

Wake County JMG - 4H Newsletter



Next Meeting: Thursday, May 13, 2010 (7:00-8:30pm)

Dear JMG Students, Parents, and Leaders,

Our May meeting will be our last evening meeting until we resume classes in September. Remember that our JMG evening calendar is the second Thursday from 7 – 8:30 p.m., September – May. Any summer activities we are able to pull together will occur during the day. I am still hopeful that we can have some Plant ID classes in June and July, and possibly one or two morning sessions for other horticultural sessions.

I want to say a very special ‘Thank You’ to the JMG students, parents, leaders, and Master Gardeners that helped with our recent plant sale. Many of our customers commented on how wonderful it was to have our students involved in learning about plants and how to care for them. They were very impressed with student’s knowledge and their willingness to carry plants for them.

As we end this month’s JMG activities, I want all of our readers to check our JMG web site for updates on activities and events over the summer. We will update our web site periodically with news that we hope will be of interest to you. Bookmark our site and check it regularly for updates -

http://www.wakejmg.org/contact_us.htm

Hopefully, we’ll see you during the summer break, but if you are planning on being away remember we’ll be starting our JMG evening program September 9.

Have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Carol Norden



Sunflower Club News (Ages 6-8)

After reviewing the make-up of soils by looking at the returned homework, we split the class in two, with half of the Sunflowers going outside to work in the Red Wolf Garden and the other half staying inside to read a book entitled, *Plants are Living Things*. The Sunflowers have their own plot within the Red Wolf Garden and, as it was overgrown with weeds, we got out the trowels and dug up all kinds of weeds, examining the make-up of their stems, roots, and leaves. It was tough getting the entire root of the dandelions! There was plenty of Lambs Ear, so we dug up lots of those plants, roots and all, to take home. One group saw a toad in our patch, but it was too fast for us to try to catch it!

We dug down 6" to take a soil sample of our little garden and took it inside our room to do the "Shake, Rattle, and Roll" experiment so that we could see the different layers of soil particles in the sample: sand, silt, and clay.

Next, we looked at a large zippered plastic bag that had some ingredients in it that we will compost to make HUMUS. They are: green plant matter, brown plant matter, water, and air. (Well, we can't SEE the air, but we know that it is in there!) Mrs. Z made up the mixture at home, just as the Sunflowers will make up their own mixtures – for homework – that we will examine when we meet in May AND use these in our garden! This is the assignment:

Homework due May 13: Compost Experiment ... Get started SOON!

You will need:

- 1 quart-size plastic freezer bag
- 1 cup greens (rich in nitrogen: fresh plant material such as lawn clippings and young weeds, fruit and vegetable scraps, tea bags, coffee grounds and filters), chopped or torn into small pieces
- 2 cups browns (rich in carbon: dried plant material such as chopped woody branches, fallen leaves, straw, cornstalks, shredded newspaper), chopped or torn into small pieces
- 1 tablespoon soil
- spray mister bottle with water

What to do:

- (1) Put the green and brown matter and soil into the bag and mist it with water until the browns are moist but not soggy.
- (2) Seal the bag tightly with a zip top or twist tie.
- (3) Massage the bag daily to mix up the ingredients.
- (4) Open the bag every other day for 6 hours to aerate it. Then reseal it.
- (5) On a piece of paper with your name on it, write down any changes you observe. Be sure to write the dates, too. In 2 to 8 weeks, you will have dark brown compost. What does it smell like?
- (6) Bring back your compost and your written observations to class on May 13.

We hope to see you on May 13, the last class before the Summer Break!

Mrs. Z, Jan, and April

Dandelion Paws News (Ages 3-5)



We hope everyone had fun learning about different ways of planting seeds and that spring flowering ornamental plant called the azalea. Did you ever think you could plant pea seeds in a Ziploc bag filled with dirt and expect them to grow? Or for that matter plant grass seed on a sponge? If you did not finish your picture of the azalea bush, please finish it at home and bring it in for show and tell. If any of your seed plantings have taken root, bring one of them in as well. At our May meeting, our last for this school year, we will award the certificate of completion for any of you that have attended 6 or more sessions of our Dandelion Paws.

Miss Mimrah and Mr. Peter will be your teachers for May. We really like having you in the Dandelion Paws and hope you enjoy the class as much as we do.

We look forward to seeing you in May!

Judith Harper, Mimrah Hossain, Peter Zierz, Leaders



Wildlife Club News (Ages 8-11)

We look forward to seeing you in May!

Bianca Howard, Jason Botts and Priscilla Haddad, leaders

Wildflowers/Weedbusters Club News (Ages 12 & up)

We know that the earth is a biosphere, which literally means ‘ball of life’. Well, at our April meeting we made biojars – more specifically, bio-mason-jars. Each jar has everything it needs to sustain the life in it with little or no help from us. We collected soil from our garden on the extension grounds and placed it and a small plant inside a mason jar. Add some leaf litter, bugs and worms, a sprinkle of water to start things off and, viola, a self-sustaining biojar! The plant will supply the oxygen for the bugs and worms. The wastes from the bugs and worms will supply the nutrients for the plant. The homework assignment was to do the following:

- Add some creatures to the jar. We didn’t find any in the soil we dug so they needed to be added from home. Pill bugs and earthworms will work great.
- Sprinkle the soil with just enough water to make it moist, not wet.
- Seal jar and place it in a bright spot. Be careful it does not receive direct sunlight or it will heat up too much and kill all the organisms.

Students should see water droplets form on the inside of the jar. This is the condensation step in the water cycle. It will be interesting to see how long the jars can sustain themselves. In fact, feel free to bring them to our next meeting so we can all see how they are doing.

Looking forward to it!
Cheryl

Other Opportunities

Wake County Youth Garden Contest

You still have time to register for our local garden contest, but must do so soon. The registration form and a letter with more information can be accessed on our JMG web site

http://www.wakejmg.org/contact_us.htm.

Before you forget, review the information, complete the registration form, and mail/give to Carol Norden. The contest is open to ages 5 – 18 (age as of December 31, 2010). You may grow vegetables or flowers; if you have a combination of the two you will be judged on whichever you have the larger number. A garden record book is required. The contest is based upon the national guidelines. If you are 5 – 14, you may submit your record book for national competition in early September. Details can be found at

http://www.njha.org/pdfs/youngam_gardening.pdf .

Plant Identification

At a recent parent meeting we talked about scheduling a leisurely walk at the

J.C. Raulston Arboretum to give students and parents an opportunity to learn more about what to look for in identifying plants. Anyone interested in participating on Sunday, May 23, from 3 – 5 p.m., please e-mail Carol Norden <cnorden@bellsouth.net> to confirm your attendance.

You are encouraged to go to http://www.njha.org/projects_hortid.html to learn more about the contest. The contest is comprised of three parts: identification of plant material, a multiple choice written test, and judging the quality of specimens.

Please e-mail Carol or see her at the May JMG meeting to confirm you will attend the session at the Arboretum.

Other Reminders:

- Remember to wear your JMG T-Shirts
- Be ready for class at 7:00 pm.
- Don't forget your homework! If you have not completed 4-H registration forms, please do so now.
- Turn in your Garden Contest Registration Forms and get started on your plans!
- Sign up to do a 4-H Presentation or Demonstration.
- Remember our Severe Weather Policy: If Wake Co. Schools are cancelled; JMG 4-H will not meet.