MISSION STATEMENT: BEAUTIFICATION ... CONSERVATION ... EDUCATION

PLANTING INFO ...

Environmental Edition, Mary Lovings, Editor
Horticulture Edition, Gail Berthe, Editor
Landscape Design Issue, Jackie Fulmer, Editor

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE: Volume III, Number 13, May 2018

GCG POSITION PAPERS, CONTINUED: REVIEW AND REMINDER: DURING THIS GCG ADMINISTRATION, EACH ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE OF PLANTING INFO ... WILL FEATURE ONE OF THE EIGHT POSITION PAPERS LOCATED ON THE GCG WEBSITE.

Members are encouraged to keep themselves informed about matters covered by all the Position Papers and to continue learning. This series of Environmental newsletters is intended as a supplement to the NGG Environmental Studies Course, strongly recommended for GCG members. Familiarity with the Position Papers is important to each member and especially to any member who speaks or writes on any topic representing GCG. We as a group and as individuals are scrupulous about careful following of IRS 501(c)(3) regulations under which the organization functions.

GCG Position Papers summarize the principles on which GCG bases its actions and efforts under its Mission: Beautification … Conservation … Education. All were written by a GCG committee with input from associates in pertinent fields, approved by the committee itself, the GCG Executive Board including the GCG President, and then approved by the GCG Board of Directors. Member input is always welcomed.

CLEAR THE AIR! CLEAN THE SKY! WASH THE WIND!
T. S. Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral

Left:
Some of the joys of Eliot’s needed clearing, cleaning, and washing are shown as hot air balloons aloft in two of a four panel conversion of hot air balloons into familiar balloon whisks. Such whisks are recognizable equipment in many kitchens.
TAKE NOTE: FOR CLARIFICATION: Generally, materials and newsletters placed on the GCG website do NOT include contact information for the editors. Such addresses can be found in the GCG GUIDE. If you do not know, not for profit IRS 501(c)(3) organizations such as GCG DO NOT EVER publish their membership lists. They do, however, provide information for making contact with the organization as necessary. If you have questions or comments for an editor, please do make and send them through the webmaster.

Moreover, Planting Info... environmental issues, are intended to encourage additional individual study as well as participation in NGG sponsored environmental studies courses. Consider also the garden study and landscape studies courses as opportunities to enlarge and enhance your knowledge in all three areas.

Position Paper for May 2018 Focus:
GCG Supports Clean Air
Revised 2016
[Note that the following Position Paper contains a helpful Glossary.]

The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. has been dedicated to preserving and protecting Clean Air since 1928. Clean air is essential for people, healthy plants, animals and pollinators. Over many days from May to October, the air over much of the state of Georgia is dangerous for vulnerable populations to breathe. Rain transfers much of our air pollution to the waterways and earth. This acid rain is killing our forests, lakes, and waterways, and reducing crop yields. Wildlife habitats, as well as wildlife, are being reduced or are disappearing. Lakes still support fish, but EPD warns pregnant women to limit or avoid consumption of fish, due to high mercury content, which would impede proper development of the fetus.

Two main sources of air pollution in Georgia are: Vehicles for transportation (cars, buses, and trucks, and especially diesel engines), and coal fired electric power plants.

GCG believes that the following action must be taken to improve the quality of Georgia’s air if we are to maintain a vibrant and forward moving economy.

- Reduction of pollutants including Sulfur dioxide (SO2), Nitrogen oxide (NOx), and Mercury(Hg), Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), toxic heavy metals, methane, and Particle Pollutants that are affecting the quality of the air and adversely affecting the habitat of all living things: plants, animals, and humans.
- Reduction in the amount of Carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gases released to the atmosphere, as global warming may pose the greatest risk to biodiversity in the coming century.
- Emission caps that cap and reduce pollutants coming from smoke stacks.
- Programs that require expanded energy efficiency and renewable energy resources like responsibly sited solar and wind resources.
- Enforcement of New Source Review, a key provision of the 1977 Amendment to the Clean Air Act, that requires old power plants to modernize their pollution controls whenever they expand or increase their emissions.
Continued improvement of clean car and truck standards that help cleanup tail pipes and support for clean electric cars such as restoration of Georgia's electric vehicle tax credit.

**Glossary of Terms**

- **Sulfur dioxide (SO2)**—Sulfur in coal becomes sulfur dioxide (SO2) when coal is burned. SO2 acidifies lakes, streams, and soil, and creates haze that pollutes our state's wilderness and urban areas. **Nitrogen oxide** (NOx)-Nitrogen oxide is produced when coal is burned. Winds carry these acid pollutants far from their sources. This causes acid rain, smog, and acid gases. Nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons combine in the atmosphere to form ground level ozone, the major constituent of smog. Human exposure to smog can produce shortness of breath, asthma, and over time, permanent lung damage.

- **Mercury (Hg)**—Mercury is a nerve poison that builds to hazardous levels when released into the environment. The chief source of mercury is power plants. When mercury enters the water, it can contaminate fish. Many states have issued warnings regarding consumption of fish from their waters.

- **Carbon Dioxide (CO2)**—Carbon dioxide is the gas most responsible for global warming. Much of the emission of CO2 into our atmosphere can be directly related to human activity. Examples are deforestation and the burning of fossil fuels.

- **Methane(CH4)**—Methane is a colorless, odorless, flammable gas that is the main component of natural gas.

- **Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)** are vapors that emanate from combustion engines as well as paint and print shops, gas stations, dry cleaners and lawn chemicals

- **Particle Pollution** (also known as Particulate Matter or PM), another main component of smog, comes from power plants and factories, motor vehicles (especially older diesel vehicles), and others. Particles may be emitted directly or form in the atmosphere when other pollutants react.

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**Commentary:**

Those of us who fortunately grew up and have lived at least part of our lives with fresh, clean air truly appreciate the joys and benefits of healthful air. As we know in Georgia, April and May do bring showers and flowers, but of necessity also bring POLLEN! Daily batches of it cover everything as they also activate allergies and become at best a temporary annoyance. We endure.

Metro Atlanta has had several days this month of air advisory conditions, not good for anyone, and especially for the very young or for the elderly. We survive, and the quotation above from Eliot’s poetic drama becomes especially apt. Each time it rains at this time of year, this GCG member tries to focus on the Clear, Clean, and Wash from Murder in the Cathedral and in fact recommends a timely reading of *Murder in the Cathedral*, set in England’s cathedral in Canterbury and concerned with tumultuous times.
Perhaps this year, focusing on the joys of clean air as part of life is especially appropriate. This is of course 2018 when GCG celebrates its 90th year of speaking for itself, thanks to a brave group of ladies in Athens GA who formed the first garden club that has become what we are today. As many of us remember, Dr. Seuss had his Lorax say, “I speak for the trees, for the trees have no tongues.” If you haven’t read that recently, do. Borrow a copy from a grandchild or buy one for a child and read it aloud. Schools usually are delighted to receive such books as gifts. In fact, the Lorax story appears often on reading lists for university level degrees in forestry. We follow that theme: simply because we can do so, we do speak for our planet, its habitats, inhabitants, and its environment. Our members serve joyfully across the state as unpaid planters, nurturers, and caregivers. Congratulations to The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. and each of its members!

HOWEVER, on the downside, despite increasingly stronger emission requirements, more ethanol in gasoline for vehicles, plus scrubbers for power plant stacks, reduction of aerosol sprays, solar and wind energy advances and other environment protecting efforts, according to the most recent issue of TIME and also in Newsweek and other recognized publications, CFC-11, sometimes called R-11, a chlorofluorocarbon that many of us know as freon under the 1986 Montreal Protocol can no longer be sold legally in the U.S. Freon used to be used frequently and commercially in items including refrigerators and air conditioners. Freon is again now appearing somehow in emissions from something by someone/s from somewhere. CFC-11 emissions are up a whopping 25% just since 2012. Scientists who are yet to establish the source/s of such increases do know they could likely delay healing of the vital ozone layer in the Earth’s stratosphere that helps shield ultraviolet rays from reaching Earth. Unless CPC-11 release into the atmosphere is stopped, the anticipated healing of the ozone layer will be delayed by a decade. Danger from ultraviolet light is a serious and a primary cause of skin cancer, among other problems.

Despite many successful efforts to reduce vehicle emissions, increasing populations with vehicles and traffic in many areas put many areas in the situation of Alice, as in Wonderland and through the Looking Glass, who had to run twice as fast with the Red Queen, in a similar situation, to be able to stay in the same place.
As with other subjects, if you want to learn more and hopefully you do, detailed information is available through most search engines. Please give ECOSIA a try. ECOSIA as a search engine uses its revenue from advertisements to plant trees worldwide. Currently, ECOSIA has planted well over 23,000,000 trees with an investment of over seven million dollars. Such use is one more easy and simple way GCG members can be supportive of the “… Conservation” portion of its Mission Statement.

If you have not seen the 06.2019 issue of NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, find a copy and read it. The just arrived June issue features plastic as The Plastic Apocalypse. The cover photo is an unexpected double take on plastic pollution. On a personal note, this editor has been since January in the process of rectifying damages from decades of deferred maintenance to her home and is joyfully using as many recycled, long lasting, sustainable products as possible. Among examples are having used decking made of materials including wood chips and recycled plastic, reflective coated widows, and asbestos free asphalt replacement shingles.

To conclude this issue as it began with hot air balloons as symbol for the joys of clean air is a photo below of three plates from a set of china (discontinued) featuring hot air balloons.

**HAPPY BREATHING!**