



IN-TOWN GARDEN IDEAS

Published by Ron Melander Garden Service

WWW.RonMelander.net

Volume No.3 Issue No.1

What We Do

Service is the name of the game.

January first, 2004 marked the beginning of my sixth year in business. I must be doing something right because here I am, still at it. The main thing for me is trying to keep my clients happy by doing whatever it takes. No matter if I see your garden on a weekly, twice monthly, or monthly basis, or even if you do a lot yourself and just need me occasionally or if I have consulted for you or if I did a drip irrigation or other type of project for you and now come only if you call, I always try not to let you down. But sometimes we can take things for granted or we get busy and do not take the time to communicate as often as we should, and so I thought I would remind you all of some of the different types of services I can provide in addition to traditional garden care and maintenance. [Color rotations or installations for special occasions](#) There is nothing like a splash of color to make a green garden glow. Let me know if you would like me to bring in more color. Keep in mind that the after-care usually requires frequent visits unless you have drip irrigation and/or are doing the watering and feeding yourself. [Drip irrigation](#) I love messing around with drip/spray/micro systems. If you want pots in your garden and don't have time to do the watering than you probably need drip. The pleasure of container gardening is greatly enhanced when you find yourself with more time for feeding and caring for your container plants. [Ponds and fountains](#) Any garden that has a water feature should have sparkling clear water. Usually a filter on the pump and some plants will do the trick to balance your water feature, particularly if you have fish. If you have a small water feature without fish, than sometimes an occasional bleach tab will do the trick. Our feathered friends prefer drinking non-chlorinated water though, thank you very much. [Regular or occasional clean ups](#) Have leaf blower (& electric pressure washer), will travel. Especially in the summer and fall months, we are available to do a quick clean up of your property. We need access to an outlet plug.

All materials are bagged or trashed as it is unlawful to blow into storm drainage areas.

A Favorite Flower

Gloxinia sylvatica

Please go to my web site to see the bright orange color of this plant. I cannot get it to print out like it looks on my computer screen and in real life. This is a plant I knew very well in the 1970s as *Seemannia*, named for German botanist Berthold Seemann 1825-1871. We used to grow it in the warm greenhouses along side African Violets, Epicia, Kholeria, Streptocarpus and other gesneriads. I've noticed it for sale in an area nursery the past three years or so and have discovered that it is pretty cold hardy. In fact, it seems to prefer the cool temps of our fall and winter months when it puts on quite a display. I have about a dozen in one bed which I have covered three or four times when it was to go below 32 and although a couple of them have been cold damaged, on the whole they are doing quite well. One of the reasons I like this plant is because it does not require the kind of sun that pansies or snap dragons need. It does fine in diffused light. We need more colorful cold hardy flowers for our gardens that will bloom in indirect light. If only it could take a hard freeze :(



Daniel Bumgarner

SCAD student a big help

A Film and T.V. student, Daniel has been a big help from the very beginning of his employment with me on Friday, June 13th proving it a lucky day! He loves animals and has started a small house-garden-pet sitting service. If you are traveling and need help, give him a call. He is also on the look out for interesting shoot locations. Daniel lives on East Jones Lane and you can reach him by calling 236-8445 -H or 704-619-4354 -C

Ron Melander Garden Service
122 East Taylor Street
Savannah, Georgia 31401
Fax/Phone 912-236-1894
Cell 912-441-7124

WWW.RonMelander.net

Releasing 'Good' Bugs into Savannah Gardens

Announcing a new service

As most of you know, I do not use pesticides. An alternative concept that I have been brewing up for a while is to use 'good bugs' to fight 'bad bugs'. I love the idea of letting nature do the work and Savannah has the perfect climate for this. One example of *nature naturing* that I noticed last year came to my attention because a variety of small birds were making quite a racket in a *Pyracantha*. At first I could not understand what they were up to but they seemed to be having a real ball. Observation is so important so I stood there looking up at them and watching. Suddenly it hit me that they were actually eating the aphids from the succulent new growth. I watched as the birds would go out to the very end of the branches and reach their head around to pluck off what must be a sweet treat considering the fact that aphids produce a sugary substance and probably are full of it. I knew the aphids were there because the week before I had noticed a sticky film on some of the leaves of the orchids below which can cause the black sooty mold to grow.

Beginning this spring, I will start a new program using natural predators to battle scale, aphid, and other pesky herbivorous insects in our gardens. I am partnering with one or two producers of beneficial insects and will be distributing them to our Savannah gardens later in the spring. My main concern is for the damage caused by aphids on crepe myrtle trees (and the associated black sooty mold), scale insects on camellia, holly, & Magnolias and the summer outbreaks of whitefly on some gardenias and other plants. At press time the details are being worked out but I am not planning on using the typical praying mantis (which actually consume as many beneficial insects as harmful insects), nor am I releasing the field collected convergent lady beetles which

typically fly away. No, we will try some good bugs that are not widely known. These beneficials have been studied, are reared in an insectary (a sort of factory for raising bugs) and are used frequently in commercial greenhouses worldwide where pesticides are not used. I am planning on launching this service to a number of my regular clients, especially those with any of the aforementioned pest problems. With trials we should be able to establish another population of nature's helpers that will over-winter like the already prevalent green and brown lacewing and ladybug larvae which we have here. Some of the ways we can encourage beneficial insects to over-winter are by leaving the natural leaf fall in the beds. Cover it up with a layer of mulch to dress it up. I generally like to use pine straw or pine bark mulch. As long as they find bugs to eat when they emerge, they will stick around. Not a problem in Savannah!

Colorful Trash

Found in East Gaston Lane

Garbage collection has never been a favorite subject of mine. But we all remember the old fashioned round metal cans with the lid that had a handle on it which were in such wide use before these huge monsters came on the scene. When the Lane family restored and re-created the northeast corner of the landmark historic district back in the 60s, a lot of pains were made to hide those cans by strategically burying them in little silos. I love Sylvia Udinsky's attempt at beautifying her modern can at 226 East Huntingdon Street (and her son David's on the eastside, I understand). My Grandmother used to hand paint her white sneakers with floral patterns so I have a soft spot for Sylvia's 'artistic expression'. The truth of the matter is probably related to Sylvia's attempt to differentiate *her* can from the many cans next door. You GO girl!

