The Garden Path
Kerr Lake Master Gardeners
July 2010

PLANT OF THE MONTH:
Winecups, or Purple Poppy Mallow (Callirhoe involucrata)
By Marty Finkel, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

This low-growing, showy perennial groundcover is worth seeking out since it isn’t easily found. In his book, *Herbaceous Perennial Plants*, Allan Armitage gives the height as 1 to 2’ by 2’ spread, but I have never seen it more than about 8” tall, spreading to about 3 feet. The leaves are beautifully cut in a palmate form, and the flowers are bright magenta. The flowers are found throughout the plant but are mostly on the terminals. They are especially effective draping over walls or in raised beds. Flowering starts the last of May and often continues until frost. Plant in full sun in well-draining soil, and if they get leggy, cut them back. They are easy to grow from seed. There is also a white form. Photo by Paul F. Redfearn, Jr. from the Ozarks Regional Herbarium at Missouri State University.

GARDEN TO DO: FRUITS & VEGGIES
By Carl Schafer, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

If rain does not fall, you need to provide one inch of water per week to keep the garden growing well. Use of mulch will help conserve moisture. Use of soaker hoses or drip irrigation will keep foliage dry and help reduce disease.

Continue your spray program on fruits if needed. Observe the time period required between the last spray and harvest. **Read the label.**

As crops mature, compost or till in plant material that is not diseased. Diseased material should be discarded in the trash.

There is still time for a last planting of many warm season vegetables. Note that if you want pumpkins for Halloween or winter squash maturing in late fall for winter storage, they should be planted in early July.

If you are considering a fall garden, see the July 2007 issue of this newsletter, or pick up a copy of HIL 8001, *Growing a Fall Vegetable Garden*, or on the net see: [www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-8001.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-8001.html). Note some of the cool season crops can be set out or seeded in July.

If you have extra space in your garden, consider planting a cover crop. Get a copy of HIL 37, *Summer Cover Crops*, or on the net see: [www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/pdf/hil-37.pdf](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/pdf/hil-37.pdf).
ROSE TIP OF THE MONTH
By Heidi Moore, Master Gardener, Warren County

The summer months are a very busy season in the rose garden. It is important to be diligent in your spraying every 10 days with a fungicide to keep fungi under control. Inspect your roses daily for signs of insects and spray with an insecticide if other means of control such as hand picking, insecticidal soap or spraying with a hose do not get the job done. Be sure to deadhead spent roses to insure your plants will continue to produce new growth and blooms throughout the hot growing season.

Your bushes will require a minimum of 1 ½ to 2 inches of water each week. Water your knock-outs, ramblers, bush roses and hybrid teas long enough to provide water to penetrate deeply to the plant’s root system. Shallow watering will produce numerous surface roots and provide very little to hydrate the whole plant. A second application of fertilizer should also be applied during July, as your roses will continue to produce blooms for at least another 3-4 months.

Try to tend to your roses early in the day before it gets too hot. Roses are their very best for cutting at this time. Also, if you spray with a fungicide or insecticide, early morning application will prevent damage to the plants due to excessive heat. Be sure to read all labels carefully when mixing and only use the recommended amount. Be sure to use the proper safety equipment when spraying, as listed on the label.

HERB OF THE MONTH
by Edna “Ladybug” Gaston, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

Ocimum basilicum – Basil

**Height:** wide variety offered – tall and leggy to short and bushy, check the seed package or observe the mother plant – usually 1 – 2’.

**Flowers:** July and August – it is suggested flowers be pinched off to increase flavor of the leaves

**Propagation:** seeds or cuttings

**Growing conditions:** full sun, well-drained soil

**Cultivation:** tender annual, very susceptible to cold weather. Excellent for containers and, with care, can be brought inside for winter color and use. Harvest leaves as needed, leaving four sets of true leaves

**Uses:** flavor and color brightens any dish that is cooked, especially pesto and tomato sauce. Flavoring for vinegars, soups, butter, peas among other foods. Plants supposedly repel flies (I like Lemon Basil on my porch – it has worked for me!) Basil with its many color choices is a wonderful garden accent.

**History:** Considered by the French to be l’herbe royale since the word stems from a word for “king” in Greek and since the taste of Basil is so regal in taste and use. In the language of plants basil shows respect for the dead and a continuing symbol of love.
More than likely the herb originated in India, migrating to Greece and then to Great Britain via Europe. With the colonists this herb made its way to America. It is mainly associated with Spanish and Italian cooking.

**Additional Information:**


**INTERESTING TID-BITS**  
By Marty Finkel, Kerr Lake Master Gardener

Since it would be preaching to the choir to go over why crape murder is a crime, you can use this information when giving pruning/gardening advice to others: a series of pictures was taken by the Urban Forestry Staff of the City of Charlotte beginning in 2001 that show the difference in growth and in flowering between topped crape myrtles and those left alone. Pictures that speak louder than words can be seen at:  
http://www.ncufc.org/TheTreeToppingStory-picspeaklouder.pdf

Alcatraz Gardens now has its own dedicated website. You can take a virtual tour of the famous gardens, see what’s blooming, and read about the island’s history and plants at:  
www.alcatrazgardens.org

Try a new gold-fleshed potato, ‘Yukon Gem’, bred by the Agricultural Research Service in Aberdeen, ID and reported to be more nutritious than the great ‘Yukon Gold.’ Louisiana State U. has developed what is supposed to be the sweetest sweet potato, ‘Evangeline’, said to contain twice as much sucrose as other cultivars.

Prune lavender and sage as soon as new growth appears. Prune lavender 6 to 8” above the ground, and do not cut below where new buds are growing. Then cut it back after flowering to keep the plant tidy. Sage can be pruned lower, but be sure there are a pair of green leaves on each stem. From the Orange Co. Master Gardeners.

When in Asheville, be sure to visit the N. C. Arboretum to see the Quilt Garden, an interpretation of traditional quilt block patterns using plants. Such an interpretation ties gardening to the art of quilting in the Southern Appalachians.

Be sure to visit www.springwildflowerprilgrimage.org. You will be blown away by the images that appear, then click on Enter Site. This was the 60th annual Wildflower Pilgrimage, and I went with two other women for wildflower I.D. hikes on Sat. April 24th and Sunday the 25th, hiking 7 miles up and down mountains each day seeing spectacular displays of yellow trillium, white trillium,
showy orchids, and countless other wildflowers. I wish I had heard about it years ago. People from all over this and other countries attend. It’s arranged by the University of Tenn. and is near Gatlinburg and Cosby. The walks are classified easy, medium, and strenuous, and I opted for the medium. Let’s plan on a few Master Gardeners going next year – you will never regret it.

Have you wondered whether pearls of wisdom about when to plant certain vegetables and ornamentals have any scientific basis? According to the Q & A column in the June/July issue of Horticulture magazine, the science is phenology, the “study of plant and animal activities and when they occur each year.” For gardeners and farmers, when certain plants bud, bloom, or leaf out it’s a clue to plant or sow certain crops/plants or to initiate certain pest controls. The column states that “Often the common denominator is temperature.” Some common indicator plants and what they indicate are: “When lilac leaves are the size of a mouse’s ear, sow peas, lettuce and other cool-weather crops. When lilac is in full bloom, plant beans. Once lilac flowers have faded, plant squash and cucumbers.” Of course, if you don’t have lilacs, other indicator plants are: “When daffodils begin to bloom, sow peas. When oak leaves are the size of a squirrel’s ear, sow corn.” More next time.

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