



Henderson County Master Gardeners Weekly News Article March 6, 2017

HCMGA Spring Conference: The Plant Kingdom's Dark Side

by Paula Winter

Henderson County Master Gardener Association (HCMGA) will host its annual Spring Conference on Thursday, March 30, at the Hart-Morris Conservation Center, 5601 CR 4812, Athens, featuring author Amy Stewart.

In her *New York Times* bestseller '*Wicked Plants: The Weed That Killed Lincoln's Mother and Other Botanical Atrocities*', Stewart takes on Mother Nature's most appalling creations. It's an A to Z of plants that kill, maim, intoxicate, and otherwise offend. Drawing on history, medicine, science, and legend, Stewart presents tales of bloodcurdling botany that will entertain, alarm, and enlighten even the most intrepid gardeners and nature lovers.



Photo courtesy of Terrance McNally

Enjoy dinner and a presentation by Stewart, as she shares the dark little secrets of the plant kingdom, some of which may be lurking in our own back yards.

Find out which plant killed Abraham Lincoln's mother, which shrub ignited a global war, and what plant has killed 90 million people. From strychnine to castor bean, from poison sumac to monkshood, from carnivorous plants to weeds that spontaneously combust, Stewart introduces an unforgettable cast of characters and tells their tales with her own wicked sense of humor.

Stewart's talk is accompanied by dazzling photographs, historical images, copper engravings, and other visuals as illustrations.

Join HCMGA for this enlightening and entertaining event. Doors open at 5:30 pm, dinner at 6:00 pm, with Stewart speaking at 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$25, which includes dinner. You are encouraged to purchase tickets as soon as possible, as the event is expected to sell out.

Sponsorships, along with book sales and a raffle at the conference, will provide funds for the programs HCMGA will provide in 2017: the DREAM garden at the Arboretum, the children's garden at South Athens Elementary, the Summer Series workshops, and participation in booths at local events, all of which are free to the public. These programs allow HCMGA to fulfill its mission: to provide members of the community with relevant research-based information needed for successful, sustainable, and healthy gardening.

For more information or to purchase tickets, call 903-675-6130 or email HendersonCMGA@gmail.com.