GARDEN INFOFEST
2007 GARDEN INFOFEST IS A BIG HIT!

As the sun rose over Lake Lewisville on the morning of October 6, Denton County Master Gardeners were already busy at Upper Trinity Regional Water District working on the final setup for the 2007 Garden InfoFest. Educational and vendors’ booths were readied, the gardening demonstration area was set up, children’s activities were ready to go, plants were lined up to be sold to eager customers, silent auction items and door prizes were on display, and the Upper Trinity board room was ready for the first speaker. Teamwork paid off, and we were ready to open the gate around 8:30 as members of the first children’s choir started arriving for their performance.

More than 450 people attended the day’s event. Activities provided fun and education for all ages. Five expert speakers on various gardening topics were on the agenda in Upper Trinity’s Board Room, they reached approximately 200-250 people. Outdoors our visitors enjoyed the music of 2 children’s choirs from the Denton Independent School District; gardening demonstrations throughout the day; educational booths on soil, bugs, wildlife, growing and using herbs, and organic gardening; and plant sales which are dear to all gardeners’ hearts. Children’s activities provided educational fun projects for the children who attended the InfoFest with their parents. Door prizes were awarded throughout the day, and a Silent Auction contributed to the fun atmosphere. As each visitor walked through the gate they were greeted by Master Gardener volunteers and received a “goody bag” with giveaways as well as an event program and a door prize ticket. Our gardening vendors were a hit with the visitors, and many of the vendors have asked to be included in future events. Our 4-H partners helped support the children’s activities, made and displayed fantastic scarecrows and provided a food booth that offered food and drinks for sale to our visitors and volunteers.

This is the third year the Master Gardeners have provided a gardening education event in the Fall for the citizens of Denton County, and this year’s event was our largest and most successful. The theme of our Garden InfoFest this year was Gardening for Pleasure and the Planet. It speaks to the enthusiasm our members have for all aspects of gardening and our emphasis on using good gardening practices to make our part of the world more beautiful and environmentally sound. Our public events provide Master Gardeners the opportunity to fulfill our mission by offering an opportunity for us to educate the public about sound gardening practices.

Most importantly over 70 Denton County Master Gardeners volunteered their time and talents to make this event a success. Master Gardeners participated in the planning process that began in June, served on various teams, and came out to Upper Trinity to help set up the event and clean up afterwards. They also donated items for the silent auction and door prizes. Husbands and children “volunteered” for setup and cleanup duty the day of the event as well, and their help is especially appreciated.

All the InfoFest volunteers were invited to a post-event get-together to “celebrate success” and discuss how we can improve the event for next year. Many of our volunteers were able to attend, and we now have good ideas for the 2008 Gardening for Pleasure and the Planet Garden InfoFest team to consider when planning next year’s event.

ZOE BROXSON—TEAM LEADER

Special thanks go to our 2007 Garden InfoFest team leads:

Door Prizes - Judy Brough
Speakers - Annell Burns
Publicity - Peggy Durrett
Children’s Activities - Susan Kilpatrick/Jenny Estes
Event Program - Julie Levine & Janie Farler
Plant Sale - Mary Morrow
Outdoor Educational Activities - Diana Kline
Vendor Coordination - Diana Kline & Martha Ahearn
Goody Bags - Elizabeth Snapp
Venue Design - Carolyn Tinner
Silent Auction - Peggy Widmer
Co-Project Managers - Zoe Broxson & Linda Williams

SEE PICTURE GALLERY PAGE 20
2008 VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

At this writing there are 24 weeks left until this event takes place on May 10, 2008...We kicked-off the planning sessions on November 6. If you were unable to make it and would like to participate - all you need to do is show up for the next session on Monday December 10, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. at the Extension Office. There is much to do and as we all know the work is lighter when there are many to share.

It has been determined that we could make the event bigger, more exciting and cohesive if we put the tour and plant sale under one umbrella, sharing the energy, funds, and creativity. It also made sense to always Garden for Pleasure and the Planet - in an effort to become more environmentally conscious. Now we have a theme for the Spring and Fall events......in the long run, we hope that it will allow us to conserve rather than re-invent the wheel each year for both of these events.

Some opportunities for helping out or sharing a good idea are:

**Education** (an element for every garden - demonstrations, etc.): This team includes Carolyn Tinner, Carol Fitch, Sandy Hiatte and Joanne Fellows

**Advertising** (Timeline, flyers, tickets, presales, news): This team includes Nancy Ross, Linda Williams, Pam McClimon, Adele Petty, Darla Bostick, Connie Johnson, and Zoe Broxson

**Plant Sale** (pass along, purchase, themes): This team includes Peggy Widmer, Nancy Ross, Donna Wolfe, Carol Fitch and Mary Morrow

**Gardens and Captains**—see below

There are many other things to do ......If you know how to build a data base for email addresses - we have been collecting emails from folks who would like to be notified of our next event - let us know. There will be some leg and phone work to do, if you like that. Who knows, the sky is the limit. It is going to be a fun and exciting year to be involved and this is one way to kick-start those creative juices.

Remember, 24 weeks.......So much to do, so little time. Contact Linda Williams -Team Leader, to let her know how you would like to share your special talents 972-355-3780 or lylelinda@msn.com.

2008 FEATURED GARDENS

We have some very special gardens in the southern part of our county. Jenny Estes is sharing her garden in Corinth, it is well-known among the younger set as the garden with trains. This special garden is used with the Junior Master Gardener program in tandem with elementary schools who visit to learn about math, reading, and much more! Across the lake, we have 4 more gardening sites waiting to be seen. Janet Gershenfeld’s garden is our “back by popular demand” garden and has many little secret areas including recently laid flagstone by best-pal Joan Stanley and a pond installed by Joan’s son. If you look closely you will see a dragon and many other wonderfull whimsical features. A huge array of plants, gazebos and tile pathways are Janet’s forte and will be enjoyed by all who view. Not to be outdone, Anita Maynor’s garden is a marvelous vision in xeriscaping. The side yard is a treasure-trove of native plants and the back yard pool is trimmed with unbelievable palms. The plant sale will be nestled in the shade under her beautiful trees along the driveway. Further around our garden trail is Rica Potenz’s garden which is primarily sunny. Her dry creek bed, fairy garden and pool/pond areas are simply delights for the soul.

Finally we are presenting the Hilltop Elementary in Argyle as a Master Gardener project. The school acquired grants to keep this project in wonderful condition, and the active participation of students makes it a lively spot.

Mothers’ Day weekend is always special, but our tour makes it a wonderful venue for Denton area folks to get out with loved ones to view our gardens. Our garden tour has proven to be the best way we reach our local community. In tandem with the plant sale the same day, it has also become our largest fund-raiser of the year.

Thanks to our Selection Committee and to those who volunteered/or were volunteered their gardens for viewing! The committee had a hard job choosing. Workdays will soon be in place so be looking for ways to contribute in preparation of these fine private gardens. You can check our website for details. New committees are in place for advertising, educational venue for each garden, and a few more. There is a place for you to plug into this fun event. Mark your calendars now for the second Saturday of May 2008--May 10.

Think green! Darla Bostick, Garden and Captain Leader
New Kids on the Block...
Lots of new faces running around DCMGA—here are a few of their stories...

Betsy Schenck... was born in Indiana and moved to Denton 39 years ago. In Indiana her mom did all the gardening, but she remembers rhubarb growing wild in everybody’s yard. Her passion is the Victorian Garden at Bayless Selby House in Denton. She is also interested in medicinal and poisonous plants, native and xeriscape plants. She is dreaming of a master plan for her yard/garden filling it with native and drought/heat tolerant plants.

Sherri Schaible... is from Newport, Rhode Island, but moved to north Texas 22 years ago. She finds gardening in Texas more of a challenge due to clay soil and the heat/drought summer conditions. She has a passion for wildlife habitat, native and perennial plants. She has plans to turn her backyard into a landscape for wildlife. She would like to achieve a nurturing and supportive year round environment for wildlife that currently utilize her yard as well as attract more wildlife.

Sandra Smith... is an Air Force brat and found herself in Texas, Mississippi, California, Alaska, Missouri, Virginia and back to Texas 2 years ago. She finds gardening easier in Dallas than Austin, since she was on the escarpment in Austin. She has a passion for tropicals, which are found around her pond, an English garden is another part of her yard, and she has 18 raised beds for azaleas. She loves to attract birds, good insects and lizards to her yard.

Elizabeth Snapp... was born in Lubbock and raised in Dallas. She has a passion for year-round color. She is planning a butterfly garden, a scripture garden, herb garden and cutting flower garden for her backyard. She wants to attract a few friendly birds and enjoy watching them in a relaxing, beautiful space.

...not a creature was stirring, not even a ...

We all have fussed when the squirrels attack our birdfeeders, but Judy Brough let this little guy get his fill....

SEND YOUR FAVORITE “CRITTER IN YOUR YARD” PHOTO TO ROTOTELLER06@AOL.COM
New Kids on the Block...
Lots of new faces running around DCMGA—here are a few of their stories...

Kay Warren... is from Natchez, Mississippi and moved here 3 years ago. She is having more luck gardening here than in Mississippi. She found out a sprinkler system here is a must. She is following Howard Garrett’s suggestions for soil prep, drainage and plant choice. Her passions are all flowers, garden structures, and she loves to dead-head and dig in the dirt. She plans to make everything in her garden bigger and better.

Judy Stewart... comes from S.E. Nebraska and has been in this area since February 2005. She finds the length of the growing season, dealing with the summer heat and adding amendments to the soil the main things to deal with in Texas. She has a passion for Roses, especially Earthkind, landscape design and native plants. Judy plans to have an entirely native and adapted plants in her garden. She has reduced the area of turf in her yard by 75%.

Peggy Widmer... landed in Sanger 36 years ago from Venezuela. Her passions include vegetable gardening, roses, and she loves to work with children volunteering at the Denton Christian Preschool. She has plans to improve the landscape around her yard.

For the year 2007, the Speaker's Bureau completed 34 individual presentations. We reached a total of 673 Denton County residents. We added approximately 5 new, active members who have already given presentations. Happily a few new members are from this year’s intern class. The list of “topics” available for presentations has expanded considerably. More are in the works for the future.

Since my tenure as Committee Chairperson for the Speaker’s Bureau ends in December, I would like to thank everyone who has worked willingly and diligently to help make this project an ongoing success. I am grateful for all the help and support that has been given me through the last few years. In particular I would like to thank Donna Wolfe and John Cooper who were always there with suggestions and encouragement. I am especially appreciative to those members who unfailingly “answered the call” when I approached them to do just one more presentation. And to all who helped out during these last three years, I offer my most heartfelt thank you!

Remember, the Speaker’s Bureau is always looking for new members! So if you are interested, please let us know.

Annell Burns
We did it!
We endured the cold, blistering wind to bag trees for Cool Shade for Third Grade. It took the combined efforts of both Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists this year to complete the project. About 30 brave volunteers tagged 3,825 trees, then delivered them to the kids in the Lewisville and Denton school district.

There were many new faces that day, interns from both Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists as well as some familiar faces of veterans. I also saw some friends and classmates that I have not seen in awhile. Busy as we were, we still found a few minutes to catch up on each others’ lives and to make new friends.

Many of the volunteers came for the service hours but all came because they cared.

Some of the people had already earned their hours, but they still showed up to put in a full day of hard work. Others could have chosen an easier way to contribute, but they came to give support. Several colleagues stepped up and helped when there were not enough volunteers to finish the job and take the trees to the schools.

The success of this project or any other project can only be achieved when people care enough to get involved. As our organization grows, our projects become more ambitious. We embrace all those who want to be a part of our organization and share our vision.

I want to thank all the Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists who helped with Cool Shade for Third Grade this year. It was hard work but with the effort of both organizations, “cross pollination”, we had great success! Thank you to everyone!
**pots in the garden: expert design and planting techniques**
by Ray Rodgers
Timber Press, 2007

Ray Rodgers covers many aspects of using pots to enhance the look and mood of a garden landscape. He covers various principles of using pots such as color, form, texture, and placement. He demonstrates how pots can be used as focal points within the landscape or as a way of directing the line of sight to a focal point. The type of materials, pots, and plants to be used for successful container gardening are covered and illustrated with beautiful photography. Many plant combinations and plant types are discussed with an emphasis on the impact that they will make in the garden. After reading this book you will be well on your way to being an expert container gardener.

**absolutely beautiful containers: The ABCs of Creative Container Gardens**
By Sue Amatangelo
Ball Publishing, 2007

We have all seen them, beautiful containers with a balance of color and plant texture that appear to be way beyond anything that we could do at home. Sue Amatangelo has written a book that takes much of the guess work out of creating a beautiful container to enhance your garden or patio. The author provides descriptions and plant selections for creating 200 containers. The range from simple with one plant to more complex designs with up to eight plants arranged artfully in the container. The designs include plant placement with consideration given to color, plant texture, height and size. After reading this book I am sure that you will rush out and create your own beautiful container display.
Peonies? I am trying to grow them here (they are a major pain to establish, but once you do they can be easy to care for - we will see after this strange year - - but this is what I know about planting them:

Dig the hole and prepare it for the life of the plant - - if planted too deep they will never bloom - - if you cut off more that 1/3 of the blooms they will never bloom again - - they require ants to pollinate so you should not plant them next to the house or a sitting area - - they require support in wind.

Here is an official blurb I borrowed from the web that says it all a lot better with details:

The best time to plant peonies is in early fall (early September until mid October are ideal) so they will have time to become established in the soil before winter. Mature plants will reach a diameter of three feet or more and so it is important to give them enough room to grow and develop.

The planting hole should be at least 18 inches deep and about 18 inches in diameter. At the bottom of the hole, add a 4 inch layer of organic matter such as compost, pine bark, or well-aged manure. A half cup of a good plant food (10-6-4), bone meal or superphosphate should be mixed into this layer. (You should avoid adding fertilizer to the soil that will be in direct contact with the roots.) Fill the hole half way with a mix of garden soil and compost, and then set the root division in place with the eyes facing upward. Spread the roots outward and evenly. Water thoroughly. Make certain that the eyes will be no deeper than two inches when the planting is completed, or your Peony may fail to bloom.

Peonies should be fed in early spring and again halfway through the growing season. Cultivate a half cup of low nitrogen fertilizer such as (5-10-10) into the soil when the stems are about 2 or 3 inches high. Use care not to damage the roots, and try to keep the fertilizer from direct contact with them. Over-fertilizing, especially with a high nitrogen plant food, results in weak stems and reduced flowering. Peonies are particularly partial to potash, and will benefit from the incorporation of a couple cups of fireplace ash into the soil in early spring.

During the dry summer months, Peonies require regular, deep watering. A spring application of 2-4 inches of leafy, organic mulch will help to conserve the soil moisture and at the same time keep the soil cool and control weeds. This mulch must be removed and destroyed before winter and a new, fresh winter mulch of loose straw or evergreen boughs added, to help control disease.

Larger flowers will be produced if the side buds on each stem are removed as soon as they are visible. The terminal bud on each stem tip is left intact. To prevent the flowers from breaking or bending over during a strong wind or rain, provide a sturdy plant stake and tie the stem loosely to it with garden twine or strips of cloth.

Remove the flowers as soon as they fade to prevent seed development, which will use up needed food reserves, and affect next years bloom.

In the fall, after the foliage dies back, cut the stems back to three inches, remove and destroy them.
I. CALL TO ORDER
President, Sandy Hiatte, called the DCMGA Board of Directors Meeting to order at 9:05AM. Those in attendance were Zoe Broxson, John Cooper, Sandy Hiatte, Mary Morrow, Linda Williams, Donna Wolfe and Brenda Wellenreiter

II. MINUTES
Mary Morrow, Secretary, presented the minutes to the board via email, they were accepted as written.

III. TREASURER’S REPORT
Brenda Wellenreiter, Treasurer, submitted the Treasurer’s Report, it was discussed to the satisfaction of the Board. The ending balance as of September 2007 is $14,330.00. See attachment 1. The Garden InfoFest exceeded budget by $469.00. Linda made a motion to approve the overage, Brenda seconded; discussion held and a committee will consider the pros/cons of purchasing a speaker system, all present approved. The Advance Training Dust Off your Toolbox, Etc. exceeded budget, with an overage for Advance Training of $359.46 for the year. Zoe made a motion to approve the overage, Brenda seconded; during discussion it was decided supplies not used during Dust Off your Toolbox, Etc. will be used for future classes. All present approved.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS
A. Nomination committee – Diana Kline has declined the position of 2nd V. President at this time. Zoe will pursue filling the position before the next General Meeting.

B. Garden InfoFest Wrap up and other projects – 450 participants from the local communities attended the GIF, and we had 70 volunteers from DCMGA. Upper Trinity was pleased with the outcome and has offered their site for future DCMGA programs. Zoe is working on placing a Project Manager for next year’s event. Overall GIF was a success; vendors were very pleased with their results and have expressed an interest in returning—some even picked out their spot for next year. Cool Shade for the 3rd Grade is complete. Many thanks were expressed to the Master Naturalists for their support with bagging trees and distributing them to the schools. With the program expanding we need to increase the volunteers for this project and consider changing the location for the tree bagging to an area away from inclement weather, i.e. the North Texas State Fair Grounds warehouse.

Zoe has sent an email to all project managers asking for 2008 Project Continuation Forms.

V. NEW BUSINESS
A. 2008 Spring Event – Kick-off was held on Nov 6th. The name of the event Gardening for Pleasure and the Planet and will be used for both the spring and fall events. Most positions were filled and items for consideration were discussed.

B. Retreat Wrap-up – 32 members participated in this year’s Retreat. Several new Ideas for 2008 were discussed. The 2008 Board of Directors will meet on November 15th to finalize the 2008 Plan.

C. 2007 Class – 13 members of the 2007 MG class have completed their hours. Maurine is having mentors call the interns to discuss plans to complete their service commitment before the December deadline, so they can attend graduation. If unable to do so, the intern has until March 2008 to complete their commitment.

D. Round-up – there was a good turnout of 17 MG wannabes at the Round-up. We have 32 applications for the 2008 class. Sandy, Linda, Zoe and Mary will be conducting interviews the remainder of November.

E. 2007 Graduation – the guest speaker will be Dr. David Creech. His fee is $500 plus expenses. His topics are located at Swifthill.com. Two topics were decided on by the members present and a ballot will be taken at the next General Meeting for the final decision.

The Board discussed the nominations for the Board Award.

F. December MG Board Meeting – will be held at Sandy’s home. The 2008 Board members will be encouraged to come and prepare for taking over for 2008.

G. 2007 State Award Nominations – are due to the state on January 22nd. Garden InfoFest, Cool Shade for the 3rd Grade and the GIF pamphlet will be considered.

H. Programs – Linda advised Susan Randolph from Lantana Gardens will be our presenter at the November meeting. For February, Steven Chamblee will return with a presentation on Texas Tough Plants.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40am.
After talking this afternoon with Dr. Jim Reinert, TAES entomologist at the Dallas Center, I have confirmed suspicions that this year may provide us with yet another pest—this time on turf grass. The tropical sod webworm (TSW), *Herpetogramma phaeopteralis*, first appeared (in my memory, at least) in this area a little over ten years ago and has remained mostly obscure and little noticed since. Judging from the numbers of moths seen recently in shrubbery and landscape beds near lawns in the north Dallas area, lawn owners may be in for an unpleasant surprise over the coming month.

The larva of the TSW feeds on bermuda grass, zoysia grass and St. Augustine grass. When severe, lawns can be stripped by the feeding. St. Augustine grass, in particular, can be slow to recover from feeding damage. The larvae feed on grass at night and retreat to the thatch during the day. Larvae are dingy cream in color, but may appear green when feeding. Newly hatched larvae feed on leaf surfaces, but after about 10 days they are large enough to completely devour foliage.

Adult moths are brown with a wingspan of 20 mm (0.8 in.). Wings at rest are triangular in shape. According to Dr. Reinert, the adults will be most easily seen by brushing shrubs and tall grasses in landscape areas around the lawn. The secret to preserving your lawn this fall is simply diligent observation and spraying at the first sign of damage. Most lawn insecticides should work well, including spinosad (low toxicity option), malathion, Sevin or any of the pyrethroid insecticides. Granular insecticides are probably not as effective as sprays. If any of you confirm lawn damage or high populations in your county, Jim Reinert (j-reinert@tamu.edu) and I would be interested to hear from you. For more information, see the Sod webworm page at [http://insects.tamu.edu](http://insects.tamu.edu). For a list of pyrethroid insecticides, see [http://citybugs.tamu.edu/FastSheets/Ent-1046.html](http://citybugs.tamu.edu/FastSheets/Ent-1046.html)

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**ASK THE MASTER GARDENER...**

Elizabeth Snapp researched the aphid after several calls to the help desk this summer, and believe it or not, there is a little bit of good in everything, read on...

"The crape myrtle aphid, *Tinocallis kahawaluokalani* (Kirkaldy), is the most important insect pest in the mid and lower South. Crape myrtle aphid is a host specific to crape myrtle so it does not feed on any other plants. These aphids reach high populations during mid summer. They excrete honeydew copiously as they feed on the plant sap which in turn serves as food for the fungus, sooty mold. Sooty mold colors crape myrtle foliage and wood black, prompting many people to apply insecticidal controls for the aphids. STOP and consider the following before you control the aphids! Crape myrtle aphids and their sugar laden honeydew serve as food for twenty to thirty species of beneficial insect predators (good bugs that feed on other bad bugs) and countless bees and wasps. The crape myrtle flowers also attract and provide nectar and pollen to many important pollinating bees. Crape myrtle and its aphids attract these beneficial parasites and predators to crape myrtle and other plants in the surrounding area. The large numbers of aphids encourage the beneficials to remain in the area. Because the aphids are not native to the U.S., most of our native predators do not prefer these aphids over the native species. The predators will leave crape myrtle periodically to search the surrounding vegetation—your yard and garden—for their more preferred prey, your other plant pests, thereby, enhancing natural biological control. However, since the crape myrtle aphids build up to such high populations, the predators usually cannot control them on the crape myrtle. To enjoy this biological pest control you have to tolerate some crape myrtle aphids. In 1993, a new exotic ladybird beetle, *Harmonia axyridis*, reached Florida as well as colonizing most to the U.S. This ladybird originates from Southeast Asia and prefers to feed on Crape myrtle aphids. As a result crape myrtle aphids are often eliminated on a localized basis. *H. axyridis* is the only predator that can completely eliminate crape myrtle aphids on individual plants. This often has profound effects on the native beneficials. On the other hand, *H. axyridis* has a very broad host plant and prey range and has become a very important predator of many pests." From an article "Crape Myrtle: Beauty and Biological Control by Dr. Russell F. Mizell, III, Professor of Entomology and Dr. Gary W. Knox, Professor of Environmental Horticulture of the University of Florida.

...and then sometimes there isn’t...from Michael Merchant, PhD, BCE
Bird flu, Swine flu, Dog flu...another flu pandemic of 1918 proportions...is it in the forecast? If flu isn’t enough to scare you, what about MRSA? This super bug, MRSA (short for words we can’t spell), an antibiotic-resistant staph infection is showing up outside of the hospital environment. Not a new thing, MRSA has usually been known to affect the sickest of patients in hospitals and nursing homes, but now we hear that it is affecting otherwise healthy people, athletes and children.

A recent edition of the Journal of the American Medical Association, suggests that MRSA infections may be more common than previously believed. Although one in five of the patients infected with MRSA died (from a 2005 report), it is noted that it isn’t always obvious whether a death was caused directly by the superbug or hastened by it.

MRSA can cause serious skin infections by entering the body and bloodstream through a cut or abrasion and often infects surgical wounds. (Thinking twice about that face lift?)

All of the scientists involved in the studies of flu and MRSA, point out one common and simple protective measure...clean hands. Whether you are running for public office and shook too many hands or simply can’t wash up like you should, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Make your own hand sanitizer using 16-oz. of 70% alcohol and 1 tablespoon each of the essential oils of tea tree and lavender (both have antibiotic properties). Glycerin (1 Tbsp.) can be added to moisturize the skin.

Thinking about flu or MRSA, remember to eat lots of nature’s antibiotic, garlic, raw if possible. Chop 1 or 2 cloves and add to your salad or just chew them up if you are secure in your relationship.

Now, like Mama said, “Don’t pick at it and go and wash your hands.”

Excerpt from TOFU by Darryl and Marsha Herrin, owners and operators of Olive Forge Herb Farm, Haddock, Ga., and members of the Middle Georgia Master Gardener Association
I just finished the Master Gardener Entomology Class and have been trying to catch butterflies for a small collection. Low and behold I caught something. It made the front page of the The Dallas County Lepidopterists’ Society. Click here and scroll down a bit to see the little guy.

http://www.dallasbutterflies.com/

It seems the northern most area it has ever been reported is Austin - till I got my net on it - now I am top record.

Joanne Fellows

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This is the solution to the "mud hole" as my friends fondly referred to it. It's a low place in their very shady back yard that they never could do anything with. They finally came up with a plan using river rock and lirope in varying shades. I think it’s beautiful and they don’t have their animals tracking in mud anymore.

Submitted by Susan Dawson

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GARDEN TIP: There are all manner of seeds that need to planted between now and January because they need a shot of cold weather in order to germinate. The annuals in this category include poppies and larkspur. Many perennials, including shrubs and trees, require cold and wet to sprout through their tough seeds.
HOLIDAY PARTY

DECEMBER 12

10AM

HOME OF

ZOE BROXSON

1. To get to Zoe’s house, you need to drive to the intersection of Shiloh Road and Cross Timbers Road (FM 1171) in Flower Mound. There is a strip shopping center with a gas station on the NW corner, a fire station on the SW corner, undeveloped property on the SW corner, and a ranch with goats, llamas, horses, etc. on the NE corner. You can get to the intersection of Shiloh Road and FM 1171 from various locations in Denton County by any of the following routes.

2. From IH35W, take the FM 1171 (Flower Mound/Lewisville) exit and travel east which is the only option. Drive to Shiloh Road and turn right. Continue to Step 5.

or

3. From IH35E, take the FM 1171 (Flower Mound/Main Street Lewisville) exit and travel west. Drive to Shiloh Road and turn left. Continue to Step 5.

or

4. Go to Country Club Road/McMakin Road/Shiloh Road (all the same street with different names depending on the community you’re in) and drive south. Continue going straight when you get to FM 1171. Continue to Step 5.

5. Continue on Shiloh Road after FM 1171 and drive to the third street which is Raintree Place. Turn right and drive to the fourth street which will be Hidden Trail. Turn left and drive to the second street which will be Ridge View Ct. Turn right and we are in the second house on the right. There is a long narrow driveway which you are welcome to use. However, it doesn’t accommodate very many cars and it’s easy to get blocked in. There’s lots of street parking available, and car pooling is always a good option. The front door is at the end of the long driveway.

Bring a covered dish and a present to exchange, value $10
JANUARY 9TH, 6:30 PM
2008 ANNUAL DINNER & GRADUATION FOR THE CLASS OF 2007
CELEBRATIONS BALLROOM
HIGHLAND VILLAGE
SPEAKER: Dr David Creech
“Gardens you Love, Gardens you Hate”

FEBRUARY 13, 9:00 AM
PRESENTATION BY Steven Chamblee
“TEXAS TOUGH PLANTS”
RATIONALE- WHY BOTHER-WHAT'S THE POINT? In 1991, each Texan sent 6.5 pounds of garbage daily to landfills, far above the U.S. average at that time of 3.5 pounds per person per day and much higher than the European average of 2.5 pounds per person per day. As of 2001, the Texas individual daily waste production had risen from 6.5 pounds to 7.1 pounds. Assume it is higher now. **FACT: 65-70% of landfill waste in the United States is organic and CAN be composted.** Although composting at this level requires facilities on a municipal or regional level, (which establishment we need to enable), individuals can make a significant contribution by reducing the organic elements in their garbage bound for landfills, where organic materials DO NOT decompose.

**WHAT IS COMPOST?** Material resulting from the natural break down of organic material (anything that is alive or was once alive) by bacteria, fungi and other organisms in the presence of air and moisture (neither of which are available to organic matter buried in sealed landfills). Compost is a natural product used to enrich soil and enhance its viability - basically a giant natural vitamin for the soil.

**WHY IS COMPOST SO GREAT?** Nature has always recreated its dead organic matter into compost, renewing itself. Nature is the ultimate recycler and compost is the perfect product of its self-perpetuation. Compost is organic, non-polluting, renewable, inexpensive and effective, especially long term.

**WHAT CAN COMPOST DO FOR ME?**
- Improves the soil structure, porosity, and density, thus creating a better plant root environment.
- Increases moisture infiltration and permeability of heavy soils, thus reducing erosion and runoff.
- Improves water-holding capacity, thus reducing water loss and leaching in sandy soils.
- Supplies a variety of macro and micronutrients.
- May control or suppress certain soil-borne plant pathogens.
- Supplies significant quantities of organic matter.
- Improves cation exchange capacity (CEC) of soils and growing media, thus improving their ability to hold nutrients for plant use.
- Supplies beneficial micro-organisms to soils and growing media.
- Improves and stabilizes soil pH.
- Can bind and degrade specific pollutants.

**WHY SHOULD I CARE?** Because compost is safe to use, it will not harm children or pets (our other children) and allows beneficial insects to live and do their jobs, naturally eliminating nasty insects and keeping plants healthier without pesticides. Compost, through its microbial action actually enriches soil, improves its structure and nutrient value. Compost enhances soil’s ability to retain moisture.

**HOW CAN I USE IT?**
- **LANDSCAPE MULCH** apply evenly a one to three inch layer of compost around base of trees, shrubs, and other plant materials. Avoid placing compost against the plant’s trunk or stem. May be watered to help keep it in place.
- **TURF ESTABLISHMENT** apply a one to two inch layer and incorporate to a depth of 5-7 inches.
- **Lawn Fertilization** add a thin, covering layer of compost (1/8 -1/4 inch) on the lawn once to twice a year (spring and fall).
- **Garden Planting Bed Establishment** evenly apply a three to four inch layer and incorporate to a level of 6-8 inches.
WHERE CAN I GET COMPOST?

-Make it- Learn the basics through reading (see REFERENCES) and/or take the Master Composter Course offered periodically through KFMB. Announcements of sessions will appear on this site, in newspapers, local publications, and in the Metro section of the Dallas Morning News as well as in the Town of Flower Mound’s bulletin. (see below for some basics if you want to make your own compost) ***

-Buy it- Not all commercial composts are created equal. Look for well-digested, finely-screened compost which is dark, crumbly and indiscernible as to origin of plant materials

HOW MUCH DO I NEED?

**Formula:**
Number of square feet to be covered (Length x width) x inches of compost (expressed as depth in inches) x.0031 = cubic YARDS of compost needed.
To convert cubic yards to cubic feet (for smaller areas) multiply cubic feet x 27.

***IF YOU WANT TO MAKE YOUR OWN COMPOST:

The Rules of Rot:

-MASS: minimum 3x3x3=27 cubic feet (1 cubic yard) because mass will reduce by about 75%.

-MATERIAL: Carbon (brown): Nitrogen ( fresh green) Ideal 30:1 The carbon is the cake and the Nitrogen is the frosting.
   Examples of Carbon (burn readily): wood, straw, leaves, paper, cotton, fresh pine needles
   Examples of Nitrogen (“stinky”): manure, hair, feathers, coffee.

-MOISTURE: 50% of the pile as you build it should be water. You want the consistency of a damp sponge

-AIR: (Oxygen) needed for aerobic decomposition.

-TIME: depends on the manipulation of the first four principles.

NO-NO’s

No pet poop from carnivores
Food scraps added only to the center of the “hot” pile. NO MEAT, only vegetative material. IF THE PILE IS DISTURBED BY ANY ANIMAL, STOP ADDING ADDITIONAL MATERIAL.

Good luck and happy composting!

REFERENCES:

Books:
The Rodale Book of Composting, Deborah L Martin and Grace Gershuny, editors. Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA. 1992. (Paperback ISBN: 0.87857.991.5) This is the “Bible” of composting!
The Secret Life of Compost. Malcolm Beck. Acres, USA, PO Box 88001 Metairie, LA 70011.
Secrets to Grow Great Soil. Elizabeth P. Shell

Periodicals:

Other:
livingearth.net
jgpress.com (Bio-Cycle)
malcolmbeck.com
garden-ville.com
dirtdoctor.com.

GARDEN TIP: Leave some mulch lying near your garden in a pile. Soon the ground beetles will nest underneath it. Ground beetles will then eat many of your other gardening pests.
The DCMGA Retreat was held on Wednesday, October 31, at the Women’s Club Building in Denton. Thirty-two Master Gardeners attended and enthusiastically shared their ideas about where we can address our attention in 2008.

Since our Retreat was scheduled for Halloween several of our members attended in costume which definitely created a festive atmosphere. There was a costume fashion show before the lunch break, and members voted for their favorite. Although several costumed members received votes for favorite costume, the winner by a large majority was Bea Header, Candy Striper Volunteer (Mary Morrow) whose bloody attire was beyond scary, especially with the meat cleaver planted firmly in her head.

Thanks to Mary Morrow for her awesome table decorations, given away for door prizes, and to Clarice Lucee who arranged lunch, snacks and drinks for the attendees.

We left the meeting with several takeaways for our members to address during 2008. They are:

Current classroom space limits size of intern class to 30 people. If we have more than 30 applicants, are there alternatives for larger space available?

Our next step is to check with John Cooper to determine feasibility of moving class outside Extension Office. Based on his feedback, investigate facilities in Denton County. (Emily Fowler Library, Upper Trinity Regional Water District, Fairgrounds, Other)

Identify and standardize how Denton County Master Gardener Association is presented to public. Include website name, help line number and mission statement.

The next step will be to develop a team to look at opportunities for DCMGA promotion. Ideas from the Retreat include acquiring logo items such as magnets and bookmarks that can be handed out at public events, signature block on correspondence including electronic, Speakers Bureau, business cards, media releases, printed handouts. The timing for adding new promotional materials and changing existing printed handouts needs to coincide with name change/new logo.

Take a look at increasing help line availability. Increased telephone responsibility/activity for Master Gardeners is expected when John Cooper retires.

The next step will be to identify requirements including recruiting additional volunteers, volunteer training, and developing a new schedule.

Perform analysis of member skills and interests to better understand volunteer availability for meeting requirements of organization now and in the future.

The first step will be to review hours sheets for 2007 to determine volunteer activity levels for each member. Develop spreadsheet to capture data. After we have a good picture of past volunteer activity, consider performing a member survey to gather information about skills and interest level for future volunteer opportunities.

Develop tools to assist project managers assess manpower requirements. Provide information on volunteer skills and interests to managers.

The next step is to talk to project managers about what type of volunteer information and tools will help them estimate manpower requirements and recruit volunteers for their projects.

Develop telephone tree for members who don’t have email so they can receive timely communications about Master Gardener projects and events.

The next step is to identify a Master Gardener who will assume responsibility for this initiative.

Address members’ concerns about DCMGA financial issues including how budget dollars are projected and spent and how cash reserves can best be allocated.

Beginning in 2008, the DCMGA president will develop a membership communication that ties annual budget to our organization’s goals as stated in our mission statement. A monthly status report that outlines accomplishments, goals, issues and a financial update will be available on the website and at the monthly meeting.

Automate hours tracking for members.

Lynda Harvey will work with Donna Wolfe and Mary Morrow to develop online system to track members’ hours for service and education.

Review opportunities to increase community outreach. Possibilities are logo item giveaways, brown bag lectures, educational CDs, landscape school.

The next step will be to form a committee to review what other organizations are doing to increase community outreach and make recommendations to the DCMGA board and membership for future activities. All members’ ideas are welcome and will be considered for possible implementation.
Address issues related to John Cooper’s retirement as Denton County continues record growth. Issues include education for intern class after 2008, telephone support, liaison to Commissioners Court, strategic management guidance for MGs, advanced horticulture questions. Will it be necessary to budget for consultants?

The next step will be to meet with John to fully understand his roles and responsibilities as they relate to Master Gardeners and address how they can be managed during any gap that might exist between his departure and when his replacement comes on board and gets up to speed with DCMGA. This initiative will include lots of “what if” scenarios due to various unknowns around who and when.

Email addresses of attendees at various Master Gardener public events have been collected over the years so that interested individuals can be notified of future events. How will email addresses be used?

The next step is to identify a volunteer who can enter email addresses in a database or create a group address on the MG computer located in the Help Line office. That computer can be used to send mass emails to individuals who have expressed interest in attending MG events.

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Let’s Take a Look at the Money

The topic of money came up at this year’s Retreat, and it was clearly an issue of great importance to many of our members. In light of that discussion, I decided to take a closer look at “the money issue” and try to gain a better understanding of where DCMGA money comes from, how funds are allocated in the annual budget and how it is spent.

The first thing I learned is that DCMGA is a mostly self-supporting organization. Denton County provides us meeting rooms and office space, office supplies, administrative support and a telephone and computer for our Help Desk. However, neither the county nor the state makes contributions to our cash position. Incoming cash comes from membership fees and dues, profits on sold merchandise (shirts, caps, plant markers, etc.), fund raisers including plant sales and garden tours, occasional honorariums for our Speakers Bureau and a modest interest income on bank deposits.

A concern raised at the meeting is that we currently have $14,330 in cash and certificates of deposit, yet we continue to work on fund raisers. That’s a valid concern as $14,000 is a substantial sum that can be applied to many good purposes.

Let’s take a look. The DCMGA 2007 budget projected income of $17,970. Dues and fee income was expected to be $5,970, and most of the remaining projected income was expected to come from merchandise sales and proceeds from fund raisers.

Where does the money go? Expenses were projected to be $21,874 in the 2007 budget. Our largest projected expense items were for monthly programs, advance training, project funding, merchandise purchased for resale, newsletters and mailings, intern costs, graduation and scholarships. The 2007 budget was very much in line with the 2006 budget, and the 2008 budget is expected to be fairly in line as well.

So, what’s the point? Based on the budget projections for 2007, we are currently spending approximately $4000 more than we make. Actual income/expenses as of the end of October indicate the same result. We are able to fund projects and other programs from our income and make up the difference by using our cash reserve. Our $14,000 “cushion” will last approximately 3½ years at the current rate, not a bad place to be. Any reduction to income will naturally decrease the time our “cushion” will last without a corresponding reduction to expenses. By the same token, a substantial expense increase without a corresponding increase to income reduces the “cushion” as well.

Options are all over the board on this issue. 1. Make more, spend less and increase the bank account. 2. Make more, spend more and increase Master Gardener opportunities and exposure. 3. Make less, spend more and go broke. 4. Make less, spend less and decrease Master Gardener opportunities and exposure. All the options provide food for thought.

A good goal for our organization is to look for the highest and best use of our resources whether it is money, people or opportunity, and our board welcomes input from all members on how to accomplish that goal. If we can increase our resources, so much the better as it will allow us to accomplish more as we work to fulfill our stated mission to educate Denton County residents about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices.
Frisco, Texas stretches across Denton and Collin counties and is one of the fastest growing cities in America. While Frisco has experienced explosive growth during the past several years, in many ways it has been able to keep its small town feel. An example of this small town atmosphere is exemplified through the collaborative work that took place recently on a landscape beautification project within downtown Frisco.

This project was born back in January when Diana Moya of the Frisco Arts Guild wanted to paint a landscape mural on a Main Street building. The idea behind the mural was to create a scenic view that would depict a rural Frisco landscape. With the idea in hand, the arts guild reached out to Gay Worley, president of the Frisco Garden Club, to help create an appropriate landscape mural. The garden club wanted the mural to depict native plants and requested assistance from Denton County Master Gardener, Rodney Sowalskie, to aid in appropriate plant selection.

As these three organizations collaborated, a rough mural design was created, leaving the final artistic design work in the capable hands of the arts guild. During this collaboration, a new idea came in to play that would take this project even further.

In front of the building where the mural was going to be painted, sits a small park area with a gazebo that was managed by the city. While the park did have some vegetation, it was nothing special. The Frisco Arts Guild and Frisco Garden Club decided that they wanted to spruce it up since it has such high visibility on Main Street. Gay Worley worked with the city’s parks department and gained approval to develop a landscape concept for beautifying the area. Again, the garden club reached out to the Denton County Master Gardeners to aid in the development of an appropriate Texas native-based landscape design.

By the end of April, the Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA), had developed a preliminary landscape design. Then the garden club, with assistance from the DCMGA, presented the design to the City of Frisco parks department. After a thorough review of the design, the city gave the garden club permission to move forward with the project.

During the next several months, the Frisco Garden Club worked to procure project funding as well as worked with a local nursery, Shades of Green, to obtain plant costs. The club received contributions from the Frisco Arts Guild, the City of Frisco, and the Frisco Garden Club and is also pursuing a grant. With the project funded, the garden club set an installation date for the cooler month of November.

As the source of the landscape design, the DCMGA was asked to spearhead the landscape installation. A collaborative installation team was put together that included members of the Frisco Garden Club, the Denton County Master Gardener Association, and the Collin County Master Gardener Association. It took two days to finish the installation, and it could not have been completed without the direct help from Denton County Master Gardeners - Brian Byrwa, Mary Morrow, Kamen Moynihan and Rodney Sowalskie and Collin County Master Gardeners - Carrie Dubberley and Ken Liedtke.

To complete this project, the Frisco Garden Club will be installing plant signage and will be creating educational materials related to using Texas natives and xeriscaping. Feel free to visit this garden at 6800 Main Street in downtown Frisco.
SPECIALIST TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

During the November meeting, the DCMGA Board of Directors approved a program that will provide reimbursement for members who complete specialist training. The program funding was made possible by monies available when the Horticulture Fund was dissolved. Horticulture Fund board members gave the funds with the understanding that they would provide financial help to DCMGA members who took specialist training and successfully completed the requirements of that training.

To qualify, a DCMGA member must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a two-year member in good standing (i.e., a 2007 intern can apply for the reimbursement after taking a specialist training class in 2009 or later)
- Must complete a specialist training class
- Must share the knowledge of the specialist training with other DCMGA members or members of the community through teaching, written communication or other media through activities equal to 12 service hours. The time frame to complete these activities is within one year from the date of the specialist training class.
- The request for reimbursement form must be signed by the County Agent-Horticulture.
- Applicant may also participate in the Texas Master Gardener Association Tuition Reimbursement Program.
- The amount of the reimbursement per applicant is $50.
- The program is effective January 1, 2007.

The form to request reimbursement will be available from the Chairman of Advanced Training. If a DCMGA member applies for and satisfies the requirements of the DCMGA program and the Texas Master Gardener Association Tuition Reimbursement Program, they are eligible for a total reimbursement of $100.

DUST OFF YOUR TOOLBOX...WE'RE PLOWING NEW GROUND

The last DCMGA-sponsored advanced training class for 2007 was a challenging opportunity for 14 participants to use their talents and experience in the process of designing a home landscape. The concept of the training was built on the premise that master gardeners, not only have many ‘tools’ for applying the principles of design and successful gardening but are willing to plow new ground to develop new skills and knowledge.

The standard classroom lecture was not evident here. Instead, students spent their time in the field to make observations of a home landscape site to be developed and later in meetings with their teams to discuss information they had gathered in reading and computer research. In this class, ‘the process’ was the teacher. John Cooper, acting as the coach and advisor, was very generous with books and handouts, over three pounds worth, that enabled students to find much of the information they needed. Each team was charged with the goal to develop a design and present it in some visual form to the class on the final day. Attachments of a plant list, maintenance schedule and resource list were also required.

As insight to the results, here is a response from one of the students: “Although every design and every approach was different, the end results were similar in many respects. Every team did a thoughtful job of considering the site, the architecture, the inherent problems and then relating the design and plant selections to the needs of the homeowner. It was pretty cool to watch.”

The 2008 chairman of Advanced Training, Diana Block, is planning another design class for next year. If you decide to participate, you will learn that ‘plowing’ requires a significant commitment of time and effort but the fruits of the labor are rewarding.
### 2008 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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