

The Bloomin' News

February, 2002

Les Leckron, Chairman

Don Crocker, Editor

Chairman's Message

By Les Leckron

If you haven't been to the Tree Farm for a while, you should go see what our guys have accomplished! The place looks better than it has in years. With the South side ground cover completed, work has continued on the North side with a swath of ground cover in the center. This was only after lots of hard work and continuous effort by many club members. If I tried to thank each of them here I'd miss someone, so I'll just say a big THANKS, you know who you are!

I had a brief meeting with the State Agricultural Inspector at the Tree Farm. It was a chance meeting with Greg Brown, who I think was really looking for Citrus, but chatted with me about the farm improvements. He said Bill Connell kept telling him how much better the place was and to drop by. Greg was impressed with the reduction of weeds and our obvious interest and effort to get things under control. I was at the farm with my father who was visiting from Pennsylvania. We divide some plants from home, prepping them for the Spring Sale and also raked and shoveled some on the north side. Lets keep up the good work, we might be able to win the war against weeds yet!

I also wanted to mention we have an aggressive budget to meet this year and the income we have is the semi-annual Tree and Plant Sales. Burl wasn't able to attend the January meeting, but e-mailed me and mentioned he thought it would be tough to meet projected income with the present state of our tree stock. I agree with Burl, we need to build our stock of trees, having trees growing at various stages so proper height trees are ready for each sale. Right now we seem to be lacking in trees, especially those that would be ready for this fall and next spring. We need to get seeds / seedlings started and keep our production level up so we don't sell out. It's obvious from customer response that we are a popular place to get trees and the community expects us to have certain trees / plants when they come to our sales.

Thanks again to those putting in long hours at the Tree Farm, it's looking great. If you have some time to manicure the Tree Farm, give Bill Connell (267-0210), Tony K (269-1931), or George Mendez (264-1278) a call, I'm sure they can tell you when to meet them for some quality time at the Tree Farm.

Les leckronl@cfl.rr.com 267-2435

Potential New Members, YOU Are Welcome

To prospective members, we are always looking for new members and have great opportunities for learning at our monthly meetings, at the Tree Farm and at special events. As a return for members input/work, many plants are available to members at no cost. There are facilities to start plants from seeds/clippings. We meet at 7:00 P.M. on the second Monday of each month at the Garden Center on Sisson; drop by to visit and to possibly join us. For more information call Tony Koromilas, 269-1931, Leland Chernerys, 269-0667, or me – **Les Leckron, 267-2435, leckronl@cfl.rr.com**

February Program:

As of the printing of your Newsletter, the February Program was still being planned. Bring your problems and questions. We had a brief question and answer session in January. We have had some positive feedback, so when there is time, we will continue these sessions.

Sea Rocket Chapter Florida Native Plant Society

The Sea Rocket Chapter's meetings are on the 4th Wednesday of the month; this month it meets Feb. 27th at 7 PM at the Brevard County Agriculture and Extension Center, 3695 Lake Drive, Cocoa.

FEBRUARY IN THE GARDEN

By Gil Bertie

This has been a good winter in my garden. The cold snaps served to intensify Citrus color and harden most shrubs. I have had some frost and a few freezes in my yard so far (1-21). Some plants have been damaged by cold but none beyond recovery. Remember cold spells are common in Florida during February full moons (Feb. 27) and have occurred during cold winters as late as the second week of March.

Judicious pruning of cold damaged plants can be done. Grape and Kiwi vines and all deciduous fruit and shade trees should be pruned in February if not already done. Begin routine apple, peach, fig and similar tree spraying. Till and enrich sandy soils with organic matter. Complete transplanting bare root trees and shrubs as soon as practical. Divide and replant large perennials.

You can thin and prune dormant shrubs. CRAPE MYRTLE should be pruned. Remove all small spindly stems from the base of the plant and small shoots on the main stems. Thin to three to seven main trunks to open up the plant. Prune stems up to about one-half inch in diameter. CRAPE MYRTLE only blooms on new wood. Thin twigs will seldom produce big blooms.

ROSES can stand heavy pruning by midmonth. Cut vigorous bushes back by a third to a half. Remove all twigs and any branches that are dead, diseased, injured or thin and spindly. Shorten main canes and remove small twigs and older canes that have become too hard. Miniature ROSES should be pruned as you would a bush ROSE, but lightly. Vigorous varieties may need heavier pruning to keep them compact. Clean up as much of the cut foliage as practical. Add a new layer of mulch to cover old rose leaves and Black Spot spores.

Hedges can be pruned heavily and shaped. Keep the top of the hedge narrower than the bottom to allow sun to reach the lower branches.

By the middle of the month you can work your beds for annuals by removing old plants, checking soil for pH and correcting if necessary. Treat for pests, work in compost, mulch or other organic matter and, when needed, colloidal phosphate, other amenders and fertilizer.

By the end of the month all except spring blooming trees, shrubs and vines can be pruned. Spring flowering plants should be pruned after they finish blooming. A good pruning now will shape the plants for much of the summer. Renew mulches to control weeds and conserve water.

By the end of February you should fertilize all plants except your lawn. Use 6-6-6 with minor elements or if you prefer one for a special plant, such as Citrus fertilizer. Citrus trees will need one half pound per inch of circumference measured 6 inches above the ground. Shade trees will need one pound per inch when less than 6 inches in diameter and 2 pounds for each inch above 6 inches. Feed container grown plants monthly.

Major lawn care and fertilizing should wait until March. Repair winter damage. Spraying for weeds can continue. If crabgrass has been a problem, remove brown but surviving crabgrass and apply a pre-emergence herbicide by midmonth. Mow lawns as needed at the normal cutting height. Water normal lawns once a week.

If you did not start seed in January, start the seed now. Seeds started in trays or flats will grow rapidly and be ready to set out in March or April.

Tree Farm News

By Tony Koromilas

We lost some plants during the last freeze. Farm is looking better. Another strip of cloth laid to allow moving some plants to the North side. Prisoners helped again with Emerson Johnson, George Mendez, Don Hawthorn, and others that helped. Tony found, and Bill Connell fixed a major break. Bill and Steve fixed the mist house water also. Thanks guys for that special effort. Bill sorted and repotted those crepe myrtles we bought from Kmart for the October sale.

It is time for all of us to get plants ready for sale. Need to select, weed, and feed those plants going to sale. Need society garlic adoptee which should bloom in April.

Tony

PS: Tony sent me a note on trees and plants that might be good for the sale and that will need adoptees. With changing internet providers and celebrating our 51st of wedded bliss on the 3rd, I wasn't able to find Tony's email. But a few I do remember are Cherry Loral, Magnolia, Cypress, Sycamore, Oaks (Live and ?).

A Note from Emerson

Emerson Johnson dropped me, your editor, an email, "I'm for a question and answer period but we never seem to get to it. Maybe you could put the questions in the Bloomin News, and somebody could answer them next issue?"

Tony K. suggests why wait for the next issue and asks, "How can one remove scale stuff on Sweet Gum trees?" We all would enjoy someone of you for your feedback on this.

In talking with Emerson, I know he knows a heck of a lot more about gardening than I do. It makes me feel good that someone else would like to cash in on the, to us, valuable info. our more experienced members take for granted. Maybe by getting some of the questions and answers into the Bloomin News, it'll let the members that can't make it to the meeting also get some of the advantage these discussions, or even give them more incentive to make the meetings. Just a thought; comments?

From Your Newsletter Editor

Please send any input and/or comments, pro or con, to me via any of the following: snail mail, email or short phone messages: Don Crocker, 5175 Kirkwood Trail, Titusville, FL 32780-6719; 'phone 264-0947; Email - trini@digital.net

Remember lasts months article, **What will you do with your Poinsettias ?** I thought you might like to be reminded of that web site:

http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/BODY_MG352

This web site has an **LOTS** of additional information:

Saturday Work Day

Please remember that the Saturday after our Monthly Meeting is a day for Concerted Effort at the Tree Farm.

Many hours are put in by individuals during the week at their convenience and this is very necessary for continued success.

We also have some tasks that need Teamwork to accomplish. This type work is the focus of our Saturday events.

Plan on coming out 2/16 to and join us at the Tree Farm

Fall Tree & Plant Sale

April 13, 2002

Put this on your calendar; it's never too early to start getting plants ready for sale!!!

Leland Chemerys, 269-0667, is the fearless leader for this sale.

The Bloomin' News
Titusville Men's Garden Club
Don Crocker, Editor
5175 Kirkwood Trail
Titusville, FL 32780-6719

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The Titusville Men's Garden Club

Next meeting

Monday, February 11, 2002 – 7:00 PM
Program Information Inside

Titusville Garden Center
5275 Sisson Road
Titusville, FL 32780