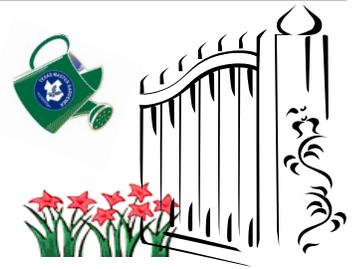




Ellis County Master Gardeners' E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume VI, Issue 6

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

July, 2012

Welcome to the Ellis County Master Gardeners' **E-Gardening** Newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to give you a month-by-month agenda of what you should be doing with your landscape. We will feature horticultural articles that we hope you will find interesting, and 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/Susan Clark, co-editor

What's Happening in July?



Saturday mornings from 8am—1pm
410 S. Rogers
(across from City Hall in the old lumberyard building)
Visit the Master Gardeners' Booth!
☉ Useful gardening tips
☉ Plants and herbs for sale
☉ Free handouts...Some items for a fee
☉ Tell a friend to sign up for the **E-Garden Newsletter**... it's **FREE!!!**

Wednesday, July 4, 10am, July 4th and Crape Myrtle Parade. Don't miss the Master Gardeners' parade float! Downtown Waxahachie. Call (972) 937-2390 for details or check the Chamber of Commerce website.

Monday, July 16, 4pm—7pm. BRIT Research Projects Symposium. For more info, go to www.brit.org.

Friday, July 20 and Saturday, July 21, 10am to 5pm. "Texas Quilt Round-Up" Show will take place at the Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle Drive. Call (972) 723-7919 or visit <http://www.elliscountyquilters.com/> for more info.

Indian Trail Master Naturalists

Monday, July 23, 7pm. "The Role of Value Judgments in Natural Resource Management" hosted by Indian Trail Master Naturalists. Brett Johnson, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Urban Wildlife Biologist, will explore issues such as emotion vs. science and the individual vs. population. This free program follows the 6 p.m. MN meeting that is open to the public. First United Methodist Church, 505 West Marvin Ave, Waxahachie.

Cedar Ridge Preserve
7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas
www.audubondallas.org

Saturday, July 21, 8am—11am. (*Note time change) **Conservation in Action Workday.** Work in the butterfly garden and on the trails. Water and snacks provided. For info, call Jim Varnum at (214) 543-2055 or email jvarnum@aol.com.

Dogwood Canyon
1206 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill; south of Cedar Hill State Park Entrance
<http://tx.audubon.org/dogwood.html>

Thursday, July 5, 9am—9pm. FREE First Thursday. Enjoy FREE admission all day and join in throughout the day for guided hikes, animal encounters, and children's arts and crafts activities.

Saturday, July 28, 9am—12pm. "4th Saturday" Volunteers are invited to join the trail building and habitat management activities. For more information, please contact Dana Wilson, Volunteer Coordinator at dwilson@audubon.org.



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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Butterfly Photo by Mox Moxley

Facts About – Butterflies

Creating a butterfly sanctuary will encourage some of the 87 verified butterfly and moth species sighted in Ellis County to grow and multiply. With careful selection of nectar plants to feed adult butterflies, host plants to lay their eggs, and plants that will provide food for caterpillars, the garden will nurture the entire life cycle of butterflies. Check out the Ellis County Master Gardeners' certified butterfly habitat garden on the Waxahachie Creek Trail and Bike Trail to get ideas for your butterfly garden.

History - The Texas Legislature designated the beautiful monarch butterfly as the State's official insect in 1995. These distinctive orange and black butterflies migrate from Canada through Texas every fall to winter near Anguagueo, Mexico. The brilliant colors on both the adult monarch and the caterpillar warn predators to back off. The caterpillars eat toxic milkweed leaves that make them poisonous to predators. They are particularly distasteful to birds.

Butterfly Photo by Mox Moxley

It's July...What Needs To Be Done?

Planting

- ☑ Plant tomatoes and peppers from transplants. They need full sun, mulch and water several times a week. Plants should survive through a hot, dry summer if kept well watered. Other fall vegetables can be planted in August.
- ☑ Use tomato varieties that are early maturing and tolerant of the summer heat. Best varieties for this area include: 'Celebrity,' 'Juliette,' 'Porter Improved,' 'Cherry' and 'Sweet 100'.
- ☑ Plant warm-season grasses such as St. Augustine and Bermuda from sod. It should look fresh and recently dug. Bermuda grass, which is the most draught tolerant, can also be planted from seed or by hydromulching. Both grasses need to be kept moist until established.

Fertilizing and Pruning

- ☑ Deadhead all blooming plants and fertilize sparingly. Clean up container plantings by removing dead leaves and flowers.
- ☑ Pinch off flowers of herbs that are going to seed to encourage additional foliage.
- ☑ Keep pinching back growing tips of fall-blooming plants to keep them compact.

Garden watch

- ☑ Grassy weeds such as dallisgrass and crabgrass will have to be weeded by hand or dug out. The chemical herbicide MSMA, previously used on Bermuda turf, is no longer available.
- ☑ Dead turf that does not respond to irrigation may have cinch bugs. Check by parting the blades and look for small black bugs with white diamonds on their backs. Treat with an insecticide for cinch bugs. Brown areas in lawn may be grub worms. Check by grasping a handful of turf and pulling. If grass easily comes up you may need to treat, especially if you had them last season.
- ☑ Weed nutsedge by hand in mulched areas. It has underground rhizomes with nutlets and it likes moist or wet areas. Get them all or it comes back. Nutsedge can be controlled by applying Image or Manage. Two applications are usually required. Apply two to three days after mowing. Read and follow label instructions.

Odds and Ends

- ☑ Keep plants with berries, caladiums, and elephant ears well watered.
- ☑ On a hot afternoon, wilting is a sign of stress. It may be from lack of moisture or that a plant's roots cannot take up available moisture in the soil. Wait until morning. If the plant is still wilting, it needs water.



Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

*Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener*



Maximilian Sunflower – Sunflower Family (Asteraceae) *Helianthus maximiliani* Schrad

Region: 1-5, 7-10 (Ellis Co. is in Region 4)
Size: 3-10 feet
Blooms: July through October, Perennial

Sunflowers are among the most easily recognized plants, yet species may be difficult to distinguish because of hybridizing. All have large flower heads with yellow, surrounding a flattened, yellow or rust-colored disk. Maximilian sunflower is a particularly attractive species, with many three-inch flowers opening at the same time, in leaf axils of the upper third of the plants. It has tall, stout, hairy stems and leaves. Colonies of Maximilian sunflowers make a dramatic fall display, in roadside swales, seasonally moist meadows and prairies, and along fence rows. Sunflowers are useful; the oil is commercially important, and the thickened roots of Maximilian sunflowers are edible raw, boiled, or roasted. A nutritious plant, it was believed by Indians to have medicinal value and it is now recognized as valuable in wildlife habitat restoration.

In the Vegetable Garden

*With Jane LaComette
Ellis County Master Gardener*



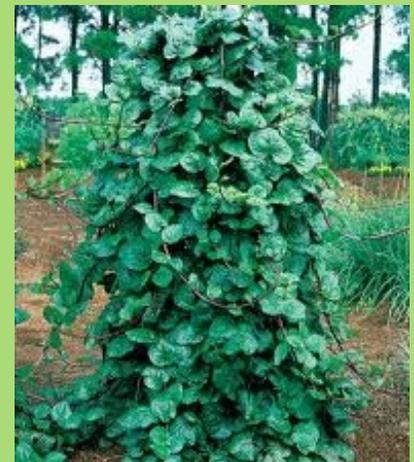
Malabar Spinach

I finally found a spinach that can grow in the heat of the Texas summer! Well, actually Malabar spinach (*Basella Rubra*) is not a spinach at all; but a twining herbaceous vine with edible leaves that looks like spinach.

When eaten raw in salads, it tastes of citrus and pepper. It stir fries well and is an excellent source of calcium and iron, a good source of vitamins A, B, and C, with a high roughage value. It is a great summer substitute.

Last year, I purchased just three vines, staked them up on bamboo poles, and watched them rocket upward to six feet tall. The three vines alone provided enough edible greens for the whole summer. When you harvest, just keep cutting off at the top, and it will re-grow.

Another great thing about Malabar spinach is how attractive it looks with its flowers and red berries in autumn. Give it a try this hot summer!



Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton
Ellis County Master Gardener



July 2012 - The Herbs of Summer

Summer and the Texas heat come much too fast for me and for much of my vegetable and herb garden, but there are some herbs that love the Texas heat and continue to thrive in our 90+ degree heat. The trick is to get out there early and check things out.

If you are a regular reader of my column, you know I am a lazy gardener and have discovered many kindred spirits out there. We are out in the garden before the sun comes up checking for the latest ripe tomato, or to see if there are any squash bugs lurking about, or areas where some extra watering is needed. I head out with my first cup of coffee just to look things over, then often find myself grubby and sweaty hours later wondering where the morning went. When the sun rises too high, I can retreat to the cool kitchen with my garden bounty in hand. The meals will be easy to prepare, using the freshest produce available and doing the least with them to preserve their full flavors and nutrition.

The herbs that are thriving in July include basil, marjoram, oregano, and Mexican orega-



Lemon Verbena

no. Lemon verbena, lemon balm, and lemongrass are also doing well. All of these herbs prefer regular harvesting

to keep them from flowering and going to seed. The flavor of most herbs will get bitter if allowed to flower.



Some herbs such as mint, parsley, and salad burnet which have a mild, sweet flavor in the spring go bitter in the heat, whether they flower or not. Come cooler weather, the new more flavorful growth will return. Just trim away the older leaves and add them to the compost.

During our summers, water is the garden's most important need. Even with a thick layer of mulch, my herbs require a good soaking every three or four days.



African Blue Basil

(Hopefully your rain barrel is full from the beneficial rains of April and May). One reason I love growing herbs is that they don't require as much feed as other plants. I fertilize my beds with a weak solution of seaweed and fish emulsion every four weeks or so. Compost tea is also added monthly. Feeding will pick up a bit

with cooler weather. The volatile oils in herbs that give them their wonderful flavors are diminished with too much fertilizer.

Back to the Herbs of Summer. When you think of basil, marjoram, and oregano, don't you automatically think of tomatoes? Try fresh to-



mato slices with fresh mozzarella cheese and basil. How about a simple tomato sauce with fresh tomatoes, onions, a little garlic, olive oil, and the three herbs of summer sim-

mered for about 30 to 40 minutes. Note: add the basil at the end of the cooking time to preserve its flavor, season with salt and pepper and serve over pasta. Yum! Try the same ingredients, but don't cook. Add some chopped Greek olives and serve over toasted baguette slices.

So get out early, keep your garden and your body healthy, and enjoy the results of your labor with flavorful fruits, vegetables, and herbs.



Save the Date!

Saturday, March 16, 2013

Blue-Blooming Vitex and Plumbago Butterflies Love 'Em, Deer Don't

By: Shirley Campbell, Ellis County Master Gardener



For indigo blossoms, butterfly habitat, and deer resistance, few plants beat *Vitex* and *Plumbago*, two adapted bloomers added to the Texas Superstar plant program.

The Aggie-inspired Texas Superstar program applies Texas A & M horticultural smarts to some of our best-known plants, developing and culturing them to be even more desirable, marketable, and successful for Texas gardens. When you see the Texas Superstar tag, you know the plant is a good bet.



Plumbago and *Vitex* join this elite group—like getting their own "star" on the Lone Star State's "plant walk of fame".

Plumbago is a tender perennial with profuse blue flowers. It loves the heat, doesn't mind our long, humid summers, and is reasonably drought tolerant. A white-blooming version is less prolific, while blue *plumbago* puts out non-stop from summer until first frost.

Disease-, pest- and deer-resistant, *Plumbago* is also known as Skyflower because of its sky blue color. It blooms even in considerable shade. While a native of South Africa, it's well adapted to South Texas conditions and will keep your yard full of butterflies all summer. Often labeled as *Cape Blue Plumbago* (pictured right) it responds well to pruning. It will flower profusely after being cut back or after a growth flush, since it bears flowers on new wood.



Vitex, our other Superstar, is also known as Texas Lilac or the Chaste tree. A native of China and India, it naturalized throughout the U.S., as long ago as 1670. *Vitex* is

a spectacular butterfly-attracting plant, hummingbirds love it, and it's deer-resistant, although bucks will brush their antlers on its branches if the plant is allowed to grow large.

For people living in the warmer parts of the South, the 'Lilac Chaste Tree' (pictured left) has been the shrub of choice to mimic the much beloved lilacs that are restricted to cooler regions. It grows best in full sun and in a location that drains well—loves the heat, and is so tough that even the Texas Department of Transportation plants it on highway medians.

The old *Vitex* had small spikes of flowers that were pale lilac, mauve, off-white, or light pink. The blooms were small and unimpressive. Horticulturists now have identified and tested improved varieties such as 'Montrose Purple', 'LeCompte', and 'Shoal Creek', which have eight to 12-inch long spikes. These varieties are marketed under the name, 'Texas Lilac' *Vitex*.

The bloom spikes on these improved varieties are not only large and beautiful; they're fragrant and provide long-lasting cut flowers.

But, once the bloom spikes have provided several weeks of spectacle, black and dark-brown seeds result. Not only do these seeds prevent additional bloom spikes, they may, in some regions, produce a mutant seedling population that will not be as glamorous as the parent plants.

What to do? Dead-head, of course. If you want to enjoy the full monty of these spectacular blossoms you must prune the spent blooms -- diligently. The challenge is that *Vitex* is extremely fast growing. It can grow into a small tree if not cut to the ground yearly.

If the seed pods of 'Texas Lilac' *Vitex* (pictured below) are removed after EVERY bloom cycle, it will be blooming again in less than a month. The entire



plant can be cut back to the ground EVERY winter. If you live in an area with a large deer population, the deer rubbing their antlers on the *Vitex* will "prune" the plant to the ground for you, or at least remind you to cut the ravaged stems back.

Another fun fact about *Plumbago*: Children can have fun making "earrings" with the sticky *Plumbago* flowers—letting them stick to their earlobes. The *Plumbago* bloom produces sticky, gland tipped hairs on the flower calyx. The seed capsule retains the stickiness, which presumably helps disperse the seed by attaching to animals. The top of the capsule splits open and drops the seed out.

These plants are readily found at our local nurseries. With another summer of scorching heat upon us, plant *Vitex* and *Plumbago* and enjoy the cool and calming effect of blue in your garden. Selecting quart and gallon size plants will give them a better chance of survival as we come into the heat of summer.

Summer Survival Tips

Submitted by George Cole
Ellis County Master Gardener

July is upon us and rain...“not so much”. When rainfall becomes sparse, there is a need for efficient supplemental watering and care of the soil through the use of compost and mulching. After surviving the 2011 drought, our landscape emerged in desperate need of “Earth-Kind Environmental Stewardship”. For those of us who intend to prepare the soil for a fall planting of either annual or perennial plants, engaging in an “Earth-Kind soil management system” is important. This includes adding three inches of compost, tilled into the soil to a depth of six to eight inches, then adding three inches of wood mulch to cover the newly tilled soil. The three inch covering layer of mulch should be supplemented throughout the year as necessary to maintain the level of soil protection. These simple techniques will increase the retention of water in the soil and help to reduce our water consumption. In addition, such measures will reduce the need for the addition of commercial fertilizer.

July weather is hot and dry. Your garden is probably showing a bad case of post-spring stress. It's good to know that many varieties of vegetable garden plants need full sun. Some that are well watered and mulched are tolerant of our mid-summer weather and can survive to bear new fruit before the first fall frost. Hopefully, you selected tomato and pepper varieties that grow well in Ellis County and are early maturing and tolerant of the summer heat.

Best varieties of such tomatoes for Ellis county include: Celebrity; Juliette, Porter improved, Cherry, and Sweet 100. Don't forget

pepper plants, such as Sweet Bell, Jalapeno, and Sweet Banana. These and other varieties of fall vegetable bedding plants you may have planted in the spring may have a second growth and bear a second crop. New bedding plants you may want

to plant for a fall harvest in our area can be planted from late July to mid-August. Be sure to check the length of the growing season for the varieties of vegetables you choose to plant. You want them to mature to harvest before the average first frost in mid-November.

July is also a month of transition for gardeners as we prepare to move from our spring/summer gardens to our fall gardens.

This time provides us an opportunity to save seeds from our existing garden (or from fellow gardeners' gardens) for planting next year. Saving seeds is a way to avoid the need to purchase seeds. For example, several packets of small seeds (vegetable or flowers) containing about 1/12 of an ounce each and costing 99¢ would equate to a staggering amount of over \$2,000 per pound. Any seeds that are saved, whether they are from your vegetable garden or flower garden, must be from an heirloom, open-pollinated strain of plants. Seeds from hybrid varieties won't produce true in the next generation. Be sure the plants you select for seed saving are healthy and disease free, so diseases won't be carried over on or in the seed itself. Commercial seed packets have become very expensive, so carefully saving seeds can both save you money and help to preserve heirloom plants.

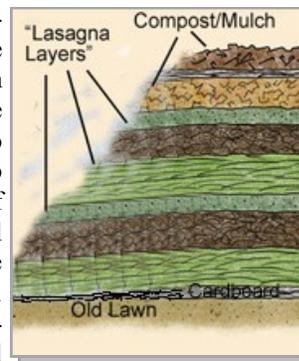
July is perfect for the solarization of garden spots. If you want to start a garden, but have a patch of weeds and grass where you want to locate it, soil solarization is a good option. It is an environmentally-friendly method of using the sun's power to control soilborne pathogens, disease agents, seeds, and grasses in the soil. Mow the area, thoroughly wet it, and then cover with a clear/transparent polyeth-

ylene plastic cover to trap solar energy. This method is usually used as a pre-planting treatment. In July, the solarization process will take about six weeks. It is recommended that you consider raising the garden bed level using the “lasagna method” or “sheet composting”.

This method requires first placing a thick layer of wet newspaper and/or cardboard on the solarized area. Second, placing layers of organic matter (leaves,



grass clippings, straw, manure, etc.) on top of the wet newspapers alternating layers of dry brown organic matter and layers of fresh green organic matter. After completing these steps, the mulch in the garden bed should be watered occasionally to keep it moist until it thoroughly decomposes. This process takes around six weeks to complete. To accelerate the decomposition process, a nitrogen source (commercial or organic fertilizer) can be added between the layers. The final step is to place eight to 12 inches of clean top soil on top of the organic matter. The combination of soil solarization



and lasagna or sheet composting will provide you a rich garden free of disease agents and undesirable weeds and grasses. For further information, go to www.ecmga.com and sign-up for our monthly newsletter. The ECMGA local telephone number is (972) 825-5175 and the e-mail address is www.ellis-tx@tamu.edu.



Landscape Gardening

From: Gail Haynes, Ellis County Master Gardener

Ellis County Master Gardeners have a website at www.ecmga.com. Check this website for information on gardening in Ellis County, sign up for a monthly newsletter, or access other websites including the Texas A&M Horticulture website. Questions for Master Gardeners will be answered with a return email or telephone call, if you leave a message at (972) 825-5175.

Chocolate Plants (*Pseuderanthemum alatum*)

By Cynthia W. Mueller, Master Gardener, Galveston County, TX

"Chocolate Plants" (*Pseuderanthemum alata*) are a beloved heirloom plant in Texas and other parts of the South. Like "candlestick plants" (*Cassia alata*) with their big spikes of golden flowers or "air potatoes" (*Dioscorea*), which are vines that are members of the sweet potato family, Chocolate Plants are almost never found in catalogs. They're usually carefully nurtured by individual gardeners and distributed through family and friends, unless a person is alert enough to find some at a small local Mom-and-Pop nursery.

They are members of the Acanthaceae family and were originally native to Mexico and Central America. Their family also includes such famous garden stalwarts as acanthus, a favorite of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and modern-day tender favorites such as shrimp plant (*Justicia brandegeana*), fireman's cap (*Odontonema*), Persian Shield (*Strobilanthes*), wild Mexican petunia (*Ruellia*), Polka-Dot plant (*Hypoestes*), Bush Violets (*Barleria*), Chinese Hat (*Megaskepasma*), and Lollipop plant (*Pachystachys lutea*).

Chocolate plants seem to be able to survive cold a bit better than most of the relatives listed above, with the exception of the shrimp plant and fireman's cap, which are also usually hardy through Zone 8.

They are also relatively drought-tolerant. The author was recently away from home for ten days, during which time the flower beds with the majority of chocolate plants

did not receive any irrigation. Although the ground was very dry, the plants responded by curling up leaves and bunching together in a dark mass, but after watering, the leaves unfurled and were back to normal.

Although the tops will freeze down during the winter, most plants readily come back the next spring and can last for several



years. The slender one to one and a half-foot bloom stalks have purplish-rose flowers and make enough seed to ensure that there will be a sprinkling of

new chocolate plants the following spring. They are also propagated through cuttings.

If the tiny seeds are collected in the fall, they may be sown in the spring in light propagating media. They are said to germinate best after 21-25 days at 55-60°F (13-15°C).

Chocolate plants are a great groundcover for partially or fully shaded areas.



If they are kept as 'porch' or greenhouse plants, pot them in a well draining mixture of peat, garden loam, and sand or perlite. Fertilize weekly with a mild solution of fertilizer, and be sure to let them

dry out a bit between waterings.

The association of the word 'chocolate' comes through the shades of reddish brown interspersed with silvery patches

that are never quite the same on individual plants. Extra silver dots are splashed over the resulting low growing mound of subtle color. The leaves are broad and the entire plant is from six inches to a foot tall and perhaps a foot or a little more wide. Unfortunately, the word 'chocolate' does not refer to a smell or taste of chocolate associated with the plants.

Garden Checklist for July/August, 2012

By Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist, TAES

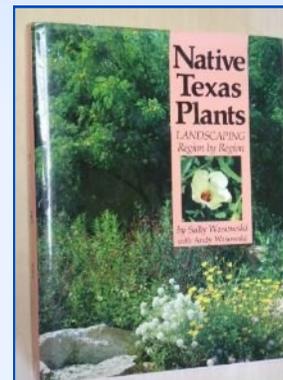
- ◆ Prune spent flowers from Crape Myrtles to encourage more blooms.
- ◆ By August many fall vegetable seeds and even small plants may be set out for later production. Be careful to give extra water, and a little shade, to these young plants while they are becoming established. The result will be excellent cool season garden produce.
- ◆ Evaluate the volume of water delivered from lawn sprinklers to ensure healthy, stress-free grass during the heat of the summer. One thorough watering which will deliver one inch of water at a time is better than several more shallow sessions. The amount of water available through flower bed sprinklers may be checked by placing several shallow pans among shrubs or flowers.
- ◆ Caladiums require plenty of water at this time of year if they are to remain lush and active until fall. Fertilize with 21-0-0 at the rate of one-third to one-half pound per 100 square feet of bed area, and water thoroughly.
- ◆ Prune out dead or diseased wood from trees and shrubs. Hold off on major pruning from now until mid-winter. Severe pruning at this time will only stimulate tender new growth prior to frost.
- ◆ Sow seeds of snapdragons, dianthus, pansies, calendulas, and other cool-season flowers in flats, or in well-

(Continued on page 8)

BOOK SELECTION OF THE MONTH

Written & submitted by Scherle Barth, Ellis County Master Gardener

NATIVE TEXAS PLANTS Landscaping Region by Region by Sally and Andy Wasowski Copyright 1988



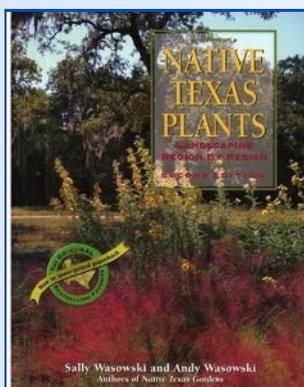
This is my favorite "go to" garden book. There are several reasons why I prefer it to other resources:

1. Organization

There are thirteen chapters which include specific landscaping regions for Texas; plant forms, grasses, shrubs, and public native landscapes.

2. Format

Each description for plants includes an actual photograph of the mature plant in a natural setting. The descriptions are uniform so you can determine exactly what a plant requires. The Latin name, with pronunciation guide, and common name are listed along with (this is a partial list) usual height, spacing, light requirements, bloom time, soil and water needs, as well as propagation methods.



3. Clarity

The text is easy to read and to the point.

4. Plants

Only Texas native plants are detailed. Adapted plants are not included. Crape myrtles and photinia are not in the book. Farkleberry and the sophoras, Eve's necklace, and Texas mountain laurel are in this book.

There is a newer edition of this resource which I have not reviewed or seen. I probably should look at it, but the one I own serves me well!

<<<<<<<<<< Editor's note: This book was revised and updated in 2001 and sells for about \$30 in paperback.)

(Continued from page 7)

prepared areas of the garden, for planting outside during mid-to-late fall.

- ◆ Plant bluebonnet and other spring wildflowers. They must germinate in late summer or early fall, develop good root systems, and be ready to grow in spring when the weather warms. Plant seed in well-prepared soil, one-half inch deep, and water thoroughly.
- ◆ Picking flowers frequently encourages most annuals and perennials to flower even more abundantly.
- ◆ Pick okra, peas, and peppers often to maintain production.
- ◆ It is time to divide spring-flowering perennials, such as iris, Shasta daisy, oxeye, gaillardia, cannas, day lilies, violets, liriopse, and ajuga (pictured right).



- ◆ Make your selections and place orders for spring-flowering bulbs now so that they will arrive in time for planting in October and November.
- ◆ Don't allow plants with green fruit or berries to suffer from lack of moisture.
- ◆ A late-summer pruning of rosebushes can be beneficial. Prune out dead canes and any weak, brushy growth. Cut back tall, vigorous bushes to about 30 inches. After pruning, apply fertilizer, and water thoroughly. If a preventive disease-control program has been maintained, your rose bushes should be ready to provide an excellent crop of flowers this fall.



A well-pruned rose bush fights disease and insects better.

- ◆ It is not too late to set out another planting of many warm-season annuals, such as marigolds, zinnias, and periwinkles. They will require extra attention for the

first few weeks, but should provide you with color during late September, October, and November.

- ◆ Establish a new compost pile to accommodate the fall leaf accumulation.

Get Your Cameras Out!



The 2013 Ellis County Master Gardeners photo contest is near. While trying to stay cool in the summer in Ellis County usually involves air conditioning, now is the time to look at those beautiful pictures that you have taken and get ready to enter them in the 2013 Ellis County Master Gardeners photo contest.



This will be the fifth year of the photo contest and although details are still being worked out, the contest will be entered online through the website, www.ecmga.com. As in the past, we will allow multiple entries from individuals, and prizes will be furnished through our Expo gold sponsors.

The photos collected from the contest become available for use by the Ellis County Master Gardeners for their various education opportunities. The 2012 calendar, produced by the Master Gardeners, used nearly a dozen entries and as the database grows, we will have an even wider choice of pictures for the many teaching Power-



Point presentations that the Master Gardeners create. You will probably even see them in the e-gardening newsletter.



So look for the announcement of the contest later this summer. If you have suggestions to improve the contest, please email



Walt Lese at wlese01@charter.net. Good luck and thank you!

MASTER GARDENER SUMMER SERIES OFFERED AT WAXAHACHIE SIMS LIBRARY

Ellis County Master Gardeners are offering educational classes at Sims Library this summer. Invite your family and friends, including children, to attend one of these fun and informative classes. There is no charge. The remaining summer schedule is as follows:

- ◆ **Tuesday, July 17, 6:00 p.m. “Plant Propagation” Susan Norvell and “Seed Saving” Robert Shugart**
- ◆ **Tuesday, July 24, 6:00 p.m. “Herb Gardening” Susan Clark**
- ◆ **Tuesday, July 31, 6:00 p.m. “Tough Perennials” Maureen Nitkowski and Jackie Wilhite**
- ◆ **Tuesday, Aug. 7, 6:00 p.m. “Butterflies” Carolyn Ross**

Nicholas P. Sims Library is located at 515 W. Main Street, Waxahachie, TX. For more info, call (972) 937-2671 or visit www.simslib.org. Please check out the “Programs & Events” calendar on the library website.



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