

# The Maypop Hill Newsletter

Jan.-Feb. 2013

An occasional report on what's growing at Maypop Hill Nursery  
and the Miley homestead in Norwood, Louisiana;

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It's still winter here in south Louisiana.  
Deciduous trees are waiting for warmer &  
sunnier weather before pushing new leaves out  
into the cold harsh world.

Some of our Witch-hazels  
(*Hamamelis virginiana*),  
including the one in the foreground,  
didn't make their spidery yellow  
flowers in November or December  
when they should have.  
Does that mean two more  
weeks of winter?

Although the landscape looks lifeless,  
we allergy-sufferers can't breath a sign of relief.  
Some plants are already making pollen,  
causing sinus misery for many people.  
Last week it was our beautiful cedars.  
This week, according to [Pollen.com](http://Pollen.com)  
it's pollen from elms, bald cypress,  
and nettles.

At least we're not shoveling snow and  
shivering from freezing temperatures like  
the people up North.





**We found a dead woodpecker outside the sun room which serves as an unheated greenhouse. To prevent more of our beloved knockin-birds” from crashing into the large window, we hung a screen to break up the optical illusion that deceived the poor bird. Hundreds of thousands of birds are killed each year when they fly into plate glass.**

**Woodhenge, made from recycled stumps, is undergoing renovations. Its trail leads to Holly Gully, which heads downhill to a creek. Native azaleas, Sweetshrub, Mountain Laurel, and native wildflowers will soon be waking wake up and struttin’ their stuff.**





**Look out Pinkie! Our pet flamingo better watch his step. If not, he'll get a fierce bite from the fire ants which have made a mound near his nest.**

**We've never seen so many fire ant mounds before, no doubt because of all the wet weather we've had.**

**Fire ants were imported accidentally decades ago; they're extremely hard (or impossible?) to eradicate. They are fast and ferocious, sneak into your socks, and run up your wrist before you even know they're there.**

**They inflict painful bites to humans who aren't aware they're in the line of fire ant fury. And it's not just us they attack. Fire ants will eat just about anything, plants, ground-nesting birds, native bees, injured animals that are unable to escape in time.**

**Solutions?** Every hardware store in the South sells bags of fire ant control products. Do they work? Probably yes, temporarily. Are they good for the environment? The answer depends on the person you ask. And you, dear reader, know that we Maypop Hillers have a lot of concerns about pesticides. So let's ask the Howard Garrett, aka the Dirt Doctor, what he thinks.

***Neither toxic poisons nor chemical growth regulators are necessary to control fire ants. The concept of A&M's new two step recommendation has one fatal flaw. It doesn't work. It's the same program that has been being used for years, and fire ants still rule. I know – used to use that program myself.***

**[http://www.dirtdoctor.com/Organic-Fire-Ant-Control\\_vq123.htm](http://www.dirtdoctor.com/Organic-Fire-Ant-Control_vq123.htm)**

**So what does Mr. Garrett recommend? He and other organic gardeners have come up with various homemade recipes containing citrus oil, compost tea, molasses, vinegar, liquid seaweed.**

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# All-Purpose Gardening Recipe

First, make a roux:

- ⌘ one gallon livestock manure (horse doody is best)
- ⌘ 5 gallons water (collected rain water preferably.)  
Use 10 gallons for strong manures from chicken or other animals
- ⌘ Optional: fish emulsion, composted matter, molasses, apple cider vinegar

Let broth seep for 2 weeks; stir daily; cover with window screen or other big lid to let it breath.

## To use as an organic fertilizer (manure tea)

Dip and pour at base of vegetable plants, fruit trees, etc. Dilute by half for young plants, tomato seedlings, etc.

## To use as an anti-ant antidote (Dr. Dirt's formula)

- 1 cup compost tea/manure tea
- 1 ounce molasses
- 1 ounce natural apple cider vinegar
- 1 ounce liquid seaweed

To this mixture (Garrett's Juice), add 2 ounces of orange oil, made by covering a "bunch" of peelings with water. Drench mounds with the juice. I've killed ants overnight with variations of this, with the addition of lots of red pepper.

Puppies also enjoy nutrient-rich horsey doo-doo, which we call Scooby snacks."



*Geaux natives y'all*

Maypop Hill Nursery & Publications

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