

I'On is Growing!

The homeowners' guide to gardening and landscaping in the I'On Community

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Herbs in our Lowcountry Garden

...by Janet Gaffney

For those of you whom I have not met, allow me to introduce myself as your local cooking school teacher, Janet Gaffney. And for those who have read about my journeys with my husband Michael, you know we have moved to and lived in 8 different cities as far north as Philadelphia, as far west as Atlanta and now as far south as Mt. Pleasant. Each of these has been in a different gardening zone. I've planted many gardens season after season and bought and had to tear out many an herb.

The good news is I have never had so many herbs winter over and give me use during the winter as I have enjoyed as those in my I'On garden. When you head out this spring to start selecting plants for your own garden, take along this list that has legs in our part of the world. Most herbs are perennials so they are "supposed" to winter over, but... (There are many more that you can enjoy during the long warm/hot season.) Remember, the following you may plant this spring and not have to replace next spring.

Bay Leaf – use leaves to flavor soups and sauces (*this will grow into a tree eventually*).

Burnet – the leaves taste like cucumber and can be added to salad and salad dressings.

Edisto – the leaves taste like beans, so it is a perfect enhancement for bean soups and Mexican cuisine.

Fennel – use the licorice flavored leaves for pork and seafood and the root bulbs can be used raw for salad or braised.

Lemon grass – the totally fibrous stems are used to flavor soups where you want a strong lemon flavor. The long leaves, too fibrous to eat, can be used to tie bundles of foods. (*My plant is 5 feet high and huge; stop by and I will share.*)

Marjoram – use leaves to flavor soups, sauces, red meat and pork.

Oregano – use in most things Italian. Both my golden and dark leaf varieties are hearty.

Savory – use leaves for soups, red meat, poultry and pork.

Tarragon – use leaves in sauces, on poultry and in egg dishes. (*This was my biggest surprise because I have NEVER had this winter over.*)

Thyme – a most familiar flavor, for the leaves are used on your Thanksgiving turkey, most chicken dishes, soups and bouquet garni. (*A little garden trivia: In English gardens a different variety of Thyme is used for each hour around a sundial.*)

Gardener's lore: If someone gives you a flower or a plant from their garden for you to plant in your garden, it is bad luck to say thank you. Accept it graciously with a smile.

(Janet has kindly included a recipe from her kitchen on page 4.)

February To Do's

by Andrew Smith
Landsmith

Any items from the February list that have not been taken care of should happen now. With good weather, plants may begin to show signs of growth.

Keep an eye out for animals that "mark" plants. A basic pepper spray will deter them.

Prune Japanese Acuba to promote dense form.

Pick up Camellia blooms on the ground. Peak bloom should be over. Pick up spent blooms from below **Saucer Magnolias**.

Spireas should be fertilized around the 10th of the month with ¼ cup of 6-6-12. Fertilize each **India Hawthorne** with ¼ cup of 8-8-8.

Fertilize Azaleas between the 15th and 30th with ¼ cup of 6-6-12 and ¼ cup of Epsom salts. Spray with a basic fungicide.

Fertilize Roses on the 20th with ¼ cup of 8-8-8, ¼ cup of Epsom salts, ¼ cup of superphosphate and ¼ cup of blood-meal. Apply two gallons of compost at the base of each plant. Do *not* fertilize **Lady Banks Roses**.

Rake the mulch from the base of **Gardenias** and treat the soil with ½ cup of baking soda, ¼ cup of Epsom salt and ¼ cup of superphosphate. Water well. Do *not* replace the mulch yet.

Feed Dwarf Gardenias late in the month with ½ cup of 6-6-12 and spray with a horticultural oil spray. Fertilize **Hydrangeas** with a light dose of 6-6-12 and ½ cup of superphosphate.

Apply several gallons of compost around the base of each **Anise**.

Apply superphosphate around the base of **Oleanders** at the rate of ¼ cup per 3 feet of height. Prune now.

The Garden Club of Charleston ... by Betty Haynes

Every year, in the month of March, the Charleston Garden Club hosts one of the premiere functions of the year – their **Garden Club Tours**. This occasion opens some of the most beautiful homes and gardens in Charleston to the public's view.

This year, the **70th Annual Walking Tour of Homes and Gardens** will be held on two consecutive Saturday's, March 19th and 26th. Each day features at least six different homes and/or gardens. Various locations include Murray Boulevard, South Battery, King Street, Meeting Street and Legare Steet.

Within the interior of each home you will find beautiful fresh arrangements done by members of The Charleston Garden Club. In past years these arrangements have received almost as much attention as the spectacular outdoor gardens.

Tickets are \$35 each (*group sales of ten or more are \$30 each*). Tickets may be purchased by sending a check and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to The Garden Club of Charleston, 55 Shrewsbury Road, Charleston, SC 29407. Tickets may also be purchased on the web at www.thegardenclubofcharleston.com.

On tour days, tickets may be purchased at Market Hall at the intersection of Market and Meeting Street beginning at 9:30 a.m. Maps of the homes and garden locations will be presented as well. The tour is self-guided. Refreshments will be served.

Proceeds benefit Club projects, including maintaining the gardens at the Manigault House, the Heyward-Washington House, the Gateway Walk and the Healing Garden at MUSC. (*You may contact Betty at 216-1188 with any questions you may have.*)

More Shade Please

... by Laura Kasman

If you have young trees that you wish would grow faster you are not alone. Shade is a precious commodity in our hot summer sun. According to the folks at Abide-a-While, there are two simple steps you can take that will have your trees safely growing as fast as possible for their particular species.

The first step is water. Most irrigation systems that are fine for your grass and shrubs don't deliver nearly enough water for a tree. Instead, turn your hose on about a quarter-volume and leave it at the base of the tree for 10-15 minutes, two to three times a week during the spring and summer. This will give an added boost to really get your trees growing.

Second, fertilize on or around April 1, June 1, and September 1 with a 6-6-6 or 12-6-6 fertilizer. I have had good results with Ironite, which also contains iron, in our yard on Sowell Street. The iron also really greens up the foliage.

To apply, spread approximately half a pound of fertilizer per inch diameter of trunk within the drip line of the tree. If this area includes grass be careful to water it in as it may burn the lawn or alternatively, dig small pits (*1 inch diameter, six or so inches deep*) at intervals around the tree and pour fertilizer into the holes.

Following these two simple steps you will likely see dramatic improvement in growth in just one season.

Inside I'On ... Lawn-O-Green Progress Report

Completed and on-going projects so far this year include:

In February, all common areas were treated for **fire ants and mole crickets**, with a solid baiting product called Top Choice. This product is used to control fire ants for up to one year and aid in the control of mole crickets for approximately three months. Weather conditions play a big part on how quickly this product starts to work and how long it will last.

Pre-emergent weed control was applied to all common area turf and planting beds. This application is geared towards minimizing the seed germination of weeds. In February we also applied a **post-emergent** to the lawn areas to control broadleaf weeds that have germinated.

Street trees thru-out I'On are in the process of being pruned. Michael P. Murphy, a certified arborist with Preservation Tree Care, identified the street trees within I'On that need to be staked and have the mulch ring regarded. This project commenced in January and will be completed on a street-by-street basis.

Installation of silt fencing to control temporary erosion at #35 East Lake and at the rear left side of #9 Boat House Close. Topsoil and sod will be installed to repair the washed out area. Aggregate will be used to "shore up" underlying shore line.

A myriad of perennials will be installed this month for color at Boat-house Close.

On a weekly basis:

- Debris is collected and removed from the entire property.
- The fountain at Perseverance Square is treated.
- All dog stations and trash receptacles throughout I'On are cleaned out.
- Routine maintenance (*mowing, edging, string-trimming, etc.*) is performed as needed throughout the community.
- Marsh walkways and The Rookery pathways are policed and maintained.

Any questions or comments regarding the landscaping in I'On should be directed to Cheryl L. Wilson, Management Director with AMCS, Inc. Please contact her at cwilson@amcs-inc.com or call (843) 303-3586.

Tip of the Month ... Pre-emergent application

From Mike Carreira ... Lawn-O-Green

For residential lawns, the best time to apply pre-emergent is between the end of February and the middle of March. It is also an excellent time to spot-treat any weeds that may be present. Granular pre-emergents are always the easiest to use and very effective. The two best pre-emergents to use are **Pre-M** or **Dimension**. As always, be sure to carefully follow label directions when applying.

Local Attractions

Palmetto Gardening

Tuesdays at Noon. Live, call-in segment on "Your Day," Clemson Extension Service Educational Radio Network, WSCI 89.3 FM.

Camellia Walks

February 8 to March 26, 11:00 a.m. Tues., Thurs. & Sat. Middleton Place. Call 566-6020 for reservations.

Emily Whaley Memorial Garden Tour

March 13, 1 – 5 p.m. Self-guided tour featuring the gardens of Church Street as well as two on East Battery. Reception follows. Sponsored by the Citadel's Daniel Library Friends. \$50. Reservations, call 953-7691.

Charleston Horticultural Society

Monthly Lecture Series

March 14, 6:30 p.m.

Getting Your Feet Wet While Growing a Water Garden

Chris Deer, Tideline Aquatics owner reveals the most popular and successful flora and fauna for our Lowcountry water gardens. Topics such as keeping the water clean, feeding the fish, the best flowering water plants and ways to protect from predators will be discussed. Charleston Museum Auditorium, 360 Meeting Street. Plant give-a-way. \$10 non-members. Call 579-9922.

CHS Gardening 101

Sat., March 19, 10:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Consecutive workshops dedicated to teaching the basics of horticulture including garden design, planting, pruning, soil care... Hampton Park (*near the Citadel*). Limited space; \$5 members; \$10 non-members. Call 579-9922.

The Garden Club of Charleston's 70th Annual House & Garden Tours

Saturday's March 19 and 26 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. (see article on previous page)

Plant Profile ... *New Zealand Flax* ...by Lynn Williams

Contact us

Sincerest thanks go out to **Janet Gaffney, Betty Haynes, Laura Kasman** and **Lynn Williams** for their great contributions to this issue. Also *BIG* thanks to **Andrew Smith** who has agreed to provide monthly to-do's on an on-going basis. There's really nothing like some expert advice!

Laura Kasman also has **two medium-size Pampas Grass plants** that are free to anyone who wants to move them (at 52 Sowell). Laura can be reached at 216-1238 or emailed at kasman@juno.com.

If you have a gardening question, a plant offer, or an article of your own, we'd love to hear from you. Just email Barbara Fry at brbfry@comcast.net (or call 216-0045). We appreciate the input.

For questions or concerns regarding your home landscaping, contact **Pam Gabriel, I'On Design Committee**, at 971-1662, ext 216.

For common area landscaping questions or concerns, call **Cheryl Wilson, AMCS, I'On Community Manager** at 303-3586, or email cwilson@amcs-inc.com

New Zealand Flax (Phormium tenax 'Atropurpureum') is a beautiful plant that provides color variation and drama to any garden. Occasionally at Lowe's, characteristics are sword-like, stiff vertical leaves in a fan pattern. Red flowers 1-2" long (mine has never bloomed) in clusters on a tall stem that reaches high above the leaves. In California I have seen these plants 9 feet tall. They prefer arid-dry areas and semi-shade.

Three years ago I planted three 5-gallon plants in different areas of my yard. One was in full sun for mid-day and quickly scorched and died. The second was against a vine covered fence that faced north. Unfortunately that winter we had a hard freeze for several days in a row. It wilted down and never came back, even though the "Cold Hardiness" factors say 0 degrees to -18. The third was planted in the back corner of my yard where it is protected by trees on three sides, gets full sun up to 1:00



and then is in indirect sun for the rest of the day. My plant is now approximately 3' x 3'.

This plant would look great under the canopy of a tree (a loquat would offer some protection from the sun); planted in front of a large leaf, bright green plant (such as hydrangea); or as a background from seasonal flowers (such as blanket flower). Its' interesting color, structure and leaf form adds another dimension to my garden.

Janet's Highly Herbed Dressing

Janet Gaffney's The Art of Cooking

Preparation time is 15 minutes. Serves 12.

2 tablespoons olive oil
1/3 cup balsamic vinegar
1/2 cup basil, oregano, parsley, chives – washed and chopped – mixed
Salt and pepper to taste

In a small bowl whisk the olive oil into the balsamic vinegar. Stir in the fresh herbs, salt and pepper.

Suggested herbs: parsley, dill, oregano, tarragon, basil, burnet and chives.

On the Web ...

<http://hgic.clemson.edu> is the site for Clemson Extension Home & Garden, our personal favorite for the unique horticultural environment in I'On.

<http://www.charlestonhorticulturalsociety.org> is the site for the Charleston Horticultural Society that lists lectures, events, membership information ...

<http://gardenweb.com> is "the Internet's Garden Community" offering garden forums, garden exchange, calendar of events, a glossary of botanical terms ...

<http://thegardenclubofcharleston.com> is the homepage of the Garden Club of Charleston where you can find out more about their upcoming tours.
