

The Green Thumb

July 2004

Contents:

1	July Meeting – Gary G. Olp on Green Building
	Upcoming Meetings
2	Club Notes
	Herb of the Month – Gotu Kola
	Ladybug Calendar
3	NULGS Thanks
4	Natural Urban Living Garden Show
5	Organic Tomatoes
	Mosquito-killing Bird Bath
	Fire Ant Control Testers Needed
6	Water Rights
7	Fertilizers in Our Waterways

July meeting – Gary G. Olp; Green Architect



Gary G. Olp directs a successful environmentally focused private practice named GGOArchitects (www.ggoarchitects.com) in Dallas. He and his firm are deeply committed to sustainable architecture and green building, and they have applied these concepts to everything from historic renovation and preservation projects to the design of retail, office, industrial, residential, medical, restaurant, and educational structures. He established the practice twelve years ago in an effort to effect a fundamental change in the application of the craft of Architecture. The design process he employs has met with varying degrees of success over the years and is now referred to as "sustainable design" or "green building".

Mr. Olp completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Cincinnati in 1977. Out of conflicting influences in the late 70's grew an understanding of environmental stewardship. He is actively involved in the Dallas community. He has served in many roles: advisory council member, neighborhood association president, Cub Scoutmaster, education council member, task force committee member. He has served as co-chair of the Sustainable Dallas Conference every year since its founding, is past chairman of the Sustainable Architecture Committee of the Dallas AIA, and has published numerous articles in professional journals and trade publications. Mr. Olp speaks on the subjects of sustainable architecture, the LEED rating system, designing healthy environments, and indoor air quality.

He has dedicated his professional career to crafting improved environments in which to live, learn, work and play, and he believes that our society clearly stands to benefit from habitable cities and a gardener's concern to nurture rather than exploit our limited resources. His efforts reflect an enterprising approach to reducing construction waste while increasing the use of recycled and natural building materials in lieu of synthetic products often manufactured with toxic by-products. His projects are often typified by the use of additional insulation, energy efficiency, passive solar techniques, natural day lighting, enhanced fresh air ventilation, less dependency on mechanical systems and so on.

Please join us for an enlightening talk, great raffle prizes, and tasty refreshments! The meeting will be held on Thursday, July 29 at the Bob Duncan Community Center. Doors open at 7 and the meeting begins at 7:30. See you there!

Upcoming AOGC Meetings

- August 26: *Soapmaking & Home Cleaning Products*
Cindy Baird – Paradise Valley Soaps
- September 30: *Water Gardening*
Nature's Touch Landscape, Inc.
Ice cream social & plant swap during refreshment time
- October 28: Annual Potluck & Business Meeting
Special guest Jay Mertz, Rabbit Hill Farm



Club Notes



Children's Garden at Fielder House

Help is needed tending, harvesting, and watering. We could use someone to stop by and turn soaker hoses on/off during the summer. If you live or work nearby and can lend a hand, please contact Nancy Hagwood at 817-265-7421.

Broadway Plaza at Pecan Park

Do you have some sun-loving plants you need to divide? We are looking for a few volunteers to plant flowers at the Alzheimer's unit on Saturday, August 7. We are also seeking donations of sun-loving flowering plants for this effort. If you would like to help out, please contact Susan Horn at 817-274-8460.

Board Members Wanted

Per our new bylaws, October is the time we elect board members. Being on the board does not require any special skills, most positions are "at large," which means you can do what you do best. Activities performed by the board include scheduling speakers; creating the monthly newsletter; writing newsletter articles; performing membership activities (keeping the roster current, printing membership cards, printing name tags, making a membership directory); serving as a liaison to other local clubs; working on the website; organizing the garden show; setting up and finding volunteers to man tables at other shows (Fielder House, Howard Garrett's Show, etc.) and anything else you can think of. If you are interested in serving, please let us know at the July or August meeting. Thanks!

Plant Swap

Take a look around your yard, and get ready for a **plant swap** at our September meeting. Members are asked to bring plants and cuttings to trade. Are you just building a yard and don't have any to bring? I hear home-made cookies are sometimes considered a fair trade! ☺

Herb of the Month – Gotu Kola *Susan Horn*

Gotu Kola, *hydrocotyle asiatica*, is an ancient Chinese healing herb. Some of its common names are pennywort, or ground ivy. My favorite name for it is the Chinese name of *man tien hsing* translated as "sky full of stars." Gotu Kola is a low growing plant that is native to the tropical and subtropical river valleys of China. Although it grows well here in North Texas in the summer, it must be taken inside during our cold winter months. It does well in a shallow container pot and since it grows in river valleys it likes to have moist soil.

Among Chinese herbalists Gotu Kola has a reputation of being a longevity herb and a brain tonic. It's considered to have a balancing affect between the right and left hemispheres of the brain and improves memory and learning. This is its 'nervine effect,' and it has even been used to treat schizophrenia and neurosis. French Biochemist Jules Lepine and Professor Menier at the Academie Schientifique have done studies on it's neurological affects and have verified this herb's nervine effects. It is also considered to have healing properties for the skin and connective tissues which has been attributed to the triterpenes that accelerate cellular repair. In India it's used in Auyurvedic treatments for skin diseases including psoriasis. I enjoy having tea made from fresh herbs from my yard and include Gotu Kola along with Basil for a refreshing afternoon beverage.

The Ladybug's Calendar

Tuesday, July 27, 7 pm – Organic Garden Club of Ft. Worth at Botanic Garden (www.organicgardenclubfw.org)

Thursday, July 29 – AOGC Meeting 7 pm; also BRIT: Dr. Tony Burgess, *Lessons Learned from Biosphere 2*, 12-1 PM at the BRIT Learning Center (www.brit.org)

Thursday, August 5, 7 pm – Native Plant Society of Texas at Botanic Garden (www.txnativeplants.org)

Saturday, August 7 – AOGC planting flowers at Broadway Plaza

Tuesday, August 24, 7 p.m. – Organic Garden Club of Ft. Worth: *Soil Amendments Promote Vegetable Growth* with Malcolm Beck, Founder of Garden-Ville at Botanic Garden

Thursday, August 26, 7 pm – Dallas Organic Garden Club: *Earth Kind Roses* by Cynthia McKenney of A&M at King of Glory Lutheran Church (www.dogc.org)

Denton Organic Society on summer break July-August: Howard Garrett will speak Sept. 15

2004 Natural Urban Living Garden Show

Thank You Thank You Thank You Thank You Thank You



The Arlington Organic Garden Club wishes to thank the following for their generous participation and contributions to a successful 2004 Natural Urban Living Garden Show.

Club Members & Individuals:

Special thanks:

... to David Barnett for his leadership and organization. He was responsible for filling the main hall with vendors, pursuing raffle prizes, and putting together the plant sale. We really appreciate all his hunting, trading, haggling, brow-beating, bargaining, sweet-talking, baking cookies, transplanting, and watering to ensure that we had a plentiful supply of great-looking plants!

... to Esther Chambliss for her creativity and hard work to make this show a success. She set up the hospitality room, created games and activities for the children, beautifully decorated the Kid's & Family Room, and organized volunteers and displays for the room: her creativity and original ideas have been invaluable to our show!

... to Susan Horn for scheduling the speakers, organizing the non-profit room, and tending to club publicity!

... to Cheryn Barnett and Kim Lorenze for ensuring that our vendors and volunteers were well-fed and had a place to rest. They ran the hospitality room all day, and cleaned it all up at the end!

Thanks to all those who helped the day of the show: Terry Leo, Penny Coder, Hester Schwarze, Jennifer Lucas, Ricki Malott, Dan Anderson, Judith Edwards, Jeanne Browning, Patty Royal, Bob Ressler, Donna Ressler, Pete Glaser, Bernetta Glaser, Elaine Couch, Diane Feldman, Bev Elbert, Vicki Brady, Jack Lavender, Jana Norris, Dale Denton, and Robbie Pritchard!

Thanks to our speakers, Howard Garrett, John Dromgoole, and Jay Mertz! A big thank you goes to Bob and the rest of the crew at the Bob Duncan Community Center for all their hard work with setup, tear-down, and assistance during the show! Thanks to Dolan Stidom from Star Telegram for donating bags for carrying literature, and to Amanda Rogers from the Star Telegram for mentioning our show in her article covering the Children's Garden!

Vendors:

We appreciate your support of our show, and the raffle prizes you so generously donated!

Better Health Market, Burgundy Beef, Diane Flynn (art glass), The Dust Jacket, Erath Earth, Green Mountain Energy, Harvest House, Harvest Supply Company, Hill City Nursery, Homegrown, Juice Plus, Ladies of the Garden, Lady Bug Brand, Maestro-Gro, Marshall Grain Company, Mary's Bee Garden, Paradise Valley Natural Skin Care Co., Rabbit Hill Farm, Redenta's Garden, Russell Feed Inc., Soap by Star, Southern Quality Pest Control, Stephanie Safran (misters and pillows), Susan's Soaps & More, Texas TKO, and Truth Hill Farm.

We also have a number of vendors to thank who could not participate in person, but donated products for our raffle, literature for our information tables, or other supplies we needed for the show:

Ball Publishing, Rodale Publishing, Texas Gardener Magazine, The Home Gardener, Yucca Do Nursery, Homegrown Magazine, Native American Seed Co., Upbeet Gardener, Master Composters (pencils & coloring books), Hulen Wild Bird Center, Lowes (shopping carts), Black Kow, WBAP, Mary Jane Magazine, and to all the businesses that put up posters & distributed flyers.

Non-profits:

Thanks to the non-profit groups who shared their knowledge and manned tables at the show:

Dallas Fort Worth Vegetarian Society/Green Singles, Arlington Conservation Council, Cowtown Gourd Patch, Organic Garden Club of Fort Worth, Dallas Area Historical Rose Society, Iris Society, DFW Native Plant Societies, and Domestic Heritage Arts.

2004 Natural Urban Living Garden Show



Birds-eye view of vendor displays in the main auditorium



Terry Leo and Esther Chambliss preparing activities for the Kids' & Family Room



Susan Horn (left) stops for a bite to eat and a chat with another volunteer.



The Cowtown Gourd Patch had a great time at the show. Joe (left) and Robbie (right) Pritchard are also AOGC members.



Overlooking the plant sale



Angie Brown at the welcome table



Patsy Rosen manned a table for the Ft. Worth Iris Society

**perennials
herbs
old fashioned annuals
old garden roses
native shrubs and trees
organics
gardenware
design
installation**

arlington 817. 451. 2149
colleyville 817. 488. 3525
dallas 214. 823. 9421
cedar hill 972. 291. 7650

r redenta's
garden shops
www.redentas.com

Organic Tomatoes

A recent study in the proceedings of the National Academy of Science has concluded that tomatoes grown with organic and natural fertilizers live longer and are more disease-resistant than those raised on chemicals. Of course, we're not surprised!

source: Ft. Worth Star-Telegram, 7/6/2004

Mosquito-Killing Birdbath

A man in Arlington, VA has patented a design for a bird bath that kills mosquitoes. Donald Hall, a retired electromechanical engineer, has designed a birdbath that provides an attractive place for mosquitoes to lay their eggs. Every few days a computer chip that runs on batteries, solar power, or electricity, activates a pump that flushes the water out, pushing it through a fine-mesh filter, crushing the mosquito eggs.

Another of Mr. Hall's inventions is a shallow tray powered by a bimetal coil (similar to a thermostat). A fine mesh is located at the bottom of the tray, and as the air warms up during the day, the two metals expand at different rates, pushing the mesh above the water line. The eggs dry out and die from baking in the sun all day. In the evening when the coil cools back down, the mesh is pulled back into the dish.

So far, neither of these mosquito traps is on the market.

source: New York Times, 7/5/2004



Join . . .
the Dirt Doctor's Ground Crew and receive 12 issues of the Dirt Doctor's Dirt as well as a membership card that can be used for discounts at organic suppliers.

Sign up on www.dirtdoctor.com
or call 866.444.DIRT.

Fire Ant Control Testers Needed

The Board has been contacted by a gentleman from Weatherford who has just patented a new fire ant control product made without toxic chemicals – main ingredients are water, soap, molasses, and soybean oil. He is looking for people with a fire ant problem (at least 10 hills) who are willing to test the product.

If you are interested in testing the product please contact R. E. Driscoll, Sr. at Phone/Fax 817-596-8259.



As always, the table for Redenta's Garden was colorfully and beautifully decorated!



John Dromgoole (left) and Howard Garrett (right) were two of our featured speakers at the show

Water Rights *Susan Horn*



Jay Mertz was our first speaker of the day. If you did not get to talk to him at the show, don't miss our October potluck: Jay will be our special guest.

The determination of 'whose water is it' continues to grow worldwide. Over one billion people worldwide lack safe drinking water and 31 countries are facing massive water scarcity issues. There are always two sides to every issue and since water is necessary for life to exist, it is a matter of public policy – a policy that needs to be thoroughly explored and a determination made that is in the interest of the public. The debate continues over the benefits and detriments to selling water rights to private companies.

This issue affects West Texas with the Land Commissioner proposing selling the water rights under 5 counties without studying the impact on the local farmers, wildlife nor the volume of available water. PBS' POV (Point of View) had a show last week on this privatization of water. A website with articles on this matter of water privatization is Public Citizen, a nonprofit organization that investigates various issues affecting the general public: A direct URL to one of their articles is <http://www.citizen.org/cmep/Water/articles.cfm?ID=10842>. This article talks about the multinational conglomerates lobbying to lower water quality standards in world governments and the bid to control the world's water supplies.

The 2 largest multinational companies that have been buying public water rights around the world are the French company Vivendi and a German energy conglomerate RWE. Vivendi is ranked 51st and RWE ranked 53rd among Fortune's Global 500 List. With these two companies controlling nearly 40 percent of the existing water market share, the potential to manipulate the price and quality of water needs to be questioned. Another French company, Suez, is ranked 99th on the Fortune 500 list and continues to pursue water rights. The push to make water a tradeable commodity, which means that the price may fluctuate depending on the moods of investors and not necessarily on supply and demand, continues to grow. And the concerns for Enron-like behavior grows as a definite possibility.

The question for all of us: to ask ourselves is do we want to lose control of this precious commodity, our Blue Gold?

Susan's Peanut Sauce Recipe

1/4 c smooth Peanut Butter
3 T Soy Sauce or Tamari (wheat free)
2T Rice Vinegar (non-spiced, brown or white)
1 T Water
1 T Sesame Oil (dark)
2 tsp Sugar
2 tsp Chili Oil (or to taste as it's hot)

Let sit until peanut butter softens and mix until smooth.
Use as a dipping sauce, as a satay sauce, or on Thai noodles.
I use organic cane sugar and tamari in the sauce that I make.



OAK RAIN BARRELS



These wonderful Oak Rain Barrels add old world charm to your garden and catch 50 gallons of rain water. Our Rain Barrels come with a faucet that a 2 gallon watering can or bucket will slide under and a hose attachment that a soaker hose can be attached to. The top of each barrel has been drilled and fitted with a 10" catch that is lined with screen for mosquito control.

Your plants will love the nitrogen filled rain water that you collect. Food crops especially benefit from rain water.

Our rain barrels are \$140.00

Delivery is free in the following areas:
(Arlington, Ft. Worth, Grand Prairie and others)
Check with Lucy

To order contact Lucy at 817-572-0148
or e-mail: lucygeorge5208@sbcglobal.net
Barrels may also be purchased at GREEN MAMA'S
817-514-7336



Sources:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG6551.html>

http://www.dirtdoctor.com/view_question.php?id=4

http://www.ci.arlington.tx.us/publicworks/env_grdn_fertilizers.html

During the hot summer months, many of our waterways have an excessive growth of algae, triggered by runoff from over-fertilizing turf grass. When algae grow quickly, they can cause lakes, ponds, and rivers to turn green, brown or black in color, have an unpleasant odor, and become a nuisance. In extreme cases, excessive algae growth may contribute to the death of fish and other aquatic organisms.

Algae are aquatic plants that naturally occur in ponds or slowly moving water. Blooms, excessive numbers of algae, occur when a high amount of fertilizer is added to the aquatic system. This extra amount of nutrient causes the algae to undergo a "population explosion."

The extra nutrients are typically introduced by overly or improperly applying lawn fertilizers. Rainfall runoff and irrigation water can move the fertilizer and other organic wastes into our creeks and ponds which provides nutrients for the algae. Even organic material such as manures, composts, various natural fertilizers, grass clippings, or tree leaves can wash off and provide nutrients for algae.

Phosphorus, a component of fertilizer (the middle number in an N-P-K rating), is believed to be one of the prime causes of algae blooms. Usually, lawns with sandy loam soil require a small amount of phosphorus. Black clay soils usually do not need any phosphorus.

What to do?

Have your soil tested, and only apply phosphorus if a deficiency is found.

Use organic soil amendments, which build the health of the soil and reduce the need for more frequent applications.

Do not apply fertilizers or pesticides when heavy rain is predicted. Water your lawn after application to move the product into the soil.

Sweep up any excess fertilizer that falls on sidewalks and streets and place it on the lawn.

Do not rake or blow leaves and grass clippings into the street where they can get washed down the storm sewer and into surface water. Leave your grass clippings on the lawn, or compost them along with your leaves.

If you live near a lake, river, or stream leave a buffer zone of natural vegetation growing around the shoreline. This can help prevent soil erosion and may retain some of the nutrients that might otherwise enter the water.

If you have a small private pond or lake, you may want to consider an aeration system to help combat the algae problem. If you find algae in your pond, apply cornmeal at a rate of 150 pounds per acre of water, or for home ponds, about a pound per 100 square feet. Mix the cornmeal into the water; don't just apply to the top.

address correction requested



Next meeting. . .

Thursday, July 29

7:00 pm refreshments, meeting starts at 7:30

Speaker: Gary Gene Olp, GGO Architects

“Green Building”

Club Information

Membership dues: \$20/year (individual or family) – membership year begins in January.

Join/renew at any meeting, or send check to return address above.

Meetings are last Thursday of the month (January – October, except June garden show on third Saturday)

- Doors open at 7 pm for refreshments, meeting begins at 7:30 pm
- Open to the public unless meeting is designated “members only”
- Awesome prizes are raffled off at each meeting!
- Meeting Location: The Garden Room, Bob Duncan Community Center, 2800 South Center Street (Vandergriff Park)

If you would like to serve on the AOGC board, please contact any of the current board members, or send email to board@aogc.org

Newsletter deadline: Third Thursday of each month

Please send newsletter submissions to Angie Brown, angie@aogc.org (include “Newsletter Submission” in the subject line, please), (817) 795-3300.

Want the newsletter but live too far away to go to meetings? Subscribe to the newsletter for \$10/year (to cover printing and postage). Send a note to us (see return address) along with payment and the newsletters will keep coming.

When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.

- John Muir, Naturalist -

