



# ECHO



## Texas AgriLife's Community Horticultural Outreach

### Why Are You A Master Gardener?

When a new session of interns convenes, I can't help but wonder what drives each attendee to want to become a Master Gardener. Which one applies to you? *I want to learn more about gardening. I just moved here and I need to know what to do with this sticky clay. What will grow here? I want to meet new people. I love plants. I need to learn how to landscape my yard. I want to get a job in the landscaping business. I want to be a better steward of the environment. I want to volunteer. I want to help people enjoy gardening. I want to start a vegetable garden. I need something to do. I want to work with the children at my son's school.* They may not have listed any of these reasons on their applications, but yet, they're here and motivated to take the CCMGA (Collin County Master Gardener Association) challenge.

As a new intern a few years ago my goals were easily defined: I was hoping to meet people and learn about landscaping my yard. I knew in CCMGA there would be volunteer work, but admittedly, I wasn't really thinking about *talking to people about what I had learned.* My plan was to stay in the background and work on gardening projects. Luckily, I found out there were more reasons to be a MG (Master Gardener) than my original two. I imagine many MGs have discovered that there are more incentives for remaining in the program than we ever conjured up for joining.

As MGs, we benefit from many educational opportunities, learning from one another, but also from horticulture experts including Texas A&M professors. In class, I said it would be a cold day in July before I spoke in front of a group, but I enjoy talking to people about gardening. Often it's just discussing plants with a friend. Other information sharing opportunities are found in Speakers Bureau, Information Booths, telephone help line, and our annual plant sale. Speaking to others about what we've learned makes a difference in their enjoyment of gardening. Educating people about EarthKind programs improves our environment and enhances natural resources.

Being a Master Gardener has changed me. I've learned a lot about gardening. I've learned Excel and PowerPoint. I speak in front of a group without intense fear. I talk to people about gardening and help with advice. Mostly, I've met wonderful people who share my love of plants and gardening. Think about what drives you to become a Master Gardener, and what you embrace about the program. I know you'll discover the reasons for remaining a MG far exceed the ones you had for joining. You'll agree that fulfillment comes in sharing your time and knowledge with others. 🌸

-Diane Sharp, CCMGA President

### September-October 2009

Educational programs of Texas AgriLife Extension serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, gender, religion, disability, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.

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## *Jewels in the Summer Garden*

By Joyce Cleary

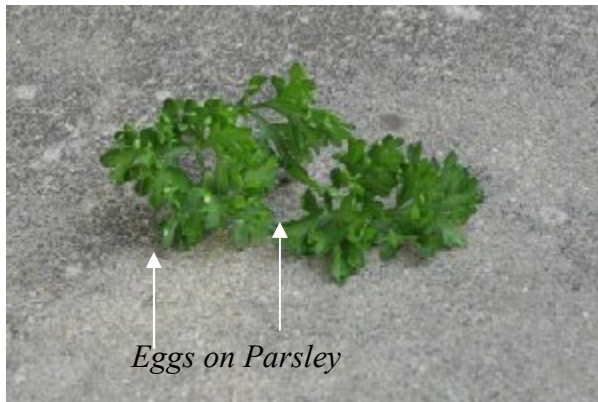


*Butterflies from my garden--*

I LOVE BUTTERFLIES. From the small cabbage whites and the gulf fritillaries to the beautiful red admirals and the majestic tiger swallowtails -- I love them all. To me they are jewels that float through the air, gently accessorizing my garden. Some of my very favorites are the black swallowtails that grace my garden and have resulted in my spring ritual of butterfly gardening.

I begin preparing for these beauties early in the spring, when I plant their host plants of parsley, dill and fennel. Every year I find a few more spots to tuck in a dill or fennel plant, or use parsley as a border in front of a bed. I'm excited when my parsley makes it through the winter and I find a hibernating caterpillar hiding in the leaves. I wait impatiently for the nectar plants of phlox, daisies, coneflower, rudbeckia, verbena and lantana to begin their spring growth. As soon as the weather warms, I add pentas, zinnias, and other annuals to attract butterflies to my garden.

Then I wait for a beautiful lady to be enticed to the garden, usually in May or June, and watch her choose the exact spot to lay her eggs. She recognizes the right plant species by its leaf color and shape. But, just to be sure, she may beat on the leaf with her feet. This scratches the leaf surface, causing a characteristic plant odor to be released. When she finds just the right nursery, she lays a tiny pale egg on the tip or underside of the leaf. If you look very carefully, you will see the miracle begin!



*Eggs on Parsley*

my mother's old-fashioned clothes-pins. I also use clips shaped like dragonflies that are used to hold orchids to stakes. Clipping the side makes it easy to open the cage and place more caterpillars inside when I find new ones and release the butterflies as they hatch. I fold the edge of the netting under the bottom of the cage and loosely tack with thread to keep it from slipping. The cage can be placed in-

My butterfly nursery consists of a tomato cage turned upside down, the sharp ends bent toward the center to form a rounded top. I cover the cage with a fine tulle netting, folded and secured along the side with



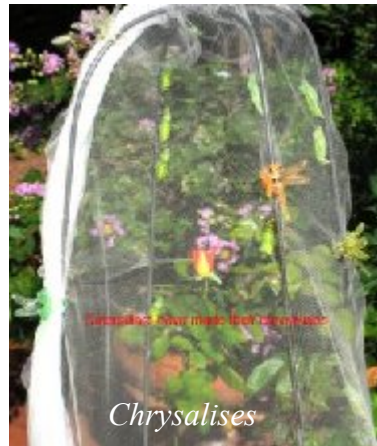
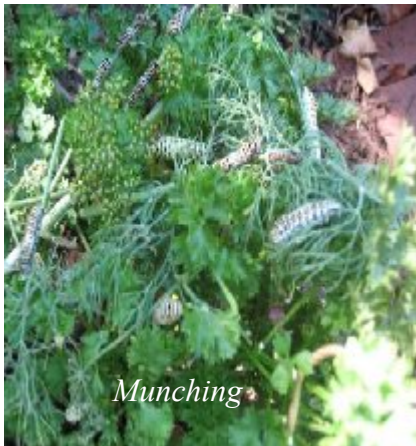
*Butterfly Cage*

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side the rim of a large pot or placed around a plant in the ground. If putting the cage on the ground, dig a shallow trench around the plant and secure the cage with u-shaped pins to keep it from blowing over during our spring rains.

You can make your own pins out of wire clothes hangers. Just cut a length of the hanger with wire cutters and bend it into a U. Then position the pin over the bottom ring of the cage and push it into the soil. Mound mulch around the bottom of the cage to discourage unwanted predators, such as ants or spiders from invading the nursery. It's best to locate your nursery in an area that is sheltered from hot afternoon sun and winds. Do not use any kind of pesticide around the caterpillars or on the host plants.



Now for the fun! As I find eggs or newly hatched caterpillars, I move them to the nursery for protection. More than once I tarried in moving them and they became lunch for a hungry bird or lizard. I always leave additional uncovered plants to attract more butterflies to lay eggs. This year at one time I had 25 hungry caterpillars munching on parsley. It is amazing to watch them shed (or molt) their skins as they grow from tiny caterpillars to great big guys who look like Disney cartoon

characters, munching away on leaf stalks. After eating for 7-10 days, they begin climbing the sides of the cage, attach themselves to the metal supports and begin their final molt into a chrysalis form. After another week or so, as the morning sun begins to warm them, they break open the chrysalis, and a butterfly body emerges with tiny wrinkled wings. Butterflies are cold blooded and need the sun to warm them before they can fly. They can fly as long as the air is between 60-108 degrees, although temperatures between 82-100 degrees are best. They hang for a few hours while their wings fill out and dry and then they are off to discover a new world, hopefully returning to visit me soon and begin the cycle again. 🌸



*About the Author: Joyce Cleary (class of 2006) is interested in small space garden design, plant selection and designing holiday décor using elements from the garden. In addition to butterflies, she welcomes hummingbirds, lizards, frogs and birds into her garden retreat.*

## This N That

### Make Your Nomination for Texas Environmental Excellence Awards

The governor's office and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality are now accepting applications for the 2010 Texas Environmental Excellence Awards.

This is the highest distinction of environmental honor in the state. *The awards recognize outstanding contributions in 11 diverse categories.* You may nominate an individual (even yourself), community, company, or organization for an award. The categories are:

- Agriculture
- Civic/Nonprofit
- Education (public education campaigns or educational initiatives)
- Government
- Individual
- Innovative Technology
- Large Business/Nontechnical (more than 100 employees)
- Large Business/Technical (more than 100 employees)
- Small Business (independently owned business with 100 or fewer employees)
- Water Conservation
- Youth (science clubs, school or scout projects, youth groups or individuals)

The deadline is October 16, 2009, and this would be a great way to reward those who are making environmental stewardship a priority. Visit [www.teea.org/apply.htm](http://www.teea.org/apply.htm) for instructions and an online nomination form. 🌱

## Library Donation

The Collin County Master Gardeners wish to thank Neil Sperry for his donation to our reference library.

Neil Sperry is a Texas gardening and horticulture expert known for his books, magazine, radio program, and annual gardening show. He attended Texas A & M University and earned horticulture degrees from Ohio State University. From 1970 to 1977, Sperry worked as a Horticulture Specialist for the Texas AgriLife Extension.

The donation of 73 books brings our library's total to 205 books! Many subjects are covered in our collections which are too many to mention here.

Now through the end of 2009, Master Gardeners have the opportunity to earn 1 continuing education hour (maximum allowed) if they spend an hour at the office reading the reference books. 🌱

## Book Review

By Mary Means

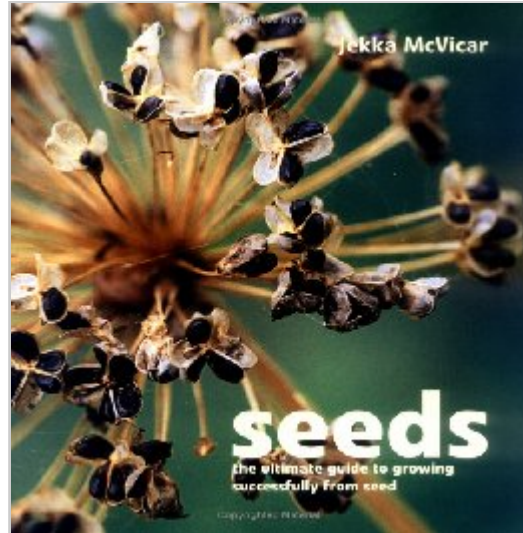
### *Seeds: The Ultimate Guide to Growing Successfully from Seed*

By Jekka McVicar

*Seeds* is one of the books donated to Master Gardeners by Neil Sperry. It was originally published in England in 2001 and was then published in the United States in 2003. The writer lives in England where she owns a successful herb farm. This means that the book is more relevant to plants and seeds in England than it is to North Central Texas. Nevertheless, it is interesting and entertaining to read and the information is useful.

*Seeds* is part plant anthology and part plant propagation book. The writer devotes as much space to describing the plant as she does to discussing how to get the seed to sprout. Chapters are divided by plant types and they include such titles as aquatic plants, ferns, herbs, trees, and vegetables.

Common seed-started plants such as broccoli and sweet peas are discussed. In addition, many other plants that are not usually started from seed are also described. This book contains information on how to grow lilies and cacti from seed. It includes information on how to grow oak and maple trees from seed. This is wonderful seed starting information that is difficult to find elsewhere.



Sometimes the seed starting discussion could have been a bit more specific. For example, several times the writer says to soak the seeds in hot water. But she doesn't say how hot or why. Does "hot water" mean 110 degrees or does it mean 195 degrees? Why are readers told to soak the seeds in hot water? Is it to wake up the little seeds, or is it to kill tiny bugs? The final chapter discusses seed growing procedures, but nowhere does it state exactly what "hot water" means.

On every third or fourth page, there is a special section called "Recipe for sowing, planting, and growing (a particular plant)." These sections contain more detailed information about the plant. The recipe for getting a seed started involves a list of supplies needed plus a step by step procedure for getting the seeds germinated. The discussion is extensive and helpful.

The large color photographs are beautiful, but not all plants have a picture. There is not a photo of each plant. Overall, if a reader is interested in growing plants from seeds, then this book is well worth reading. 🌸



*About the Author: Mary Means is a class of 2002 CCMG, secretary for our association, and a delegate to state meetings.*

## CCMGA 6th Annual Fall Fundraiser: Bulbs for North Texas Landscapes

By Dawn Oldfield

*“The flowers of late winter and early spring occupy places in our hearts well out of proportion to their size.”*

*-Gertrude S. Wister*

The splashes of color that visitors enjoy at the Dallas Arboretum are easily replicated in your home garden with a little spring bling! And, spring starts now! CCMGA is preparing for our 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Fundraiser: Bulbs for North Texas Landscapes.

This fall we will be selling a mixture of spring blooming bulbs, including lovely tulips, narcissi, Blue Magic Iris, Spanish Bluebells, and more. These tried and true heritage bulbs are those which will reward gardeners with a beautiful display that will thrive – and sometimes multiply – in our difficult soils and climate extremes. Many of these bulbs are not available in local nurseries.

The color palette is a varied one, featuring flowers in pastels, and bright shades of white, blue, yellow, red and bi-color. Most of our selections will display their beauty between the months of February through May.

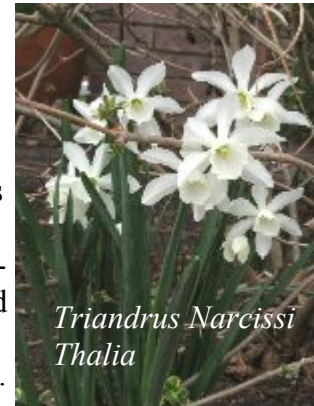
Choose one or select a few, but you'll be tempted to plant all these beautiful bulbs! The next column lists ten becoming bloomers for sale during this year's Bulbs for North Texas Landscapes fundraiser.

It is best to plant spring bulbs after the soil cools. Store them in a cool, dry, ventilated place until planting time. This is usually between October-December in North Texas. Planting instructions will accompany each order.

The fall fundraiser is open to everyone. Master Gardeners, family, friends and neighbors are welcome to participate.

- *Kaufmannia Hybrid Tulip Shakespeare*
- *Jonquilla Narcissi Quail*
- *Dutch Iris Blue Magic*
- *Double Narcissi Tahiti*
- *Leucojum aestivum Gravetye Giant*
- *Triandrus Narcissi Thalia*
- *O. umbellatum Star of Bethlehem*
- *Hyacinthoides hispanica Excelsior*
- *Musacari armeniacum*
- *Tulipa clusiana Lady Jane*

A color brochure, description of bulbs available for sale and an order form are available for downloading at the CCMGA Website: [ccmgatx.org](http://ccmgatx.org). Orders must be accompanied by a check payable to CCMGA and must be received by September 30, 2009.



*Triandrus Narcissi  
Thalia*

**Please mail orders to:  
Judy Ewoldson, 2009 CCMGA Treasurer,  
1540 Ford Lane  
Lucas, TX 75002.**

Bulb orders may be picked up at the meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, or at the Extension office on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. 🌸



*About the Author: Dawn Oldfield is a class of 2004 CCMG, our group's public relations coordinator, and is passionate about roses, water conservation, and traveling the gardens of the world.*

# Gardener's Journal:

## Green with Envy

By Mary Nell Jackson

Can a gardener be plagued with one of the seven deadly sins? Envy is one of these verboten sins, and I must confess I possess envy for almost every plant that isn't included in my garden.

As far back as I remember, envy has played a big part of my garden design. Just when you relax and think you have planted every square inch the soil will take, you happen upon a plant you must have. It could be a plant in some other gardener's landscape, or one you spied at your local Arboretum or perhaps from the latest article in your garden magazine. A gardener's envy isn't like ordinary envy; it is more like a particular way to express your love for all plants. Do I sound like I am trying to ask forgiveness? The most envy a gardener can feel is when they hear the words, *you can't*



*have it in your garden!* The hunt begins almost immediately. I think my first plant to envy was the rose. I remember the way it smelled when I was very small. The whiff of the fragrance was then - and now - intoxicating. I am sure the first roses I smelled were antiques. Of course the gardenia falls in this category too. Simple flowers might have been an envy I had as a small child; perhaps it was the zinnia or daisy.

I wanted them in my family's garden. I was introduced to honeysuckle early on and enjoyed sucking the sweet nectar from its stamens. Mint was a garden standby, and I wanted that fragrance when I rode my bicycle and passed a lawnmower that was clipping mint that had found its way into the grass.



Oddly, garlic was a plant of envy for me. I fondly remember watching a neighbor dig garlic bulbs from under a big tree and telling me she was using it on the Sunday roast. I never understood at age five what she meant, but I wanted my mother to have some in our pot roast. My garden today is full of many varieties of garlic planted each fall, and I have learned that garlic has many uses other than flavoring meat.

I am wary of committing yet another deadly sin - greed - in my garden as I think it would come back in my Karma. There are gardeners that possess this sin, but hopefully they are few and far between. Most gardeners are very giving people and share their harvest of plants and seeds with others quiet readily. I do this as often as possible.

No gardener wants to possess the sin of sloth as its definition is unwillingness to work or exert oneself. I suppose that would apply to a gardener when the summer temperature reaches three digits.

The sin of wrathfulness is a rarity for a gardener; we usually are a mild-mannered bunch. I do find I can work up wrath when the armadillo tears up my fluffy compost/mulched soil searching for grubs. Anger isn't something that a gardener displays very much; we are usually in our bliss when we set out to garden. I am quick to admit that I do have the sin of gluttony when the basil is in season, I can not

*(More on page 8)*

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get enough. Each May when the basil blooms in profusion, my gluttony is usually satisfied by the time the first freeze takes out my fragrant basil leaves.

Lust is an easy sin to admit. Its definition includes a strong desire. Every spring most gardeners have the seasonal lust or strong desire to create the garden of their dreams. The smell of spring is charged with lust and it happens to us every year whether we accomplish this desire of Eden in our garden or not. We still give it a try.

The seventh and last sin is pride. Is it such a sinful act to find pride in our gardens? I think not, but we must be careful to guard against having a high opinion of our own individual garden's worth because Mother Nature will bring us down a notch. Just picture a hail storm that would destroy our precious iris standing tall in March, a rain storm in April that might blow every last rose petal into the garden path, a heat wave that may turn every blade of grass the color of coffee in August, or a January snow storm that could cover the landscape long enough to make **all** our gardens identical.

Forgive me; I feel a sin coming on! 🌸



*About the Author: Mary Nell Jackson, class of 1997, is a herb lover and discovered her love for writing about the garden a few years ago when she penned an article about gardening in her p.j.'s.*

Being a Master Gardener:  
So much to learn and so  
many fun ways in which  
to learn it!

## You Know You're A Master Gardener When:

1. You rejoice in rain...even after 10 straight days of it.
2. You have pride in how bad your hands look.
3. You have a decorative compost container on your kitchen counter.
4. You can give away plants easily, but compost is another thing.
5. Soil test results actually mean something.
6. IPM rules!
7. You'd rather go to a nursery to shop than a clothes store.
8. You look for gardens open to the public whenever you go on vacation.
9. Your non-gardening spouse is actually getting involved with your garden endeavors...digging ponds, building bird houses, watering, pruning, turning compost piles, planting...

*And you definitely know your a  
Master Gardener when...*



**You are surrounded by terrific  
people who share your passion!**



*Created by Audrey, Emmitsburg, Md.*

## Garden Checklist for September and October

By: Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist  
This list was compiled from the 2008 updates by Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. The following information available at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/newsletters/hortupdate/tamuhort.html>.



### September:

- Rejuvenate heat-stressed geraniums and begonias for the fall season by lightly pruning, fertilizing, and watering.
- Caladiums require plenty of water at this time of year if they are to remain lush and attractive until fall. Fertilize with ammonium sulfate at the rate of 1/2 to 2 pounds per 100 square feet of bed area, and water thoroughly.
- Don't allow plants with green fruit or berries to suffer from lack of moisture. Hollies will frequently drop their fruit under drought conditions.
- Prune out dead or diseased wood from trees and shrubs. Hold off on major pruning until midwinter. Pruning now may stimulate tender growth prior to frost.
- Divide spring-flowering perennials such as irises, Shasta daisies, gaillardias, cannas, day lilies, violets, liriopse, and ajuga. Reset divisions into well prepared soil with generous amounts of organic material worked into the top 8 to 10 inches.
- Prepare the beds for spring-flowering bulbs as soon as possible. It is important to cultivate the soil and add generous amounts of organic matter to improve the water drainage. Bulbs will rot without proper drainage.
- Plantings at this time can provide landscape color for three seasons in central, east, and south Texas. Annuals set out early enough will bloom as soon as Thanksgiving, and frequently last until Memorial Day. Annuals that should soon be available in nurseries and garden shops include petunias, calendulas, pansies, snapdragons, stock, sweet peas, and violas (from seed).
- Continue a disease-spray schedule on roses, as blackspot and mildew can be extremely damaging in September and October. Funginex, used every 7 to 14 days, will usually give excellent control.
- Christmas cactus can be made to flower by supplying 12 hours of uninterrupted darkness and cool nights (55 degrees F.) for a month, starting in mid-October. Keep plants on the dry side for a month prior to treatment.
- Replenish mulches around trees and shrubs, and water every 3 to 5 days.
- Start cool-season vegetables, such as mustard, lettuce, arugula, broccoli, carrots, and turnips, from seed in well prepared beds.
- Harvest okra, peppers, squash, and other vegetables often to encourage production.

*(Continued on page 10)*

**Garden Checklist for September and October** (Continued from page 9)

- Careful covering of tender plants on nights when light frost threatens, early in the season, is a way to stretch out the season for a few more days or weeks. Candidates for protection include late season crinum blooms, brugmansia and datura shrubs, Lantana trifolia with its lavender, verbena-like flowers in clusters, "Halloween-blooming" *Gladiolus dalenii* and many others. Tender herbs such as basil should be cut for use as pesto sauce ingredients or pizza toppings as soon as possible at this time.
- Fall is often one of the best times to enjoy rose blooms in Texas. Lightly prune hybrid teas, floribundas, and modern garden roses and fertilize them in early fall for an abundant display until hard frost.
- October is a good time to reduce the insect and disease potential in next year's garden. Clean up the garden, removing all annuals that have completed their life cycle. Remove the tops of all herbaceous perennials that have finished flowering or as soon as frost has killed the leaves.
- October-November is also an excellent time to purchase bulbs while you still have a good selection in the garden center.
- Chill tulip and hyacinth bulbs in the refrigerator until mid or late December before planting. The lower part of the refrigerator is best. Do not leave bulbs in airtight plastic bags during refrigerated storage.
- Plant bulbs in well prepared beds so the base of the bulb is at a depth that is three times the diameter of the bulb. In sandy soil, set slightly deeper and in clay soils less deeply.
- Holly plants with a heavy set of fruit often suffer a fertilizer deficiency. An application of complete fertilizer late this month can be helpful and provide a head start next spring.
- Collect leaves for the compost pile. Be sure to have extra soil available so that each 6 inch layer of leaves may be covered with several inches of soil. Wet the layer of leaves thoroughly before adding the soil. Add about one pound of a complete lawn or garden fertilizer to each layer of leaves to provide the necessary nitrogen for decomposition.
- In addition to bulbs, garden centers have started plants of snapdragons, pinks, sweet Williams, poppies, and calendulas. Planted now in south and east Texas, they will usually provide spring color; wait until late winter or early spring to plant in north Texas.
- Keep Christmas cactus in a sunny spot where night temperatures can be kept below 65 degrees F. Buds will drop if you allow night temperatures to go above 70 degrees F or if you allow the plant to become excessively dry. They should be kept in total darkness from 5:00 pm until 8:00 am for about 30 days in October to initiate flower buds.
- If you have saved seeds of your favorite plants, allow them to become air dry, then place them in an airtight container and store in the refrigerator. Label each packet carefully. Seed from hybrid plants will seldom resemble the parent plant. Prepare beds for planting pansies when they become available at the garden centers. They need a well-drained soil and exposure to at least a half-day of sun. It is best to use started plants, as seeds are difficult to handle.
- If you are planning to save caladium tubers for another year, dig them in late October, and allow to dry in a well ventilated but shady area. After 7 to 10 days remove leaves and dirt, then pack in dry peat moss, vermiculite or similar material for storage. Pack tubers so they do not touch each other. Dust with all-purpose fungicide as you pack. Place container in an area where temperature won't drop below 50 degrees F. 🌸

**Thanks to ECHO Newsletter contributors:**

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The submission deadline for the November/December 2009 issue of the ECHO Newsletter is October 10, 2009. Send submissions, comments and suggestions to:

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