

THIS spring was beautiful with moderate temps and consistent rain, and then unexpectedly the drought hit us. Not to worry! Here is a list of five top choice Georgia native plants for the Xeric (arid conditions) garden.

Genus Opuntia, known by most as Prickly Pear Cactus, is the first and probably the least used of our wonderful natives. Sound painful? But when was the last time you hugged your flowers? They will not stick you if you do not touch them!

Opuntias are the most drought tolerant species in the Southeastern U.S. Georgia has some five or so species for your landscape. In mid-spring they offer beautiful brilliant yellow flowers, one with orange centers. They spread as an evergreen ground cover and in summer are covered with edible maroon fruits which must be delicately peeled (wear gloves) before eating.

Second on the list is *Satureja georgiana*, also known as Georgia Basil. This is one of my favorite native miniature shrubs. Growing to 2' high x 3' wide it develops into a neat small shrub that produces tons of small flowers. The flowers can range from rich dark pink to white, though soft lavender colors are most common. The foliage has a wonderful smell reminiscent of fresh basil. This plant reacts to

drought by developing into a smaller shrub but still offers all the attraction you could ask for. It is evergreen, producing larger foliage spring through fall and smaller winter foliage. My third plant choice is *Tradescantia birisuticaulis*, or Dwarf Hairy Spiderwort. A delightful species that only gets 8" tall x 1" wide and looks like a hairy Liriope. It will flower in early-to-mid spring and has a wide range of colors to choose from: white to dark purple and most colors in between. A native of granite rock outcrops throughout the southeastern U.S. It is a charmer in any full sun or part sun garden setting.

Phlox nivalis and *species subulata*, or Thrift, is fourth. *Phlox nivalis* is commonly confused with *Phlox subulata*. Their main difference is in the length of their anthers (male parts of a flower). Both species are wonderfully fast ground covers for a dry sunny location. More aggressive forms can spread to 6' across while not getting any taller than 8". They bloom in early spring with a range of colors from white to almost red. *Phlox subulata* blooms about two weeks earlier than *P. nivalis*. They both remain green 10 months a year with a brief dormant period in November and December. Both start to green up in January preparing to bloom at the end of February on thru the first of April.

There are few new species as exciting as our fifth plant *Talinum mengesii* 'N³ Bretta Perkins'. *Talinum* is the coolest genus and most far-out plant one could have in that special spot in a dry landscape. This succulent beauty with rich green terete, (cylindrical), foliage and brilliant magenta flowers is a real show stopper. *Talinum mengesii* 'N³ Bretta Perkins' is an exclusive introduction to the trade by Nearly Native Nursery. This native of the sandstone rock outcrops of Northwest Georgia and eastern Tennessee thrives on drought, never needing water once established. Each plant will mature to 1' high x 1' wide. It multiplies ten fold each year by producing bublets on the pedicels, (flower stems). One plant can cover a 4' x 4' area in two summers.

There are many other native species that can tolerate drought, but the five in this article will thrive in any dry garden. Even gardeners with black thumbs can succeed with these special plants.

Thanks for the opportunity to share my native knowledge, and happy Xeric gardening.

Jim Rodgers

NearlyNativeNursery.com & SnakeArts.com

Jim and Debi Rodgers own Nearly Native Nursery in Fayetteville, Georgia. Please visit www.NearlyNativeNursery.com.

July 2006

Apalachee Plantation Homeowners' Association Newsletter

Reporting Covenant Violations

OUR HOA board appreciates the concern shown in the neighborhood for maintaining the appearance of our neighborhood. When you wish to report a covenant violation in the neighborhood, please do so via e-mail or phone. Contact information can be found on-line and in every newsletter. Please do not go to the homes of board members to file a complaint, and under no circumstances leave anything in their mail boxes, this is against Federal law. We appreciate your continued efforts in caring for your neighborhood.

Liens placed on non-paying HOA member homes

CERTIFIED letters have been sent to Home owners who have not paid their association dues. Those still owing dues after forty-five days from delivery of the certified letter, even if the letter was not accepted, will have liens placed on their homes for the amount due plus a \$200.00 charge for the lien process.

Please remove all debris remaining on the streets, lawns, and protected areas left over from fireworks.

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Protected and Common Land Use: Do's and Don'ts

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD has one of the most attractive settings of any of the subdivisions in our area, and for one simple reason—the forested areas behind and around our homes. For many of us, the wooded areas were one of the reasons we chose to purchase our homes here. What many of us did not realize is that these wooded areas are protected on the Federal, State and County levels.

What is protected? Buffer zones of 25 feet on each side of streambeds (measured from the edge of the stream) and wetlands areas are protected. These buffer zones must be left undisturbed. If part of the protected area is on your home's property, you can thin or trim vegetation as long as protective cover remains and a natural canopy is left in sufficient quantity to keep shade on the streambed. You cannot remove trees greater than 4 inches in diameter, nor can you allow or cause erosion. You can garden in this area, but not in any way that may harm the native habitat. If the land is not within your property lines, you may not alter it. *You cannot clear the land, burn it, or dump waste in it, nor can you put sheds or play areas in it.*

Other areas are protected wetlands. These are typically not on private property and may not be disturbed in any way.

Common Areas. Some buffer zones are adjacent to our common areas. No trees may be cut down, nor can gardens be built in the buffer zones. Native vegetation must be left undisturbed and only native plants may be planted.

Violations and Fines. Any land-disturbing activity is subject to a fine ranging from \$100 to \$2,500 per day. This includes "any activity which may result in soil erosion from water or wind" *continued on page 2*

Outdoor Water Use —Getting the Most for the Least

OUTDOOR watering/washing restrictions are now in place. Between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm every day, most outdoor water use is banned statewide until current drought conditions end. Before and after those hours, outdoor watering is restricted year-round to three days a week under permanent, statewide water-conservation rules that went into effect in 2004.

At present, Gwinnett County residences are allowed to water on the following schedule:

- Outdoor water use restricted between 10:00am and 4:00pm daily
- Odd-numbered addresses may water only on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays
- Even-numbered and unnumbered addresses may water only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays

Following are excerpts from the article, "Outdoor Watering—Doing More With Less," written by Mary Elfner, Georgia DNR Water

Conservation Coordinator, Dr. Gary Wade, UGA Extension Horticulturist, and Dr. Rose Mary Seymour, UGA Griffin experiment Station.

What You Can Do

- Maintain three to five inches of mulch on your landscape. Mulch holds moisture in the soil and prevents evaporation from the soil surface. . . . Pine straw, mini-nuggets and shredded hardwood mulch do a better job of conserving moisture than coarse-textured mulch. Consider placing two to three sheets of newspaper under mulch. Pull back existing mulch with a leaf rake, moisten the paper and rake back the mulch over the newspaper.
- Use a hand-held hose to apply water only to those plants that show signs of wilt. Priority should be given to newly planted trees and shrubs (those installed within

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Association Projects in 2006

Our Association will be hiring work done to care for a number of necessary projects this year. These will increase our costs to between \$15,000.00 and \$20,000.00 for the year. Currently scheduled projects are listed below.

Increased Landscaping Services: We have contracted for additional flower beds and maintenance at our entrance, including seasonal flower rotation in the spring and fall. Also added is cutting and clearing of the school entrance side for a more appealing view as we enter the subdivision.

Fencing around detention ponds: We have quotes in and will be contracting the work that needs to be done on the fencing at the two ponds in our neighborhood

Wash Repair at Fort River Detention pond: We repaired the erosion damage at the Fort River detention pond. The County provided the rock and we hired someone to do the grading. Next, we will clean out the bottom of the pond to get it to drain. The county has cited us again on this problem and on the fence falling down.

Sprinkler system repair: The sprinkler line has to be repaired after a tree fell and broke the main supply line. We also need to replace the sprinkler controller.

Additional Projects: Our website will soon be transferred to another host, making it more accessible and easier to update. Our address is www.apalacheeplantation.com.

Surveillance Camera to be Placed

We will place a security camera in our entrance area to prevent the frequent littering going on.

Shutter Painting: Home Makeover for \$50

ARE FADED vinyl shutters detracting from the beauty of your home? Fifty dollars and a Saturday morning can have your home looking like new. Vinyl shutters can be restored or, for a new look, painted.

Before doing either, first remove and thoroughly wash your shutters with a bleach or acid-based mildew killer. Then, if renewing your existing color, apply the product. For painting, allow your shutters to dry, then paint with an exterior latex paint. Adding a coat of primer will help the new paint adhere and last longer but is not necessary. Allow paint to dry completely, and then hang your shutters.

Federal, County, and State Protected Buffer and Wetland Areas within Apalachee Plantation

All areas listed below are protected lands. If they run on your property you have limited landscaping rights. If protected areas adjoin, but are not on your property, they must be left undisturbed. Any violations should be reported to: the Storm Water Management division of Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources at 678-376-7000.

- From the backs of Fort Apache Ct., between 2641 and 2621, and Fort River Court, running between the even numbered side of Fort Daniels Dr. and the odd side of Fort Daniels Trail, running into another buffer zone behind the open space behind houses 2370, 2360, 2365 of Fort Daniels Drive.

- Running behind and between the cul-de-sacs of Fort Connors Way and Fort Connors Court, and behind the detention pond between Fort River and Fort Connors Court.
- Crossing Fort Apache Trail and running behind the even side of Fort Daniels Trail, including behind the cul-de-sac area of Fort Hampton Court, and behind the odd side of Mountain Fort Way, and including the cul-de-sac of Fort Shawnee Trace.
- The area crossing Fort Daniels Drive, before the intersection at Fort River, leading into the Daniel Park subdivision.

Protected and Common Land Use, from page 1

and the movement of sediments into state water or onto lands within [protected areas], including, but not limited to, clearing, dredging, grading, excavating, transporting, and filling of land.”

A basic rule of thumb is: if it is wooded or near a streambed of any size, it is protected. The box above contains a partial list of protected areas within our subdivision. If you have, any questions contact the Storm Water Management division of Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources at 678-376-7000.

Water Use, from page 1

the past four months). Water these plants every seven to 10 days during the absence of rainfall.

- Avoid shallow watering. The worst thing you can do for plants is to water them frequently and shallowly. [This] encourages a weak root system and reduces the drought tolerance of plants.
- Direct water to the roots, not the leaves. Avoid wetting the foliage of ornamental plants if possible. Wetting the foliage encourages diseases and results in evaporative water loss.
- Use drip or trickle irrigation or a soaker hose. Drip irrigation uses 50% less water than conventional sprinkler irrigation and applies water slowly and directly to the root system.

Landscape for Higher Property Values

A HOME is so much more than just a structure. It is a collection of areas that include both the interior and exterior, and the views from each area. Attractive landscaping increases a home's sale price by five to ten percent. Poor or no landscaping actually costs you, lowering your home's value by eight to ten percent. The key items to consider in a landscape plan are:

- Observe and analyze the habits of the people who will be using the space
- Survey available materials to determine how they will affect the space and design options
- Study the environment of your site; ensure that landscape items are conducive to the area and will not require unnecessary maintenance and care

For larger items (trees and major shrubs) think of your landscape items as a frame to draw attention to your house. Avoid covering key architecture items. Especially seek to create lines that complement the roof line of your home.

However, the most important thing to remember is to work from a plan. Draw out your property and your desired layout of items. Then consult a local nursery or supply store. They can help direct you to plants that will work well for your environment.

Happy planting!

Carl Wiley, GRI and Brenda Wiley

Office : 770-932-9368, Cell 404-402-8845 or 404-754-2728, wileywisdom@bellsouth.net

Summer Garden Tips: Simple Tips for a Beautiful Yard

Gardening Tips from Pike Family Nurseries

- Did you know? Turf grasses perform best when maintained at the correct height. No more than 1/3 of the blades should be removed at any one time. Also, instead of bagging the clippings, leave them on the lawn. Summer's heat will decompose the grass clippings in a matter of hours, releasing nitrogen and other nutrients into the soil.
- Off with their heads! Deadhead your annuals on a regular basis. Pinching off dead blooms as they occur helps to prevent seed production and pauses in blooming.
- Got weeds? Apply a post-emergent weed killer to your lawn according to package directions. Make sure that the product you select is safe for use on your type of grass. Don't wait too late. Weed killers work best when temperatures are 85 degrees or less.

Lawn Tips from Jamie Burns, Reliable Lawn Care

- Remember not to cut your lawn too short, especially under drought conditions. Some may want to do this to avoid cutting so often. However, this may only stress your lawn out more. Bermuda and fescue lawns should be cut at a level depending on

Board Members and Contact Information

Elections were held at our last home owners' meeting. Those who have volunteered to serve on the board are required to enforce our neighborhood covenants and work to protect the value of each homeowner's property and promote the well being of the entire neighborhood. While some neighborhoods hire agencies to care for this work, we appreciate the willingness of our fellow residents to work in our behalf.

President: Lee Adkins, 404-432-6878

Vice President: George Olavarria

Secretary: Travis Nolan

Treasurer: Madeline Andrade

Member-at-large: Ren Burnette

Member-at-large: Ren Burnette

Association website:

www.apalacheeplantation.com

Contact information is on-line at www.apalacheeplantation.com

HOA E-mail:

apalacheeplantation@yahoo.com

rainfall or watering amounts. A little more height can always be removed, but not as easily replaced.

- Cut the lawn in an alternating pattern. This will avoid any mower tracks and ruts that are more apparent under dry conditions. Another benefit is stronger lawn growth and a more pleasing appearance.

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Wood fences and decks add beauty and value to your home when properly maintained. However, left to the elements, they soon start to give your home that uncared for look that quickly reduces resale value. Cleaning and sealing your decks and fences keep them looking new for years. For further information, contact your local home improvement store or see: <http://www.onthehouse.com/wp/19910902>.

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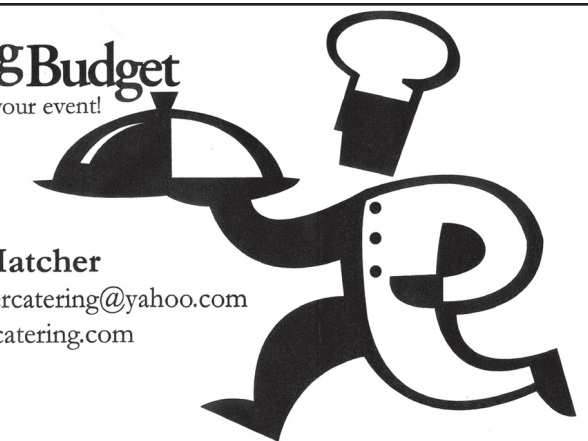
Ads

Ads can be placed for \$15 per year for homeowners and \$25 per year for non-homeowners.

Contact the HOA

Catering on a Budget

Let us plan your event!



Donette Hatcher

Email: hatcher catering@yahoo.com

www.hatcher catering.com

770.356.5060

We do Birthday's, Wedding's, Bar Mitzvahs, Super Bowl Parties, Office Parties, etc.