



# Gulf Herb Society Coast Newsletter

March  
2022

Mailing Only: 109 Grand Blvd • Mobile, AL 36607 • [www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org](http://www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org)

## Rosemary for Remembrance DATES

- **March 17-19 2022.** *Plantasia Plant Sale!* at MBG
  - **March 22, 5:30 pm.** GCHS Meeting at MBG
  - **April 7, 7-10 pm.** One Enchanted Evening Fundraiser at MBG. Click Here for [Ticket Info](#).
  - **April 26, 5:30 pm.** GCHS Meeting at MBG
- See calendar page at the end of the newsletter for complete details.

## Thymely NOTES

[Click Here to find us on Facebook!](#) Read herb tips, recipes, and see pictures from our latest events.

- Please **volunteer** in the herb garden whenever you can. Contact Pat Ivie [peivie@comcast.net](mailto:peivie@comcast.net), 334-315-5874 for info.
- A Membership form is at the end of the Newsletter. Mail to or drop off: c/o Kathy Lovitt, 109 Grand Blvd, Mobile, AL 36607. Make checks payable to GCHS \$25.00 Questions? Call Kathy Lovitt at 251-680-7979.

## Did You KNOW

### The Ladybird Myth - Why Ladybirds Cannot Control Spider Mite! [dragonfli.co.uk](http://dragonfli.co.uk)

There appears to be widely circulated misinformation in the growing community that ladybirds (*Adalia bipunctata*) are an effective predator of red spider mite (*Tetranychus urticae*). While they are a popular beneficial insect, we at Dragonfli would like to set the record straight for control of spider mites!

Here are a few reasons ladybirds should not be used in an attempt to control spider mites;

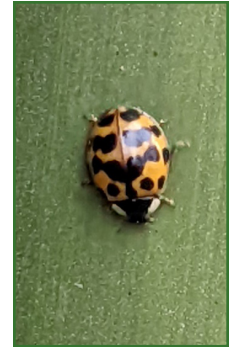
Although ladybirds may eat a small number of these pests, they are not their preferred food source. This means ladybirds will not feed on spider mites voraciously and are likely to fly away in search of a more favourable food source.

The ladybird life cycle, from egg to adult can take several weeks, compared to spider mite populations which can double in less than 3 days and increase tenfold within 10 days. The rapid population increase of spider mite, compared with the slow population increase of ladybirds is a total mismatch, preventing any form of control.

Ladybirds will not eat enough spider mites. Due to the rapid population increase of spider mite infestations,

coupled with the ladybirds lack of interest in spider mite as a food source, pest populations can increase rapidly.

Ladybirds are sensitive to temperature and day length so may go into hibernation or choose to migrate under certain conditions. This may include growth under lights or in heated greenhouses during the winter.



Ladybug

Ladybirds are expensive. Compared with specially bred spider mite predators ladybirds are very expensive when considering the ratio of spider mites eaten per predator. *Phytoseiulus persimilis* for example can consume up to 5 adult spider mites and 20 young or eggs per day! Ladybirds are not the best choice of biocontrol, by far, when treating spider mite.

If you have an aphid infestation, then yes both ladybird larvae and adults are the perfect choice, but there are other predators much better suited for efficient and targeted control of red spider mite, as used by professional growers across the country and worldwide.

### 14 Dog-Safe Plants To Spruce Up Your Garden [rover.com](http://rover.com)

You'll be able to find many of these dog-safe plants at your local garden centre as seeds, starts or potted plants. You can also find seeds for good deals online on Amazon and other gardening sites.

1. Camellia - These flowering shrubs take some work to establish, but once they're firmly rooted in your garden they'll keep coming back each year with little effort.

Camellias prefer partial shade, and mature plants are able to survive with little watering. If the plant is brand new however, it will require some watering to establish its roots.

2. Dill - Culinary dill is obviously safe for humans, but this feathery weed is also a dog-safe plant. This herb goes well with creamy dressings, soups and meats. Just make sure you give it plenty of room to grow—these plants get bigger than you expect.

3. Garden Marigolds - These flowers aren't just beautiful—they also help bring bees to your garden and protect your vegetables (if you're growing any) as a form of natural pest control that can deter beetles and other harmful bugs from

infesting your edible plants. Their stunning, sun-like blooms aren't too bad either. A win-win, all-around dog-safe plant!

4. Fuchsias - These elegant pink and purple flowers look great in hanging baskets outdoors. They do best in mild, temperate climates, and can remain in bloom from late spring to late fall.

5. Magnolia Bushes - Most people think of large, stately trees when they picture magnolias, but this dog-safe plant also grows as a bush. Most magnolia bushes offer spectacular flowers in purple, pink or white. They do well in full sun if you can give it to them.

6. Purple Basil - This gorgeous variety of basil whips up a delicious (purple) pesto, and also brings stunning colour to your garden beds. Plant these guys after all chance of frost is over, and give them plenty of water and a place in the sun. Cut and eat what you want and you and your dog can enjoy until the first frost of the year.

7. Creeping Thyme - Another practical herb that won't harm your pets, thyme is a perennial plant that doesn't need a lot of attention. Just a little water and sun, and it's good to go. This herb pairs well with roasted vegetables, meat, soups, and potatoes.

8. Sunflower - Sunflowers are the epitome of summer and come in a huge range of heights and colours. These dog-safe plants can grow several feet tall, make a great border along fences or in front of the house, and they love a sunny spot with plenty of water. As sunflowers lose their bright petals, the seeds mature and attract birds through the fall (that is if you don't harvest them yourself for a tasty snack!).

9. Rosemary - All rosemary is suitable for culinary use and is considered a dog-safe plant, but this creeping variety is a hardy way to fill empty spaces in your yard with a low, fluffy cloud of evergreen. The trailing stems look especially beautiful cascading over the edge of a raised bed or container. This sun-loving ground cover will release a waft of scent whenever your dog scampers through.

10. Pineapple Sage - Pineapple sage smells amazing, and is a tasty addition to everything from fruit salads and salsas to sangria. It's generally considered an annual but may come back in spring if your winter is mild enough.

11. Polka Dot Plant - This low-growing, shade-loving, dog-safe plant adds a splash of pink all summer long. It's perennial in warm climates and also makes a nice houseplant.

12. Fennel - This tasty bulb has beautiful feathery foliage and the flavour of liquorice. While it's safe for dogs, it's even better for humans: it's delicious grilled and makes a fragrant addition to salads. Its seeds are also a great breath freshener and make a soothing tea.

13. Snapdragons - Everyone loves a sunny snapdragon

patch. These dog-safe plants are easy to grow from seed in full sun, and produce a range of colours from yellow to red on their lovely tall stems. They make great additions to cut flower arrangements too.

14. Nasturtium - Nasturtiums are popular annual flowers to grow for a few reasons. The flowers are edible and have a surprising spicy flavour. They can grow in poorer soils without needing fertilizers, so you can plant them in any odd spot for a splash of colour. Plus they elegantly drape down garden boxes and rock walls—and they smell like heaven!

## 6 Great Companions for Fruit Trees

[thisnzlife.co.nz](http://thisnzlife.co.nz)

Permaculture guidelines recommend planting companions underneath fruit trees to help with pollination, to attract beneficial insects which predate the non-beneficial insects, to bring up moisture and minerals to the surface, passing them onto the tree when they eventually die down, forming a natural mulch.

Whatever you plant, keep it around 1m from the trunk, to help protect the root system of your fruit trees.

1. Bergamot/bee balm - This is an aromatic family of herbs, which means you gain an eye-catching flowering plant which bees and other pollinators love, and its flowers and leaves can also be used in your cooking. *Monarda fistulosa* grows to 1m high, has an edible sweet flower, and both leaves and flowers can be used as a tea to help with a sore throat.

Bergamot lemon (*Monarda citriodora*) grows to 60cm and has very pretty white or pink flowers, and young leaves can be used to give a strong lemon flavour to dishes.

2. Chives - Chives are prized for their ability to repel some insects (like aphids) due to sulphur compounds in the foliage.

The flowers are also loved by bees, giving you another excellent pollinator for trees and plants, and the stalks can be used in cooking.

3. Daffodils - The later winter blooms bring in the pollinating insects, helping to ensure your trees are pollinated from first bud burst.

4. Cow parsley - This a wild member of the carrot family – you'll find it growing wild on roadsides – and the Biological Husbandry Unit (BHU) at Lincoln University have found it offers a range of benefits in an orchard, especially when grown around and under apple trees:

- a wide season of flowering providing food for beneficial insects;
- perennial growth habit requiring little maintenance;
- it outcompetes grass species that would otherwise reduce apple yields;

- it eliminates the need for herbicide strips or mulching;
- it provides a habitat for beneficial insects;
- its tap roots do not compete strongly with apple tree roots;
- it increases rate of leaf litter decomposition which provides nutrient cycling and disease prevention benefits;
- it traps black spot fungal spores that are shot up in the spring air from the fungus (which overwinters in leaf litter).

Alternatives: wild carrot, wild parsnip, dill and coriander, but they do not have them same protracted flowering period or persistence.

5. Buckwheat - This is a fantastic weed suppressor in autumn – it can even outcompete couch – plus a rich food source for bees, and it produces an edible grain.

The BHU reports vineyard Waipara Hills grows buckwheat in every 10th row of vines and has found it successfully helps to control leafrollers (no insecticide was required) over summer because it is a great food source for parasitoid wasps.

Other experiments on the BHU farm have shown it also helps feed parasitoid wasps that predate wheat aphids and the diamondback moth.

The result was buckwheat (and also phacelia, which also tested well) is now planted throughout the BHU gardens every 20m in sequence (so it is constantly in flower) to provide protection against aphid and caterpillar damage.

6. Comfrey - Citrus has very shallow roots. Comfrey provides a deep rooting, non-competitive understorey that effectively brings nutrients up from lower in the soil profile and fulfils other roles such as outcompeting weeds and

grasses and improves soil condition.

A further refinement to the system is that ducks or geese can be used to graze and manage the height of the comfrey. NOTE: Comfrey can be invasive and will grow from any taproot left behind in the soil. This is why it's often used free range in orchards, but is better controlled (eg, in pots) in a garden.

## Myrtle's MUSINGS

• **Plantasia! Spring Plant Sale** at the Mobile Botanical Gardens. March 17th – 19th – FREE. Friday and Saturday hours – 9am to 4pm. Sunday hours – 11am to 4pm. Plant list available online.

Spring Plant Sale Preview Party: Thursday, March 17th from 4pm to 7pm. First pick of the plants, with refreshments! Tickets: \$25 in advance or at the gate. To buy tickets and more info go to [mobilebotanicalgardens.org](http://mobilebotanicalgardens.org).

• **Old Dauphin Way Spring Plant Swap**, April 2nd at Central Presbyterian in the parking lot on the corner of Ann and Dauphin from 10-12. It is a free event. Trade potted plants for potted plants.

• **One Enchanted Evening 2022**, Through the Looking Glass: Envisioning the Future. At MBG, April 7, 2022, Time: 7pm - 10pm, Cost: \$150. This fundraiser raises awareness of the beauty of the Gardens. It will celebrate the bright future MBG now has due to financial stability realized through City operational support combined with the creation of an endowment fund. Click Here for [Ticket Info](#).

## “DILL”-ICIOUS Sheet Pan Chicken Souvlaki ~ [thekitchn.com](http://thekitchn.com)

Serving 4

- 2 pounds skin-on chicken thighs, bones removed
- 1 pound small red potatoes, halved
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 2 tablespoons dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 medium red or yellow bell peppers, cored, seeded, and sliced into 1/2-inch strips
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper/zest
- 3 tbsp. chopped fresh cinnamon basil

1. Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat to 400 degrees. Place a rimmed baking sheet in the oven while the oven is heating.
2. Season the chicken and potatoes with 3/4 teaspoon of the salt. Place the chicken skin-side down in the center of the hot baking sheet. Add the potatoes, cut-side down, around the edges of the baking sheet. Roast for 15 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, place the lemon juice, 1 tablespoon of the oil, garlic, oregano, and basil a small bowl and whisk to combine; set aside. Place the peppers with the remaining oil and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt in a medium bowl and toss to combine; set aside.
4. Flip the chicken skin-side up. Brush the chicken with the lemon-herb mixture. Scatter the peppers around the chicken. Bake until the chicken and potatoes are crispy and the peppers are tender and browned around the edges, about 15 minutes more. Let cool on the baking sheet for 10 minutes before serving.

### GCHS Officers 2021 – 2022

President ~ Beth Poates • President-Elect ~ Vacant • Recording Secretary ~ Larry Liles

Treasurer ~Kathy Lovitt • Historian ~ Jennifer Williams • Ways & Means ~ Kathy Lovitt

Parliamentarian ~ Martha Fuller • Weeders & Planters ~ Sybil Burnett & Nita Crandall • Newsletter Editor ~ Qjuana Cooney

## GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY Calendar of Activities 2021 – 2022

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**March 17-19, 5:30pm:** Plantasia Spring Plant Sale

**March 22th, 5:30pm:** GCHS Meeting at the Mobile Botanical Gardens

**April 7, 7-10 pm.** One Enchanted Evening Fundraiser at MBG.

**April 26th, 5:30pm:** GCHS Meeting at the Mobile Botanical Gardens

**HERB DAY** Postponed. Date to be determined.

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## MOBILE BOTANICAL GARDENS Calendar for 2021 – 2022

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### EVENTS/ SOCIAL (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#))

- **Plantasia! Spring Plant Sale** March 17th – 19th – FREE. Friday and Saturday hours – 9am to 4pm. Sunday hours – 11am to 4pm. Plant list available online two weeks prior to sale.

Spring Plant Sale Preview Party: Thursday, March 17th from 4pm to 7pm. First pick of the plants, with refreshments! Tickets: \$25 in advance or at the gate. To buy tickets and more info go to [mobilebotanicalgardens.com](http://mobilebotanicalgardens.com).

- **One Enchanted Evening 2022. Mobile Botanical Gardens presents Through the Looking Glass: Envisioning the Future.** Thursday, April 7, 2022 at 7pm.

Not only will this 2022 event raise awareness of the beauty of the Gardens, it will celebrate the bright future MBG now has due to financial stability realized through City operational support combined with the creation of an endowment fund.

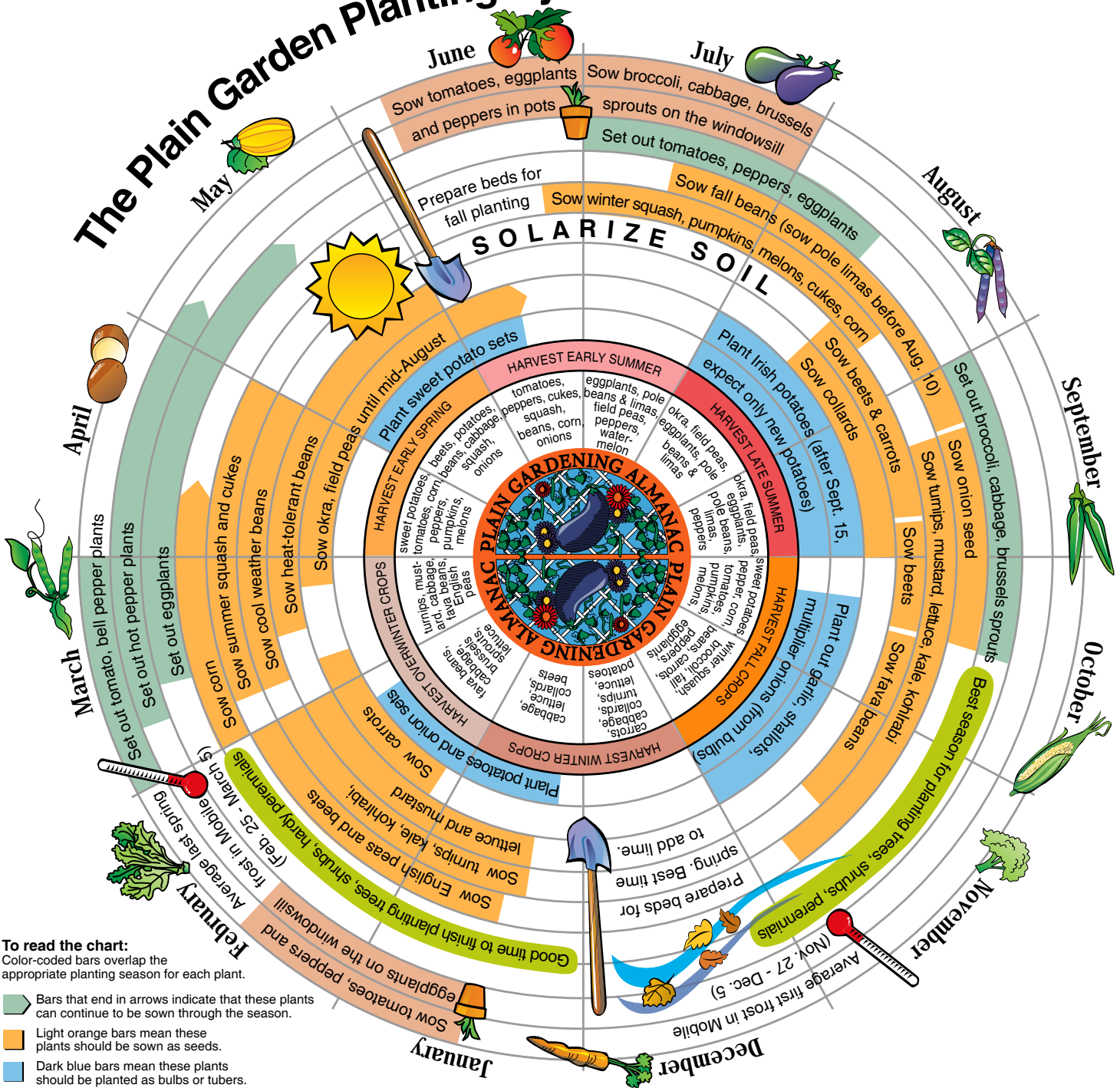
### CLASSES (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#)).

### PRESENTATIONS (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#))

#### GCHS Food Team Duties

- Make sure kitchen tables and counters are clean
- No food left in fridge
- Pick any trash off floor
- Clean spills from floor
- Take out garbage & place new - bags in cans bags are on to fridge
- If table and chairs are to be put up we will let you know - if not they can be left out
- Make sure all doors are locked
- Thermostats must be left as you found them

# The Plain Garden Planting Cycle



- To read the chart:**  
Color-coded bars overlap the appropriate planting season for each plant.
- Green bars that end in arrows indicate that these plants can continue to be sown through the season.
  - Light orange bars mean these plants should be sown as seeds.
  - Dark blue bars mean these plants should be planted as bulbs or tubers.
  - Green bars mean these plants should be 6-inch-high transplants when put in the garden.
  - Brown bars indicate that these plants should be sown in pots in a cold frame or inside the house.



# GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member? Y N

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ (to receive our Newsletter and updates)

Committees I am interested in: \_\_\_\_\_ Herb Garden \_\_\_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Herb Day

**Yearly dues are \$25 and payable in August.**

**Please make check payable to GCHS  
mail % Kathy Lovitt, 109 Grand Blvd. Mobile, AL 36607  
Or bring your check or cash to one of our meetings**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Paid by Cash \_\_\_\_\_ or Check # \_\_\_\_\_

## INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

**Welcome to the Gulf Coast Herb Society! We meet at the Mobile Botanical Gardens from 5:30 to 7:00pm the fourth Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise announced in our newsletter, emails and Facebook.**

Refreshments are served at each meeting, it's optional to bring something to share.  
Meetings start at 5:30p.m., program will follow, work days in Herb Garden TBA

## QUESTIONS?

Check out our website [www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org](http://www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org) Like us on Facebook!