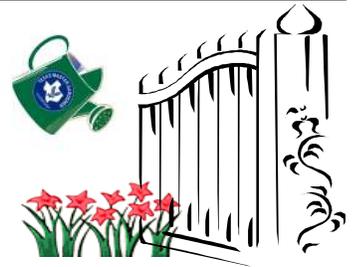




Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume III, Issue 5

Official E-letter of the Ellis County Master Gardeners Association, Waxahachie, Texas

June, 2009

Welcome to the Ellis County Master Gardener's **E-Gardening** newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to give you a month by month agenda of what you should be doing to your landscape. We will be featuring horticulture articles that we hope you will find interesting, important dates where you can find the Master Gardeners speaking, demonstrating and passing out information relative to your garden. If you would like to receive this newsletter monthly via your email address, log onto our website www.ECMGA.com, click on **subscribe**, and it will be sent around the 1st of every month. Best of all; it's FREE!

Melinda Kocian, editor

What's Happening in June?

Sunday, May 30 thru Friday, June 5th - As you drive around, especially downtown and all points in close proximity, look for artists, 50+ strong, doing *Plein Aire* painting (outdoor painting). On Friday, at 2:00 painting stops and their completed works will be taken to the Chautauqua Auditorium in Getzendaner Park for judging. The weekend of the Gingerbread Trail, their art will be on display and for sale.

Saturday, May 30, 8-1 pm. Downtown Farmer's Market Begins! Lots of wonderful fresh produce and canned fruit, jellies and jams for sale. Check out the Master Gardener's booth where you can get answers to your gardening and landscaping issues, as well as landscaping manuals, flower and butterfly wheels and the "*Treasured Recipes*" cookbook for sale.

Saturday, May 30, 10-11:30. Artist from all over, will be on the Square doing their annual "Quick-Draw" painting. Paintings will be judged and awards given, followed by a live auction at 12:00 noon.

Saturday and Sunday, June 6-7. 41st Annual Waxahachie Gingerbread Trail. Five homes on the Trail, hours from 10 am-4 pm. Arts and Crafts in Getzendaner Park, Antiques cars on the Square. *Plein Aire* artists will also be on the square and at each of the homes on the tour. Tickets can be purchased at each house, a ticket booth on the square, one at the Museum, and a booth at Main and Grand. Cost of tickets are \$12.00/adults and \$5.00/children, if purchased in advance at the Museum, through the 5th. On the 6-7th, cost is \$15.00/adult and \$7.00/children.

Saturday and Sunday, June 6-7. Arts and Crafts booths at the Getzendaner Park from 10:00 am through 5 pm.

Saturday-Sunday, June 6-7. At the Chautauqua Auditorium in Getzendaner Park, the artwork from the *Plein Aire* event will be on display and for sale.

Thursday, June 11, 7:00 p.m. The Greenery's Green Thumb Organic Club will have its last scheduled event for this year: **A Sustainable Table**. Chef Jeri will cook, Ken Halverson is providing peaches from his orchard and Pilgrim's Pride is providing the chicken. Ted and Bea Roacha from Ovilla will host this meeting. RSVP; there is a limit of 25. Contact Marilyn at 214-497-3918. There will be a \$5.00 per person charge to help defray expenses.

Friday thru Sunday, June 12-14. 5th Annual Blanco Lavender Festival. For more information about this festival and even more information on lavender in Texas, please visit www.blancolavenderfest.com.

Monday, June 15, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. Garden Inspirations is hosting a **free organic** class at 108 Ridge Crest, (Rockett in Twin Lakes Addition). Chef Jeri will bake zucchini bread. Also fresh fruit from LarKen Farms in May Pearl will be available. Ken Halverson will speak to us about the progress of his over 10,000 peach, plum, and pear trees and blackberry orchard. (Preorder fresh fruit from LarKen Orchard by calling Marilyn at 214-497-3918). RSVP at same phone number and to get directions.



Listen to KBEC.....

Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m. on 1390 AM.

The Ellis County Master Gardeners have a 5-minute segment every week, offering you helpful information on what you need to be doing in your landscape, as well as "happenings" around the county. Be sure to listen in!

Melinda Kocian

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It's June - What Needs to be Done?



Farmer's Market Herb Garden

From the garden of Arlene Hamilton

Planting and Sowing

- There's still time to plant warm-season color from 4-inch and 6-inch nursery stock, as long as the plants are kept well watered during the summer heat.
- Sow seeds for fall tomato transplants early this month.
- Plant crape myrtles in bloom to be certain that you have the desired color. Be sure the mature height and spread of your variety will fit your selected site. Hand-water for the rest of the summer, as they can dry out quickly.

Fertilizing and Pruning

- Re-blooming salvias (*S. greggii*, *S. farinacea*) and fall-blooming perennials (Mexican mint marigold, mums, and *S. leucantha*) should be pruned back periodically. Remove only the spent flowers and a few inches of stem below. This type of pruning should be completed prior to September 1st, since flower buds begin forming about that time.
- If your Bermuda lawn appears brown after mowing, try raising the height of your mower up a notch. Return it to its former height when cooler weather arrives.

This and That

- Be sure your garden beds are well mulched to help conserve water and regulate soil temperature during the forthcoming summer heat. Depending on which type you use, mulch should be 2 to 6 inches deep.
- June is the time to select daylily varieties as they reach their peak of bloom.

Garden Watch

- Gray leaf spot in St. Augustine lawns can be troublesome at this time of year. Gray leaf spot causes diamond-shaped gray-brown lesions along the midrib of the blade. A labeled fungicide will treat the problem, but to help prevent it, avoid using high-nitrogen fertilizer on your lawn from now until September.
- Check for insects and diseases. Spider mites can be especially troublesome at this time. Destroy badly infested plants. Select a chemical or organic control, or use insecticidal soap.

EarthKind™ Tips for June

A regular irrigation system audit can spot small problems before they cause excessive water use, reduced efficiency and plant problems. Regular audits should be conducted at least twice a year. For more information please visit: <http://www.waterwisetexas.org/>.



Well, it's that time again...!

Time for the opening of the Waxahachie Downtown Farmer's Market! Beginning Saturday, May 30, from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. Just think....fresh tomatoes (yum!)....and of course lots of fresh-grown vegetables from local farmers. Also, food-related items such as canned preserves, jellies, jams and salsas.

And as always, the Ellis County Master Gardeners will be on hand at their booth with timely, free hand-outs with info for all your landscape and garden information. They will have, for sale, landscaping manuals, bird and flower identification wheels and of course, their brand-new cookbook: "*Treasured Recipes*". This much sought-after cookbook will be available for purchase every Saturday. The cost is \$10.00. (p.s.-they make **GREAT** gifts!

Vegetable Gardeners Monthly

By Rick Daniel

Ellis County Master Gardener/Vegetable Gardening Specialist

Hello, and welcome to the June edition of the Vegetable Gardeners Monthly. If you have questions that this article doesn't address, just give us a call at 972-825-5175 or contact us via the web at www.ecmga.com and ask for one of your Master Gardener Vegetable Gardening Specialist.

Sow tomato seeds for your fall transplants early this month. Continue to harvest ripe vegetables. Onions should be harvested this month, as they don't do well with hot temperatures like we see towards the end of June and throughout the summer. It is critical this time of the year to apply the right amount of water at the right time. As the weather warms, you might need to water every 3-4 days and not once a week like you can get by with during a wet spring. I use drip irrigation in my garden, which applies the water only where needed, and keeps the vegetation from getting wet, which can lead to disease. I also use rainwater, which I capture and store during the wet season, to make available during the long dry season.

Featured Vegetable of the Month

By Rick Daniel
Ellis County Master Gardener



Vegetable of the Month

OKRA:



Planting dates: Plant when soil temps are between 75-90 degrees. In general April - June 1 in the spring and July 15-August 15 for fall crops.

Planting method: Soaking the seed in room temperature water for 24 hours before planting speeds germination. Sow seeds at 4-5 per foot of row and ½ to ¾ inches deep. Thin plants when about 2 inches tall to about 6-9 inches apart, and again when about 6 inches tall to about 12-18 inches apart. Rows should be spaced at least 3-4 feet apart. Okra should always be directly seeded into the garden rather than transplanted, as transplants tend to grow slowly and offer no advantages of earlier production.

Varieties: Clemson spineless, Emerald, Blondy, Lee, Louisiana green velvet, Red velvet

Culture: Enjoys hot weather and is easy to grow in healthy, well drained soil. If your soil is not well drained, you should plant in raised beds to improve drainage. Okra does not require a large amount of water and does not like to have wet feet. Okra does well throughout the summer, or you can cut it back in the summer and they will bush out again for the fall garden

Fertilizer: Likes to be fertilized a few times with organic fertilizer. Fertilize when you complete the final thinning, and again when the plant blossoms in the spring and again about at first harvest. Continue to fertilize every 2-3 weeks. Use a handful of compost and organic fertilizer per plant. For non-organic gardeners, use a handful of high nitrogen fertilizer per plant each time you fertilize

Harvest: Pick when pods are young and tender. Harvest daily, or at least every other day. Harvest pods when they are about 3-5 inches long. If you leave pods on the plant too long, they will decrease production.

Just when the Caterpillar thought that the world was
over it became a butterfly"

Anonymous

Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton
Ellis County Master Gardener



Basil *Ocimum basilicum*

By Arlene Hamilton, Ellis County Master Gardener

What better herb to feature for the month of June than my favorite, basil. This wonderful herb of summer in its many varieties is loved by the cook and the gardener. Basil loves Texas heat, full sun, and is a happy companion plant with tomatoes both in the garden and in the kitchen.

Native to Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean and tropical South America, basil arrived in Europe about 2000 years ago. Medicinal use of basil was recorded in England around 1550 and was found in the Massachusetts Bay Colony by 1621.

Basil is one of the easiest herbs to grow and summer foods require the use of fresh leaves from your garden. A gardener planning to grow this annual herb needs to pay attention to its basic needs, namely warm, sunny weather and plenty of moisture. Basil does well with hot-weather vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants. Rapid growth occurs during periods when night temperatures are above 60°F. degrees, so planting should begin in May and June. Like most herbs, basil is adaptable. Although it likes full sun, it will subsist on as little as three to four hours of direct sunlight. The plant will grow best in well-drained, loamy soil that is rich in nutrients. Good air circulation is also necessary.

Basil plants are desperate to reproduce. Their flowers come quickly. The cook's objective is the harvesting of leaves, therefore frequent pruning is necessary. To regenerate green growth basil stems must be cut deeply. When harvesting remove enough of the stem to leave only two to four leaves. Scissors or a sharp knife work best. Pruned in this manner, within three weeks the plant will have two to four new branches ready for harvesting.

Following are a few of the many varieties every adventuresome cook should have in the garden:

- 'Sweet Basil' is the most common of the plant and generally called for in pesto, tomato dishes and sauces. It has large green leaves with a flavor of mint, spice, citrus and anise.
- 'Cinnamon' was introduced to Texas and the rest of the USA by Texas herbalist Madalene Hill. The plant originated in Mexico, and has a clean cinnamon aroma with a sweet grass and mint trace. It can be used in salad dressing, vinegars and fruit salads.
- 'Dark Opal', 'Osmin', 'Purple Ruffles', and 'Red Rubin' are purple leafed varieties adding color to the garden and table. Flavor and aroma vary but the color adds a wonderful blush to herbal vinegars.
- 'True Thai' grows wild in Thailand and has a radiant purple, cone-headed flower cluster and makes a beautiful ornamental plant. Its leaves are used to flavor Asian dishes.
- 'Spicy Globe' is a compact plant with a small round shape, suitable for use as a fragrant border or as a container plant in a patio garden.

Try this easy recipe with your garden harvest:

Basil flavored Tomato, Black Bean and Corn Salsa

3 large ripe, home grown tomatoes, diced
1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 can Mexi-Corn, drained
1 bunch green onions, thinly sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 or 3 jalapenos, seeded and diced
2 tbs. fresh lime juice
½ cup basil leaves, chopped
Salt and pepper

Combine vegetables in a bowl and toss. Sprinkle with the lime juice, basil, salt and pepper and toss well. Let stand for at least 30 minutes then taste and adjust for seasoning and serve.

Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

*Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener*



Mealy Blue Sage

Salvia farinacea Benth,
Mint Family (Lamiaceae)

Size: 6-36 inches
Blooms: March through November, perennial

Mealy blue sage is named for the white felt-like or sometimes purplish, hairy, or farinaceous appearance of the calyx. It usually forms a mound as wide as it is tall. Its blue flowers are arranged intermittently in dense whorls up a leafless, terminal spike. Opposite leaves are one to three inches in length, have margins that are wavy or coarsely toothed, and have long stalks. The aromatic plants are leafy, especially in the lower portion. Several square stems rise from the base, forming a clump. Mealy blue sage is widespread on limestone soils. Because it flowers for an exceptionally long time and is not readily browsed, it is of great value to pollinators. It is a favorite plant for xeric gardens, and is often available in nurseries. Sage tea is said to reduce bodily secretions, and is useful in decreasing lactation during weaning, as well as reducing sinus mucus. The tea can be gargled or drunk to treat sore throat.

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## Highlighting the 2009 Ellis County Master Gardener Interns

### PERENNIALS

*By Pam Davis-Young, 2009 Intern*

I have loved perennials since I bought my first home in 1989. I was living in Dallas and experimented with many perennials. My only problem was I had too many shade trees; perennials need sun.

Almost 5 years ago I moved to Oak Leaf into a new house with no established big trees and LOTS OF SUN! I was so excited!

The beauty of perennials is that I transplanted all my perennials from my old house to my new front bed. Perennial plants make sense to me, they keep on coming back, so you get your money's worth. Once established, they do take a little work to dig them up to divide or to give away, keep the weeds out of the bed and keep the beds appropriately prepared.

Since taking the Ellis Co. Master Gardener Class I have learned some valuable knowledge about perennials.

- (1) I don't have appropriately prepared beds. I do not have enough organic material, expanded shale and compost. I need to add more.
- (2) I did not know that I can get free mulch from the city of Waxahachie.
- (3) I learned that deciduous perennials lose their leaves and come back from their roots and woody perennials stay green all winter.
- (4) I must admit I love flowers and color, so I have planted in my front bed perennials that come up all year long. Some examples are daffodils, thrift, hyacinth, coneflowers, day lilies, Easter lily, salvia, verbena, lantana, roses, amaryllis, coreopsis, aster, sedum, mums and spider lilies. I realize by taking the class that I have some native drought-resistant plants but I need to add more. I realize that we must conserve our water. My front bed is already established, but when I landscape my backyard it will have native and adapted plants, to include plants that attract butterflies and hummingbirds.
- (5) I have never cleaned my plant clipper. I will now clean it in between trimmings.
- (6) I usually have aphids on my roses and I get the hose and wash them off. If that doesn't work I now have a couple of natural recipes to try.
- (7) Last, I now have a lots of resources to get more information about perennials thru websites and other Master Gardeners. I can't wait to get started.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to attend this class.



## Turf Grasses: Bermuda and St. Augustine

by Pat Cheshier, 2009 Intern



All homeowners would love to have beautiful green lawns. For this to come to fruition, a certain amount of planning and research should be undertaken by those who have little experience with turf grasses. The most common grasses for lawns in the northern part of Texas are Bermuda and St. Augustine. These grasses will be briefly discussed in this article.

Bermuda grass is the most common grass in Texas. It is a hardy grass that spreads very quickly. It has stolons or runners that enable it to cover an area in a relatively short period of time. Bermuda has rhizomes which are underground stems and enables the grass to produce new plants. One major advantage to Bermuda is that it is hardy and can survive very cold winters. Conversely, one major disadvantage is that it can be very invasive and requires constant edging and trimming along sidewalks and flower beds.

There are numerous varieties of Bermuda grass. Many older lawns have common Bermuda and it seems to be a favorite of many homeowners in established areas. Common Bermuda is very difficult to find in sod form. Growers have found it easier to grow some of the numerous hybrids that are now available. Two of these are Tifway 419 and TifSport. Both of these are used by golf courses and sports areas and are beautiful grasses also. They may require a somewhat more frequent fertilization program.

Bermuda grass can be placed in lawns by sod or by planting seeds. Planting the seed requires planning and diligence. The area to be planted needs to be prepared first. About one pound per 1000 square feet should be sown. Because the seed is very small, it is best to mix it with some other medium such as sand at the same rate as the Bermuda seed. The area sown must be kept moist to allow the seed to germinate. Bermuda should never be placed in shady areas since it is not tolerant to even medium shade. It needs 5-6 hours of sunlight each day to do well. Once it is in place, Bermuda grass seems to be one of the best grasses in high traffic areas.

The second most used turf grass in the northern part of Texas is St. Augustine. This grass is almost completely established by sod but sometimes plugs of some varieties may be obtained. St. Augustine can spread quickly also by stolons. Three of the most common types are common St. Augustine, Delmar, and Raleigh. The latter two seem to be the most disease free of the St. Augustine grasses.

Because of its wider leaf blade, a fully covered St. Augustine lawn is beautiful. There is a misconception that St. Augustine requires much more water than Bermuda. Generally the two grasses require about the same amount of water to grow though St. Augustine may require more water than Bermuda lawns in very dry conditions.

While St. Augustine lawns are beautiful, the grass has some drawbacks. It will not survive extreme cold temperatures as does Bermuda. It does not have the rhizome structure that is common with Bermuda. It also is susceptible to St. Augustine Decline (SAD) and may be affected more by chinch bugs and white grubs. Finally, it is not as tolerant to high traffic as Bermuda.

We Texans enjoy beautiful well-kept lawns. A major focal point of any landscape is the turf. Lawns not only enhance the beauty of a home, it can also increase the value of the property. With research, planning, and proper maintenance of the lawn, this goal can be achieved.



## Ellis County Master Gardeners

By Suzanne Walker, 2009 Intern

Having recently completed the Ellis County Master Gardeners ("Master Gardeners") classes, I have a new appreciation and respect for our Texas Agricultural Life Extension Service ("Extension Service") for Ellis County. Growing up in Dallas and visiting my grandparents in Johnson County, I had always enjoyed and been interested in gardening. I considered, and still do consider, my grandparents the "ultimate gardeners". Their gardens and gardening skills were known throughout Johnson County. The five-week Master Gardeners class which was conducted in February, is sponsored by the Extension Service and was much more than "gardening". Our Extension Service office is one of about 3,000 such extension service offices in counties throughout the U.S. The Extension Service is under the umbrella of the U.S. Agriculture Services through a Land Grant University.

Historically, the Land Grant Universities were established by the Morrill Act of 1862. In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the Land Grant Act which donated public lands to states and at that time, territories, which could provide colleges for the

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

benefit of agriculture and mechanics arts. Congress provided each of these colleges with agricultural experimental stations. The Land Grant University for our state is Texas A&M University.

Congress created this system of services nearly a century ago to address agriculture issues of rural farmers. Today, there are fewer than 2% of Americans that farm and only 10% of Americans live in rural areas. In 2009, the Extension Service still helps our farmers grow crops but they also address urban and suburban issues in counties all over the country. The Ellis County Master Gardeners has over 100 trained volunteers that help the Extension Service answer questions about horticulture and gardening within the County. All of the information that the Master Gardeners provide to the community is research-based through the Land Grant University, Texas A&M University.

I must admit that I did not realize I would be going back to college when I applied for participation in the program. I have always liked to "dig in the dirt" and grow herbs and flowers as did my grandparents. The February 2009 Masters Gardeners class had 30 interns which is the largest class the Ellis County program has ever had. We attended classes twice a week from 8:30 am until 5:30 pm for five weeks. Our class enjoyed excellent speakers that were highly qualified, many with PhDs, in such subjects as botany, plant disease, entomology, biology, pesticide safety, lawn and turf management and trees. Ellis County Master Gardeners also instructed us in EarthKind™ methodologies, organic gardening, composting, rainwater harvesting, herbs and vegetable production and many more topics. As the result of this program, I am much more aware of how important it is to help educate ourselves and our community about these topics not only for today but for future generations.

Within the Country, Master Gardeners has many ongoing projects such as the Waxahachie Downtown Farmer's Market, the Midlothian Conference Center garden, the Veteran's Memorial garden, the Junior Master Gardener's, and the Garden Expo. The Garden Expo will be held this year on Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am to 5 pm at the Waxahachie Civic Center.

As you can see, this is a very active organization and I am proud to be a small part of it. If you have horticulture questions call or come by the Ellis County Extension Service office. The phone number is 972-825-5175. The email address is [www.ecmga.com](http://www.ecmga.com).

### Did You Know?

by Betty Reuscher  
Ellis County Master Gardener

Did you know that June 22-28, 2009, is National Pollinator Week?

Scientists estimate that in the United States, native bees perform as much as \$3 billion worth of pollination services annually. Bees and other pollinators are essential to human survival. Without them we would lose most of our plants because three-quarters of the world's flowering plant species rely on animal pollinators. As gardeners, we can be pollinator-friendly by being wildlife-friendly as we create sustainable ecosystems and landscapes.

Here are some suggestions from the National Wildlife Federation:

1. Provide pollinators with the best food by choosing plants native to your area. For a list of specific recommendations, consult [www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org).
2. Select plants that produce heavy nectar and pollen.
3. Plant a diversity of species to attract bees, butterflies and other animals. Plant for year-round blooms, night nectar and pollen production.
4. Be a "messy gardener" by leaving some unmulched areas and brush piles that serve as sources for nesting materials.
5. Provide water in shallow birdbaths or pools with edges for pollinators to easily alight. Add muddy areas, for some wasps and bees need mud to build nests.
6. No not use pesticides.



Pluck not the wayside flower; it is the traveler's  
dower.

~William Allingham

## Cecile Brunner Rose

By Micki Roark, Ellis County Master Gardener



Family: Rosaceae  
Genus: Rosa  
Class: Polyantha

This sweet smelling little beauty was probably grown in your grandmother's garden. It is still extremely popular, and with very good reason. 'Cecile Brunner' is one of the most consistently fragrant, healthy, long-lived and thornless roses that can be grown in our gardens.

The scent is deliciously sweet and spicy, like a tea rose. It repeatedly produces large clusters of perfectly shaped, 2-3 inch pink blooms. And is resistant to our most troubling rose diseases, black-spot, mildew, and rust.

Bred in 1881 by Joseph Pernet-Ducher of Lyon, France, 'Cecile Brunner' was named for the daughter of Ulrich Brunner, a renowned rose grower at Lausanne, Switzerland. Its popularity spread throughout the world until it has become one of the best known of old world roses.

The fully double, urn-shaped blooms burst forth on a compact bush from spring until frost. The name polyantha refers to its clusters of blooms that are held on sturdy stems. The bush remains less than four feet tall, with sparse, shiny green leaves.

'Cecile Brunner' may also be know as: Madame Cecile Brunner, Mademoiselle Cecile Brunner, Maltese Rose, Mignon or The Sweetheart Rose.

'Cecile Brunner' roses prefer sun, but do quite well in partial shade. They should be spaced at 18-24 inches when planted. It grows in bush form and may spread at least 24 inches. From April until November it may be covered in flowers, creating a strong color impact in your landscape.

The 'Cecile Brunner' rose is included in the World Federation of Rose Societies' **Old Rose Hall of Fame**. Every garden should have at least one!



## Trinity River Audubon

At 6,000 acres, the Great Trinity Forest is the largest urban hardwood forest in the United States. The Great Trinity Forest supports a diverse community of plant and animal species and contains a unique mixture of bottomland hardwoods, aquatic and wetland systems and grasslands. The Trinity River Audubon Center, opened October 2008, and serves as the gateway to explore these amazing resources.

The actual building site, near a prominent bend in the Trinity River, is located eight minutes south of downtown Dallas. This convenient location enables Audubon to focus on serving schoolchildren and provides unique, nature-based experiences. The land, formerly an illegal dump site, has been reclaimed by the City of Dallas and will demonstrate how a municipal liability can be transformed into a major asset.

The Trinity River Audubon Center is the flagship Center for Audubon's education and conservation initiatives in Texas. Education programs address the need for students to improve and strengthen their science and critical thinking skills while aligning with the TEKS state-mandated curriculum. The Center, designed by architect Antoine Predock, 2006 AIA Gold Medalist, provides direct access to a myriad of opportunities for the citizens of Dallas: nature viewing, hiking, picnicking. In the Dallas Trails Master Plan, the numerous citywide trail systems are designed to connect to the Trinity River Audubon Center, providing a premier trail destination location. Once this happens, individuals and families from all over the Metroplex may ride, blade, run, or walk to the Center.

Visitors have the opportunity to explore hands-on exhibits; miles of nature viewing trails; the Children's Discovery Garden; and sustainable building features including a vegetated roof, rainwater collection system, energy efficient systems, and recycled materials. The Trinity River Audubon Center will be the first LEED-certified building constructed by the City of Dallas Parks and Recreation Department. [www.trinityriveraudubon.org](http://www.trinityriveraudubon.org)

## It's June - What Else Need to be Done?

By Carolyn Foster  
Ellis County Master Gardener



### Vegetable Facts

Healthy soils make healthy gardens. Be it flowers or vegetables, often we need to feed the soil. Vegetables absorb huge amounts of nutrients from the soil. Some, like corn and spinach, are nitrogen hogs, while onions and peppers use and store more phosphorus, potassium and minor nutrients like magnesium. Frequent nutrient replenishment is a must. Compost is one of the best ways to maintain soil health. A 1/2" application each spring replenishes what crops have removed during the past growing season. Two inches will help build up deficient soils organic matter and nutrients.

For better tomatoes, trellis them. This improves air circulation, keeps animals and soil-dwelling pest away and decreases soil borne diseases. Tomatoes can be "determinate" (bred to grow to a certain height) or "indeterminate" (continue to grow as long as they live). Catalogs indicate which is which.

"Determinate" tomatoes form fruit on branches (suckers) that grow between the main stem and first branches. If removed you have removed the fruit production sites. In contrast, removing suckers is a good way to prune "indeterminate" plants. Because they grow from the top of the stem, they continue to produce blossom-and fruit-bearing branches. Got it?

"Open-pollinated" seeds are similar but not identical to parent seeds. Plants grown from these seeds produce seeds "true-to-type" with characteristic traits from the parents, and are called "heirlooms". "Hybrid" seeds result from crossing two or more plants. They are different from parent plants but almost identical to every other plant grown from the same cross. "Saved" seeds from these can resemble any part of the combined plant crossing. So much info, so little time and space.

## Announcing the 2010 Ellis County Master Gardeners Photo Contest

The contest will begin June 1<sup>st</sup> and run thru January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010. Winners will be announced at the 2010 ECMG Expo, Ellis County Master Gardener E-Gardening newsletter, the Waxahachie Daily Light and on the Master Gardener website [www.ECMGA.com](http://www.ECMGA.com).

In a break from the past, this year's contest will be free and all entries will be submitted by way of the Ellis County Master Gardener's website. Simply log on and click on photo contest.

The categories are:

- Single specimen (i.e. one tulip or a field of bluebonnets) and
- In the Garden (full backyards, water gardens, containers etc.).

Prizes for this years contest will be \$100 in gift certificates for 1st place, \$60 for 2nd place and \$40 for 3rd place; in each of the two categories. The gift certificates are from The Greenery, Roland's Nursery, Tex-Scapes Greenery in Ennis and EarthTones Greenery in Midlothian.

For full details and to enter, please click on photo contest at [www.ECMGA.com](http://www.ECMGA.com).



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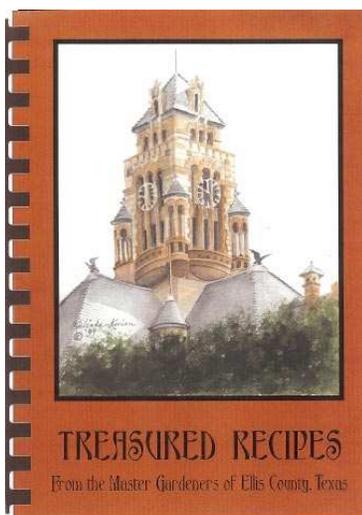
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