

# CASWELL HORTICULTURE CLUB

## JULY 2011 NEWSLETTER

**Welcome** new member, ***Susan Thompson!*** Susan is married to Kerr, a Caswell County native. They divide their time between their farm on Long's Mill Road, and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Her participation in the CHC will be dictated by Kerr's teaching schedule at Gettysburg College. Please add Susan's email address to your directory: [sthomps0910@gmail.com](mailto:sthomps0910@gmail.com).

Remember, if you have not received your CHC directory, go by the Agriculture Building, Agriculture Extension Office to get it. Tonya has them in the front office.

As usual we take a break in July, as a large number of members are away. It is too hot in the south to do much away from air-conditioning. There is **no July meeting**. We'll be back on schedule in August for our important planning session at the ***Yancey House on August 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 for our Spring Seminar 2012***. Please begin now to think of desirable and attractive speakers for this event. This must be established early on and is our first order of business.

### June meeting – Heirloom Gardens

On June 16, eight CHC members had a delightful visit to Heirloom Gardens on Hodges Dairy Road in Caswell County. Laura Smith Singleton and Jan Smith, our hostesses for the day, gave us a thorough tour of the Smith family farm which has evolved from a tobacco farm of the past to a multipurpose agricultural business that includes organic gardening products for sale at the Regional Farmers Market in Greensboro and a commercial kitchen for production of canned tomatoes, salsa and pimento cheese, which are marketed under the Moon Creek Farm label and sold at the Farmer's Market. The latest business venture for Heirloom Gardens is the addition of an Events facility on the grounds.

Of particular interest were the mushroom beds, located in a grove of pine trees. The shitake and oyster mushrooms grow on short logs which have been inoculated with mushroom spores. They are a big seller for Moon Creek at the Farmer's Market.

A box lunch, prepared especially for the garden club by Laura, was served under the shade of huge trees on the grounds. Everyone seemed to enjoy their food—as well as the conversation. We welcomed our newest club members, Gladys Graves and Susan Thompson.

Thanks to Nettie for arranging this meeting! *Cathy Long*

***Gardening FYI:*** One of my favorite gardening rewards is the propagation of my plants. I love getting free plants! Rooting will give you true offspring from the parent plant. Hydrangeas are among the easiest plants to root. Coleus can be rooted in the following manner quite easily also. My method follows:

Rooting mixtures: Perlite and sand, mixture of perlite and potting soil (without fertilizer), mixed together until it is light in weight, or commercial rooting soil. Have one gallon containers ready or use a clear plastic storage box with a clear lid. Soil should be dampened throughout, not soggy. Have something as a cover to create humidity, best for one gallon containers are clear 2 liter plastic bottles with tops cut off. Or, or if you are able to mist the cuttings *regularly*, it will work without lids. The storage boxes are mini greenhouses.

Take tip cuttings, approximately 6" long, just below a leaf node, 45 degree angle, remove lower leaves, leaving the top three or four. I avoid cuttings with flowers. Cut those remaining leaves in half. If you take the cuttings from a friend, place a wet paper towel and cuttings in a closed ziplock bag until you get home.

If you have fresh rooting powder, new to the season, dip the cutting in water, then in the powder (use an amount taken from the container so not to compromise the remaining powder – do not return that amount to the container once you have used it), tap off excess and put in a hole you have made with a pencil. Press soil up to the cutting.

In about four weeks you will have a new plant! June and early July are good months for taking hydrangea cuttings. Once a tug offers resistance, you probably have a new plant. Pop it into a container with potting soil, keep it watered, and in the shade throughout the growing season, and if roots appear out of the bottom, up your container to the next size. By fall you'll have a new plant to put into the garden! Or one to overwinter in a container for the plant sale in two years! Keep in mind that they're called hydrangea– hydra - water!