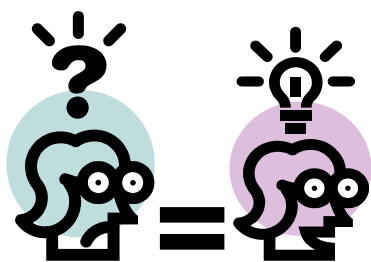


ST. LUCIE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

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As heard on
The Green Thumb
WQCS 88.9 NPR

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Birdbaths

Garden ornaments and furniture, also known as hard-scape are wonderful additions to any garden. A well-placed birdbath is great for our fine-feathered friends to enjoy, especially during our many hot weather days. Plus, a well placed birdbath can bring hours of viewing enjoyment throughout the year, for all ages. It is best if you place your birdbath close to trees and shrubs, so the birds have a sense of protection. Always keep your birdbath clean of debris and filled with fresh water. To safely clean your birdbath, scrub with vinegar or wet a cloth dipped into silica sand and rinse well.

Garden Emergency Baskets !

When I'm getting ready to go out for a day in my garden, there are a few things I prepare before heading out. These simple things make my gardening time healthier and more pleasant. I like to leave a nice basket or container beside my door. I use this basket to store some items that I may need during my time in the garden. First in my basket, I place some antiseptic spray and I never forget Band-Aids for those small emergencies. For possible bites and stings I add a shaker of meat tenderizer. Now with my basket all prepared, I'm ready to face whatever creepy-crawlies or small injuries come my way.



Garden Emergency Baskets II

I've found it's a good idea to keep a prepared basket of items beside my door. I grab it on my way out to do my gardening. I include antiseptic spray, band aids and meat tenderizer for small injuries. To be proactive, I include insect repellent, SP suntan lotion and protective eye wear. My favorite includes two shower caps. Yes, they protect my hair when doing high pruning, but I like them even better for my feet. Never fails when I'm stomping in mud I discover I need to go inside. Then, I just slip the shower caps over my feet and go in. Just a few things permanently set up in one handy place make my days in the garden easier.

All in the Eye I

With a lot of planning and a little work we're fortunate to be able to have full and lush gardens year round here on the Treasure Coast. But a lot can be lost even to the trained eye of a gardener. It is therefore very important to have different shapes, colors and textures throughout your garden to give your eyes a rest from the continuous green of an ordinary garden. To your eyes green is green is green and unless you insert a color, texture or shape to break the homogeneity of all green the beauty of your garden may be lost to your eye.



All in the Eye II

Having a monochromatic green garden is boring to the eye. The break can come from a bloom or a well-placed piece of garden hardscape. That can include birdbaths, benches, stick ornaments or just fun found items, like colorful bowling balls, stones or pottery. The eye can rest after looking at something different. Then your eyes can focus on the next plant or shrub and be able to see with distinction the color, texture and shape. Even a well-placed pot of colorful seasonal annuals can give non-blooming plants and shrubs a distinctive pop. It's all in the eye of the beholder, so give it a rest to see the best.

Cleaning Hands I

Gardener's hands are always at the ready to pull a weed, pot up a new plant or cutting, with or without a glove. Use your bare hands to dig a hole or smooth out mulch quicker than to going for a trowel or hand rake. Then the phone rings...companies coming or you have to leave.... you look around ...house okay.... garden okay.... hands a disaster. What to do when scrubbing and regular garden gloves aren't enough. Denture cleaning tablets to the rescue! Soak your hands in a bowl of warm water, with 2 tablets and stains on fingers and nails will bubble away.



Cleaning Hands II

Did you know that when you've been working in the garden and your hands are a mess, you can dissolve two denture cleaning tablets in a bowl of warm water, and then soak your hands? Stains on fingers and nails disappear and it feels good. For pre treatment-scrape nails on a bar of soap, this helps keep the dirt out. Hand lotion or petroleum jelly on you hands and nails before gardening helps prevent staining. Dry hands and nails stain easier. Leave surgical or plastic gloves at the door for easy pick up when heading for the garden. When you're done with your gardening you won't need to wear garden gloves when you leave home.

Feeding Butterflies I

Ever wonder where all the butterflies go? You planted a wonderful garden filled with butterfly plants just for them, yet you see them for only a short time during the day. Well I can bet you they're at a nearby mud puddle. They love mud puddles. They get all their recommended Daily Requirements of water, vitamins and minerals from the wet soil. Forget your birdbath as a substitute, it is too deep, likely too exposed and hopefully not muddy. Instead try saucers filled with a little muddy FL soil and a few stones for resting spots. Place these homemade mud puddles in a protected area and watch for the return of these glorious garden guests.



Feeding Butterflies II

Did you know that butterflies love mud puddles? So if you only see them for a short time each day even though you've planted all the right plants, they are likely relaxing and feeding at a nearby mud puddle. They can't use birdbaths or regular puddles because they're either too deep or too open giving their predators the advantage. To keep them in your yard use a few shallow saucers filled with plain old Florida garden soil. Place a few small stones on top to act as landing pads. Place prepared saucers in protected areas in your garden. Placing a wedge of fruit on the saucer provides them with a nice treat. Feed and water them and they'll stay all day.



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