



# Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume VII, Issue Seven

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

July, 2013

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 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](http://www.ECMGA.com), click on subscribe, and it will be sent around the 1st of every month. Best of all; it's FREE! Susan Clark, Editor

## What's Happening in July

### **IT'S BACK! Every Saturday from March to December 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!!!**



**Throughout July, Garden Inspirations** offers classes such as Vegetable Gardening, Herb Blends, Canning, Seed Saving and more. Go to <http://gardeninspirations-tx.com/index.html> and click on Garden Classes for info and to register.

**Throughout July, Botanical Research Institute of Texas.** Lectures and classes for all ages and interests. Check their website at <http://www.brit.org/education/learners>.

**Friday, July 19 and Saturday, July 20, 10am–5pm, Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County presents A World of Color 2013 Quilt Show.** Over 100 quilts, judged quilt and wearable art show, vendors, scissor man, door prizes, silent auction, quilt appraisals by Denise Bartosh and more. For more information, go to <http://www.elliscountyquilters.com>. Location: Midlothian Conference Center.

**Saturday, July 20, 8am–11pm Conservation in Action Workday at Cedar Ridge Preserve.** Volunteers remove non-native plants, restore trails, and work in the butterfly garden. Snacks, water, pruning shears, shovels, and work gloves are provided. Bring sunscreen and bug repellent. For info, contact [info\\_CRP@yahoo.com](mailto:info_CRP@yahoo.com). Location: 7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas.

**Saturday, July 27, 9am–12pm, Dogwood Canyon—Fourth Saturday Workday.** Located at 1206 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill, just south of Cedar Hill State Park entrance. For more info, go to: <http://tx.audubon.org/Dogwood.html>

**Texas Discovery Gardens**  
3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dallas  
[TexasDiscoveryGardens.org](http://TexasDiscoveryGardens.org)

**Saturday, July 13, 11am, Garden Explorers Walk.** Get out in the garden on this family friendly walk! It ends in time for you to catch the Butterfly Release talk at noon in the conservatory. The walk is included with general admission.

**Saturday, July 20, 10:30am–1:30pm, Fascinating World of Butterflies.** Discover the fascinating world of butterflies with Dale Clark, co-founder of the Dallas County Lepidopterist Society. The class begins at Texas Discovery Gardens and ends with a field trip by

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TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI LIFE**  
EXTENSION



### **Listen to KBEC.....**

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

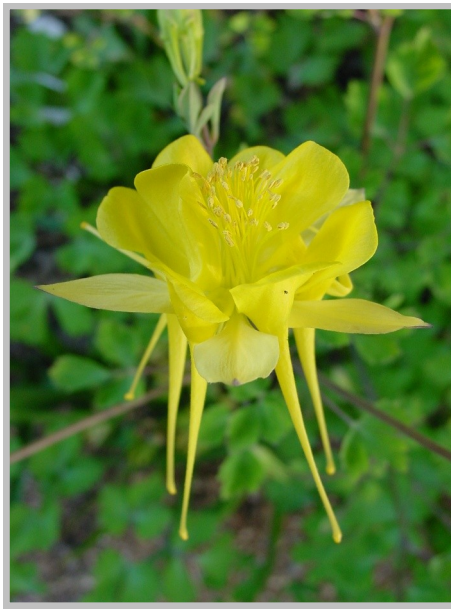
The Ellis County Master Gardeners have a 5-minute segment every week, offering you helpful information on what you need to be doing in your landscape, as well as “happenings” around the county. Be sure to listen in!

Melinda Kocian

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### Earth-Kind® Mulch

- ❖ One of the best methods of growing healthy plants and conserving water at the same time is to use mulch in the landscape. Experienced gardeners have long known the secret of mulching the garden and all its benefits.
- ❖ What is mulch? It's simply a protective ground covering that saves water, reduces evaporation, prevents erosion, controls weeds, and in the case of organic mulches, enriches the soil. Almost sounds too good to be true!
- ❖ To learn more about Earth-Kind® Mulch, click on the Resource tab at [www.ecmga.com](http://www.ecmga.com) and click on Earth-Kind Publications.

Mulch also suppresses the growth of many weeds. A three to four inch layer of organic mulch should be sufficient to prevent sunlight from reaching the soil, thereby reducing the chance of weed growth. Any weed seedlings that do manage to germinate and break through the layer of mulch are easily pulled.

A mix of coarse and fine mulch will help reduce seed germination. Mulches should not be piled up against the trunks of plants, but rather form a donut around the base of trees and shrubs.

## 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 though 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.

### Pruning and Fertilizing

- ❖ 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 so they remain 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 chinch bugs. Check by parting the blades and looking for small black bugs with white diamonds on their backs. Treat with an insecticide for chinch bugs. Brown areas in a 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. Remove them all or it comes back. Nutsedge likes moist or wet areas and can be controlled by applying *Image* or *Manage*. It will usually require two applications; ideally, applied two to three days after mowing. Read and follow label instructions.



## Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

*Submitted by Melinda Kocian  
Ellis County Master Gardener*



**Spotted Beebalm** – Mint Family (Lamiaceae)  
*Monarda punctata* L.

**Region:** 1 - 10 (Ellis County is Region 4)

**Size:** 3 feet

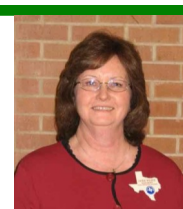
**Blooms:** April through September, Annual/Perennial

*Monardas* are strongly scented, square-stemmed, and have opposite leaves. Clustered flowers, each with a large bract at its base, are whorled intermittently up the stem, ending with a cluster at the tip. Spotted beebalm has flowers that are creamy yellow or sometimes pinkish, peppered with tiny, light brown or red spots. The bracts subtending the flowers are broad and petal-like, and may be white, yellowish, pale green or lavender.

Thymol, an antiseptic, is derived from an oil of this showy plant. *Monarda* species have been important to people for hundreds of years. Their essential oils have been used medicinally for flavorings, perfumes, and insect repellents. The leaves have been used for tea and as a garnish. Honey from a beehive near a field of flowering *Monarda* will take on its flavor, a taste too strong from some people, but relished by others. *Monarda* is irresistible to butterflies and other pollinators.

## Earth-Kind® Landscaping

*By Jackie Wilhite  
Ellis County Master Gardener*



Earth-Kind® is a registered trademark held by the Texas Agri-Life Extension Service, The A&M University System. It is the result of years of work by professionals such as horticultural specialists, county extension agents, nursery industry representatives, and volunteers including Master Gardeners.

The principle goals of Earth-Kind® landscaping are water conservation, safe use and handling of fertilizers and pesticides, reducing yard waste

entering urban landfills, and landscaping for energy conservation. This system supports the idea that, by (1) planning a landscape design, (2) preparing the soil with three inches of compost and three inches of expanded shale, (3) selecting plants that are native or adapted non-native species, (4) following proper planting practices and (5) adding three inches of mulch to cover the soil surface around plants, homeowners will replace labor intensive, water wasting gardening practices with sustainable renewable ones.

The continued application of mulch retains soil moisture and feeds microbes to help avoid the

need for fertilizer application. Compost tea is recommended as an alternative for fertilizer. When fertilizer is used on plants such as heavy feeding roses, it is placed on top of the soil so it feeds the roots as it enters the soil.

Healthy plants rarely ever require pesticides. This elimination of pesticides will bring on the renewal of beneficial insects in the landscape that devour the bad insects for sport. This is the best method by far. It

reduces the work on the homeowner by using mulch to retain moisture and reduce watering. This in turn reduces gar-



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## Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton  
Ellis County Master Gardener



### Herb of the Month—Lavender

This morning I harvested my first successful crop of lavender flowers. The large, fragrant bundle hangs in the guest bedroom allowing visitors a soothing, restful night of pleasant dreams. The bundle came from a three year old shrub, the first to survive more than two springs in my garden after many years of frustrating attempts. Unfortunately, I suspect its more the result of our current drought rather than my gardening skills.

The **Lavenders** (*Lavandula* spp.) are a genus of 39 species of flowering plants in the mint family, native to the Mediterranean region south to tropical Africa and to the southeast regions of India. The genus includes annuals, herbaceous plants, and small shrubs. Because Lavender cross-pollinates easily, however, there are countless variations within the species.

Historians found lavender in use since the days of the Roman Empire. Its scented flowers have been gathered for their healing and soothing properties as well as for use as a culinary herb. Queen Elizabeth I of England used lavender tea for treatment of severe migraine headaches, and Cleopatra was known to favor lavender in her bath. Sweet and savory, the delicate scent of lavender enlivens food dishes and is found in the classic herbes de Provence mixture.



Growing Lavender in this part of Texas can be a challenge. The plants require sandy or rocky soil with a pH of 7.0. The limestone soil of west Ellis County is ideal for growing lavender



while those of us with sticky black clay must amend. For heavy clay, amend with well-decomposed organic matter. Plant on mounds or hillsides to increase drainage. While lavender is considered drought tolerant when mature, new plants need regular watering until they are established. Overhead watering can promote fungal disease, and too much mulch will cause water retention and root rot. Ideally, mulch with sand, stone or white rocks. Plant lavender in full sun.

Plants are ready for harvest when the bottom third of the flower head is blooming. After the sun has dried the morning dew from the plant, clip the stems down close to the foliage using sharp shears. Lavender stays fresh for about three days in water which should be changed daily. Each year after flowering, cut back the plant by one-third to one-half. Always prune or harvest plants with

sterilized tools.

English lavenders, known as *L. angustifolia* and *L. x intermedia* 'Provence', tolerate extremes of hot, dry summers and wet springs as long as the roots don't stay wet for more than a few days. Chefs tend to prefer *angustifolia* and Provence because of their lower camphor content. Good choices for the culinary garden are Munstead and Hidcote. Varieties with more robust scents are *L. x intermedia*, such as Grosso.

French lavender (*L. dentata*) tends to prefer a more southern climate and will not survive our winters. They make great potted plants or must be lifted from the garden before the first frost.

Spanish lavender (*L. stoechas*) is gray leaved and blooms with a broad, flat-topped cluster of flowers instead of a spike. It is winter hardy and thrives in our summers. The plant and flowers are beautiful, but it is not suitable as a culinary.

**Lavender Sugar:** Place four or five dried lavender stems in a quart jar. Add two cups of sugar; seal and set aside for a few weeks. The sugar can

be added to drinks, fruit or any recipe calling for granulated sugar.



Courtesy of FelinusNoir, Flickr.com

## Fall Tomatoes—Luck or Skill

With Susan Norvell  
Ellis County Master Gardener



It's mid-to-late July and the tomato plants that looked great a month or so ago aren't looking so great anymore. The plants aren't setting many/any fruit and the fruit is so much smaller than

those early June beauties. Everyone knows it's possible to have a fall tomato crop in North Texas, so you decide you want to go for it. You want to be the person who gets to brag about serving fresh tomatoes with the Thanksgiving dinner. *But* how do you pull it off?

I'm an optimist and always try for fall tomatoes. I've had great successes and

I've had great failures. Sometimes I knew why and sometimes I didn't. I'm going to share my unscientific opinions with you in the hopes that some of my experiences may help you to that elusive goal—a decent fall tomato crop. So, if you are game to give it a try, here are some things that you need to consider:

The Tomato Plants There are two schools of thought here—set out new plants at the end of June or in early July or carry over the spring plants into fall. If you decide to pull out the old plants, you will need to purchase plants that can stand up to the heat and still have time to produce a crop before our average first freeze date of about November 15<sup>th</sup>.

There's not much point in planting varieties in July that hardly have a chance to produce before the first frost. It doesn't take much of a frost to kill the foliage on tomato plants.

Many of the garden centers and nurseries sell tomato plants for fall produc-

tion beginning at the end of June. Just remember that these new plants have been raised in a greenhouse and they need to be hardened off before being set out in our blast furnace summer conditions. It would be helpful to provide some shade from the intense sun. Rigging up some shade cloth goes a long way to protecting the new plants.

I've planted tomatoes in July and just had them sit there and struggle, not dying, just barely hanging on and making me feel guilty for subjecting them to such harsh conditions. New plants should be planted and tended with the same loving care as you lavished on the spring tomatoes.

Don't forget to go easy on the fertilizer until your new plants begin to set fruit, otherwise, it's all leaves and no fruit.

If you plan to carry over your spring plants, here are a few things to consider. First, what type of plants did you plant in the spring—determinate or indeterminate? By their very nature, determinate plants are designed to give you their harvest pretty much over the course of a couple of weeks. My experience has been they are not good candidates to produce fall tomatoes and should be removed. Your indeterminate plants continue to grow from the ends. These are the plants you should try to coax into fall.

The next thing to consider is how much and where to cut the plants back. Some sources will tell you to cut them back to

about knee high. My experience with this type of cutting back is total failure. I've been much more successful in cleaning up the plants, which is removing the dead leaves and cutting back the obviously dead areas of the plant. Remember that the indeterminate plants grow from the ends so if you severely cut back the plant you will cut back all of the new growth.

Once you have cleaned up the plants you need to take good care of them. Make sure to continue to fertilize them and keep up an even watering schedule. Also try to control the insects and diseases that generally plague our summer gardens. With luck and cooler temperatures, your plants should begin to produce again in September.

The Weather—So now you have planted new plants and/or cleaned up the ones you want to take into the fall season. What now? Here's where things get out of your control and are pretty much up to Mother Nature. If July and August have blistering temps and no rain, it's going to be more difficult for the plants to produce fall tomatoes; they will be lucky to survive.

On the other hand, if Mother Nature gives us a break, turns down the oven temperature and give us some wonderful rainfall, it will help tremendously.

The stars have aligned properly and your plants are looking good and starting to produce once again. Mission accomplished, right? You aren't out of the woods yet. I've had tomato plants loaded with green tomatoes in late October. They just needed a couple more weeks and they would start to ripen. What

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## Late Bloomers

By: Shirley Campbell, Ellis County Master Gardener

Already I'm dreading the heat of the summer when no one feels like working in the garden. But, fall will come and its cooler temperatures will bring us new enthusiasm. I always look forward to seeing these late bloomers putting on their show in the garden.

**Autumn Sage (*Salvia greggii*):** A semi-evergreen woody shrub growing three feet tall and wide, and coming in all colors. Actually, the flowers start in early spring and last all summer long. These salvias benefit from frequent haircuts after a flush of bloom. The August trim is especially important for good fall blooms. The tubular flowers attract hummingbirds, and the nectar brings butterflies and bees.

**Mexican Bush Sage (*S. leucantha*):** This plant is worth having as a background plant for its lovely lance-shaped, silvery leaves. Flowers emerge on long, draping spires in solid lavender, or lavender and white. To keep the tall plants from becoming too leggy and to encourage more blooms, prune back by half in mid-spring and early summer.



**Mexican Mint Marigold (*Tagetes lucida*):** Equally at home planted in the herb garden and flower border, the leaves have a distinct, anise-like scent. The leaves can be used in teas and as a substitute for tarragon in cooking. With its small, yellow daisy-like flowers and two to three foot size, it would look great planted in front of the taller Mexican bush sage for an eye-catching combination of yellow and purple.

**Fall Aster (*Symphyotricum oblongifolium*):** The two to three foot mounds display one and a half inch lavender flowers with yellow centers and are especially nice in the fall border if combined with Mexican Mint Marigold. Requiring good drainage and detesting over fertilizing and over watering, they are a must for water-wise

landscaping. Cut back the plants in spring or early summer to maintain a dense growth habit.

**Blue Mistflower (*Eupatorium coelestinum*):** A plant also known as Hardy Ageratum or Boneset is a prolific fall bloomer that puts on a show for four or more weeks and fairly buzzes with the activity of butterflies, bees, and other insects seeking its nectar. Its misty display of blue/purple, fluffy flowers are especially nice planted with Mexican Mint Marigold giving you the pleasing combination of blue/purple with yellow.

**Copper Canyon Daisy (*Tagetes lemmonii*):**

The name gives you a clue. Brush against it as you walk by and the air will fill with the fragrance of citrus and camphor. This plant makes a three to four foot tall mound with a profusion of single, bright yellow blooms about an inch in diameter. The blooms are a great source of nectar for several species of beneficial insects. Give it plenty of room and it may need to be staked. It's a wise choice for the low water use garden.

**Sweet Autumn Clematis (*Clematis paniculata*) pictured left:** Most types of clematis are best left on the pages of the seed catalogs if you garden here in Texas, but this vine is an exception. It sprawls over whatever support you provide. It explodes into a billowy white mass of quarter-sized white blooms with a knock-your-socks-off fragrance. Remember, it likes its face in the sun and its feet in the shade, so plant a low growing shrub or place a container at its feet to shade the roots.

**Fall Obedient Plant (*Physostegia virginiana*) pictured above:** Did you even wonder why it is called obedient plant? The

blooms on the stalk can be moved to the side and will remain in that position when you let go. This plant produces snapdragon-shaped flowers of lavender pink blooms with dark lavender purple markings. It willingly takes over a planting bed if given moist soil. It is better kept just moderately moist to curb its enthusiasm, or consider an underground barrier.

**Maximilian Sunflower (*Helianthus maximiliani*)**

**pictured left:** This relative of garden sunflowers is also willing to roam and should be kept on the dry side to tame its aggression. This sunflower is a perennial that blooms

in the fall with many three inch yellow blooms spiraling upward along the four to six foot tall stalks. To tame it a little bit, I cut it back severely in July or August and am gradually moving it out of the flower beds and to the pasture fence.

**Sedum (*Sedum spectabile*):** Sedum has blue-green, roundish foliage, and bears bright pink flowers in round, flat heads in late summer. Established plants can be 18 to 24 inches tall. It's a butterfly magnet and one of the best plants for a water-wise garden. 'Autumn Joy' is easily found in our local nurseries. I have also had good luck with 'Neon' and 'Vera Jameson' (a low grower more like a groundcover).

All of the above perennials like full sun. Obedient plant, sedum, and blue mistflower can take part sun. Planted now, they will need attentive watering for the next few weeks until their roots become well established.

As we wilt through the summer months, think "fall" and plan to add some of these late season performers to your landscape now and extend the color season on into the fall.





## Landscape Gardening

From: Gail Haynes, Ellis County Master Gardener

Ellis County Master Gardeners have a website at [www.ecmga.com](http://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.

### "Busting" Common Garden Myths

National Garden Bureau

**Myth:** Pinch the seed pod off if the onion goes to seed.

**Busted!:** Years ago that was a common practice because older (heirloom) varieties were prone to bolting. In today's world with newer hybrids, if you pinch the seed pod off immediately, it will keep the center core of the onion from growing and the end result is a smaller onion that will not store well.

**Myth:** Knock the tops of onions over to make larger bulbs.

**Busted!:** Actually the opposite is true. If you knock the tops over prematurely, that will stop the bulbing process and thus will make the onion more likely to grow during storage.

**Myth:** To get sweeter tomatoes, add sugar to the planting hole.

**Busted!:** Sorry Grandma, this is not true. Tomato plants can't absorb sugar in the soil, they produce it through photosynthesis. The sugar content of a variety is predetermined in the plant's genetics.

**Myth:** Perennials won't bloom the first year, especially bare-root.

**Half Busted!:** With modern breeding and growing techniques, this is no longer true. Go ahead and plant bare root and potted perennials now and enjoy those blooms the first year, assuming you don't plant them past the time they naturally would bloom.

However, if you buy a potted perennial that requires over-wintering, then you will have to wait through the first winter to get the desired blooms. It's best to inquire from the seller to find out what to expect that first season after planting.



**Myth:** Plant peas and potatoes on St. Patrick's day.

**Half Busted!:** This can't possibly be true for all climate zones. It's much better to refer to the updated USDA hardiness zone map and plant according to the local last-frost dates as recommended by local gardening experts. We assume grandma never moved far from where she was born so she must have lived her entire life in the same hardiness zone!

**Myth:** Pinch off all blooms of annuals before planting.

**Busted!:** In many cases pinching is no longer an absolute must because today's commonly available bedding plants are bred to be more compact with continuous blooms. So, you don't need the pinch to manage growth or promote another flush of blooms.

**Myth:** Planting tomatoes in a trench or up to the first true leaves promotes a sturdier plant.

**Half-Busted!:** This one is still true for seed propagated heirlooms and hybrids. Planting deeply does help elongate the rooting area since any point on the stem that comes into contact with the soil will root. The exception is when planting grafted tomatoes (plants and/or supplies for grafting are available by mail order) because if the scion takes root it will negate the benefits of the grafted rootstock, so never plant a grafted tomato too deeply.

**Myth:** Use tuna fish cans around transplant stems to thwart cut worms.

**Not Busted!:** Yes, Grandma was correct

and frugal with this tip! When both ends of the can are removed and placed around the plant, it acts as a barrier to keep these natural soil surface crawlers from reaching the plant until the stem has thickened past the tender stage.

**Myth:** Add chalk or egg shells to the planting hole.

**Not Busted!:** Again, a good tip, as both of these items will help prevent blossom end rot in tomatoes since they provide calcium to the fruit (since egg shells take a while to decompose, crush or grind the shells to enable them to dissolve faster).

**Myth:** Putting egg shell flakes around the base of plants will prevent slug damage.

**Not Busted!:** Yes, Grandma was right,

slugs do not like to crawl over the jagged surface of sharp eggshells so putting a barrier of crushed (not ground too finely) egg shells is a great deterrent.

**Myth:** Beer traps for slugs?

**Not Busted!:** Yes, they really do work. And there is even research to show they prefer the light beers over the darker ales and lagers. But, if you get a rain or water the plants, you will need to refill the traps with fresh, undiluted beer as those little critters avoid the watered down stuff.

### Garden Checklist for July-August 2013

Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist, Texas AgriLife Extension Service

❖ Trim off faded flowers on crape myrtles to encourage later re-bloom. The more modern hybrids of the old-fashioned *Lagerstroemia indica* and *L. faureii* have larger, more conspicuous panicles

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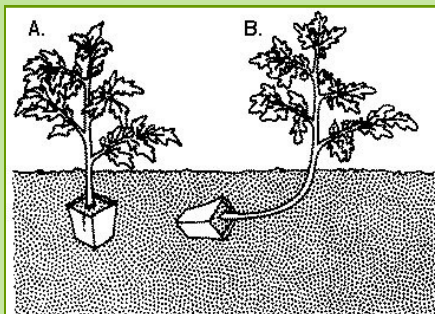


Fig. 2. Plant tomatoes slightly deeper than they were originally growing (A). If plants are leggy, set them as shown (B).



*Fall Tomatoes (Continued from page 5)*

could go wrong? Now Mother Nature can pull one of her cruelest tricks—an early frost.

If an early frost is forecast and you feel certain your garden area will be impacted, you should pick the green tomatoes. Once picked, there are a number of methods for ripening green tomatoes. One caveat here is that a tomato needs to have reached a certain maturity level before it will ripen at all.

Sometimes I can tell which tomatoes will ripen and sometimes I can't tell. Probably the most common method of ripening the green tomatoes is to individually wrap them in newspaper and store them in a single layer in a cardboard box. Adding a banana to the box will help hasten the ripening process. The box should be stored in a cool, slightly humid place out of direct sunlight.

Are you game to give it a try? What do you have to lose? And if you are successful and the gardening gods smile on your patch of earth, your reward is a wonderful harvest of second (fall) season tomatoes. Good luck!

**I never had any  
other desire so  
strong, and so like  
to covetousness, as  
that one which I  
have had always,  
that I might be  
master at last of a  
small house and a  
large Garden.**

~Abraham Cowley,  
The Garden, 1666

*Landscape Gardening (Continued from page 7)*

of flowers, but these often tend to turn to heavy seed pods, which discourage re-blooming later in the season. They can be cut off, if practical.

❖ Evaluate the volume of water delivered from lawn sprinklers to ensure healthy, stress-free grass during the heat of the summer. One thorough watering that 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-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.

❖ It is time to divide spring-flowering perennials, such as iris, Shasta daisy, oxeye, gaillardia, cannas, day lilies, violets, liriop, and ajuga.

❖ 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.

❖ 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.



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Contact James Kocian at  
[expo.ecmga@yahoo.com](mailto:expo.ecmga@yahoo.com)

**Reserve the date: March 29, 2014!**



What's Happening (Continued from page 1)

caravan to Dale's butterfly farm south of Dallas. Class is capped at 30 participants, so register early! \$30; \$24 for TDG members.

**Saturday, July 27, 10am–12pm, Water Wiser: Drought Resistant Plants.** Some common, and not so common, landscape plants are tough enough to survive Stage Four Water Restrictions. Learn more about them, and take home some samples to add to your own garden! Led by Director of Horticulture Roger Sanderson. Admission: \$20; \$15 for TDG Members

**Saturday, August 3, 10am–3pm, Fourth Annual Butterflies and Bugs! Family Festival.** Enjoy displays of live and pinned insects, family friendly activities, butterfly house tours, crafts and more. Included with admission.

Indian Trail Master Naturalists

For more info, call (972) 825-5175 or email [ellis-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:ellis-tx@tamu.edu)

Visit: <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/>

**Monday, July 15, 9am–11am, Wildflower & Bird Walk.** Members of the ITMN will lead a combined Wildflower and Bird Walk at Mockingbird Nature Park. Please bring drinking water and binoculars. 1361 Onward Rd, Midlothian. Free.

**Saturday, July 20, 8pm–11pm, Night Hike at Mockingbird Nature Park.** The ITMN will lead a fun and family-friendly hike into the nighttime world. A familiar trail by day becomes a whole new experience at night. Come and learn about the sights, smells, and sounds of nature at night. Closed-toe shoes, long pants, and bug spray are recommended. Adults bring a flashlight and everyone bring a bottle of water. Plan to be outdoors at least two hours. Registration is required. Send an email to [indian-trailmn@gmail.com](mailto:indian-trailmn@gmail.com). Free.

**Monday, July, 22, 7pm–8pm, Indian Trail Master Naturalists presents "A Portrait of the Blackland Prairie"** with by Matt White, teacher of American and Texas History. Matt White's connections with both prairie plants and prairie people are evident in the stories of discovery and inspiration he tells as he tracks the ever dwindling parcels of tallgrass prairie in northeast Texas. The program is free and follows the 6 p.m. Master Naturalist meeting that is also open to the public. It takes place at the Red Oak Public Library, 200 Lakeview Parkway, Red Oak. For more info, call (972) 825-5175 or email [ellis-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:ellis-tx@tamu.edu)

Earth-Kind® Landscaping (Continued from page 3)

dening chores and becomes a much more cost-effective way to garden.

The Earth-Kind® system has also evaluated plants, mostly perennials, roses, and turf grasses, used in trial beds across the state. The results of these trials are available at the following websites: [Earth-Kind.tamu.edu](http://Earth-Kind.tamu.edu), [Aggie-Horticulture.tamu.edu](http://Aggie-Horticulture.tamu.edu), [Urban-LandscapeGuide.tamu.edu](http://Urban-LandscapeGuide.tamu.edu), and [TexasSuper-Star.com](http://TexasSuper-Star.com)

This is merely a highlight of the information in the Earth-Kind® Environmental Landscape Management System. Water conservation and rainwater harvesting is also a big part of the system, as is the fruit and vegetable gardening guide.

New varieties of fruit and vegetable plants are in trials at this time. Look for an expanded list of plants and gardening methods for fruit and vegetable gardening to be forthcoming.

Check out the above listed websites for more information on this patented system.

The environmental values of this system will be measured for years to come as we evaluate the improvements made to the soil, the reduction of fertilizers and pesticides to our eco systems, and conservation of not only

our time and money but a very precious commodity—water.

For more information on any of the material or plants mentioned in this article, please visit [ecmga.com](http://ecmga.com) or call a Master Gardener at the Texas AgriLife Extension Service Office at (972) 825-5175.



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Save The Date!  
Saturday, March 29, 2014