

Can You Dig It?

FIRST
QTR
2021

Plan Now for Spring- Plant A Tree

Tree planting is already underway in some parts of the country. Now is the time to plan, order and plant your trees for spring.

Trees shade and cool our homes, bring songbirds close by, and mark the changing seasons. For all of us, trees are a source of lumber, food and countless products – and they beautify our communities and countryside.

But equally important, trees conserve energy, reduce soil erosion, clean the air we breathe and help protect rivers and streams.

If trees are to provide all these benefits, we need to care for the trees we have and plant more! Planting and caring for trees is something each of us can do to improve our community and the environment. Hope you will plant more trees where you live this spring!



this issue

State of PHLMG **P.1**

First Quarter Gardening Tips **P.2**

Fight Invasive Pest **P.3**

State of PHLMG

Just like the U.S. President gives the country an address outlining what's in store for the year, I know you are wondering what's the state of our beloved PHLMG. Who knew this time last that a little "bug" would bring the world to a standstill! As Master Gardeners, we are accustomed to attacking and adapting to pest of all kind. So what can and how do we adjust to this new world with COVID19 running the show?

What to do about our limited opportunity to earn volunteer hours in 2020? I'm contacting Mark Wilson for a possible one year waiver. We can't be the only group that has problems in this area. I will hopefully have an answer at our Feb. meeting.

What to do now – Hopefully by late spring early summer we should be able to begin group activities again. Until then, how about stopping by the AgCenter and spending some time working in one of the teaching gardens?!

Schedule a visit with Agent John Monzingo to see your gardens. I know everything is brown currently but he can help with spring plans for planting and do a before and after.

Write an article to post on the PHLMG Web page. The hours would include the time for composing and submitting the article.

There are numerous YouTube videos you can view to count as educational hours until the country opens up. Don't have a way to view? Maybe you have a friend or family member that you can safely watch with.

As we move forward, we have plans for a 2021 Master Gardeners Class. It will begin Thursday July 1 with registration. First class day will be July 8. Class times are 6pm until 9pm. Cost of book is \$150.00. Sign up deadline is June 1, 2021. There is a discount of \$25.00 for anyone who signs up before May 1, 2021. Let everyone know.

Lee Faulk thinks it would be a good idea to have a past/current member reunion. What do you think? Marjorie has tentatively offered her home for the occasion.

So grab your garden gloves, trowels and spades cause **YOU CAN DIG IT!**

Submitted by Wanda Medlock-Smith



First Quarter of the Year Gardening Tips

5 tips for great lawns and gardens using common household products you may already have.

Re-cycle those kiddie wading pools!

Have an old children's pool hanging out in your backyard? Put it to good use by making your own wading-pool garden. Here's what you will need:

- Plastic wading pool (5-6' in diameter, about 12" deep)
- Vermiculite or wood chips (1.5 cubic ft.)
- Peat moss (3 cubic ft.)
- Compost or potting soil (3 40-lb bags)
- Seeds or plants

Here's How:

Drill holes every 12-18" around the circumference of the pool about 2" above the base to allow drainage with some moisture retention on the bottom. Next choose a flat location for your pool that gets 6-8 hours sunlight and has access to water. Spread a 2" layer of vermiculite over the bottom of the pool, then add a mixture of peat moss and compost or potting soil, filling the pool to about 2" from the top. Plant seeds or transplants directly into the soil and water thoroughly.

Happy Growing!

TIP #1 Tomato Blight Buster

Use this mix to ward off many common tomato diseases from your newly transplanted tomato seedlings.

- 3 cups of compost
- ½ cup of powdered nonfat milk
- ½ cup Epsom salts
- 1 tbsp. of baking soda

Sprinkle a handful of the mixture into each planting hole. For additional disease defense, sprinkle a little more powdered milk on top of the soil after planting, and repeat every few weeks throughout the growing season.

TIP #2 CHASE DEER AWAY

Deer eat over 600 different kinds of plants. To make sure yours aren't on the menu, puree **2 raw eggs, 2 cups of water, 1 to 4 cloves of garlic, and 2 tablespoons of hot sauce** at high speed in a blender. Allow this tonic to sit, covered, for several days. Then pour or sprinkle the mixture over any vulnerable plant.

Guess What? Deer will turn up their noses and eat out in someone else's backyard!

TIP #3 ROBUST ROSE TONIC

This fabulous formula will keep your roses happy, healthy and churning out blooms galore, all summer long!

- 2 tbsp. of instant tea granules
- 1 tbsp. of dry red wine
- ½ tbsp. fish emulsion
- 1 tsp. iron (available at garden centers)
- 1 gal. warm water

Mix these ingredients in a bucket, and treat each rosebush to a quart of the mixture every three weeks during growing season.

TIP #4 DON'T TROW OUT THE BATHWATER!

Solid food is just fine for a routine diet, but most plants like some liquid refreshment, too. So whenever you change the water in your fish tank, or toss a floral arrangement onto the compost pile, don't send the used H2O down the drain; you'll be wasting lots of health-giving

Nutrients. Ditto for the water you've used to cook eggs, vegetables, or pasta, or rinse out glasses, bottles or cans that held any of these refreshing beverages:

Beer	Juice	Whiskey
Tea	Coffee	Wine
Pop	Milk	

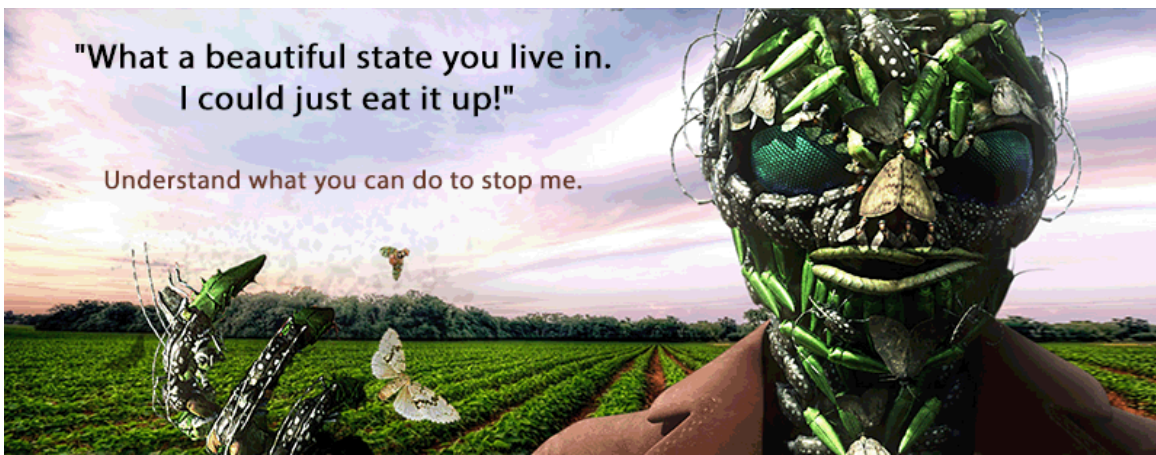
TIP#5 CONTAINER BOOSTER MIX

When you're planting vegetables in containers, add this miracle of good commercial potting soil and compost. You'll get a harvest that'll put many an in ground plot to shame.

- ½ cup Epsom salts
 - ¼ cup coffee grounds (rinsed clean)
 - 1 tbsp. of instant tea granules
 - 4 eggshells (dried and crushed to powder) per 2 gallons of soil
- Combine the ingredients thoroughly with your potting mix. Then plant your seeds or set in your transplants, and get ready to enjoy a bountiful harvest.

"What a beautiful state you live in.
I could just eat it up!"

Understand what you can do to stop me.



Do Your Part to Stop The Invasion

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

There are many ways you can help stop the spread of invasive species, no matter where you live and that's by preventing their introduction in the first place. These hungry pest feast on and infest our agriculture, damage our parks and forest, wreck our gardens, push out native species, reduce biological diversity and change wildlife frequency and intensity. Plus some can even be dangerous to human health. The cost of invasive species exceeds \$1 billion annually.

FIGHT BACK NOW

We can fight back against these hungry pest and keep them from destroying our ecosystems, crops, and local life by following these few steps:

Buy Local, Burn Local. Invasive pests and larvae can hide and ride long distances in firewood. Don't give them a free ride to start a new infestation – buy firewood where you'll burn it.

Plant Carefully. Buy your plants from a reputable source and avoid invasive plant species at all costs.

Do Not Bring or Mail fresh fruit, vegetables, or plants into your State or another State unless agricultural inspectors have cleared them beforehand.

Cooperate with any agricultural quarantine restrictions and allow authorized agricultural workers access to your property for pest or disease surveys.

Keep It Clean. Wash animals, tires and gear between fishing, hunting, or camping trips. Clean lawn furniture when moving it from one home to another.

Learn To Identify. If you see signs of an invasive pest or disease, write down or take a picture of what you see, and then report it to your local State agriculture department or local master gardener extension office.

This Month's Q&A Gardening Grows

Q: What can I do to keep my hanging baskets happy without daily watering?

A: Many plants grown in pots must be watered as often as twice a day during the hot summer days. To keep plants adequately cool and moist during hot summer days, double – pot: Place a smaller pot with the plant in it inside a larger one and fill the space between them with sphagnum moss or crumpled newspaper. When watering the plant, also soak the filler between the pots.

This will act as an insulator for the plant. If your plant is in a porous pot the double pot will act as a sponge to collect water run-off.

2021 Piney Hills Louisiana Master Gardeners Elected Officers

Meet your 2021 Elected Officers:

President

Wanda Medlock-Smith

Vice President

Open

Secretary

Barbara Sisler

Treasurer

Emmett Jones

Historian/Parliamentarian

Open

Members –At-Large

Val Corley and Susan Scroggins

Volunteer Coordinator

TBA

Local MG Coordinator

John Monzingo



Piney Hills
Louisiana
Master
Gardeners

Webster Parish
Extension Office

1202 Homer Rd.
Minden, LA
71055

318-371-1371

www.phlmg.com

Like us on
[facebook.com/PHLMG](https://www.facebook.com/PHLMG)

Upcoming Events

- **Feb 11- Piney Hills Louisiana Master Gardeners Regular Meeting**

Regular meeting PHLMG at 6:00pm Webster Parish Extension Office. This will be a hybrid virtual / call in meeting using Microsoft Teams. Log on details will be emailed by John Monzingo. Board members will meet in person at 5:00pm. All meetings will be in this format until the gathering restrictions are lifted by the Governor.

- **Mar 18- Piney Hills Louisiana Master Gardeners Regular Meeting**

Regular meeting PHLMG at 6:00pm Webster Parish Extension Office. Board meeting at 5:00pm

- **Mar 25- Deadline for Can You Dig It? 2nd quarter Newsletter Submissions!**