



The Giving Garden

Volume 4, Issue 6

July - September 2015

Giving Garden's Spring Event

by Angela Glover

Despite the weather, gardeners and family members participated in a Picnic turned Potluck on Saturday, May 23rd. We had a variety of yummy dishes including fresh organic vegetables from the garden and tasty desserts. Thanks to all for making the event a success; special thanks to Aldersgate United Methodist Church (AUMC) for use of their facility, Willie Lane (Beds 17 & 18) for grilling the brisket and Martha Grizzel (Beds 10 & 11) for bringing the games. I think some individuals are practicing for a re-match. Look for more information on our upcoming fall event.

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Giving Garden's Spring Event Continued



Lamb's Ear Perennial . . . Submitted by Laura Margadonna



What's soft, fuzzy, and silvery grey-green? The answer is one of the best herbaceous perennial secrets around for your garden; lamb's ears. If you are looking for texture and diversity for your garden, and need a low-growing (6-8 inches tall), ornamental edge plant, this might be "it."

The plant originated in the Middle East, near Turkey and Iran. Other authorities assert that it is a native to the Caucasus Mountains in Europe. Lamb's ear got its name from the shape and feel of the ovate leaves. It is a member of the Lamiaceae family, related to mint.

Stachys byzantina is no longer considered a medical herb, although for centuries it was used as a wound dressing. The plant does have antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, and antibacterial properties and is absorbent. Because of these properties, it's also called "woolly woundwort." I was intrigued that a herb could be "taken off the list" of helpful plants after so many years of service. Why?

I did find one reference from the 1800s, to lamb's ear being included with golden rod as a wound dressing. Mostly, I found website after website of the exact same information about lamb's ear, evidently copied from each other! None of them had anything new to say about the plant. I turned to my herb books and texts.

Having known the mature plant both in my garden and in the woods, I was very surprised to find two-inch potted specimens for sale at the local garden center. More special was the garden center employee telling me that a video on how to plant lamb's ear was available online. I tried very hard not to laugh. However, I did go home and watch it.

Lamb's ear has a reputation for both good and ill. The dense, matted rosettes of leaves beg to be touched. Often planted in children's gardens, lamb's ear can take a lot of abuse and still survive. Some farmers might think of lamb's ears as a baa'ed plant. (Sorry, couldn't help myself.)

However, the plant does very well if kept within perimeters or borders and not allowed to spread. It is easy to grow as long as it has well drained soil. Once planted, lamb's ear requires very little maintenance and tolerates a variety of weather and soil conditions. It's a hardy, sturdy plant and may require thinning or redirection every few years. The plant is propagated by seed or by dividing the root ball.

Grown in pots, or as part of a container planting, lamb's ear does very well. It is considered an evergreen and makes a great companion plant or filler to brightly colored blossoms. It makes a good companion for roses. It also makes a good protection barrier against deer and rabbits. The beasts just don't enjoy the taste. *Continued on Page 14*

Eggplant Stacks *from Cook Yourself Thin*



Ingredients

4 eggplants, thinly sliced into rounds, about 2 pounds
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 lemon, juiced
1 1/4 cups pesto sauce, store-bought
4 -5 tomatoes, thinly sliced
1 1/4 cups feta, crumbled
1/2 cup basil, chopped
salt and pepper

Preparation Instructions

Lay the eggplant slices on a sheet pan; lightly sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Mix together the olive oil, balsamic vinegar and lemon juice, and lightly brush the eggplant slices.

Heat the broiler or grill pan, or low gas grill. Grill or broil the eggplant, turning over occasionally, until eggplant is very tender, 6 to 10 minutes; do not let them burn. Cook low and slow for sweetness. Remove and reserve.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

On baking pan, arrange 4 of the largest eggplant rounds side by side and spread each with thin layer of pesto, then top each with largest tomato rounds. Season tomatoes with salt and pepper, and top each with about 1 tablespoon feta and a pinch of chopped basil. Continue to layer, ending with cheese.

Bake in the oven (or on the grill) until cheese begins to melt, about 3 to 4 minutes. Garnish with fresh lemons.

Total Time: 17 minutes

Caprese Salad by Martha Grizzel



Ingredients

- 1) 2 cups Balsamic Vinegar
- 2) 3 Whole Ripe Tomatoes, Sliced Thick
- 3) 12 ounces Mozzarella Cheese, Sliced Thick
- 4) Fresh Basil Leaves
- 5) Olive Oil, For Drizzling
- 6) Kosher Salt And Freshly Ground Black Pepper

Preparation Instructions

In a small saucepan, bring balsamic vinegar to a boil over medium-low heat. Cook for 10 to 20 minutes, or until balsamic has reduced to a thicker glaze. Remove from heat and transfer to a bowl or cruet. Allow to cool.

When you're ready to serve, arrange tomato and mozzarella slices on a platter. Arrange basil leaves between the slices. Drizzle olive oil over the top of the salad, getting a little bit on each slice. Do the same with the balsamic reduction, making designs if you want. Store extra balsamic reduction in fridge for a later use.

End with a sprinkling of kosher salt and black pepper. Serve as a lunch, with crusty bread. Or serve alongside a beef main course for dinner.

Common Tomato Plant Problems

[By Marie Iannotti Gardening Expert](#)

Question: Why do the bottom of tomatoes turn black and soft?



Answer: You are describing Blossom End Rot.

This is thought to be caused by insufficient calcium. However, don't rush out to buy a calcium supplement for your soil. This calcium deficiency is probably caused by irregular watering and a fluctuation in water levels. Water carries calcium throughout the tomato plant. Without enough water, the calcium, which is being used first for foliage growth, doesn't make its way to the fruits. Other factors may include: too much nitrogen fertilizer, too much salt in the soil, root damage and a soil pH that is too high or too far below the optimum 6.5.

There's no saving the rotting fruits. Remove the affected fruits, make sure the plants are getting at least an inch of water per week, correct any other problems, mulch under the plants and you should see improvement.

Question: Why do my tomatoes crack as they ripen?



Answer: Tomatoes tend to crack when they receive irregular water. If your tomatoes have gone through a dry spell and you try to make up for it with frequent watering, the inside of the tomato will plump up faster than the outside can stretch and grow. As a result the outer skin of the tomato splits open or cracks.

Tomatoes that crack are still edible. They just won't keep as long. You can prevent future tomatoes cracking by making sure that they receive water regularly, whether or not it rains. Mulching the area around the tomatoes will also help maintain ground moisture levels. Finally, look for varieties that are resistant to cracking.

Common Tomato Plant Problems *Continued*

Question: Why is the stem end of my tomatoes not ripening?



Answer: When the stem end of a tomato remains green or yellowish, it is called green shoulders. The green area is also noticeably harder than the ripened fruit. This can occur when temperatures remain high for a prolonged period or when the fruit receives too much direct sun exposure. The chlorophyll in the fruit that would normally break down as the fruit ripens, doesn't or does so too slowly.

This problem is more prevalent in heirloom varieties, since many hybrid tomatoes have been bred not to do this. If you find this happening to your tomatoes, make sure the fruits have good foliage cover. If the problem persists, try picking the tomatoes while they are still green and allowing them to ripen away from the sun. As with tomatoes that crack, tomatoes with green shoulders are still edible. Just cut around the shoulders.

<http://today.agrilife.org/2014/03/13/tycoon-tomato-texas-superstar/>
<http://www.texasgardener.com/pastissues/janfeb02/tomatororganic.html>

*Giving Garden featured in Live Happy Magazine
by Terri Barrett*

The July issue of ***Live Happy*** Magazine will feature an article on The Giving Garden! *Live Happy*, a new lifestyle publication, has a motto of “Live simply. Love generously. Care Deeply. Speak Kindly” which we can all use! The magazine, available in hardcopy and softcopy, weaves positive psychology through inspiring content, relatable stories, and sage advice in the effort to help readers discover their personal journey of happiness. Read about The Giving Garden at www.livehappy.com and check out the pictures of a few of our gardeners.

Meet the Gardener . . . Maxine Allen (Bed 27)



Left: Allyson, Erma, Garrett, Tony and Maxine

My most favorite thing about belonging to The Giving Garden is the good nutritional contribution our work brings to the community. In a world that is consumed with fast food, it feels good to offer people a better alternative.

- Live in The Colony, Texas and have been married for 32 years to Tony. We have two children, Garrett (28) and Allyson newly 25! And we are empty nesters...Halleluiah!
- Manages a showroom for women's apparel at the Dallas Market Center.
- Fellow gardener Angela shared her wonderful bounty with me last season (kale, spinach and cabbage) and I was hooked by the freshness and the idea it was all organic. I found out that half of what was grown was shared with the elderly and those less fortunate, the decision and desire to join became a must.
- The most favorite thing about belonging to *The Giving Garden* is the good nutritional contribution our work brings to the community. In a world that is consumed with fast food, it feels good to offer people a much better alternative.
- The three adjectives family and friends would use to describe me are faithful, fun (most times) and fickle.
- My favorite vegetable is anything green really...but I guess mustard, turnip and spinach mixed (the way my grandmother made them...yum!)
- The last movie I saw was "American Sniper".
- Favorite hobby besides gardening is decorating and working on home projects. Also, yoga has become my new favorite thing to do for relaxing and exercise.
- If I could travel anywhere I would go to Israel.

Meet the Gardener . . . Jinho (Jin) Kim (Bed 32)

Jinho (Jin) Kim, Pastor of Flower Mound Baptist church and works for an organization called “Wheat Mission” serving people who have Intellectual Developmental Disabilities in the DFW area. The organization helps children from a very young age grow into adulthood while offering a friendly atmosphere. Jin also produces coffee to provide job opportunities to individuals with disabilities.



Jin came to the States in 2002 with his family as an International student. He has a wife, Sharon and two children Grace (age 13) and Sam (age 10). His son, Sam was born with autism and like most working parents Jin never really had the time to hang out with Sam, which he strongly regrets. Therefore, he started searching for some things where they could bond. During his search he kept thinking of foods free from GMO. There are researchers who have proven when a parent feeds autistic children non-GMO food the results were very promising. Jin wanted to help his son become healthier and lead a better life. His mission is two-fold because he also wanted to introduce non-GMO products to students he works with to help them live a healthier lifestyle like his son.

After sharing his plan with a few friends one of them told him about community gardens, where his family could grow the food they needed. So he researched the term “community garden” on the Internet, and that’s how he found the ‘Giving Garden’.

When asked what he likes about the garden Jin said he enjoys working with people. His first impression was one of a warm hearted feeling that he couldn’t really describe. Whenever he meets fellow gardeners, they share their stories and what they’ve grown. Secondly, he likes the scenery. He often thinks of the garden when he just wants to get some fresh air and feels a sense of healing when there. His son, Sam loves to come to the garden and help, but he really despises the mosquitoes. Thirdly, Jin has an appreciation for gardening as his parents are farmers. Lastly, Jin appreciates the concept of the ‘Giving Garden’. He often mentions the garden at his church in hopes they will be able to help the community like the Giving Garden is doing now. He’s greatly blessed to have a place where he can give to his family and back to the community. Jin thinks it is an amazing idea to give 50% away and help the seniors.

Besides farming Jin likes to use his hands at woodworking, reclaimed wood recycling, and calligraphy.

Thank You Notes



*12 Tree.Com Services for donating 4 loads of Mulch. The Garden was able to re-mulch pathways and share mulch with Aldergate Church and community members. **A big Thank You to all Giving Garden gardeners.***



Left: Lisa Ingram (Bed 21 & 28) manages our student volunteers. Since August 2014, her efforts have yielded more than 175 hours from 56 student volunteers. Students not only helped flip compost, remove trash, weed, spread mulch and harvest, but deliver fresh organic vegetables to seniors.

Aldersgate United Methodist Church's Honey Dudes who found a way in between the storms to trim the trees on the southeast side of the garden.

Thank You Notes Continued

Thanks to Cindy and Kelly Baxley, Willie Lane and Cindy's neighbor John Schmitz with the Mulch-a-Rama project on Friday June 12th. They worked several hours utilizing the skid steer, Willie generously rented. John has previous experience working with heavy equipment so he drove the skid steer rented by Willie. They moved mulch to the Aldersgate Church playground and spread mulch across the back hill behind the garden. Willie also graded the hill to help with erosion. While John worked the heavy equipment Kelly, Willie and Cindy moved hundreds of wheelbarrows of mulch throughout the week of June 8-13th.



Above: Willie Lane (Bed 18 & 19) and Cindy Baxter (Bed 9)

The collage consists of six photographs. Top left: Several people in green shirts making sandwiches at tables. Top right: A person in a black shirt washing a red truck. Bottom left: A young boy in a green shirt with '2015 THE BIG EVENT' on it, wearing work gloves. Bottom center: A close-up of many hands covered in brown dirt. Bottom right: Five people in green shirts standing together outdoors under a canopy.

One Big THANKS

Our First Annual **East Zone Big Event** was a huge success...We couldn't have done it without you!
Thank you from the East Zone Big Event Committee

What's New in the Native Plant Bed

Submitted by Laura Margadonna

Blue Mealy Cup Salvia

Latin Name: *Salvia farinacea*

Common Name: Mealy Cup Sage



Exposure: Full Sun to Partial Shade. In hotter climates, afternoon shade will extend the bloom period as well as the life span of the plant.

USDA Hardiness Zones 7 - 11. Widely grown as an annual, in cooler climates. I've had it over-winter in my Zone 6 garden, after a mild winter.

Mature Size: Varies with variety, most grow from 2 - 3' tall and get about 8 - 12" wide.

Bloom Period: Early Summer through Fall

Description:

Salvia farinacea is a short lived perennial or annual. Five years is about the life span you can expect in gardens where it grows as a perennial. It shares many qualities with other members of the sage family, including the soft, fuzzy flower spikes and a slightly fragrant foliage that makes it less popular with animals.

Leaves: Elongated and slightly serrated leaves have a hint of gray to them, especially underneath. They are not fuzzy or thick, like many other sage plants.

Flowers: Multiple stems of small flowers clustered along sturdy spikes.

Suggested Varieties:

- '**Argent White**' - A soft, off-white selection. 18"
- '**Blue Bedder**' - Similar to 'Victoria Blue', but taller. 3'
- '**Strata**' - Two-toned. Blue flowers are cupped with white sepals. 18"
- '**Victoria Blue**' - The classic deep purple-blue. 18"

Design Suggestions:

Because Salvia farinacea blooms so steadily, they make wonderful container plants. I like to tuck a few plants in areas of the garden where I know the perennials will be out of bloom for a brief period.

What's New in the Native Plant Bed *Continued*

The bluish purple color really shines next to pale yellows, like Coreopsis 'Moonbeam' or the buttery Yellow Flower Carpet Rose. It's also a great way to blend oranges into your garden, tempering harsh, red tones.

Growing Tips:

Soil: Salvia farinacea isn't really particular about soil pH. It does, however, need a well draining soil. Mealy cup sage is fairly drought tolerant, but will bloom best if watered during dry spells.

Planting: Mealy cup sage can be started by seed, cuttings or divisions. In cooler climates, it is readily available as a bedding plant. Although Salvia farinacea can tolerate a light frost, it's best to start seeds or plants outdoors, after all danger of frost has past. You can start seeds indoors, about 6 weeks before transplanting out. Spring is also the best time to divide plants.

No pinching or pruning is required to get the plants to branch. Sunshine will do the trick.

A Little Known Fact . . .

The first celebration, which came one year after the signing of the Declaration of Independence was comprised of 13 fireworks being set off in city of Philadelphia. Thereafter, Boston held its own fireworks celebration. The original tradition behind the fireworks was to symbolize the 13 states of the union as 13 fireworks were set off at the beginning of the celebration. Today, you will find fireworks are synonymous with our Independence Day celebration all over the land.



Have a safe and fun Fourth of July !

Lamb's Ear Perennial Continued

Lamb's ear flowers in late spring and early summer. The pale pink, violet or lavender flower spikes rise from six to 10 inches above the woolly base. The stalks look great in flower arrangements. The flowers are considered sessile. This means the stalk is firmly attached to the plant base.

After blooming on the plant, it's a good idea to clip off the dead flower heads. The flowers attract bees and other pollinators, and smell a bit like pineapple. Just before flowering, the stems of the lamb's ear elongate, and sometimes the plant may begin to look "weedy" or "leggy." It can be cut back after flowering, if you wish. If you do not enjoy this stage of the plant, look for cultivars that do not flower.

Lamb's ear is loosely related to Betony (both are *Stachys*), and is sometimes called woolly betony. Besides the soaking up of blood and use as a dressing, lamb's ear has also been used as a poultice and has analgesic properties.

It was used either alone, or to help hold in other herbs like comfrey. It was often used in the aftermath of bee or wasp stings, and reduces the swelling from both.

It was used for centuries as a "women's comfort" for hemorrhoids, menstrual flow, birthing, for nervous tension, and as a skin aid. It's easy to see that with the invention of Tylenol, gauze, feminine hygiene products, cotton packing, and make up removal pads, the knowledge and use of lamb's ear for this purpose kind of went out the window. However, now you know you have a natural substitute if everything goes wrong and supplies are not available.

Lamb's ear has been used as a natural dye for wool. Boiling the leaves in hot water and then adding a mordant, brings out a fabulous, creamy, yellowish beige. Using the bracts (flower spike) instead of the leaves, a light mauve can be attained.

Powdery mildew is one of the plant's few attackers. The fungus causes white spots on the leaves. Pick off and destroy all affected foliage. Treat the plant with a fungicide, neem oil, or garlic spray. Slugs and earwigs can attack and eat holes in the leaves. These pests can be controlled with traps. Hot, humid weather can rot the leaves. The weather isn't preventable. If this happens, just peel the dead leaves off.

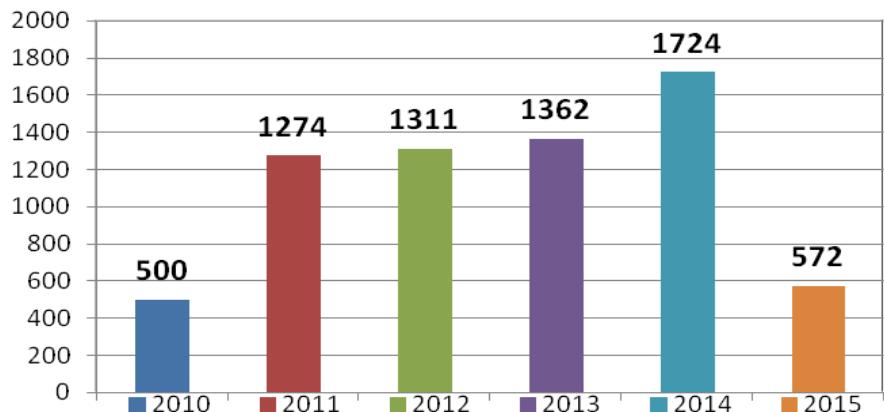
Now to the use of the plant for food. The truth is that not many people eat it, even if it is edible. The leaves by themselves have a bland, fruity taste and smell and have been described as both apple and pineapple-like.

The leaves traditionally have been used in cooking from the West Indies. A lovely tea can be made from the leaves as well, tasting a bit like chamomile. I also have a mole verde recipe that calls for small lamb's ear leaves. When harvesting for food, only choose small, healthy leaves. There is a market for dried lamb's ear plants, to be used in floral arrangements, wreaths, and potpourris.

Whether you love or hate it; seems that this overlooked, creeping perennial plant, it is not a baa'ed choice for your garden, or for your emergency stash.

Master Gardener Sydney J. Tanner nurtures her 10 children as well as plants, in Colfax

Share the Harvest Donations



Above: Eileen Graziano (Bed 5) checking status of the community garlic and onion bed.



Left: Garlic and onion harvest in June.

The Giving Garden Board Members

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About The Giving Garden of Carrollton

The Giving Garden of Carrollton is a non-profit community garden that is jointly developed by Keep Carrollton Beautiful and Aldersgate United Methodist Church (AUMC). The goal for the community garden is to provide a sustainable community garden opportunity for the citizens of Carrollton, without regard to demographic or socioeconomic status.

Mark your calendar

Annual Garage Sale October 10, 2015.



What is a weed?
A plant whose virtues...

