figs, Crepe Myrtles, and strangely enough Magnolias.....mainly because they have somewhat fleshy roots that heal poorly in cold soil. Most any other species that are normally winter hardy in our area will benefit greatly from fall planting.

Specimens grown in containers should be planted as soon as possible to take advantage of the fall weather. Larger specimens that must be dug to be moved are best, if you wait until we have had a hard frost, their foliage has dropped and the plant is in winter dormancy. All fall plantings, but especially smaller plants such as perennials should always be mulched after planting to keep the soil at a uniform temperature. You are not trying keep the soil warm, only insulate it. Remember all things in moderation. An inch and a half to two inches of mulch is sufficient. You can smother smaller plants with too much mulch.

Autumn is also a really good time to think about your gardening successes and failures of the past season. Did you summer annuals not bloom as well as they should because your trees have grown and are casting more shade? Time to plant shade annuals or thin out the canopy. Did you really like the tomatoes you grew or were you disappointed? Better make a note of it so you remember it in the spring.

Have your some of your daylilies become huge clumps and need to be divided. Did the color of your

Encore Azaleas look great with the daffodils in the spring but clash with the asters in the same bed in the fall? Does your shrub border need major renovation pruning, which should be done in late February.....better make a note of it on the calendar. I am sure you get the picture!

Some of these situations can be addressed now and others need attention at the appropriate time so the importance of making some notes now, while your memory is fresh will be a great help latter on. Some pictures of plantings you liked or might want to change can also be helpful when you are indoors on a cold day in January with a stack of Nursery Catalogs and are planning your 2015 Garden of the Year.

By Rick Pudwell, Director of Horticulture

Update by Chris Cosby

October was a month of international networking for the Memphis Botanic Garden. In late September, we were contacted by Sara Murphy, horticulturist at the Missouri Botanical Garden, and asked if we would be willing to spend some time with her and her MOBOT colleague David Gunn, who were touring mid-south sites of botanical interest with Mikhail Romonov, Oleg Korotkov, and Polina Vesselova, botanists from Moscow, Volgograd, and Kazakhstan, respectively.

We learned that MOBOT and the Russian Academy of Science have an ongoing annual exchange of botanists and horticulturists for the purpose of sharing knowledge, insights, and plant material, and we were honored to spend a few hours talking plants and collecting seeds and cuttings with such eminent botanical figures. It turns out that all of our respective institutions, regardless of status or endowment, face similar challenges of funding, public education, and garden maintenance. I must admit that it was quite a relief to learn that we are all in the same boat, so to speak, and that we can benefit from sharing our experiences with one another.

Time-saver Breakfast: Baked Eggs with Homemade Pesto, Baked Bacon, and Herb Cheese Biscuits

Making breakfast seems to take such a big chunk out of my time - and one can only eat so many breakfast casseroles – how about some baked eggs? Bring the eggs to room temperature. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Wipe the insides of ramekins with softened butter. Season the dish lightly with salt and pepper. Carefully break an egg and tip it gently into the ramekin. Repeat with the rest of the ramekins. Drizzle a little heavy cream (about 1 Tablespoon) onto each egg white, taking care that none runs onto the yolk. Place the ramekins onto a shallow roasting pan and place into the oven. Bake until the white is set and the yolk begins to thicken (about 10 to 12 minutes or so). Why is this a timesaver? It gives me a few minutes to cook something else, or wash a dish or two. Another timesaver would be to oven-bake your bacon prior to the eggs: 12 slices bacon, thin- or thick-cut. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Arrange bacon slices in a large jelly roll pan or other shallow baking pan with sides at least ¾ inch tall to keep in the rendered bacon fat (to save

The very next week, Nick Esthus and I had the privilege of attending the national meeting of the North American Japanese Garden Association at the Chicago Botanic Garden. We attended workshops on a variety of topics, ranging from the maintenance and care of a maturing Japanese Garden to the roles Japanese Gardens play in the health and well-being of both people and the environment, and networked with staff from gardens across the US and Canada. The speakers and workshop leaders were dynamic and eloquent, and consisted of many Japanese garden professionals and historians, who offered a unique perspective on what these gardens are really about and how they can contribute to communities and to society at large. In addition, NAJGA and the Japanese diplomatic contingent signed a formal agreement to share knowledge and resources on an ongoing basis, an agreement which promises to bring great developments to North American Japanese gardens.



As if all of this wasn't enough. We got to work in the Osaka Garden, which was originally constructed for the World Columbian Exposition in 1893. We helped to lay a new stone path in an area of the garden and did a bit of pruning to help shape things up. I think I can speak for both of us and say that we felt honored to lay our hands on one of the oldest expressions of Japanese culture in the country.

As a glorious end to our trip, we got a

time, you can add the bacon to the oven before the temperature reaches 400 degrees). Roast until fat begins to render, 5 to 6 minutes; rotate pan front-to-back. Continue roasting until crisp and brown, 5 to 6 minutes longer for thin-sliced, 8 to 10 minutes for thick cut (my oven takes even longer- for best time saving, test a batch for timing prior to doing this for others! Hey, I can manage a quick shower while the bacon finishes in my oven!). If cooking more than one tray of bacon, exchange their oven positions once about halfway through the cooking process. Transfer with tongs to a paper-towel lined plate, drain, and serve. Bacon can also be cooked and frozen, then thawed and reheated for the last few minutes in the oven with the biscuits (below)...

Now, don't you think I've forgotten herbs... You know, I like to incorporate fresh herbs whenever possible – serve the baked eggs with a dollop of homemade pesto on top: 2 cups fresh basil leaves (or cilantro, or sage, or arugula, or a mixture of any of these), 1/2 c grated parmesan, 1/2 c extra virgin olive oil, 1/3 c pine nuts, walnuts or pecans (pecans are great with the cilantro, walnuts are exceptional with the sage), 3 medium sized garlic cloves, salt and pepper to taste. In a food processor, combine herb(s) and nuts. Add garlic. Slowly add olive oil in a constant stream while the food processor is on. Scrape down sides. Add grated cheese and pulse again. Makes 1 cup. (This pesto can be made in advance, placed in a freezer bag, then thawed prior to use.) Want to up the ante even more? How about some herb-cheese biscuits? 2 1/4 c baking mix, 1/2 t ground pepper, 2 T butter or margarine, 1 c (4oz) shredded Swiss cheese, 4 t minced fresh basil, 4 t minced fresh thyme, 4 t minced fresh oregano, 1 8-oz carton plain low-fat yogurt. Combine baking mix and pepper in a medium

personal tour of Anderson Japanese Garden, a thirteen-acre public garden in Rockford, Illinois. Tim Gruner, Head Horticulturist and Garden Curator, showed us around on a beautiful, crisp fall morning. The trees and shrubs were in full fall color, highlighting the beautiful and thoughtful design of the garden and expert pruning of the Anderson team. Coupled with the sound of the numerous waterfalls in the garden, it was a mystical and tranquil experience. In fact, I developed a new translation of PTSD-Post Tranquility Stress Disorder-as a result.

In closing, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Misner family, whose generous support of our Scholarship Fund allowed us to attend the workshop. You can be sure that we will apply what we learned from the experience here at MBG.



By Chris Cosby, Senior Manager of Gardens

bowl. Cut in butter with a pastry blender until crumbly. Add cheese and herbs, tossing to blend. Stir in yogurt just until dry ingredients are moistened. Turn dough out onto a surface dusted with baking mix. Knead lightly 3 to 4 times. Roll dough to ½-inch thickness; cut with a 2 ½-inch round cutter, and place on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 450° for 8-10 minutes or until golden. Yield: 1 dozen. (Can use dried herbs in place of the fresh-use 1/3 the amount called for if using dry herbs. So you would end up with 1 teaspoon total of dried herbs: 1/3 t basil, 1/3 t thyme, 1/3 t oregano, or just 1 teaspoon of one herb of your choice). Make the biscuits ahead of time and freeze them. Thaw when needed, split open, and toast in oven while the eggs bake. A dollop of good sweet butter and the biscuits are done. This recipe is by Herb Garden volunteer Evelyn Mosely from the Memphis Herb Society's newest Celebration of Herbs cookbook (with an addendum or two by me...).

Make ahead and freeze: pesto and biscuits. Thaw when needed. Bake bacon then bake eggs. Split open the herb-cheese biscuits and toast in oven while the eggs bake. Serve with pesto on the eggs, and real butter on the biscuits. This could be served as a biscuit sandwich – bacon, egg, and pesto piled onto the biscuit would make a very fine breakfast.

Happy eating from the Herb Garden to you and yours!

By Sherri McCalla, Herb Garden Curator, and John Petersen, Herb Garden Volunteer