

Maury County Master Gardener's NEWSLETTER

September 2017

Maury County Master Gardeners Meeting

Tuesday, September 12, 2017

Maury County Senior Citizen's Center by the Fair Grounds

Pot Luck begins at 6 pm

Guest Speaker: Eleanor Craig

Great Perennial Ferns for the Southern Garden



Eleanor Craig

Known to many in the southeast as "The Fern Lady", Eleanor Craig, is owner of Fern Ridge Farms, a small specialty nursery located in Cedar Bluff, Alabama. She has been a huge supporter

of Master Gardener programs across the southeast as both a lecturer and vendor. Previously located in Canton, Ga. the nursery received numerous awards at the Southeastern Flower Show in Atlanta for their fern exhibits and garden displays. Growing over 70 varieties of perennial/hardy garden ferns, the nursery has been recently recognized as a source for locating unusual ferns in the book Plant Lovers Guide to Ferns.

With a master's degree in Special Education and over 30 years experience in landscaping, lawn maintenance, and the nursery business, Eleanor will share some insights to many old and new garden ferns - their hardiness in our changing climate, location needs, and care. Beware, her love for ferns is contagious!

About Ferns...



Ferns are one of our oldest, but yet, most overlooked perennial garden plants. Having survived since the age of the dinosaur, today we have over 12,000 species of ferns ranging from moss-like to 40 foot trees, growing from the arctic to the tropics, yes, even in the desert. With these qualities for survival, ferns can live in your garden, giving you years of interest and beauty.

Ferns are not as finicky as most people think and once established, prove to be one of the easiest and most carefree plants in the garden. There are three major requirements in site selection.

1. Shade: Most ferns do best in some shade. Dappled shade is best, part sun is good. Avoid deep/dark shade and afternoon hot sun. However, some varieties of fern can grow and thrive in full sun.

2. Moisture: Consistent moisture is important and best throughout the year. However once established most ferns adapt to dry periods. One of the most common
(cont'd on page 2)



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You can place an order!



Maury County Fair



About Ferns... (cont'd from page 1)

causes of death is too much water. While a few of the ferns love wet, boggy areas, most do not like their feet wet. Increase moisture in drier soils by amending the soil with organic matter.

3. Soil: Rich, humus, well-drained soil is ideal for a successful fern garden. Regular addition of leaf mulch, wood chips, and compost will make a great fern haven.

Planting Tips:

Knowing the growth habit- short/tall, creeping/spreading, crown forming- is important when planning the fern area. Ferns like good ventilation, so leave room for growth. We suggest digging a nest rather than a hole- wider than deep. Line the nest by mixing the existing soil with amending material such as compost or humus. Never plant the crown below the soil. Be sure the plant is at or slightly above the

soil level. A feeding of slow release fertilizer in the spring is sufficient. Ferns do not require regular fertilization.

Now, once your ferns are planted- sit back and enjoy the wonderful color, textures and form variations that ferns provide in your garden. Also, deer do not like to eat ferns and neither do most insects. But people love the cool airy feeling ferns give to the garden on a hot summer day. Some Fern Reference books that we use and enjoy:

THE PLANT LOVER'S GUIDE TO FERNS
Richie Steffen & Sue Olsen
Timber Press

FERNS FOR AMERICAN GARDENS
John Mickel
MacMillan

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GARDEN FERNS
Sue Olsen
Timber Press

Report: MCMG Special August Meeting

On August 7th, the Maury County Master Gardeners held a special meeting at the MTREC in Spring Hill and invited the public to join them. There were 66 people in attendance including about 30 visitors! The intern committee comprised of Kelly Raimondo, Cynthia Killlets, Kathie Wilson and Deena Trimble did a wonderful job of contacting all of the people who had shown interest in the club over the past year and inviting them to this meeting. The visitors received a gift for attending, free plants and a delicious meal provided by the members. Many of them expressed their gratitude for the club's hospitality and showed strong desire to become future master gardeners. Practical information was shared with the group by the guest speaker, Todd Breyer, about common plants that grow well in this region. The guests were also welcomed by Dill Hughes, extension agent, and Natalie Bumgartner, state coordinator for the master gardener program.

Calendar

September

September 12 Maury MG Meeting, Plant Swap & Intern Certification

September 18 Jackson Garden Tour

September 23 Workday at Sr Citizen's Bldg

October

October 10 Maury MG Meeting and Plant Swap

October 21 Mid TN Plant Swap at Henry Horton

October 26 Workday at Sr Citizen's Bldg



Natalie Bumgartner, UT Extension



Special thanks to Landscape Architect Todd Breyer for answering questions.



Dill Hughes, Extension Agent



A special welcome to our GUESTS



Maury County Master Gardeners and Interns