

Master Gardener Extension Volunteers of Union and Towns Counties

NEWSLETTER

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Janice King

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Tommy Westbrook

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Meetings: Unless announced otherwise, Master Gardener Extension Volunteers of Union and Towns Counties meet on the second Thursday of every month in the Haralson Memorial Civic Center in Blairsville, 4:00 p.m. socializing, 4:30 p.m. meeting. We do not meet if inclement weather closes Union County or Towns County schools.

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Beautiful Yellow Fringed Orchid

Photographed by Elaine Bliss who found a big patch of these on Gainesville Highway

Editor's Words

Autumn is in the air. The changing position of the earth in relation to the sun makes the 'light' look different. Some of the leaves on my red maples have already started turning red and they are beautiful. As you close down the summer season, make notes about what you learned this past growing season, note your accomplishments and failures so you can make changes and be successful in your garden next growing season. And, if you have never planted a fall garden, now is the time to plant one. Try it, you may like it.

Master Gardener Extension Volunteers have been busy with the Ask a Master Gardener booth at the Farmers Market, work in the Gold Medal Garden and at the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center and are getting ready to do some crafting for items for the Kris Kringle Market.

Our featured Master Gardener Extension Volunteer for this quarter is Janice King, please see pages 3– 4 and be sure to check out Marcia Little's article and Gayle Kusak's photographs about the Gold Medal Garden on pages 11-13. Beautiful photographs are found on pages 14 -16 of plants that are blooming now (or have just finished blooming) in the gardens of Gayle Kusak, Henry and Tommy Westbrook and Tom and Jo Anne Allen.

Happy gardening,

Jo Anne

***** Autumn arrives on September 22, 2022 at 9:04 p.m..*****



At left, a portion of Tom and Jo Anne Allen's vegetable garden - the latest completed project, 16,000 pounds of pea gravel spread between the raised beds. It looks much nicer and hopefully will result in a reduction of weeds. Future maintenance - any weeds that come up in the gravel will have to be sprayed but no grass and weed seeds will be thrown into the beds by our lawn mower or weed eater.

Meet Janice King

Our featured Master Gardener Extension Volunteer for this quarter is Janice King. She and her husband Glenn have lived in Union County since 2018, moving here from southwest Florida. They have two sons, one a diesel mechanic living in Florida and the other working in the movie studio industry and living in Atlanta. She completed her Master Gardener Extension Volunteer training in 2021 and was certified as a Master Gardener Extension Volunteer in 2022. Included in her volunteer work, Janice is currently serving as recording secretary for the Towns Union Master Gardener Association and project chair for the Children's Memorial Garden located at Meeks Park in Union County.

Janice grew up in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania where she graduated North Hills High School. She has been styling hair for 25 years and currently works as a stylist at Dazzle Cosmetics in Blue Ridge.

Her hobbies and passions include gardening, hiking, swimming, kayaking and a new love of her life, a 6-month-old puppy named Abby.

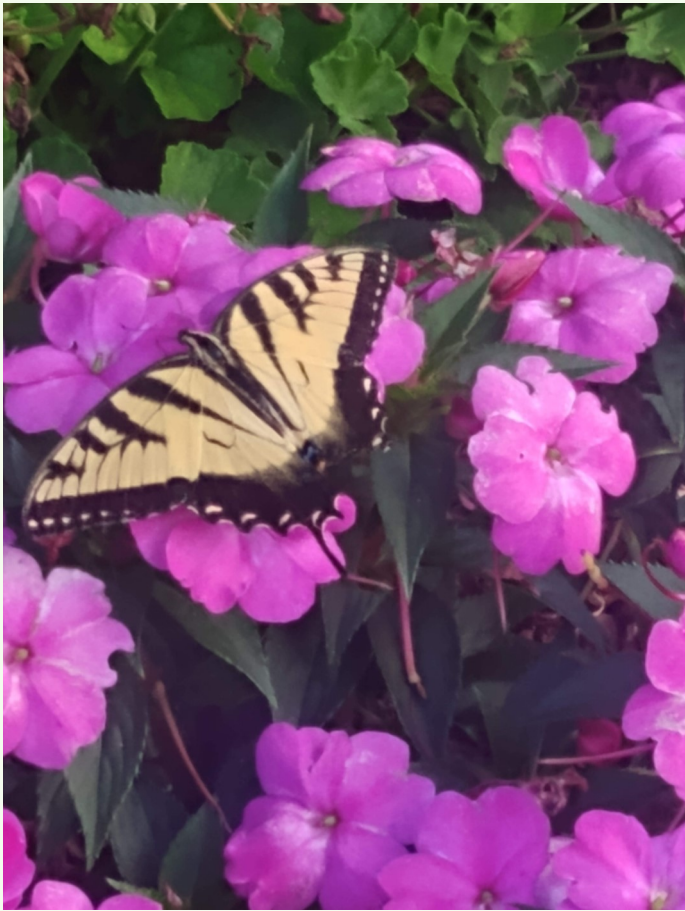
Because Janice loves color, her favorite plants to grow are annuals. She plans on adding a vegetable garden to her landscape in the future. Favorite gardening activities include garden design and shaping and pruning shrubs and trees.

Favorite foods include sushi and ice cream, any and all flavors, and she has traveled extensively. She has visited and would like to go back to Sedona in Arizona, Jackson Hole in Wyoming, Key West in Florida, New Orleans in Louisiana and New York. Places where she would like to visit are the redwood forests in California and Niagara Falls in New York.

Something that many of her friends do not know about her is that she knows how to juggle and a while back she won the 6 number lotto lottery. She said "Don't ask to borrow any money because I had to split the pot with a large number of people."

I enjoyed getting to know Janice better and hope you will too.

Jo Anne Allen
Master Gardener Extension Volunteer



Impatiens attracting an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly (*Papilio machaon*) in Janice's garden

Janice's 6-month old puppy, Abby



September Garden Chores

Trees and Shrubs - Gardening lore says plant trees, shrubs, and perennials in months which have the letter "r" in their names – September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April.

Fertilize roses one last time for the season so they will have time to slow down their growth before cold weather arrives.

Azaleas and rhododendrons are forming flower buds now for next year so keep these plants watered to insure good bud formation and flowers next spring.

Mulch trees and shrubs to protect your plants from temperature extremes and to keep the soil evenly moist. Keep mulch back 3 inches from the trunk to prevent damage and disease.

Do not prune or fertilize trees and shrubs now. Pruning and fertilizing will stimulate new growth that could be hurt as temperatures drop.

Replace mulch under trees and shrubs to prevent diseases on next year's foliage.

Vegetables - Plant a fall garden: sow seeds/transplant seedlings of mustard, spinach, turnips, beets, carrots, kale, radishes, broccoli, lettuce, onions, collards, and cabbage.

Plant garlic now for harvest next summer.

Cover crops like annual rye and crimson clover planted in unused areas of your garden help hold the soil in place and add organic matter when tilled into the soil next spring before planting.

Clean up your vegetable garden space to decrease your pest problems next season.

Dig sweet potatoes before frost.

To keep weed seeds from blowing into your cultivated garden area, keep turf surrounding your garden mowed, directing grass clippings away from your garden area.

Do not apply pesticides when temperatures exceed 85 degrees or when it is windy.

Flowerbeds - Autumn is a good time to add perennials, trees and shrubs to your garden. Plant fall blooming perennials such as aster, chrysanthemum, goldenrod and black-eyed Susan for fall color.

Perennials perform better in soil that drains well. When digging beds this fall, add compost and soil conditioners to help with drainage.

For good selections, purchase daffodil, tulip, hyacinth and other spring blooming bulbs as they arrive at your nursery. Store in a cool area and plant in October when soil temperatures are in the 60's or cooler.

Fertilize chrysanthemums now for lots of blooms this fall.

Divide overcrowded groundcovers like ajuga and lirioppe and overgrown clumps of daylily, iris and coneflower this month.



Not all spring flowering bulbs bloom at the same time; check varieties and bloom times. For early color, “Early Sensation” is a daffodil variety that blooms in January in our area.

Fertilize bulbs when you plant them because it is hard to locate them until they come up next spring.

Edge and weed existing perennial beds. Use a granular weed-preventer (following label directions) to reduce winter weeds and apply mulch.

Plant your pansies and violas as the weather cools.

Remove faded blooms from pansies to keep them blooming and healthy.

Lawns - Fertilize fescue lawns following label instructions.

Rake up fallen leaves and add them to your compost pile to create a rich soil amendment. If you do not have a compost pile, start one.

Soil Test - Have your soil tested. Stop by your local Extension office for a soil testing bag and instructions.

Houseplants - Lightly trim and check your houseplants that have spent the summer on your patio for insects and disease and if necessary, treat them (following label directions) before moving them inside for the winter.

Take cuttings of coleus and geraniums to grow inside until next spring.

Root leaves of African violet plants to give as Christmas gifts.

Miscellaneous - Begin collecting dried materials for fall and winter arrangements and decorations.



October Garden Chores

Trees and Shrubs - Plant trees and shrubs now. Their roots will have time to become well established before the demands of spring growth. Remove any twine or wire that is wrapped around the trunk when you plant.

Lightly fertilize evergreen azaleas and rhododendron to prevent yellowing during winter.

Refurbish mulch around shrubs and trees but do not place mulch too close to the plant's trunk. Mulch helps control weeds, provides insulation for the roots during cold weather, and helps keep the soil moist.

Do not heavily prune shrubs or trees now, as this will force new growth that will be susceptible to cold weather injury.

Keep evergreen shrubs and small trees watered to help prevent damage from low temperatures.

Fruit Trees - Pick up fallen apples, peaches, pears and plums from under your trees and destroy them to avoid diseases next spring.

Vegetables - Clean up old plant debris from this year's vegetable garden because insects and diseases can survive winter weather in this material. Before storing your tomato cages, remove old tomato vines from them.

Add spent plants from your vegetable and flower gardens and leaves to your compost pile. Do not put diseased plant material in your compost pile or you may spread disease to other plants when you use your compost. If you do not have a compost pile, start one.

Spread shredded leaves and manure over your vegetable garden soil and turn it under to improve soil fertility, structure, and water-holding capacity.

Harvest your pumpkins as the vines begin to dry.

Protect strawberries with a light layer of pine straw mulch.

Dig sweet potatoes as the vines die back. Let them 'cure' in a dry, warm spot before storing.

If you have not already planted garlic, plant now for harvest next summer. Break garlic bulbs into individual cloves for planting, 3 inches deep and 4-6 inches apart.

Harvest mature green tomatoes before the first frost.

Before the first frost, cut and preserve herbs.

Water your soil before harvesting your carrots so they will be easier to pull. Once harvested, trim the tops so the leaves will not draw moisture out of the carrots, making them limp.

Flowerbeds - Fall is a very good time to plant perennials like coneflower and black-eyed Susan, and divide existing perennials.



Divide perennials like daylilies, phlox, and iris.

Collect seeds from perennials and annuals. Clean them and store in a cool dry place. Plant them next spring.

As the weather turns cool, plant spring flowering bulbs like tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, and crocus. A general rule is to set bulbs three times as deep as the dimension of the bulb.

Fertilize freshly planted pansies with a water-soluble fertilizer. Switch to a nitrate nitrogen fertilizer as the weather gets cooler.

Cut chrysanthemums and asters back to about five inches tall after they have bloomed so they will sprout strongly in spring.

Top-dress your perennial beds with one or two inches of compost, keeping it away from the crown of your plants.

Fertilize established bulb beds with one-half cup per ten square feet of bulb fertilizer, always following package directions.

Plant peonies now. Buds should be no more than two inches below the soil surface.

Continue planting pansies and other cool season annuals like snapdragons and ornamental kale.

After the foliage dies back, dig caladium bulbs and store them loosely in dry peat moss or vermiculite for the winter.

If you have not already done so, dig dahlia tubers and elephant's-ear for winter storage. Dry them under shelter for about a week then store them loosely in dry peat moss.

Lawns - Rake fallen leaves from your lawn to keep them from matting down and killing your grass. Add them to your compost pile.

Replace areas of the lawn that are thin because of too much shade with a groundcover like liriopé or ajuga.

Soil Test - If your soil test indicates that your soil needs lime, now is the time to add it to your soil in the recommended amounts.

Houseplants - As night temperatures approach the mid-50s, bring in houseplants that have spent the warm weather on your deck or patio. Check for insect infestation.

Divide overgrown Boston ferns and repot.

Miscellaneous - Carve a pumpkin.



November Garden Chores

Trees and Shrubs - Fall is an excellent time to plant trees, shrubs, and perennials. Be sure to remove any wire that may be wrapped around the trunk and roots when you plant a tree.

Do not prune trees and shrubs now because the pruning will stimulate new growth that may be killed by freezes. Wait until January or February when they are dormant.

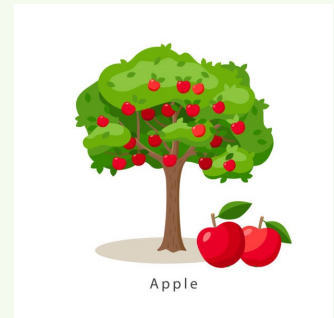
Add a fresh layer of mulch to trees and shrubs to help insulate the roots as temperatures drop. Shredded leaves and pine straw are two choices.

Deciduous trees and shrubs can help with energy efficiency in your home. They provide shade in the summer and let sun shine in during the winter.

To help prevent damage to evergreen shrubs and small trees from low temperatures, make sure they receive adequate moisture as we enter the winter season.

Scale insects on trees and shrubs can be controlled with dormant oils.

Fruit Trees - Set out fruiting plants from October to March.



Vegetables - Make a list of vegetable and plant varieties that performed well in your garden this season so you will be ready to order seeds for your spring plantings.

Consider planting unused areas of your vegetable garden with a cover crop like clover or put a layer of leaves on your garden. Plow it under about three weeks before spring planting and this will improve your soil by adding nutrients and organic matter.

To prepare your garden soil for planting next spring, turn your soil 8 to 12 inches deep with a spade or shovel to provide aeration and add composted organic matter.

Clean your tomato cages before storing them to prevent insects and diseases when you plant next spring.

Flowerbeds - Clean up your perennial borders by removing dry stems and dead leaves to help prevent a build-up of insects and diseases and add composted organic matter.

Dig up bulbs that need to be stored for the winter like caladiums, elephant's ears and dahlias.

Plant spring flowering bulbs now, and through the end of November.

There is still time to plant pansies. Fertilize them every two weeks with a water-soluble plant food and to encourage more bloom, remove faded flowers regularly. Switch to a fertilizer containing "nitrate nitrogen" and follow label directions as the weather gets colder.

Plant Lenten rose (*Helleborus orientalis*) now and it may bloom for you next February.

After your chrysanthemums and asters have quit blooming, cut them back to about five inches.

Remove any remaining foliage left on peonies.

Pot up your Mandevilla vine and bring it indoors for the winter. Cut it back to 2 feet high and place it in bright light until spring.

Keep pansies and other seasonal flowers watered regularly.

Lawns - To keep your lawn healthy, rake fallen leaves regularly from your lawn. Use them in your compost pile or shred them and use them for mulch.

Soil Test - Have your garden soil tested if you have not already done so. Stop by your local Extension office for a soil test bag and instructions. If you need to add lime, add it now so it will have time to work into the soil. Wait until next spring to apply any fertilizer that is needed so the nutrients will not leach from the soil before spring planting.

Houseplants - Do not be alarmed if your houseplants drop a few leaves when you bring them indoors after they have enjoyed the summer on your patio. This is normal as they adjust to less light and drier air inside your home.

Force bulbs to bloom indoors; a good choice is paperwhites.

Cut back on fertilizing your indoor plants and do not water them unless the soil feels dry.

Do not place your houseplants too close to a window because the draft can turn the leaves brown.

Miscellaneous - Collect okra seedpods, rose hips, gourds, and other material from your garden for dried flower arrangements and craft projects.

Inventory and clean up your garden tools. If you need a tool, you may drop a hint to friends and family since the Christmas season is near.

Add a rain barrel to your gutter down spout to conserve rainwater for your garden.

If you do not have a compost pile, start one.

Keep your bird feeders filled with black oil sunflower seeds.

Leave hardy water lilies and fish in ponds deep enough not to freeze solid. Compost tropical water lilies.



TOWNS-UNION COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS WORKING WITH UNION COUNTY

In 2009 Mickey Cummings (the then Union County UGA Extension Agent) conducted a Master Gardener class consisting of 30+ students to graduate as UGA Extension Volunteers. Mickey's challenge to the graduating students was to create a "Gold Medal Plant" garden at the entrance to the Union County Farmers' Market. The area Mickey had selected at the entrance to the Farmers' Market was originally designed as a drainage ditch to direct water run-off from the Farmers' Market along the road.

Gold Medal Plants didn't mean the garden would earn a gold medal, it was a program where a group nominated and selected a list of plants for the State of Georgia that they decided would be identified as a "Gold Medal Plant." The participating professionals consisted of The State Botanical Garden of Georgia, UGA Cooperative Extension, UGA Faculty Members, Nurserymen, Flower/Plant/Tree Growers, Garden Retailers and Landscape Professionals across the State of Georgia. The plant categories included vines, shrubs, ground cover, perennials, annuals, trees and natives.

The 2009 class decided to accept Mickey's challenge and choose plants from the Gold Medal Plant list creating a garden for visitors to the Union County Farmers Market to view different types of plants and trees that would survive and thrive in our climate.

The Master Gardeners began their work; first drawing and designing a landscape plan. Annette Hopgood and Marcia Little were the original designers with a pencil drawing of their visions. Our first working install was to create a "dry creek bed" that would allow for drainage from the Farmers Market into an existing drain. Master Gardeners installed round rocks to create the creek bed and created a small wall allowing an area for new plantings.

Two small bridges were constructed and installed under the direction of Eagle Scout John Tom Stevens. He designed the bridges so that they could be moved for any necessary maintenance to the existing drain or the existing electric transformer power box. One of the bridges was dedicated to Jo Anne Allen's mother, Mary Ethel Coleman, who passed away in 2012. She loved the Farmers Market and her husband, (Jo Anne's father) Henry Coleman, is also a Master Gardener.

Perennial flowers, plants, and some native plants were chosen from the "Gold Medal Plant" list and installations began in the Spring of 2010 and continued throughout the Summer of 2010. Soil amendments, rock borders, mulch for the individual planting areas, stepping stones and fencing were completed in 2010.

Our first "plant" install was three (3) *Callicarpa japonica* (Purple Beautyberry) donated by Jo Anne Allen (Master Gardener since 1993). The Beautyberry began to reproduce and take over a good portion of the garden. Master Gardeners harvested many of the small plants and were able to sell them to the general public to raise funds for more plants. Secondly, and our first "Gold Medal" plants, were three (3) *Amsonia hubrechtii* 'Blue Star', purchased by a group of Master Gardeners. Thus began the install of over 45 different perennials and shrubs from the "Gold Medal Plant" list during the Summer of 2010.

We began to realize we wanted more constant color to our garden rather than the short

blooming time of our perennials. Some diseases began to diminish our perennials, as well as life expectancy of some perennials. And, as with anyone's garden, things happen! We began to lose and replace plants as the garden matured.

Our focus really began to change when the "Gold Medal Plant" program ceased to exist. What to do now and what direction did the Towns Union County Master Gardeners want to take? We decided to use plants that will invite and sustain pollinators, throughout their lifetime, to our garden. This new direction would not only emphasize and educate the public on the importance of pollinators and the loss of their environment; but, also provide a beautiful and colorful garden.

Cathy Haist, a 2009 Master Gardener graduate, began the lengthy and very detailed research and documentation for certification we desired for our garden. We are proud that Cathy was able to secure three (3) certifications: 1) Rosalynn Carter Butterfly Trail, 2) Monarch Waystation, and 3) Pollinator Habitat.

Today the garden demonstrates a long and loving desire to provide a garden that demonstrates beauty and sustenance for the life cycle of our very important pollinators necessary to our food production. It also demonstrates the beauty shared among man and our environment.

Currently there is a list that provides a reference to the labels in the garden to help identify individual plants and flowers and further provide education to the public so that homeowners can recreate a home garden with plants and flowers of their choice.

We are proud of this garden and proud to share it with Union County residents and visitors. We welcome any questions and they can be fielded through the "Ask The Master Gardener" booth at the Union County Farmers Market, Saturdays, from June through October- or through the UGA Extension office in Blairsville, Jacob Williams, Extension Agent.

Marcia Little, Project Coordinator, Gold Medal Garden

UGA Extension Volunteer Since 2009



Gold Medal Garden—Photograph by Gayle Kusuk



The three photographs on this page are of the Gold Medal Garden - Photographs by Gayle Kusak



What's Blooming Now

(or what has just finished blooming or being beautiful)

Photographs on this page are all from the garden of Henry and Tommy Westbrook



Bigleaf Magnolia (this is their first bloom)



Cardinal Flower



Plumleaf Azalea

What's Blooming Now

Continued

This page contains photographs from the garden of Gayle Kusak

Gayle Kusak decided to share what was growing in her garden. She has a brush pile that she throws weeds, etc. in and usually any raw vegetable or food scraps for the critters, which of course means any squash seeds. This spring a squash plant sprouted. It took a while to see what type of squash it was going to be, especially with the deer constantly eating the blooms.



Then one day she finally got her answer, sure enough it was a spaghetti squash plant. She threw a net over it and this is a picture of the squash plant just before harvest. She harvested a total of 5 beautiful spaghetti squashes from the plant. And spaghetti squash is one of her favorites!

What's Blooming Now

Continued

This page contains photographs from the garden of Tom and Jo Anne Allen



Above: Eastern Yellow Swallowtail Butterfly (*Papilio glaucus*, Official State Butterfly of Georgia) on Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*)

Right: Birdbath with solar powered fountain, *Verbena bonariensis* is the purple flower in the foreground



Left: Carpenter Bee (*Xylocopa*) on Passion Flower (*Passiflora*)



Saint Fiacre of Breuil

Patron Saint of Gardeners

(c.AD 600-18 August 670)

Saint Fiacre was a catholic priest, abbot, hermit and gardener of the seventh century who was famous for his skill in curing infirmities. He emigrated from Ireland to France where he constructed a hermitage together with a vegetable and herb garden, oratory and hospice for travelers.



Statue of Saint Fiacre in the garden of Tom and Jo Anne Allen with Elephant Ears (*Colocasia esculenta*) in the background

The 2022 Great Georgia Pollinator Census was August 19th and 20th!

I hope you counted!

Plant To Attract Pollinators!

Weeds I Love To Hate

Sonchus asper

Prickly Sowthistle

Prickly sowthistle is a spring or summer herbaceous wildflower or weed, with spiny leaves and yellow flowers resembling those of a dandelion. It reproduces by seed. Other common names it answer to are: rough milk thistle, spiny sowthistle, sharp-fringed sow thistle, or spiny-leaved sow thistle. It is a widespread plant in the tribe Cichorieae within the family of Asteraceae.

The leaves are bluish-green, simple lanceolate with wavy and sometimes lobed margins, covered with spines on both the margins and undersides. The leaves and stems emit a milky sap when cut.

Native to Europe, North Africa and western Asia, it has also become naturalized on other continents and is regarded as a noxious, invasive weed in many places. It is found throughout the United States, north into Alaska and the Yukon. Its leaves are edible and it is found in cultivated soil, pastures, roadsides, edges of yards, vacant lots, construction sites, waste areas and grasslands.

Prickly Sowthistle may be controlled through hand-pulling or cutting prior to flowering. A glyphosate based herbicide (Round-Up, etc.) will kill Prickly Sowthistle in a single application. Avoid spraying and killing desirable neighboring plants and always follow label directions.



Jo Anne Allen

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer

“Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower.”

Albert Camus

Oven-Baked Eggplant Parmesan

Recipe from Internet

Serves 6

2 eggs

1 1/2 C seasoned bread crumbs

2 medium eggplants (about 1 1/2 pounds), cut into 1/2 inch slices

1 jar (24 ounces) Classic Marinara Sauce

2 C shredded mozzarella cheese

2 T grated Parmesan cheese



Set oven to 400 degrees F. Spray a rimmed baking sheet with vegetable cooking spray. Beat the eggs in a shallow bowl with a whisk. Place the bread crumbs in another dish. Dip the eggplant into the eggs and then coat with the bread crumbs. Place the eggplant onto the baking sheet. Bake for 30 minutes, turning the eggplant over once halfway through the baking process. Spray a 2-quart baking dish with vegetable cooking spray. Spread 1/2 C sauce in the bottom of the dish. Layer half the eggplant, 1 C sauce, 1 C mozzarella cheese and 1 T Parmesan cheese in the dish. Repeat the layers. Bake for 25 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Enjoy!

Book Corner

Title: Ferns for American Gardens

Author: John T. Mickel

From the library of Jo Anne Allen and she gives this book 5 green thumbs out of 5.

Ferns for American Gardens is the definitive guide to selecting and growing more than 500 kinds of hardy ferns and their allies (clubmosses, spikemosses, quillworts and horsetails). This reference guide describes alphabetically more than 400 types of ferns and explains the fern's habit, frond size and color, hardiness zones and ease of cultivation. It also points out any outstanding ornamental features and their season of interest and gives suggestions for best uses in the garden. Chapters include: Introduction, Fern Structure, Growing and Gardening with Ferns, Propagating Ferns and Hardy Ferns for American Gardens.