

October Meeting Follow-up



Lucky for us the clubhouse was available – we finally got rain!

We had a good turnout for our meeting. Folks were interested in getting some tips from the person behind all the beauty at Town and Country.

Lucky for us the folks at Moody and Rabin were willing to help me figure out how to contact Cheryl!

Below are notes from Karla and I have included some of the images Cheryl showed us – great ideas for sprucing up your own pots.

Thank you to Roxanne for the crostini, to Barbe for the muffins and to Peggy for the bundt cake. All were delicious.

RECIPES – seasonal treat – Apples

Apple Muffins with Crumb Topping

<https://www.momontimeout.com/apple-muffins-recipe/>

Apple Bundt Cake - <https://iambaker.net/apple-bundt-cake/>



Apple and Brie Crostini

FIRSTFRUITS FARMS

1 baguette, thinly sliced on the bias
½ cup Kirkland Signature Almond Butter
3 oz brie cheese
1 large Honeycrisp apple
Fresh cracked pepper
½ cup candied pecans, chopped (for garnish)
¼ cup honey

Heat oven to 375 F. Arrange baguette slices on a rimmed 8 x 13-inch baking sheet. Thinly spread almond butter on one side of each baguette slice, about 2 tsp.

Slice the brie and the Honeycrisp apple thinly so one flavor doesn't overpower the other, about ¼-inch-thick slices. Place brie on top of almond butter spread. Set apple aside.

Bake 5 minutes, or until cheese is melted.

Top crostini with apple and pepper. Sprinkle pecans on top for garnish and drizzle with honey. Serve immediately. Makes 4 to 6 servings, about 12 crostini.

**Garden Club Meeting
October 5, 2023**

The meeting took place at Nottingham Forest Club.

Announcements

Barbara highlighted features in the October newsletter, including meeting dates, workshops, and field trips.

Garden Tip

Bluebonnet seeds have hard shells that must be scarified before planting. You can do this by scraping the shell on concrete or using sandpaper. Another method is to freeze them overnight and pour boiling water on them after removing them from the freezer to crack the shell. Only ~30% of the seeds germinate, so it can take several years to fill a bed. Use seeds from other flowers in the meantime to fill the flower bed – or plant the seeds with live plants. It will take several years before the bed fills out. Questions? Talk to Melissa Endicott.

Speaker

Cheryl Langford of Color Specialist Landscaping gave us tips for creating beautiful pots. Cheryl is responsible for the containers and landscaping at Town & Country, as well as other sites around town including the Post Oak district, various shopping centers, and country clubs. She started her business in 1985.

Cheryl showed us photos of various installations her company has done around town, pointing out some of the plants they use, and the timing of the installations. Typically, they plant a given bed 3 times per year: March-April, July-August, and November-December.

- Pack in the plants tightly to make a very full arrangement.
- Set pumpkins on hay bales, or on top of a container. They will rot if placed in contact with the ground.
- She gets pre-chilled tulip bulbs from Holland. They are planted ~ Jan. 10–20; do not plant them in December. (The rest of the bed is planted in November.) Plant the border first, to figure out the spacing, the plant the tulips or other plants in the bed.
- Use flowing plants that cascade over the edge of the containers. She likes to use 10" baskets, but it depends on the container size. Smaller containers might need only 4" or 6" baskets.
- She likes bright, vivid colors and contrasting colors to make the arrangements stand out.
- Pay attention to the planting zone, especially when purchasing plants online.
- Deadhead (remove) spent flowers to encourage new blooms. Keep plants trimmed to maintain their look, growth pattern.
- She uses growth regulator, mainly in the summer, to keep the plants' growth in check.
- The plants need regular fertilization because frequent irrigation leaches the minerals from the soil. She uses liquid fertilizer twice monthly. She also uses other fertilizers such as Microlife, Osmocote, Color Star
- FoxFarm Lucky Dog "soil" preferred. It's a soil-less mix, available in a bale (compressed) or bag. She gets it at Plants for All Seasons garden center.

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- Large planters don't dry out as fast and are more showy than small containers.
- Plant gel – might help, but not user friendly. Can mix the dry crystals in the soil when planting but have to be careful because it expands when watered.

Plants for height:

- Duranta – in a standard form
- hibiscus tree
- rose tree
- bottle brush
- robellini palm
- dwarf canna lilies
- spiral colonnade holly (preferred over spiral ligustrum, which has not been doing well in extreme temperatures)

Hardy shrubs:

- parsoni juniper
- dwarf yaupon holly
- colonnade holly

Flowering plants she likes to use include:

- magenta snap dragons (winter)
- cyclamen (winter. She sources from CO)
- World's Favorite tulips (plant January 10-20).
- white ornamental cabbage (winter)
- Amazon neon dianthus (use mid-size as they are sturdier, and less prone to falling over; also place other plants around it to help hold it up)
- dusty miller
- silver falls dichondra
- geraniums (plant in early spring as they do not tolerate heat well)
- pentas (if established before it gets too hot, and protected from afternoon sun)
- vinca (have done well this summer)
- lantana (have done well this summer)
- banana split sedum ("spiller" to cascade over pot edge)
- bonfire begonia
- blue princess verbena

Plants for shady areas:

- cyclamen
- primula
- caladium (some favorites include scarlet flame, strap leaf, lemon blush)
- impatiens (maybe ok, but some can be fickle. New guinea impatiens ok)
- ferns (holly, wood, fire, fox tail, asparagus)
- ligularia

Cheryl assembled plants to demonstrate making a fall planter. They included:

- purple fountain grass

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- croton – prefers curly leaf variety for more color than regular leaf
- anthurium
- crossandra
- kalanchoe
- ornamental peppers
- aurea (related to creeping Jenny)
- gourds/pumpkins – drill hole in the end and insert a stake in them to include in the arrangement

She explained an idea for changing planter for Christmas. She would pull out the plants and change out for the following plants:

- A large red poinsettia in middle
- White cyclamen around the poinsettia
- And then as a spiller – silver falls dichondra

Planting tips:

- Fill container approximately ½ way with soil before adding plants. Plant the plants “tight,” avoiding oxygen pockets in the soil.
- For huge containers, there is no need to fill them entirely with soil. Use a light-weight filler, such as Styrofoam peanuts or charcoal, in the bottom.
- Plant the plants at a slight angle, facing you, rather than true vertical. Think, “What is the face of the plant?”
- If planted against a wall or fence, put the tall plant towards the back, rather than the center.
- Plant tall plant first, then work your way with larger plants, and outward to edges of pots, finishing with fillers and spillers.
- If repotting a rootbound plant, you may cut off the lower portion of the root ball.
- Container should have a hole in the bottom for drainage.
- Put Microlife or other slow-release fertilizer in the soil when planting.
- Cheryl uses both Micro-life granular types of fertilizer at planting time or Nelson Colorstar – depends on needs of plants
- Cheryl likes to use colors that “shock” – things that don’t seem to go together – orange and hot pink for example

The above plant lists are just some suggestions that Cheryl mentioned (and able to capture in notes). They are not an all-inclusive list of plants that Cheryl uses or recommends.

Samples of her work:

Good for future planting ideas!



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