



ST. TAMMANY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION  
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Website: [stmastergardener.org](http://stmastergardener.org)

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I must endure the presence of a few caterpillars  
if I wish to become acquainted with the butterflies.

The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

The Dog Days of  
Summer 2-3

Le Jardin Potager at the  
Lang House 4-5

Vegucator Notes  
Neem Oil 6-7

Vegucator Field  
Trips 8-12

STMGA Scholarship  
Recipients 13-14

Helianthus 15



Photo by J Blazek



Photo by J Blazek

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## The Dog Days of Summer

The heat and humidity this time of the year can leave you panting like a dog. Is that why they call it “the dog days of summer”? Not really! Traditionally the dog days of summer are from early July through mid-August. The ancient Romans thought the heat during this time was brought on by the appearance of Sirius, the Dog Star.



Image from Google search: [cityastronmer.com](http://cityastronmer.com)

Sirius is the largest and brightest star in the Canis Major (Latin for Big Dog) constellation. This time of the year Sirius can be seen rising in the sky with the morning sun. So the ancients believed this bright star contributed to the heat of the day. The Egyptians also believed Sirius was responsible for the extra heat of the day and that it brought on the annual flooding of the Nile which was so important for a good harvest. Throughout the ensuing centuries the phrase “dog days of summer” became associated with the blistering hot days of summer that can sometimes cause listlessness and stagnation. Just thinking about August in southeast Louisiana makes me want to find a swimming pool and a lemonade.

## The Dog Days of Summer, *continued*

Our plants can also get too much sun during the dog days of summer. Shade netting, such as tarps or tunnels, are available from several manufacturers. Drip irrigation and soaker hoses timed for early morning are efficient methods of delivering water to the parched plants. Biodegradable mulch can help retain moisture in plant beds.

According to the American Public Health Association, between 1999 and 2009, an average of 658 people died each year from excessive natural heat in the USA.

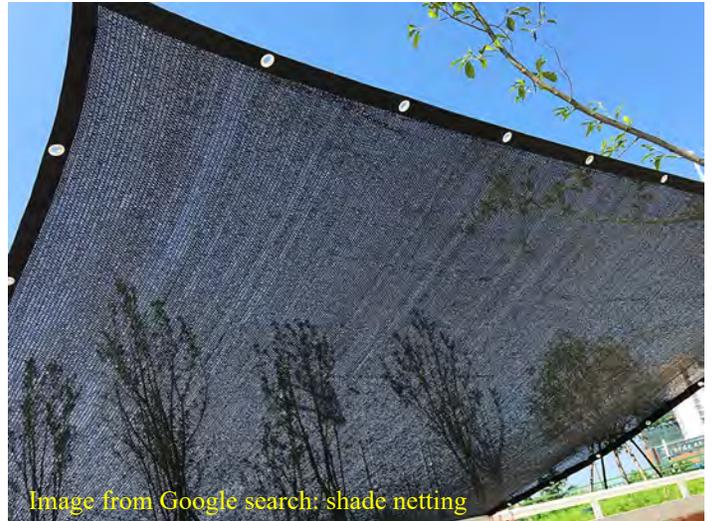


Image from Google search: shade netting

Schedule your gardening hours for early mornings. Work in the shade as much as possible. Drink lots of fluids while outside in the heat. Don't wait until you are thirsty: drink two to four glasses of cool (not cold) water an hour. Drinks with alcohol, caffeine and high sugar content can cause fluid loss and should be avoided during the heat of the day. Take frequent breaks in the shade or air-conditioning.



Photo by E Berzas

There are some modern inventions that can help us extend our hours in the garden during these dog days of summer. Using terms such as *neck coolers*, *neck ice wraps*, *neck cooling towels*, *cooling vest* or *ice vest* in your on-line search will help you find them.

But, really, the weeds will still be waiting for you tomorrow. Wouldn't you rather join me in the pool with a tall glass of lemonade.

Resources:

<https://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/articles/heat.html>

<https://www.apha.org>

<https://www.phrases.org.uk>

<https://idiomation.wordpress.com>

Jamie Blazek  
Master Gardener & Vegicator

## Le Jardin Potager at the Lang House in Mandeville



The Lang House Le Jardin Potager became a St Tammany Master Gardener Association project a year and a half ago. The garden's installation was reported in January 2018 issue of *The Gardengoer*. The John Baptiste Lang House Museum and Gardens are owned by the City of Mandeville and are a cooperative endeavor with the Old Mandeville Historic Association (OMHA). <https://www.oldmandevillehistoriccassociation.org/lang-house>

This jardin potager, French for vegetable garden, was carefully researched to represent the kitchen garden providing produce and flowers for the Lang household circa 1850.

On April 18, 2019, STMGA members and Lang House staff and volunteers gathered in the garden to do some spring cleaning. The garden beds were weeded and a yard of garden soil was added along with some fresh compost.



Le Jardin Potager at the Lang House in Mandeville, *continued*

Large rosemary plants were transferred to the center of the raised beds. Salvia, vinca, herbs, eggplant, and some peppers were added to the beds.



Will Afton, LSU AgCenter County Agent, joined the group of STMGA master gardeners to complete the work in preparation for the annual Mandeville Historic Association Mother’s Day Home Tour and summer museum program.



Peter Weaver  
Master Gardener  
Lang House Project Chair

# Vegucator Notes

## "Safe" Chemicals for Sustainable Gardening: Part Two

### Neem Oil



Mimi Padgett presented a lecture on safe chemicals for sustainable gardening to the Vegucators on March 27, 2019. This is part two of a series based on her lecture. Part one can be found in issue three.



Image from Garden Safe

Neem oil is a pesticide derived from the neem tree. The active ingredient in neem oil is azadirachtin which reduces insect feeding and acts as a repellent. It also interferes with insect hormonal systems making it harder for the insect to produce and lay eggs.

When used as directed, Neem oil can be safely applied to edible produce and leaves no dangerous residue in the soil. It effectively reduces or kills pests and prevents powdery mildew on plants.

Neem oil can be used as a foliar spray, an insecticide or a fungicide. It should be applied in indirect light at ambient temperatures below 85 degrees Fahrenheit. Before using neem oil, test a small area on the plant and wait 24 hours to see if there is any leaf damage. If no damage is observed the plant should not be harmed by neem oil and can be sprayed entirely.



Powdery mildew image from Garden.eco

## Vegucator Notes

### "Safe" Chemicals for Sustainable Gardening: Part Two

#### Neem Oil, *continued*



Is neem oil safe for bees and beneficial insects? Most studies show that, if used as directed, it will not harm medium and large beehives. It targets insects that chew on leaves leaving butterflies and ladybugs unharmed.



Neem oil can be slightly irritating to human eyes and skin. Azadirachtin can be very irritating to human skin and stomach. So it is important to wear gloves and protective clothing when spraying plants. And a good idea to always wash your hands well after applying any chemical or pesticide in the garden.

You can get more information and a fact sheet from the National Pesticide Information Center (a cooperative effort of Oregon State University and the USA Environmental Protection Agency):

<http://npic.orst.edu/factsheets/neemgen.html>

Mimi Padgett  
Master Gardener & Vegucator

# Vegucator Field Trips



On May 29, 2019 the Vegucators took a field trip to Shroomdom, a mushroom farm in Poplarville, MS. The event started with an introduction on mushrooms and the surrounding grounds by owners Anthony and Leilani Rosenbaum.



Photo by J Blazek



Photo by J Blazek

The discussion included types of mushrooms and information needed for mushroom identification: documentation of location, growth media (leaves, soil, live vs dead wood), presence of gills, skin folds, polypore characteristics, color, hard vs. soft body, and types of spores.

The master gardeners then broke into small groups to scavenge the woods for several hours searching out and collecting different types of mushrooms.



Photo by J Blazek



Photo by J Blazek



Photo by J Blazek



Photo by S Pecoraro

# Vegucator Field Trips, *continued*



Photo by J Rizutto



Photo by J Blazek

Over 30 different types of mushrooms were collected, including a rare white chanterelle which had only been found once at Shroomdom.



Photo by J Blazek



Photo by J Blazek

Yellow chanterelles, orange chanterelles, turkey tails, puffballs, auricularia, and several polypores were a some of the different types of mushrooms brought back for identification and discussion.



Photo by J Blazek



Photo by J Blazek

# Vegucator Field Trips, *continued*



Photo by J Rizutto



Photo by S Pecoraro

Anthony reviewed each specimen. He discussed the physical characteristics and whether they were edible, poisonous or had any medicinal qualities.



Photo by J Blazek



Photo by J Blazek

The group lunched at Perry's, a Poplarville restaurant with a Cajun twist. The food was delicious. The service great. But no one ate mushrooms there!



Photo by J Blazek

# Vegucator Field Trips, *continued*



On June 5, 2019 the Vegucators took a self guided tour of the New Orleans Botanical Gardens in City Park.



Photo by M Padgett



Photo by M Padgett



Photo by M Padgett



Photo by M Padgett

Vegucator Field Trips, *continued*

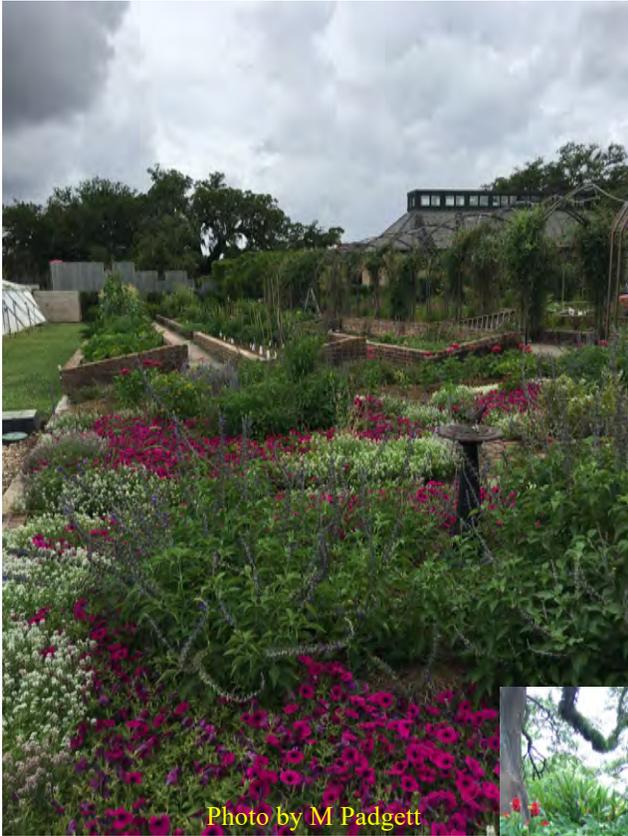


Photo by M Padgett



Photo by M Padgett



Photo by M Padgett



Photo by M Padgett



Photo by M Padgett

Jamie Blazek  
Master Gardener & Vegucator

## 2019 STMGA Scholarship Recipients

On May 15, 2019 the STMGA student scholarships were awarded.

The Dr. Bobby Fletcher Sr. Scholarships went to high school graduates who are all honor students and volunteers for several organizations.



Gabrielle Bird, a Fontainebleau High graduate will attend LSU. She is majoring in animal science and plans to participate in LSU's track and field program as a pole vaulter.

Racquel Bouche, a graduate of Salmon High, will attend Nichols State University and major in a pre-veteranarian curriculum. She is also an athlete.

Ansley Seymour, a Northshore High graduate, will attend LSU, and major in agriculture in a pre-veteranarian curriculum. She also participates in livestock shows.



## 2019 STMGA Scholarship Recipients, *continued*



The following students, already enrolled in LSU undergraduate programs, were also awarded STMGA scholarships.

Wyatt Hodge, Ag Business, has a four plus GPA. He participated in the Zen-Noh Grain Corporation mentor program and is treasurer of the Ag Business Club. This is his second time as a STMGA scholarship recipient.

Whitney McKinzie, Ag Business, has a four plus GPA. She participated in the LSU Ag Business Quiz Bowl and is on the President's Honor Roll. This is her second time as a STMGA scholarship recipient.

Cole Zechenelly, Horticultural Science, is studying plant and soil systems. He has a three plus GPA. This is his third time as a STMGA scholarship recipient.

Kay Hanson  
Master Gardener  
Scholarship Committee Chair



## Helianthus



Helianthus, or sunflower, is native to the Americas. They were cultivated in North America as far back as 3000 BC. They were originally used for food, medicine, dye, and oil. The Spanish conquistadors brought the sunflower to Europe in the 1500s. Most sunflower species display a behavior called heliotropism. Young blossoms face east in the morning and follow the sun's path as it moves across the sky. As the flower matures, it gets heavier with seeds, the stem stiffens and thickens, and it will generally remain facing east. The Guinness World Record for sunflower height was set in 2014 at thirty feet one inch.

Jamie Blazek  
Master Gardener & Vegucator  
Editor, *The Gardengoer*



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