

2018 Calendar

Register NOW for Feb. 9, Greenville MG Seminar. Go to ggmga.org for registration. Sells out early. Always fabulous way to start spring.

12/08/18: LMG Board Mtng. Clemson Ext. at 4:30 pm.

1/08/18: LMG Board Mtng. Clemson Ext. at 4:30 pm.

2/14/18: LMG Board Mtng. Clemson Ext. at 4:30

2/21/19 : LMG Annual Banquet, Harris Baptist Church (300 Center Street, Greenwood) at 6:30 pm.



DECEMBER 2018!



Greetings Lakelands Master Gardeners

Wally and I want to thank you for your support this year. We have had a successful year in 2018 and it is due to the many hands and hearts staying the course and getting the jobs done.

Please have a safe and healthy holiday season. Look forward to seeing you in January 2019!!- Wally and Donna Sears

CRUCIFERS AND CRYOBIOLOGY CREATE TASTILY BEAUTIFUL WINTER PLANTINGS

By Christopher Blake Hackmeyer

Master Gardeners are probably well aware already that crucifers, also known as Brassicas or the mustard family, can be some of the most reliably hardy plants for the winter garden. I know I've planted them aplenty in preparation for colder days ahead, and I imagine many of you have, as well. But I've also been getting a couple of "frequently asked questions" from other gardeners about these frost-friendly plants lately, so I dug into some research (and a little bit of, well, self-experimentation), and am happy to report back with some findings that will hopefully be of interest to my fellow crucifer-crunchers.

Is it okay to eat ornamental kales and cabbages? Would you want to?

First things first. The species *Brassica oleracea* contains a surprising variety of cultivars that may seem very different at first glance and have all sorts of names on the dinner table. Not only kale and cabbages, but broccoli, cauliflower, collards, Brussels sprouts, and some more "exotic" fare like kohlrabi and gai lan, are all just different parts and cultivars of this culinarily multi-talented species. And the same goes for any kales or cabbages you may happen to find in the ornamentals section of your favorite seed catalog or garden center. Being merely different selections from the same species, the [University of Wisconsin Extension program](#) says these ornamental cultivars are no less safe to eat than those sold as vegetables. Makes sense to me, but in case you're still skeptical I went ahead and tried it out for you! And after downing quite a few salad bowls full of ornamental "Red Russian" and "Chidori" kale I can report feeling no worse for the wear. So yes, these flashier crucifer cultivars can make great additions to an edible landscaping project where an extra splash of stand-out color, shape, or texture is needed.

The catch is that breeding for more striking colors and leaf shapes often comes at the expense of superior flavor and texture for eating. I can attest, based again on personal experience, that these ornamental varieties do tend to be noticeably more bitter and require a little more chewing than the "Blue Curled Vates" from my vegetable garden. But that's no reason to let those lovely leaves go to waste! In my experience, the acidity of a vinaigrette dressing helps cut

down on their bitterness in a salad, and throwing a handful or two into a stir fry for the last 30 seconds or so of cooking mellows them out and softens them up quite a bit while adding some beautiful color to the dish. If those options still seem like a bit much, you might consider using just a bit as a garnish to spruce up your holiday meals.

And if all else fails, keep reading...

Do crucifers really taste better after a frost?

This one may be common knowledge to those who have grown these vegetables in winter before, but for the uninitiated here's another tip for improving the taste and texture of cruciferous greens. Try going out and picking them the morning after a frost. Brassicas, especially kale, really do taste strikingly sweeter and turn a bit more tender after a few hours around the freezing point. As a matter of fact, the best kale I've ever tasted I pulled out from under a thin layer of snow. But why is that so?

The science of cryobiology, which studies the ways in which organisms adapt to cold stress, suggests it has to do with the way these plants manage to remain green and thriving through bitterly cold temperatures that do in so many others until spring. According to the [United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization](#), one way cold-hardy plants prepare to cope with sub-freezing temperatures is by "accumulation of sugars or sugar alcohols [to] lower the freezing temperature of tissues" when their environment begins approaching the normal freezing point. It's a chemical principle similar to spraying salt on the roads to ward off ice; the more non-water molecules you have dissolved in water, the colder it has to get before the water freezes, and the sugars that plants photosynthesize can serve this purpose just as well. By a happy accident, this churning out of extra sugar makes the leaves taste sweeter, too.

Here's wishing all of you a lovely and delicious holiday season, and happy winter gardening!

References

Mahr, Susan. "Ornamental Cabbage and Kale." University of Wisconsin Extension, 11 May 2010, hort.uwex.edu/articles/ornamental-cabbage-and-kale/. Accessed 15 Nov. 2018.

Snyder, Richard L. and de Melo-Abreu, J. Paulo. "Chapter 4 - Frost Damage: Physiology and Critical Temperatures." *Frost Protection: Fundamentals, Practice, and Economics*, vol. 1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, 2005, www.fao.org/docrep/008/y7223e/y7223e0a.htm. Accessed 15 Nov. 2018.

Thank you Chris, for the most scholarly submission we have had to the newsletter in 10 years, and now I can eat all my ornamental kale!- Sandy Orr

THEY WALKED IN THE DOOR NAÏVE AND GULLIBLE, AND NOW THEY ARE MASTERS OF THE GARDENING UNIVERSE

Actually, they're just interns for now, but when they get their hours, they will know all. Congratulations to all the new interns who will be installed at our February Annual Banquet.



OUR VOLUNTEERS, WORKING THE STREET, PRIMING MAIN STREET BEDS



Why are Ann and Karen wearing angel wings?

FIDDLE-LEAF FIG HINTS - Sandy Orr

In the recent inclement weather when all I had to do was sit at home and stare at my pitiful fiddle-leaf fig, I found a podcast called Plantrama that featured a segment on them. Recommendations: 1) Get a bigger, heavier pot with good drainage. 2) Let it completely dry out between waterings. (pinkie up to first knuckle should be dry) 3) Lots of light. Okay I'll move it to maximum light. 4) Don't move it. Oops. 5) High humidity. A saucer with wet pebbles might help. 6) Periodic non-winter fertilization. Okay, I'll feed the blasted thing someday. 7) Rotate the plant ¼ turn at each watering. Wait a minute, you said not to move the plant. Plastic is looking better and better. I do love this podcast, though. It enables you to preview the contents and speed to the segment you want to hear, thus freeing you from listening to segments on bugs.

THERE'S STILL TIME TO RENEW YOUR MASTER GARDENER MEMBERSHIP - see below form

At a paltry \$20, membership is a bargain. Please complete the form below and show up to any of our events or else you can mail your dues to Summer Booker, whose address is on the form. Completing the form helps us update your email info so you can receive all of Ann Barklow's email blasts.



Lakeland Master Gardener Association Membership Renewal 2019

Master Gardener Membership Dues are \$20.00.
Payment is due by the Awards Banquet to be eligible to vote.
Make your check payable to Lakelands Master Gardener Organization (LMGO) and mail to:
Summer Booker
112 North Cedar Dr.
Greenwood, SC 29649

New Member Renewal/Transfer

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone # Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

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Year Graduated MG Program: _____
 Transfer: (Y/N) _____ From: _____

Check here if you do **not** wish to be listed in the directory.

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Suggested topics/activities for the meetings or continuing education: _____

***** Please do not write below this line*****

Date Paid _____
 Date Membership List Updated _____

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Vice Presidents: Melinda Fincham

Treasurer: Summer Booker

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Past President: Jimmy McInville

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Community Projects: Sherry Edwards

Education: Linda Halsey and Wally Sears

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