
The Garden Scoop

La-Terre Chapter

Master Gardener Newsletter

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Fall 2006



Bloom Where You are Planted ...

Walking through my garden gives me the peace of mind to answer many of life's questions. I know you have asked yourself this question, "How did I arrive at this point in my life?" This question has led me to think about how and why I became involved with the master gardener program and the president of La-Terre Master Gardeners. As I walk through my garden, checking on each and every plant, there stands, for the third year, my brave little periwinkle growing in a crack of the sidewalk. Last year she shared her spot with a French marigold, this year she has a little asparagus fern accompanying her, and some babies in the crack next to hers. I enjoy these volunteers and allow them to "bloom where they are planted". WOW! This is the answer to my question. Our volunteers! You are from many walks of life and are blooming where you were planted. You have shared the goals of the master gardener program and have been invaluable in obtaining these goals. You are sharing the skills and knowledge that you have acquired through your life's walks. You are enthusiastically spreading horticultural knowledge throughout our community, while continuing to enhance your own knowledge of horticulture. You are

"blooming where you are planted"! You are my incentive.

How will we continue to share our knowledge and talents with the community in this new club year? We need to increase the development of member presentations. Each and every member has at least one area of horticulture that he/she especially enjoys. What is yours? I'm sure other members may share that interest with you. We are not expected to be experts in all areas of horticulture. We do have the ability to research and increase our knowledge and share with others. Let's make an effort to get together with one another in the preparation and presentation of an educational program for the general public. One of you may have an extensive knowledge of that subject, experience, speaking to a group comfortably, and computer and/or artistic skills forming a great team to share your knowledge with the public. Would you please give it a try this year? You will have numerous members to assist you.

We must also make an effort to know one another on a

personal basis. How do we do that? Participating in work days at the Folk Life & Cultural Center, Habitat for Humanity Landscaping, Mentoring, the iris garden at the Tourist Center, involvement with the planning and production of the Bonne Terre Garden Fair, Tomato Field Day, and the Golf Tournament, etc. will give you the opportunity to get to know members on a personal level. It is through these activities that you'll find the person(s) who shares your specific horticultural interests.

Let's work together this year to improve dissemination of horticultural knowledge to the public and increase the public's recognition of master gardeners as leaders in community horticultural improvements.

Bloom where you are planted!

**Raymonda Guidroz,
President**



My Neighbor's Garden...

Fall is in the air and it actually feels like it! We finally have reached a time when we can work outside and enjoy it. The 2006 La-Terre Chapter of the Louisiana Master Gardener program graduated on October 2nd at the home of Aline Barr of Thibodaux. Thirteen master gardeners in training were recognized for fulfilling the requirements of the Louisiana Master Gardener program and have twelve months to complete their initial 40 hours of approved volunteer service to the LSU AgCenter.

Graduates are:

Gregory Adams, Lafourche
Aline Barr, Lafourche
Angele Soignier-Coffman, Lafourche
Donovan Forte, Assumption
Faye Guidroz, Lafourche
Ruthie Hassell, Lafourche
Julie Jemison, Lafourche
Jeanne LeBlanc, Lafourche
Marianne Matherne, Terrebonne
Wendy Ordoyne, Terrebonne
Nell Page, Terrebonne
Gloria Spence, Terrebonne
Earline Theriot, Lafourche

Congratulations to these graduates! Their class project will be helping plan, implement, and evaluate the 2007 Bonne Terre Garden Fair.

The third annual "LSU AgCenter Classic" golf tournament was held Friday, November 17th with an 8:00 am tee time at Sugarland Country Club in Raceland. This fund raiser was held on collaboration with the Lafourche 4-H Junior Leader program as they share ½ of the net proceeds for scholarships. We will use the remaining proceeds to support consumer horticultural outreach programming by the La-Terre Master Gardener program in support of the LSU AgCenter. The tournament was a great success thanks to the large group of MGs

who volunteered their time and talents to make contacts for golf teams, got tee box sponsorships or other financial support, and helped the day of the tournament. Everyone had fun and the weather was perfect! Thanks again, MGs!



The 2006 citrus season began in early October so be prepared to find high quality Louisiana citrus available in retail grocery stores, farmer's markets and roadside stands. Satsumas will start coming in first followed by navel oranges about Thanksgiving through January. Make sure the products are marked as "Louisiana grown."

Several Master Gardener volunteers recently initiated a fall clean-up and planting of fall bedding plants at the Terrebonne Folk-life and Culture Center in downtown Houma. I was there and noticed several passers by making positive comments to the volunteers cleaning up and planting new annuals.

Cheryl Skinner has been doing a lot of work on the La-Terre Master Gardener website. I encourage you to check out her efforts and look around the entire site while you are there. You may even find something beneficial outside the realm of horticulture! The link below will direct you:

www.lsuagcenter.com/la-terre

"You can bury a lot of troubles digging in the dirt." Author Unknown

...Bobby Fletcher, Jr.





**The Garden Scoop
Guest Garden Expert:
Robert J. Souvestre**



Many of us realize that we can no longer garden like we used to. As our gardens mature, so do we, and what used to be an easy gardening task now takes more time and effort. Gardening is a wonderful activity that provides healthful exercise and a sense of well being. Achieve the most from your gardening experiences by adopting some established and new practices.

Avoid the heat by working outdoors in early morning and late afternoon hours. Wear sunscreen with an SPF 30 or greater and keep hydrated by drinking cool water before you become overly thirsty, particularly if you perspire heavily. Wear protective clothing and a hat that protects face, eyes, ears, and neck. There are some new fabrics on the market that offer SPF protection and that repel insects. And don't forget to always take time to rest.

Before heading to the garden, perform 5 minutes of simple stretches. This will increase blood circulation and reduce muscle stress and injury. Ask your physician which stretches are best for you. Lift correctly – don't bend your back, bend your knees. And carry smaller loads or better yet, use a wagon, cart or 3- or 4-wheeled wheelbarrow. Wearing a pair of gloves will protect your hands from soil stains, scratches, blisters and possibly a pruning cut. Kneepads, either the kind you strap on each knee or the type you kneel on will really greatly improve how you feel once the day is over, and

the following day, especially if arthritis is a problem.

Use an extension pole for cutting small branches rather than climbing a ladder. Falls are dangerous! Sharpen all tools, those with cutting blades and shovel blades. Select the proper tool for the job and maintain it by keeping it clean and lubricated. Ergonomic tools allow you to accomplish the same job with less effort, meaning reduced body strain and fatigue. Some tools are specially shaped while others use a snap-on handle. Simple things like using a water wand to reach hanging baskets and out-of-reach plants will make the task easier and more enjoyable. And switching your mower making it recycle grass clippings will totally eliminate the need to stop and empty heavy mower catch bags.

It may be time to rethink your total outdoor environment. Maybe eliminating some flower beds or lawn area and allowing groundcover to grow will help simplify your life. Making a raised bed to reduce bending or to accommodate a wheelchair may be considered. Growing in containers virtually eliminates weeds and concentrates color, herbs and vegetables into a small area.

...Robert J. Souvestre



Instructor, Department of Horticulture

Specialist, LSU Ag Center

State Master Gardener Coordinator





Questions for Lulu the Ladybug...

A friend gave me some snowflake bulbs last year, and I planted them in a raised flower bed. They are coming up this year in clumps. If I want to move them and divide the clumps, when is the best time?

You are in luck. These passalong plants are easy to grow and pest free. As long as they get four to six hours of sun, well drained soil, and a general purpose fertilizer, they are happy. Wait for a few years to divide and dig your snowflakes. They usually need separating every three to five years. You should have clumps of these lovely spring-flowering bulbs for years to come.

Source: "Louisiana Gardener's Guide", D. Gill and J. White.

I have a French mulberry bush that is full of gorgeous purple berries this fall. How do I harvest the berries: are the seeds viable; and when can I plant them?

You can harvest the seeds when they begin to wither and turn a purple brown on the shrub usually in October-November. Birds like the seeds so they may get to them first! Yes, the seeds are viable. There are no special planting requirements to get the seeds to sprout, so go ahead and give it a try this year. It is best to sow seeds as soon as possible after harvesting. You will need to protect the young seedling through the coldest part of the winter. If you don't want to sow seeds, try taking root cuttings or layering a lower branch in the late summer. These shrubs make great gifts for your neighbors and gardening friends.

Source: "Passalong Plants", Allen Lacy.

I love fresh asparagus. Can I grow asparagus successfully in south Louisiana?

Yes, you can grow asparagus here. However you will have to have a lot of patience. If you want to start asparagus from seed, you will not be able to harvest the young spears for three growing seasons at a minimum. You can order 1-2 year old plants from nurseries around the country to shorten the time to harvest. Young plants should be planted in a good garden soil, pH 6.5- 8.0, in a trench 6-8 inches deep. As the plants grow, fill in the trench. The best planting time is March/April. Check out a source for plants from your catalogues now. Fresh asparagus is well worth the wait! Try roasted asparagus for a real treat.

Source: "Home Gardener's Problem Solver", Ortho Books.

....Shep Templet



Bobby Fletcher presents plaques to Buster Lagarde from Thibodaux, left, for the "longest drive contest" and Jay Rutter, Thibodaux, right, for his win in "the closest to the hole contest" at the Third Annual LSU AgCenter Classic Golf Tournament.



From a Gardener's Kitchen...

Cranberry Salsa

Ingredients:

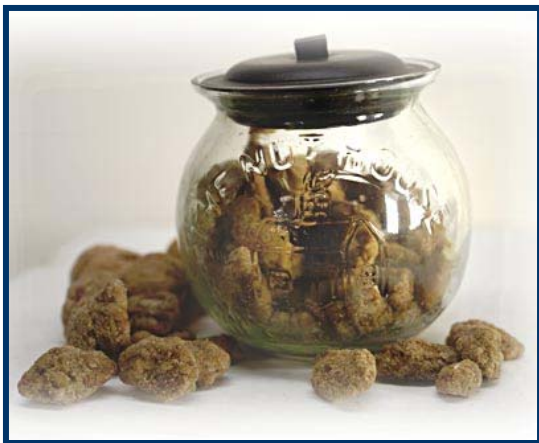
3 c. frozen cranberries
½ c honey
2T lime juice [freshly squeezed]
½ c purple onion [coarsely chopped]
2 jalapeno peppers [seeded and coarsely chopped]
½ c dried apricots [chopped]
½ c cilantro leaves
2 large oranges [peeled, seeded, and coarsely chopped]

Directions:

Using a food processor add frozen cranberries, honey, lime juice, onion, peppers, apricots, cilantro, and oranges. Pulse until chopped, stopping once to scrape down the sides. Do not over process. Use more honey if you prefer a sweeter taste. Transfer the cranberry mixture to a serving bowl. Chill several hours before serving.

This is a great holiday gift to make and give....delicious with turkey or ham. Place the salsa in decorative jars, label, and add a festive tag and ribbon. Instant gifting!

...Carol Naquin [Source: Culinary Secrets]



Pecans On Fire

Ingredients:

1 Tbs. salt
1 Tbs. freshly ground black pepper
2 tsp. cayenne pepper
2 Tbs. Hungarian paprika
1 lb. mammoth pecan halves
1-2 c confectioners' sugar
2 qts. canola oil

Directions:

Mix first four ingredients and set aside. Blanch pecans in boiling water for 5 minutes and drain well. Coat hot pecans with confectioners' sugar. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium high heat (about 350 degrees). Add pecans and fry until golden brown--about 4-5 minutes. With a slotted spoon transfer pecans to a tray and sprinkle pecans with pepper mixture. The more seasoning used, the hotter the "fire." Let cool and store in an airtight jar. Great for gift giving!

... Mary Delaune [Source: Angele Parlange]





Garden Tip: When it is time to clean your aquarium or pond, use the pond water for your thirsty plants. This recycles the water that is full of luscious nutrients.

...Donna Bucci

Flower Power..... Blue Sky Vine



Thunbergia grandiflora

Pronunciation: thun-BER-jee-uh gran-dih-FLOR-uh

Family: Acanthaceae

Other names: Bengal Clock Vine, Clock Vine, Indian Sky Vine, Blue Skyflower, Blue Sky Vine

Sky vine is an appropriate name for this vigorous vine, for it will climb to the top of its supporting structure in no time at all. Its fast-growing habit makes it a natural to cover an arbor, trellis, or fence. From August until freezing weather, clusters of three-inch-long, bell-like flowers hang in glorious profusion. Everyone who sees it, wants one, and no wonder, the vine is quite a sight, clad attractively with blue trumpet flowers, shown to greatest advantage against broad, dark green, heart-shaped leaves.

In areas with no frost or freezing weather, sky vine is evergreen, but frost kills the green above-ground portions back to the ground. If it freezes, it will sprout back in spring, spend most of the summer growing to blooming size, and puts on a spectacular show in early fall until the first frost. Sky vine is root hardy to below 20 degrees F, but the stems will freeze back when temperatures reach around 25 degrees.

Sky vine appreciates some protection from direct afternoon sun, so site accordingly. Provide with a sturdy trellis or other support. Upkeep is minimal. Some pruning may be required to keep the vigorous vine in bounds. Dead vines should be cut back after the first freeze. Mulch with pine needles or other organic material to protect the roots during the winter.

Propagation is easy. Cuttings taken in warm weather root readily. Layering is easily accomplished, for stems root when they come in contact with the soil. Root cuttings may be made from the tuberous roots.

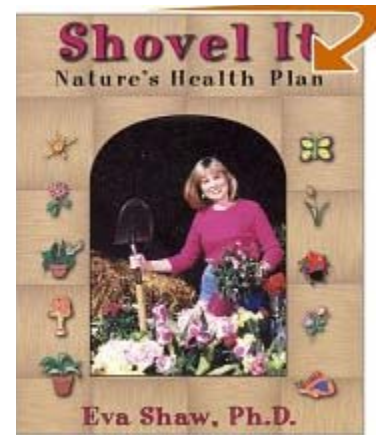
Flowers of *Thunbergia grandiflora* may be sky blue to light violet. A white-flowered type is available, as well. *Zones:* 8-11

...Shirley Huggins



From the Bookworm...

Shovel It, Nature's Health Plan (Writeriffic, 2001) by Eva Shaw, Ph. D.



My interest was piqued after hearing several positive reviews of Dr. Shaw who was a speaker in April at our Louisiana Master Gardener convention. After reading the book I was somewhat surprised to learn that it is primarily geared toward non-gardeners who should be gardening for the sake of their health and longevity. The premise of the book is simplistic: gardening is therapy; it can improve and strengthen the gardener's physical and mental health and also bestow peace and happiness. According to Shaw, studies were done on gardeners and the results revealed that the brain waves of people who were in the process of gardening were equal to the brain waves of those who meditate. Gardening relaxes your body, reduces stress and provides physical exercise to raise the heart rate, all of which positively affect the health of the gardener.

Those who already have discovered a love of gardening will enjoy this book due to the many interesting tidbits of information included in the book. Shaw gives a recipe for organic pest control to combat aphids and powdery mildew on ornamentals. The book also contains useful tips to make gardening chores easier. For example, in a very large (and potentially heavy) plant container place Styrofoam popcorn at the bottom, layer lightly with gravel and then place potting soil on top. This will save you from a sore back when you need to move the pot for winterizing! The discussion on creating themed gardens as well as *feng shui* and Zen gardens was very informative and thought-provoking.

Hint: This book may be the perfect Christmas gift for a friend or family member who is not yet a gardener and may be experiencing health issues or living a stressed-out life!

...Carol Naquin



Garden Tip: Everyone loves pansies! They are colorful in our gardens- especially the "Crown" variety and others that do not have a dark center. Grouped in like colors, they create nice focal points. They are darling floated in a bowl or placed in a short vase. They are also perfect for pressed flower projects and hold their color very well. ...Donna Bucci

Herbs for the Season...Stevia: Nature's Perfect Sweetener

Stevia rebaudian), also known as the "sweet herb of Paraguay" or "Sugar Leaf" is a product from the daisy family. It is the world's only sweetener with zero calories, zero carbohydrates and a zero glycemic index. These attributes make stevia a good alternative to sugar or chemical sweeteners. Its leaves contain compounds called glycosides, which are 200 to 300 times sweeter than sugar. In its unprocessed form, stevia is highly nutritious, containing magnesium, niacin, zinc, calcium, potassium and vitamins A and C. Under medicinal use, its listed as a plaque retardant and tooth decay inhibitor. Stevia can be used fresh,

dried, powdered or in liquid form to sweeten a variety of foods and beverages.

Stevia is a slightly woody plant, with toothed leaves and white flowers. I have grown this plant in my herb garden here and in Texas, where I first learned about stevia. I have purchased the plant locally, at Cleggs nursery in Baton Rouge, and I have found seed packets at Wal Mart. If you would like more info on this neat plant, you can go to www.steviainfo.com

...Harriett Green





Amis de Jardin "Garden Friends" La-Terre Master Gardeners Lois and Rudy Davis

The freshwater bayous and the call of the Gulf of Mexico lured Lois and Rudy to Houma in 2003, after their retirement. Both avid fishermen, they made their home on the bank of Bayou Terrebonne. When they aren't fishing, gardening, or reading, they immerse themselves in civic activities.

Lois and Rudy came together as they neared retirement when a friend introduced them and they began a long-

distance courtship. Lois, a Tennessee native, is a retired psychologist. She worked at Fisk University and Meharry Medical College before her retirement. Rudy has Louisiana roots having served as high school band director at Acadiana High School in Lafayette and Central Memorial High School in Natchitoches. After over a year of courtship, they married and lived briefly in Tennessee before moving to Houma.

Lois has a daughter and three grandchildren in Tennessee and Rudy has two sons. Rudy's eyes sparkled as he spoke of his sons, Gregory, who is the director of the Cajun Dome and Rudolph Davis who is chief security officer at a hospital in Georgia. The baby of the family might be considered the oldest in dog years. Basso, their seventeen-year-old golden retriever, politely comes in and out of the house by invitation only and wags his tail like a puppy at the sight of Rudy.

Their decision to move to Houma for the fishing proved to be a record breaker for Lois when she landed a forty-two pound catfish while fishing from the bayou bank behind her house. When asked if they had the fish mounted Rudy chuckled, "Naw, I let him go so he could make more catfish." If they aren't catching in their back yard, they can often be found with a line in the water in Montegut, Dularge, or Pointe-Aux-Chenes. Lois also enjoys cooking and shared her tip for the best, fried fish ever. "Keep it simple."

Seasoned Filets

1. Cut thin filets (trout or reds)
2. Season as you like (salt, pepper, etc.)
3. Shake in a bag of flour
4. Pan fry in butter until golden brown

Though they both love to fish, their appetite for devouring good books rivals their love of fishing. Rudy has been a Civil War buff since his college days and has been to reenactments in Mississippi, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. He also likes to study politics. *Plan of Attack* by Bob Woodward is his most recent read, but *My American Journey* by Colin Powell is his favorite book. Lois's current read is *Let There Be Light* by Rocco Errico and her favorite book is *Discover the Power Within You* by Eric Butterworth.

Rudy and Lois make time to serve their community too. Lois is a CASA volunteer and belongs to PEP, People Empowering People, which is a new organization that initiated a program to tutor non-certified teachers in our area for the PRAXIS, (certification exam). Rudy can play any musical instrument and devotes his talents to the Houma Community band. Each participates generously in the La Terre Master Gardeners program.

Somehow, with all their interests and activities they make time to garden and do they ever. Over twenty different kinds of vegetables were growing in their neatly kept garden divided into tidy wooden boxes in a style called square foot gardening. A wide variety of flowers climbed, trailed, and stood about the house as well. Many of the plants were grown from seed, and some were "passed along" to them by friends and fellow gardeners. Lois was genetically prone to gardening, because her father was an extension agent. She began planting at the tender age of eight. Her first crop was popcorn and she's been hooked ever since. Rudy's interest sprouted about twenty-five years ago when some of his friends inspired him to garden. He described gardening as "a wonderful pastime and therapy." It was only natural for them to join La Terre Master Gardeners. Lois said, "Gardeners have something special about them. The way they love plants shows through in how they live life." Rudy leaned forward a bit and added, "Yes. Master Gardeners are different from other groups and our leader Bobby is a wonderful person."

Rudy and Lois treat everyone they meet kindly but seem to have warmth and respect for each other too. When asked if either had a hidden talent Rudy said, "She has a beautiful voice." Lois said, "Rudy has a way with flowers. He can arrange them beautifully and naturally. And he can fix anything."

As Lois said, "Gardeners have something special." And so are Lois and Rudy.

Lagniappe: When asked what Rudy would be if he could be a plant, he said, "A tomato because it's the most popular vegetable, nutritious, and easy to grow." Lois said, "A rose because it's serene. I like the way its beauty unfolds."

...Pamela Kopfler





Garden Tip: Last year, our abundant satsuma crop left us with many small ones on the tree. Instead of letting them dry up on the tree, I cut them in half and put them on flat surfaces in my garden. The birds, bees and butterflies loved them! Try this treat this winter if you have extra satsumas to spare!

...Donna Bucci

La-Terre Master Gardeners Activities: December, 2006/January, 2007

- Dec. 9, 2006 Holiday Open House and Book Signing with authors B. Fontenot, D. Gill, and C. T. Haar, Hilltop Arboretum, (255-767-6916).
- Dec. 14, 2006 Through the Garden Gate--Soil pH: What Do I Add?", Allen Owings, Professor, LSU Department of Horticulture, Ione Burden Conference Center, noon registration.
- Dec. 21, 2006 Through the Garden Gate -- "Soil pH: Adding Lime & Sulfur", Allen Owings, Professor, LSU Department of Horticulture, Ione Burden Conference Center, noon registration.
- Jan. 13, 2007 "Planning a Year-Round Vegetable Garden", Drs. T. Koske and J. Cannon, Professors of Horticulture, LSU, Hilltop Arboretum, (255-767-6916).
- Jan. 18, 2007 Through the Garden Gate—"Keeping Garden Records to Improve Performance", D. Gill, LSU Department of Horticulture, Ione Burden Conference Center, noon registration.
- Jan. 27, 2007 Hilltop Arboretum 2007 Symposium: "Garden Gems and Intimate Spaces", Contact Hilltop Arboretum, (225-767-6916).

...Judy Soignier



Habitat For Humanity Update:

This year in Bayou Blue we landscaped 11 houses. The remaining houses have been or will be landscaped by Oprah's organization. There are 3 houses in Houma under construction. Two are on Levron St and the other is on Silver City. It will be about 3 months before they are completed.

There are two houses under construction in Thibodaux. They are at least two months away from completion. A new subdivision

will be built in Larose. Habitat will build 26 houses there. They expect to start construction in several weeks.

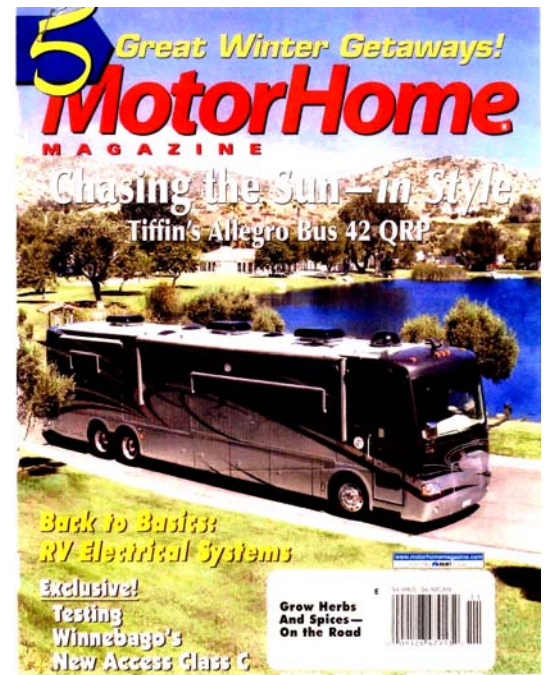
So it looks like we will have a break for a couple of months until the next house is completed.

... Glen Jordan



Michael Richard of Chackbay Nursery spoke to the La-Terre MG Group during a Landscape Seminar held at the Houma Public Library.

Our own MG, Brenda Aucoin, has article, *Spice It Up*, about her herb growing published in MotorHome Magazine



MG Brenda Aucoin and her husband John travel around the country a lot in their motor home. While on an RV Rally in Arkansas she was interviewed about growing herbs in her RV by a writer for the national magazine MotorHome.

Brenda is definitely a true gardener both at home and on the road. She and her husband enjoy the taste and flavor that fresh herbs give to eggs, meats, and seafood. She is never far away from a pot of basil, thyme, parsley, or chives.

"When we travel in our motor home," Brenda said, "I take a pot of herbs with me so I can have them at my fingertips. I love to snip a little fresh basil, thyme, or parsley and add it to eggs—maybe throw on a bit of rosemary for garnish." From her big iron sugarcane kettle herb garden in Napoleonville she transplants herbs into containers for the motor home. She sits her herb pots in the sink when John cranks up the engine of their RV for their next travel adventure. Brenda recommends that you water your plants

by putting the herbs in the shower and giving them a good soaking spray. She places the pots in the front window of their 39 foot Fleetwood Discovery when she and John arrive at their destination. If they are going to be in one location for a few days Brenda puts the potted herbs outside for a breath of fresh air.

If you are in Arkansas visit the Ozark Folk Center's Heritage Herb Gardens in Mountain View, Arkansas. There you will find one of the most diverse organic herb gardens in the nation. The Resident Herbalist is Tina Marie Wilcox, currently president of the International Herb Association.

For more information about "growing herbs and spices on the road", check out the November, 2006, issue of MotorHome Magazine. Our own MG, Brenda Aucoin, is part of a national RV herb gardening trend.

...Shep Templet



Garden Tips: For those of us with smaller yards or only a few trees; dump your leaves into a trash can and use a weed whacker to shred them. Mulch your beds with the shredded leaves or add them to your compost pile. They decompose in no time!

...Donna Bucci



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MG Class of 2006

