

Master Gardener | Stanly County

FALL 2019

Stanly Gardener Quarterly

Stanly County Fair Booth 2019
Extension Master Gardener's Booth won
First Place for Best Booth



Editors Note

by Pat Allen, EMG

Autumn is in the Air

Summer days were long, hot, and dry in Stanly County but when the weather turns cooler, the days become shorter, and the leaves begin to fall, we know that Autumn is in the air. Autumn is a time for nature to begin resting and refreshing herself. Holidays spur memories of long-ago traditions, family, and festivals.

For the second year the Stanly County Extension Master Gardeners have won prizes for our booth at the Stanly County Fair. This year we won First Place and in 2018 Second Place for best booth. Congratulations to the Fair Committee for all their hard work and extra-ordinary efforts.

Historical Society held an Open House and Plant Sale on October 12th. The plant sale was sponsored by EMGs who not only propagated the plants but donated a portion of the proceeds to the Historical Society.

A Gardeners Speaker's Bureau is in the works. Be sure and read Richard Morton's article on how to contact a speaker for your gardening organization.

Oakboro STEM school gardening program has grown into a Junior Master Gardeners program. Richard Morton gives us more details.

Getting to know your Master Gardener introduces Kay Hawkins. Kay has a special interest in historical medicinal plants and enjoys identifying and placing 'period appropriate' plants at the Historical Society site.

The Mystery Plant in this issue is a summer/fall favorite. But can you identify it? Wanda Tyner may have found an allusive star this time. What do you think?

The Design Garden planning is in process. Read about its progress and meet Diane Furr who will be overseeing the project.

Anne Houck's article in Native Plants describes a long time favorite of grandchildren and grandparents alike. Old Man's Beard, or Grancy Greybeard got its names because of the beard-like flowers. Grancy is another name for Grandfather.

So, you've got a Holiday Cactus but can you tell the difference? Cynthia Housel makes identifying them easy for us.

Anne Houck updates on her grapevines and gives us detailed instructions on how to build a Geneva Double Curtain (GDC) trellis.

Enjoy your autumn garden, and remember to save those leaves for your compost pile.

Special Events

by Kay Hawkins, EMG

Historical Society Open House October 12th.

Below are a few photos of the Open House and Plant Sale. Photos by Kay Hawkins, EMG.



Historical Society volunteers are preparing for the Open House.



Plant Sale by Kay Hawkins, EMG and Walt Deppe, EMG.



Civil War reenactors group in front yard of Historical Society.

Upcoming Events

by Richard Morton, EMG

- **Stanly County Master Gardeners have formed a Speaker's Bureau.**

These speakers will use the presentations previously given at Master Gardener meetings and will be developing additional presentations as well.

The target audience for the speaker's bureau includes the senior centers, libraries, schools, churches, and civic organizations. Ann Houck is developing a flyer that we will be distributing announcing the formation of this bureau as well as how to schedule a speaker. In the future, we hope to have a Stanly County Master Gardener website to promote the bureau and schedule speakers. We are very excited about this new volunteer opportunity.

- **Oakboro STEM School Update.** Stanly County Master Gardeners initially started volunteering at Oakboro STEM school in the spring of 2018 by assisting them with their school garden. This initial contact lead to the formation of the Junior Master Gardeners 4-H club in the spring of 2019.

The club got off to a good start thanks to the efforts of a number of Master Gardener volunteers, parent volunteers, and the clubs sponsor, science teacher Mrs. Hannah Griffin. With news of Mrs. Griffin leaving Oakboro STEM at the end of the 2018-2019 school year there was concern about the future of the 4-H club.

Although the school has not yet found a replacement for Mrs. Griffin, the school is committed to continuing the 4-H Club and,, thanks to their dedicated staff, they have people who will work with us until such time as a new science teacher is hired.

We started off the 2019-2020 school year on September 24th with Dustin Adcock and Kacie Hatley speaking to the students. Kacie talked to the group about the mission of 4-H, how to conduct a 4-H club meeting, and opportunities to attend 4-H camps in the summer of 2020.

Dustin talked to the students about becoming certified Junior Master Gardeners by meeting the requirements of 20 hours of education and 10 hours of volunteer work. Dustin also went over the basics of parliamentary procedure since this is a requirement of 4-H Clubs.

Master Gardeners began teaching on Tuesday, October 8th. We are all excited about the lessons for fall of 2019. Anyone interested in teaching or providing hands-on help should contact Richard Morton. There will be opportunities for teaching in the spring of 2020, helping them construct a second hothouse, and helping them plan and plant their school garden.

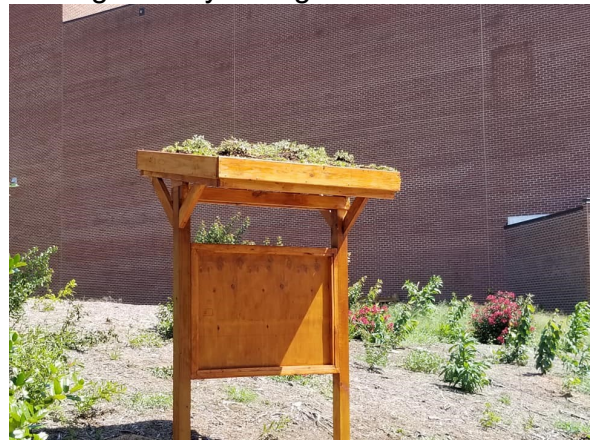
EMG Projects

by Richard Morton, EMG

Stanly County Master Gardener's Design Garden

After months of planning and design by the Stanly County Master Gardeners the dream of a design garden at the Stanly County Agri-Civic Center is finally becoming a reality. The garden will be located adjacent to the north entrance to the Agri-Civic Center.

Work thus far includes grading the site and building an information kiosk. The information kiosk was constructed by Master Gardener volunteers and will be used to display information about the garden as construction progresses and about upcoming garden events once the garden is complete. The kiosk features a green roof constructed using hearty succulents that require minimal watering and maintenance.



The garden site will be graded in the near future to lower the site making access easier from the north entrance walkway. The retaining wall between the garden and the walkway will be replaced and steps will be added at garden walkways.



Master Gardener Diane Furr, pictured in the photo left, has been selected to implement the final garden design. Diane will be tasked with taking the Master Gardener's conceptual design and supervising the final location and planting all plants. Diane says "I would like for the garden to not only be a place to enjoy the beauty of nature but also get ideas for our own yards and gardens."

The ultimate goal of the garden is education. The garden will feature a pollinator garden, an herb garden, a vegetable garden, native plants, and ornamental plants. The garden

will be used as a teaching tool for residents of the county.

The garden will be designed such that anyone can walk through the garden at their own pace or Master Gardener volunteers will be available for guided tours for groups. We are very excited about this garden and look forward to the grand opening in 2020.

Native Plants

by Anne Houck, EMG

Old Man's Beard or White Fringe Tree

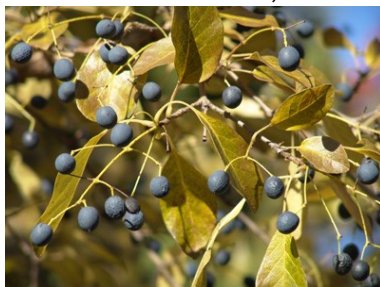
On one of my recent walkabouts on a woodland trail, I was delighted to see a Fringe Greybeard tree, also called Grancy virginicus, Old Mans Beard, and Grancy Greybeard, Fringe Tree (*chionanthus virginicus*).

The Fringe tree is a native, spreading, deciduous small tree that grows up to 15 feet tall. Its opposite, glossy green leaves and fragrant white flowers borne in pendant panicles, are both up to 8 inch long. In summer they are followed by small blue-black fruit, 1/2 inch long, that can be used as a pickle-like olive.



Fringe trees like rich moist soils found near the edges of streams in damp woods. They have a mature height of 10 to 15 feet, but can also be pruned as a shrub border. Their hardiness zones are 4-9. Flowering and fruit is best in areas with long hot summer.

It modern herbalism, the root bark is considered to be one of the most reliable remedies for disorders of the liver and gall bladder.



To propagate, sow seed in a cold frame as soon as it is ripe. Germination is usually good. Layering may be carried out in spring, autumn or summer.

Resource: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/chionanthus-virginicus/>

Getting to Know your Extension Master (EMG)



Kay Hawkins

1. What made you decide to become a Master Gardener? **To gain more knowledge about a passion I finally have time to pursue (after retirement)**

2. What is the most important lesson you learned during your EMG training? **Soil preparation!**
3. What are your main gardening interests? Are they the same as before you became an EMG? **I tend to look at all facets of a landscape and how they work together instead of focusing on individual plants.**
4. What have been the greatest gardening changes you've made since taking the EMG course? **Soil sampling before amendments are added.**
5. What do you hope to bring to the Extension Master Gardener program this year to help us reach our objectives? **I'm not sure. Some of my endeavors of last year seem to not be what our group needs/wants, so I will be reassessing where I can contribute. Presently I am helping revitalize the historical society's Snuggs House landscape.**
6. When you're not gardening, what are your other interests? **Family times, dressage, weight lifting, cooking and reading.**
7. What would you like your fellow EMGers to know about you? **My life has been an incredible journey and I am so blessed to now join them in obtaining gardening knowledge.**
8. Where are you originally from? **North Carolina**
9. Where do you currently live? (not your address but your general area) **Norwood.**

Mystery Plant

by Wanda Tyner, EMG

What is red and green, magically appears out of no where, and is only seen in the fall?

One of my favorite late summer and early fall colors is red. Fall leaves are changing from green to yellow, to orange and then red. My favorite plant this time of year is one that appears to magically pop up out of seemingly nowhere. One day it isn't there and the next day long green naked stems appear.

Several years ago, I was given several of these mysterious bulbs by my mother who was an Extension Master Gardener in another county. It is one of the old-time southern beauties and has graced older gardens but is not seen as often in newer gardens. Unless you love this plant, you might not think about it until it appears in your garden or someone else's. I have spotted the mysterious flowers in several gardens and lawns in Stanly County. After you see the pictures of this beauty, I am sure that you will also look for these gems.

This plant is an herbaceous perennial bulb and is a member of the family Amaryllidaceae. After being introduced to Japan from other Asian countries, the bulb made its way to the United States.



This mysterious plant consists of 4-6 terminal flowers, nodding, on a naked stem with six-parted red or white tinged with yellow and funnel shaped petals. The lobes are strongly re-flexing and wavy. The bulb blooms in late summer (September) before the leaves fully appear. Leaves are parallel-sided (0.20- 0.39 inches wide) with a paler central stripe that remain evergreen (after blooming) throughout the winter. Leaves are simple type, feel fleshy, with a rosulate leaf arrangement, and linear in shape.

Foliage emerges every spring and then dies back by the beginning of summer. Gardeners usually think the bulb has died but it is actually in a brief dormancy period. The two-inch flower stalks appear from barren ground and within four days emerging flowers appear. Height is 2 feet to 3 feet 2 inches and width is 6 inches to 1 foot.



This plant is an easy, no care perennial bulb that is best in USDA Hardiness Zones 6a-8b. It does well in hot weather. The bulb is semi-hardy damaged below 28 degrees F to hardy damaged below 5 degrees F. A lot of watering is not required.

Plant bulbs 8 inches deep, spaced 6-12 inches apart in well-drained soil. It is recommended to plant bulbs in groups of three to five minimum for the best visual effect. Bulbs will gradually spread over time. Bulb tolerates full sun to part shade. In cold winters mulch is needed to protect the bulbs. Long lived bulbs are best left alone undisturbed. Propagation is by division of bulbs. Store bulbs dry at 45-55 degrees F.



The plant is deer resistant. It works well in flower gardens and lawns because insects and diseases do not appear to pose problems. The flower value to the gardener is the showy, long lasting bold, eye catching late summer blooming beauty. It is a true conversation plant in the garden.

Source: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/>

Feature Article

by Cynthia Housel, EMG

Have a Holiday Cactus? Great! Which One?

Several years ago, a friend gave me what I thought was a Christmas cactus. It finally started to grow but it never bloomed. After a little research, I discovered that I didn't have a Christmas cactus - I had a Thanksgiving cactus. But I also found ways to encourage it to bloom.

Not surprisingly, the Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter cacti are often confused with each other. They are similar but do have some distinctive differences. Each of these succulents derived their name from the time of year they typically flower in North America.

Common among them is that all three grow naturally in the rain forest trees of Brazil. All three species of cactus are members of the leaf cactus group. Their plant bodies are flat, and the leaves are actually stems. Flowers are produced from notches in the stems or from the tips.



The differences begin with the Thanksgiving cactus, *Schlumbergera truncata*; it has broad segmented leaves with serrated edges on each side that form into points with 2-4 points on each side. The tip of the last segment is slightly concave with a point on each side. The flowers can be pink, red, white or yellow and typically appear in November.

Similarly, the Christmas cactus, *Schlumbergera bridgesii*, has wide and flat segmented leaves but they are smaller and rounder. The edges of the leaves have small indentations instead of forming a point. The tip of each segment is only slightly curved but can look almost flat across. The flowers are usually white or red and typically appear in December.

Lastly, the Easter cactus, *Rhipsalidopsis gaertnerii*, has flat segmented leaves similar to the Christmas cactus. The leaf edges are slight scallops with small bristles on the end of each leaf compared to the indentations of the Christmas cactus, or the serrated edges of the Thanksgiving cactus. The star-shaped flowers are royal purple, red or pink, and typically appear in April or May. The mature Easter cactus is smaller than the Christmas or Thanksgiving cacti and is considered to be more difficult to grow because it is much more sensitive to under or over watering.

It may be easier to distinguish between the three with your eyes closed. Rub your fingers along the edge of the leaf segment. If it has a distant point or claw, it is a Thanksgiving cactus. If there is no point or claw and there is not a flat end, it is a Christmas cactus. If there aren't any points or claws but there are numerous small bristles on the tip end of the leaf, it is an Easter cactus.

All prefer moist well drained soil with bright indirect light. If your cactus is not blooming, it may be due to the amount of daylight it is receiving or the temperature it is kept at.

To trigger blooming, the cacti like at least 14 hours of night and between 8 to 10 hours of bright, indirect daylight for 6 weeks. They also prefer temperatures to be between 50-55 degrees.

All three of these are wonder additions to any household.

By Cynthia Housel, EMG

Feature Article

by Anne Houck, EMG

Grape Vines in the "One Happy Place " Garden

Last year a friend asked me if I wanted some of his Scuppernong shoots. Not being one to turn down free plants, I accepted. Since I had never grown grapes before, I had to figure out what to do with them. Thus began my venture into viticulture, the study and practice of vineyard production - on a very small scale.

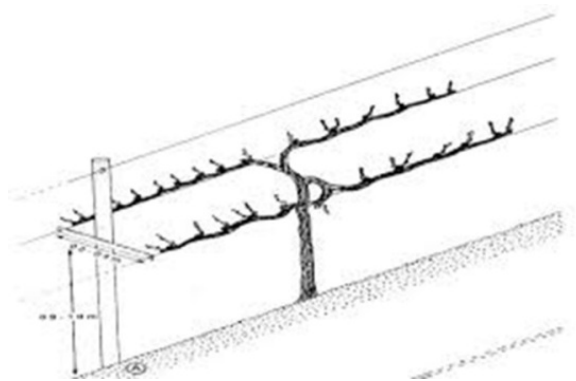
I decided on a small space beside the fence near the bee hives in the One Happy Place garden to set up my "vineyard." I learned a vine will typically produce grapes in the third year, but being the impatient gardener I am, I wanted to see some fruit on these vines in the second year. My goals for this ambitious project were:

- Plant the vines
- Build the trellis
- Set up a drip irrigation system.
- Train the vines up to and down the horizontal wires in the first year.
- Eat the grapes in the second year.

So Began My Journey

I decided to use a Geneva Double Curtain (GDC) trellis design because of the limited space and the garden fence that presented a small challenge since it would block the morning sun. I figured if I used the GDC trellis with angled cross-arms, both cordons on both wires would receive as much sunlight as possible... and it would look pretty too!

The GDC system allows for a dense canopy by using two wires instead of one. By positioning the shoots downward, the canopy looks like two curtains on each side. This design allows more sunlight to reach the fruit and can double the yield about 30% more than single wire systems. That is what got my attention.



Geneva Double Curtain Grapevine Trellis
Figure 1.



Mature Vine Using the GDC Trellis
Figure 2

Four vines would fit nicely in my vineyard space so I purchased two more vines and ended up with the following cultivars:

- Concord - This is a bunch grape, self-fertile, medium size dark berry, late season, good for fruit, juice, jams, and jellies.
- Noble - This is a self-fertile, small, early-season grape good for fruit, juice, and wine (perfect-flowered)
- Two Scuppernongs from my friend - Bronze, average size, mid-season, but flowers with only female flower parts, so it must be planted near a perfect-flowered cultivar.

Planting

I planted the vines in late March of 2018 about 12' apart, covering them 3" above the highest root. (Yes, this is a little close. Probably should have been 15' apart.) Adding worm castings to the soil and mulching with bark helped reduce moisture loss. Later, I used weed control fabric and pine needle mulch.



Month one - irrigation in but no trellis wires yet. Figure 3.

Key to bringing in my first fruit in the second year was the use of a Blue-X Plant Shelter. It offers a beneficial micro-climate by increasing humidity and carbon dioxide levels in the grow tubes which accelerate the plant growth. It also limits suckering in the tube. Using these shelters also protect the young vines from wind damage, rodent and herbicides. I left these on over the winter then removed them in the spring of the second year.

After the plants were in the ground, I was able to concentrate on finishing the trellis and setting up the irrigation system. There's not much to say about building the trellis, since you can look at the picture and see how I put it together. A materials list for the trellis and the irrigation system are at the end of this article.

Irrigation System

I ran a wire through eye bolts, about a foot above the ground on the trellis, and attached ½" drip irrigation tubing to the wires with vine curls. With two emitters (1 gal. per hr. each) for each vine I watered twice a week for a total of 3 to 7.5 hrs. depending on the month and amount of rain.



Irrigation System. Figure 4.



Irrigation System. Figure 5.

My watering schedule for the first year was as follows in gallons per week:

- April - 6 to 8
- May - 8 to 12
- June, July, & August - 12 to 15
- September & October - 8 to 12

Training the Vines

To train the vine up to and down the horizontal wires I had success with the following routine.

- Keep the longest runner for the main trunk, prune the rest.
- Pinch lateral shoots back to the first leaf growing on the main shoot to absorb sunlight and to direct energy to the main trunk. This is key to getting fast growth of the vine.
- Use agriculture ties or tape to train the vine to the wires.
- When the main trunk reaches about 3' prune to force two shoots and train each shoot up to the height of the horizontal wires. One to the rear wire and one to the front wire.
- As the two shoots reach the horizontal wires, prune each shoot to force two shoots to create bilateral cordons down the wires
- As the cordons are growing down the wires, pinch back new growth on tips of shoots to direct the energy to the cordons growing down the wires. Do this every week or two for fast growth of the cordons. When the cordon reaches the end of the wire, you no longer have to do this.
- Fertilize April through July to encourage strong trunk and fast growth. Spread in a circle about 15" from the vine. Do not apply any fertilizer after early July to minimize winter injury. I continued this feeding plan in 2019, spreading on each side of the vine instead of in a circle. After June 15th, I stopped applying the calcium.
 - First of month - ¼ lb. of 10-10-10 around each vine.
 - Fifteenth of month - ¼ lb. calcium nitrate around each vine

Progress

In the second year, as grapes formed on the Concord vine, I battled beetles for about four weeks, but strangely, they went for the Concord vine and didn't like the Muscadines much. I set up a beetle trap about 50' away from the vines and also manually removed them by flipping them off the leaves into a cup of water once or twice a day. This was very effective, but I still had some lacy leaves. Below are a few pictures of the progress each year.



September 2018. Figure 6.



October 2018. Figure 7.



June 2019. Grapes on the vine.
Figure 8.



Figure 9.

So now, *One Happy Place* has a small vineyard in one corner; I plan on enjoying some home grown grapes this year! If you want to try the GDC, below are materials lists for the irrigation system and trellis.

Irrigation Materials

- 1/2" Drip Irrigation tubing.
- Wire - I used a coated wire rope, flexible galvanized steel, 1/16" diameter and had to strip some of the coating off to use the Gripple joiners and C-clamps.
- Eye bolt (one per post).
- Female hose adapter - 3/4" Female hose to 1/2" drip tubing.
- End cap - 3/4" Female Hose Threaded End Cap to 1/2" Drip Tubing.
- Vine Curls (six per vine).



Vine Curl. Figure 9.

- Gripple joiner



Gripple joiners. Figure 10.

- Wire rope clip (2 for each post connection)



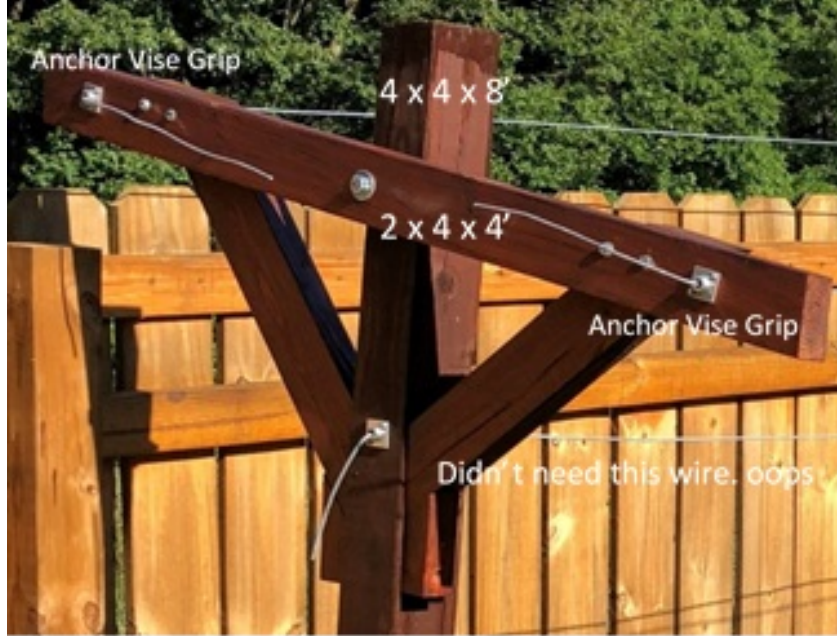
Wire rope clip. Figure 11.

- Hole punch for emitters
- (2) Hole plugs for mistakes
- (2 per vine) Bow-smith non-stop emitters - 1 gallon / hour



Emitters.
Figure 12.

Geneva Double Curtain Trellis Materials



Geneva Double Curtain Trellis. Figure 13.

I used five support posts for the four vines. The materials for one trellis support post are listed below.

- 4 x 4 x 8' treated post, 2' deep in the ground - I stained mine for greater protection... and looks nice.
- (2) 50 lb. bags of Quikrete fast setting concrete mix for setting the post.
- (2) 2 x 4 x 4' treated, one for the cross arm that can be connected at 90 degree angle to post or angled for maximum sun. One for the support beams that will be cut based on how you angle the cross arm.
- (1) 6.5" Hex bolt with two washers and a nut.
- (4) 4 1/2" medium strength grade 5 steel Hex head Screw, zinc plated, partially threaded 1/4"-20 thread size.
- (8) zinc yellow-chromate plated grade 8 steel washer for 1/4" screw size.
- (4) steel nylon-insert lock-nuts, Grade 5, zinc plated 1/4"20 thread size 2 1/2" Wood Screws.
- 9 gauge galvanized steel tension wire.
- (2) one-way anchor vise grips were used on the end posts to grip and tension the wires.



Anchor vice grip. Figure 14.

- A wire gripple tensioning tool is handy for tightening the wire when using the anchor vises or the gripple wire joiners.



Gripper Tensioning Tool. Figure 15.

End

Stanly Gardener Quarterly is a newsletter supplying gardeners with unbiased, research-based information on gardens, lawns, and landscapes. Our readers are mainly Stanly County gardeners interested in a variety of gardening types, landscaping design, and permaculture.

Written by Stanly County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers (EMG), who have been trained and certified by NC State University and NC A&T State University horticulture faculty, our goal is to offer informative and timely articles on plants, gardening, garden design, pest management and gardening products.

(Answer: *Lycoris radiata*: Common names: Spider Lily, Red Spider Lily, Red Magic Lily, Surprise Lily, Resurrection Lily, Naked Lady)



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