March of time is upon us—almost Spring and last week it felt very much like it was here—the changing of a season really is a march of time as we relish/watch/enjoy the progression of plants and flowers. I was so afraid the camellias would be destroyed by the too early warm weather followed by the severe cold just as camellias were opening. We had a wonderful week or so with bouquets of camellias and viewing the bushes from the breakfast table. It amazed me all were not destroyed by the very cold spell. As it warmed up a couple of weeks ago the camellias finished their display as the daffodils, and some the other signs of spring flaunted their beauty…and the progression continues! What a wonderful world we live in. The time has come to review what we, as gardeners, must/should accomplish to continue this cycle of beauty.

Last Wednesday was my day to do a bit of garden shopping. Too early to purchase anything but hardy plants—some herbs, creeping phlox, lavender, snapdragons, dianthus…they are all sitting in a cozy spot waiting for me to finish some weeding and get them in the ground. Because they are larger plants many of them will be divided into two or four cuttings and put in the ground to spread—creeping phlox, lavender and the hardy herbs. My shopping also warranted a new garden magazine, “Southern Living Garden Guide—143 ideas for containers, beds, and borders. The “Seasonal Checklist” was the first item to catch my eye. All four seasons are represented with suggestions for successful gardens. For March: Assess Your Azaleas--arrange azaleas in groups of one ‘hue’ or in layers of different shades. (My first real experience with Azaleas was in Georgia…we planted probably two dozen or more 99 cent azaleas along one border of a three acre woods, too far from the water source for proper maintenance. They are magnificent after 20+ years of neglect! Except there was one ‘rouge’ dark pink azalea of a different smaller species growing into a big light pink azalea! It is actually a very ‘interesting sight’ because the dark pink flower has
established itself all the way through the light pink species! Isn’t it incredible how nature adjusts the gardener’s fumbles?) Southern Living gives us more standard suggestions for March—Feed your lawn, prune SPRING blooming shrubs after they finish blooming, divide late summer/fall blooming perennials. April suggests planting tomatoes, herbs, cut the grass! (my husband has already done that chore in early March). May is the time for hydrangeas and southern magnolias, trimming your hedges unless they are summer bloomers, and set out the annuals. All in all it was a neat summary of what to do. There are many other more detailed instructions on the internet, in books. Generally, by using your good sense it is possible to know when to prune, plant, enjoy your garden. Spring blooming flowers are pruned soon after they bloom in the spring. Early spring is a good time to plant shrubs, trees, some perennials, late spring after all danger of frost is over it is time to plant annual seedlings, but the time to plant seeds depends on how long it takes for them to germinate and mature—check out the seed packet instructions. Many vegetables are planted very early in spring—broccoli, potatoes, lettuce, some hardy herbs….The trick to all this is to read the information included with nursery plants, seed packets, the internet, horticulture books, observing your really good garden neighbor or reading a quality garden catalog. There are some real catalog losers—I know from experience! Be discriminating!

**A Horticulture Challenge**

List of garden terms to name…answers are on page 6 thru 8!

- Annual; biannual; Perennial; Evergreen;
- Bare root; Hybrid; Naturalized; Hardening off;
- Family and Genus; Botanical Name; Species;
- Germination; Deciduous; Direct sowing; Self-pollinating;
- Open-pollination; Dormancy; Herbicide; Weed;
- Invasive; Native; Exotic; Tender;
How Do You Garden?

This question/topic has intrigued me for many years…Horticulture magazines, garden books, symposiums, lectures, visiting the gardens of friends, and fellow gardeners: all of these venues project gardens from absolute perfection to chaos—but in most cases the gardens are the pride of the owner. Years ago my vegetable garden was beautiful—veggies in neat rows with annual flowers sprinkled in open spaces—zinnias, marigolds, Mexican sunflower…a multitude of hearty annuals to supply bouquets for the house and friends. I thought it was lovely—someone else thought it was a cacophony of confusion. We as gardeners need to take into consideration how our concept of ‘beauty’ appears to others—especially neighbors.

Gardens come in all manner of design, from the very formal, highly manicured, elegant garden complete with exotic species of plants to the humble collection of wild flowers; what is the design you would most like for your garden? Perhaps a better understanding of garden planning is the results can be from very formal, to casual…to chaos!

Is it a lovely ‘English Garden’ or chaos?
I remember this garden! This is one of many ‘real gardens’ featured in the annual Garden Walk in Buffalo on the last weekend in July. (When it is maybe in the 80’s and simply a delightful walking tour of the historic city of Buffalo. Check it out on google.

OK, we’ve set the scene for our ‘how do you garden’ topic but why are we talking about this?

We are members of a prestigious national garden club. We devote much our time to planning and enjoying our garden. We specialize in creating lovely designs to feature at home or NGC flower shows. We breed and caress our horticulture to win prestigious awards. We attend excellent NGC ‘schools’ in increase our understanding of not only gardening, but floral design, landscaping, and environmental knowledge. All this is wonderful, but there are two other very significant goals to achieve success—

- Enjoying the care and beauty of our own creations—the garden, design, landscape, and environment

- Sharing this love and expertise with those who also enjoy gardening but don’t really have the knowledge to achieve ultimate success
  
  - When a young or even a more mature person asks for help know how to help them.
  
  - Suggest joining your garden club
  
  - Recommend books, nurseries, fellow gardeners to add to their comfort zone to start gardening
- Suggest classes available to them—Gardening Consultants School (NGC) you don’t need to be a member of a garden club; Master Gardener Schools, go with them to nurseries and reputable ‘big box stores.’ Share seedlings and cuttings….

- Refer them to horticulture ‘specialists’ in your garden club

- Remember the mistakes you made and share them

- Perhaps most important is to allow your friends to choose their personal techniques and establish their very own garden

**An Interesting Garden Catalog or Two**

Yesterday’s mail included two garden catalogs. One had very pretty pictures, nothing but email addresses, and very low prices for what appeared to be some very nice horticulture. The other catalog was not fancy, but it included a well written *Monarch Recovery Report* from the director, University Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum; a synopsis of the history of their 36 year old nursery; a clearly state opinion concerning use of NEONICOTINOIDS—the Nursery does not use it; and their product is described as “Seeds and Plants of Authentic North American Wildflowers for restoration and Gardening. Which catalog would you be comfortable using for your garden? Native Gardeners’ Companion, Spring-Summer 2018 or the unnamed catalog. (I’m not going to print the name of the first catalog—but if you want to know just ask! I have a ‘list’ of unacceptable catalogs—all learned from personal experience.

**The Current President of Garden Club of Georgia, Jane Hersey, is promoting a special project: "Gardening in Georgia", Native Plants**

Chairman of the project, *Virginia Pennington* is promoting the use of *Native Plants* in your home landscaping. Using native plants in your garden can be a big help with regard to water usage. Although not every native plant is
drought-tolerant or carefree, one big advantage is that they are more adapted to our heat and humidity.

This information is from the website of Garden Club of Georgia, Inc., our excellent source of GCG information. Check it out for more complete information

*Can a Kansas native plant be moved to Georgia and be a native plant in Georgia? Can a central Kansas native plant be native in south Kansas?*

Here are the answers to the list of the Horticulture Challenge…

**Annual:** planted, grows, blooms, will continue blooming IF you dead head the bloom but will die at the end off one year’s season

**Biannual:** planted and grows in the first year and blooms in the second year then dies

**Perennial:** blooms on succeeding years; some perennial are long lived some have a short life

**Evergreen:** does not lose its leaves –green at all times though the green will frequently change color tone during season’s change

**Bare root:** generally refers to a plant which has been grown to appropriate size and moved with its roots exposed to be replanted in new location

**Hybrid:** the pollen from two plants are conjoined with the expectation that a new and different plant will be the result. A Cultivar is a hybrid because humans have created the conjoining. A Variety is the result of nature’s little joke…

**Naturalized:** an exotic plant (one not natural to an area) establishes itself in a foreign location. It may be as simple as seeds being located on your shoes and then ‘moved’ to a distant area, dropped from your shoes and voila a new plant emerges and **survives forever.** Frequently an undesirable invasive!

**Hardening off:** gradually moving a plant outside or inside. Seedlings are germinated inside and when weather is appropriate the plant is gradually introduced to its new home.
**Family:** This is complicated! Plants are organized into groups of like plants and that group becomes a **family**! For instance: A family of plants are similar in their characteristics. **Genus:** Genera is the term for a group of related plants (further complicated because Genus is the singular of Genera!) Then we go to Species, to Cultivar or Native….It is really Genus-Species-Cultivar/Native that makes a difference in plant selection (or judging) at our humble level! Why did I do this challenge!? See my comment at the end of the newsletter.

Botanical Name: See *above*...the botanical name refers to the name the smart people have put to the plant—for example, Coleus—is a former genus of flowering plants in the family Lamiaceae. In recent classification the genus is no longer recognized and the formerly included species are instead placed in the genera Plectranthus and Solenostemon.”

Species: “…is a group of similar plants that interbreed freely in nature.” Definition from the Flower Show Handbook, revised 2007. Species ranks just belong Genus. (I have not purchased the Handbook because I’m not judging flower shows any more. I will purchase the Handbook ASAP and if there is a different definition I will send information to all the readers of Planting Info…

Germination: this is how/why a plant grows from a seed!

Deciduous: Any plant which seasonally sheds all its leaves is deciduous…

Direct Sowing: a method of distributing seed into the ground by simply putting the seed in/on the soil. This method is used for easily germinated seeds

Self Pollinating: some plants have the ability to transfer the pollen from the anther to the sigma of the same flower, or another flower on the same plant, or the plant of the same clone! Very efficient!

Open Pollination: any plant that grows without human interference and grows naturally

Dormancy: the act of going to sleep! No activity! When a tree or shrub loses its leaves it is considered to be ‘dormant’

Herbicide: any substance which can kill a plant/grass on contact
Weed: any plant growing where it is not wanted

Invasive: Any plant which grows too fast to be kept under control

Native: any plant that grows naturally in a specific area

Exotic: any plant that is introduced and survives in an unfamiliar area—the plant has been introduced by human activity

Tender: a plant that will not survive harsh freezing weather

**Truth is cruel sometimes! When I made this list it seemed quite simple...but to more correctly write an accurate definition it was necessary to consult the ‘Type here to search’ on my computer, or the dictionary, or the Flower Show Handbook! I’m really ashamed of myself for not purchasing the new Handbook because I do want to read it, and be up to date though flower show judging is not possible any more—and I miss my flower show friends and the beautiful exhibits. Most importantly there is a multitude of information in the Horticulture Challenge.**

**Happy Gardening**

**Gail, the Happy Gardener (and I am happy this year because I can get out into the garden more easily!)**