The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. is an amazing, interesting and valuable addition to the wealth of information available to us as members of this organization. Horticulture is an important element of any organization with ‘garden’ in its name! GCG, Inc. embraces environmental issues, as well as landscape design and horticulture—the three elements are interrelated and significant if we are to maintain healthy living. It is hoped each one of our readers will profit from this project first introduced by our esteemed president, Suzanne Wheeler in 2013-2015. President Martha Price continued the project in 2015-2017. The new 2017-2019 edition is presided over by President Jane Hersey. It is hoped you the readers will communicate to the three editors, Mary Lovings for Environmental Issues, Landscape Design will be written by Dr. John Barnet, and your Happy Gardener, Gail Berthe, will report on horticulture. I sincerely hope it will make your gardening interesting, productive, and fun.

What does it take to be a ‘happy gardener?’--dedication, patience, desire, a sense of humor because there are frustrations in gardening, but the rewards are many. Come join us as we begin our fifth year sowing our seeds to produce beautiful gardens of vegetable produce and ornamental wonders.

As a mid-westerner planting and harvesting the garden was very much a part of growing up. As a navy wife the garden was a year or two in Kansas, Florida, Virginia, California, New Jersey, and Buffalo NY (a magnificent garden city—if you ever have the opportunity go to Buffalo the last weekend of
July and enjoy **Garden Walk**. Over 300 private gardens are open for your enjoyment. The owners of the gardens are in the garden to talk with you! It is incredible.) The point is I’ve experienced a wide range of garden activity, and it is an honor to share some it with you.

"**PLANT AMERICA - Georgia's Heritage, Georgia's Legacy**"

This is the theme for Jane Hersey’s term of office, 2017-2019. How can we plant a new garden or add to an established garden to enhance this ambitious challenge?

- Planning is essential.
  - What are our goals? A comfortable collection of favorite garden flowers or a magnificent collection of rare exotic specimens (maintained by a crew of gardeners), or a vegetable garden to feed our family? (Don’t forget it is possible to combine flower and vegetable garden in one space)
  - What is your budget?
  - How much TIME are you willing to spend on maintaining the garden? Important consideration—this is not a ‘put the seed in the ground and expect perfection to be achieved with no other care!’ The picture is the happy gardener pulling weeds! (The first picture in this series was of me backing out of the bushes—not a picture for the faint of heart!)
  - How much ‘space’ is available for flower or vegetable beds?
  - Will you be specializing in a specific genus? style?
  - Is cooperation available from your immediate family? Spouse? Children?

- Where do you live in Georgia?! Climate zones in Georgia range from 7a (north GA) to 8b (South Georgia). **Climate zone** will help establish what plant choices have the best opportunity to grow and thrive. Also important is **soil type**—something between hard-pan clay to prime loam! Sometimes it can all exist on one plot of land! Hydration (available water) is important. Amount
of available light must be considered—Zinnias will not bloom in a dark forest nor will Rex Begonia thrive in full sun.

What are ‘heritage/heirloom plants’—ornamental as well as vegetable species are among those plants which have been passed down through generations of gardeners. They may or may not be open-pollinated. (breed true from seed) They may or may not be ‘native’ plants.

Native plants are another conversation! Wikipedia defines native plants as “plants indigenous to a given area---. This includes plants that have developed, occur naturally, or existed for many years in an area (trees, flowers, grasses, and other plants). Some native plants have adapted to very limited, unusual environments or very harsh climates or exceptional soil conditions.” They have NOT been hybridized to exhibit special beauty/enhancements such as cultivars. For instance: *Echinacea purpurea* (coneflower) is native to eastern US It thrives with little care, but more importantly its pollen and nourishment are available to pollinators. (picture taken in my garden today) Cultivars may be related to the native but they have enhancements which are the result of human intervention!

Vegetables can be indigenous to an area (corn), or heirloom (tomato) which has been passed down through generations because of their stamina or flavor etc. They generally excel in flavor but do not yield the quantity of fruit as a cultivar will. (Don’t I wish these were in my garden)

Money can be a big factor!
- Appropriate fencing to keep ‘creatures of the field’ from eating or destroying your plants.
- Tools necessary for plant maintenance and eco-friendly garden products are expensive!

Share the garden—it is more fun that way.
Dealing with Hydration in July and August!

Truth is there really is much more to hydration than water! We are realizing changes are coming to the environment in which we live. *Fine Gardening*, August 2017 tells us we are *Gardening in a Changing Climate*. “Eighty-seven percent of scientists indicated they believe the earth is getting warmer because of human activity” according to the article. Fossil fuels, greenhouse gases, CO2 and methane gas, global temperatures will rise by 3.8° by 2050! It is scary. I’m old enough to remember the ‘dust bowl’. Living in western Kansas in the mid-1930’s was pretty awful. (Read Timothy Egan’s “The Worst Hard Time” for an accurate picture of ‘the great American Dust Bowl’) Circumstances changed as concerned farmers, agriculture authorities, and other sources worked together to develop agriculture methods to organize new farming methods to help alleviate the ‘dust bowl’. What were some of these methods?

- Applying dryland farming methods to prevent wind erosion
  - Terracing the fields to control wind erosion
  - Planting fast growing trees to act as wind breaks

What concerns are paramount in today’s situation? Here are some of the situations and consequences as expressed by Bert Cregg. The author of *Gardening in a Changing Climate*. 

Terraced Iowa farm field

Trees as wind breaks
Increasing temperatures in winter which are rising at faster than overall average temperatures allow the northward spread of insect pests (Buffalo in the early 1990’s had no Japanese Beetles—by the early 2000’s Japanese Beetles are a Buffalo insect pest)

Warmer winters allow longer growing seasons for trees and shrubs! Think about this winter and the blueberry and peach concerns….late frost/freeze damage plus insufficient days below needed freezes to set bud development of peaches…

It is the responsibility of the gardener (professional or hobby) to exercise risk control. Diversity is the best tool gardeners have to deal with the changes in our gardening techniques. This is not your grandmother’s garden anymore!

We can do the same thing as the farmers did during the dust bowl only on a much smaller and different scale! We can examine what is happening with our climate and make changes in the way WE garden. ‘Personally, I can’t change the world, but I can change my methods of gardening.’ Others will observe, or read Sowing Seeds…..and make suggestions, share experiences. These are some of your happy gardener’s suggestions:

Diversity—plant a variety of hardy species. (March 2017 Sowing Seeds…horticulture promoted succulents as an option.) There are plenty of other very hardy options

- *Hemerocallis* (daylily) Deer candy—everything else listed is of no interest to deer
- *Zinnia*
- *Marigold*
- *Iris germanica* (bearded Iris)
- *Mirabilis jalapa* (four o’clock)
- *Achillea millefolium* (Yarrow—consider *Achillea paprika*—one of my favorites)
- Consider using plants from a zone warmer than the zone in which you garden…
Oh the world is so full of wonderful things we should all be happy as kings. (not a direct quote!) just check out hardy plants and enjoy

➢ Educate yourself
➢ Water conservation
  ▪ Deep watering with soaker hose once a week is significantly more efficient than using a ‘sprinkler’ for ½ hour every day!
    ▪ Deep watering teaches the plant roots to go deep
    ▪ Shallow watering makes the roots come to the surface and ‘dry out.’
  ▪ Learn which plants are more drought tolerant
    ▪ Consider the list in the previous section ‘Diversity’
    ▪ This is when succulents/cacti are so effective. Many succulents are winter hardy in zone 7b and 8a and 8b
    ▪ Check out what gardeners are using in Arizona or New Mexico
  ▪ Prioritize which plants will get water in a severe drought
    ▪ Slow growing heritage plants would get my first choice for watering
    ▪ Annual plants would be the last choice
    ▪ Vegetables would take first choice if the drought was that severe
    ▪ Mulch—it is the very best way to reduce the soil temperature and it helps keep the weeds in check
  ▪ Using fertilizer during a drought—consider the plant has enough problems with minimum water—it doesn’t need to be forced into more growth! (At least that would be my opinion. I’ve had a motto about gardening—‘think like a flower!’ Would you really want to be forced to grow when you are doing the best you can just to survive?)

As I was writing this letter, it occurred to me the best thing I could do is take some pictures in my garden. Maybe they will give you some ideas. My garden is not a work of art; it is a work of love and a lot of experimentation. Each picture is taken late May and is either a perennial or a reseeding annual. In fact I just finished planting seeds in the garden this morning!
Enjoy the pictures below, and add your favorite plants for whatever climate conditions summer gives to us this year! Just be patient and marvel at the wonders of the garden.

**Happy Gardening,**

**Gail, the Happy Gardener**

![Gaillardia](image1)
![Achillea millifolium](image2)
![Marigolds](image3)

![4 o'clocks](image4)
![Dianthus species](image5)
![Sedum ternatum](image6)