



Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume II, Issue 5

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

June, 2008

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?

Saturday, May 31, 8:00 - 1:00. Waxahachie Downtown Farmer's Market, runs from May 31 through last weekend in October.

May 31, 10:00 a.m. - Garden Photography with Tom Cook. 10:00-point and shoot, 11:00-Advanced class. For info send email to contact@texasdiscoverygardens.org.

May 31, 10:00 am - 2:00 p.m. Eastern Collin County - Blackland Prairie Tour at Parkhill Prairie Saturday. Join Master Naturalist Jim Varnum for a tour of the Parkhill Prairie for native grasses and wildflowers, grassland birds and butterflies. See native and restored prairie locations. The tour includes a short stop at a nearby bison ranch and information about life on the early prairies in North-Central Texas. Contact Jim at JEVarnum@aol.com for more information. RSVP's are appreciated but not required.

Friday June 6, 5-8:00 pm at Weston Gardens in Ft. Worth. **Wine, Cheese & Hibiscus** - private preview party. Complimentary wine and cheese. Special buy 3 hibiscus, get 1 free. RSVP by 5 pm. Wednesday, June 4th. 817-572-0549

Saturday, June 7, 10-2:00 p.m.-Texas Discovery Garden's Greenhouse at Fair Park in Dallas. Annual plant sale. Members-only preview sale will be from 4-7 p.m. on Friday, June 6th. Call 214-428-7476 for more info or visit the website at www.texasdiscoverygardens.org.

Wednesday, June 7, 6:00 p.m. - Connermara Meadow Preserve; bird walk with Gailon Brehm. RSVP@connemaraconservancy.org.

Tuesday, June 10, 7:00 p.m. The Greenery - Fieldtrip to Halverson's Peach Orchard.

Presenter: owner, Ken Halverson. Pick up further information and directions at The Greenery, Waxahachie.

Thursday, June 12 at 6:00 p.m.—Jim Varnum will lead a wildflower walk at Dallas' White Rock Lake. Bring family and friends—it's open to everyone. The prairie is on the east side near the Bath House Cultural Center. Bring water, insect repellent, wear appropriate outdoor attire. RSVP if you wish. Jevarnum@aol.com.

(Jim's newsletter has so many things going on; too many to mention them all. To receive Jim's newsletter, send your requests to him at Jevarnum@aol.com.)

Saturday, June 14, 7:00 a.m. - Nature Photography Workshop with Janice Eddington. To RSVP and details: RSVP@connemaraconservancy.org.

Saturday, June 14 - 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Ovilla Garden Tour. Ovilla Heritage Park, Main and Ovilla Rd. There will be a plant sale at the park. For tickets call Carolyn Ross 972-743-1878. Can also purchase from garden club members. Vendor space available, call Bobbie Mason, 972-742-0738.

June 14, 9-2:30 p.m.—Winged Jewels: Dragonfly Work shop. A walking tour of the Texas Discovery Gardens. For info call 214-428-7476 or www.texasdiscoverygardens.org.

Saturday, June 21 - Cedar Hill-Cedar Ridge Preserve, Conservation in Action! Volunteers work to clean, clear and restore the preserve. For more information, contact: www.volunteers@audubondallas.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

Inside this issue:

It's June	2
KBEC-1st Place	2
Bats in the Garden	3
Patience	3
Major Threat to Crops	4
How Often to water?	5
Controlling Aphids	6
Wildflowers	6
Featured Flowers for June	7
Places of Interest	8
What Else Needs to be Done?	9

It's June - What Needs to be Done?



Featured Plant for June

Monarda, Beebalm, Bergamot (Native)

Monarda fistulosa

A perennial herb with purple flowers on the end of long stems. Blooms from May to July. Monarda is also a Texas wildflower. Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. Easy to grow from seed, transplants or divisions.

Exposure: Sun
 Size: Ht 3-4' Spread: 2-3'
 Spacing: 3-4'

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. To be certain that your plants are the desired color, choose among those that are in full bloom. Hand-water until temperatures cool down to keep them from getting too dry.

Fertilizing and Pruning

- Prune blackberries after harvest. Cut back canes that produced fruit completely to the ground, as they will not produce fruit again.
- Fertilize container plants every time you water them using a balanced, water-soluble plant food.
- Remove spent flower stalks and dead leaves from your spring-blooming perennials.
- 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.

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.

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.

Tip of the Month

Some fertilizers will have at least 50 percent of the total nitrogen content of the bag as sulfur-coated or plastic-covered urea. This information can be determined by reading the Guaranteed Analysis found on each bag of fertilizer. Remember, the higher the percentage or units of sulfur-coated or plastic-covered urea, the more you and the environment benefit.

KBEC 1390 Radio - First Place!



Melinda and James Kocian, Ken Roberts, Rosemary Morgeson and Pam Daniel.

The Ellis County Master Gardener's presented Ken Roberts, General Manager of KBEC 1390 radio station, the 1st Place Plaque they received in Conroe, Texas, during their annual Texas Master Gardener Conference. The monthly radio spots, coordinated by Rosemary Morgeson, as well as the live Saturday morning radio spots were written up by Mindy Phillips, as a submission for Mass Media in the medium-size division of the Texas Master Gardener's Associations.

The Master Gardener's have worked hand-in-hand with KBEC for the past several years allowing us to promote our

organization and give week by week information to the people of Ellis County about things they should be doing in their gardens and landscapes.

James Kocian approached Ken Roberts and Barry Wolverton several years ago about the possibility of having "spots" on the radio with gardening information. And the rest is history!

The Master Gardeners wanted to spotlight this unique way of getting gardening information to the people in the county. They were pleased but not surprised that the judges felt that this informative partnership deserved a 1st place recognition.



Nancy Fenton, James and Melinda Kocian, Pam Daniel and Rosemary Morgeson in the control room with Mike Roberts.



Bats in the Garden

by Kim Ellis, Ellis County Master Gardener



The New Year was not even a week old when I started pouring over my books and catalogs trying to figure out what new plants I wanted to try and grow this year. While patiently waiting for the pile of books to reveal the other half of the bed, my husband noticed I did not have anything red on the list of possible new additions. Other than my roses, he was right! How in the world could I have forgotten to add some red to the mix? I love red; it's one of my favorite colors.

Fortunately for him, I had picked up a great new book on Texas flowers on a recent trip to the book store. Otherwise, it would have been off to the nearest bookstore for yet another book on gardening. I love books with lots of pictures of what the plant will look like in full bloom. I love reading too. I can turn pretty much any small issue into a reason to buy another book.

While thumbing through my newest find, "The Texas Flower Garden: A seasonal Guide to Bloom, Height, Color, and Texture", written by Kathy Huber, I stumbled upon *Cuphea llavea*. This beauty is also known as Batface. Any plant with such an unusual name warranted further review. I had a few requirements for whatever I decided to add this year. I wanted a perennial, something somewhat close to the ground and something that would grow in a rocky area. This unique flower had it all. I could grow it in full sun and it is drought tolerant. Plus, it only gets about a foot tall.

So why is it called "Batface"? When in bloom, it has two red "ears" that purplish "face". When you look at it you really can see a bat face. Unfortunately for me, it is propagated by cuttings. I was not going to find a cutting of this plant in the cold winter days of January.

By the time the Lawn and Garden Expo came along, I had a pretty firm list of plants I wanted. As always, my ever-supporting husband took my list and made the rounds while I worked in the Children's Workshops. Not only was he able to find a few plants for me, he even found one or two for himself. It didn't take much for the small cuttings to flourish. I put it in a nice sunny spot on the south side of my house that has a great deal of rock in the soil. It hasn't had much extra water because the rain has been plenty. Finally, after a few weeks, the blooms had appeared. So, with a little work and a little water, I now have bats in the garden.

For more information on this and other great Texas flowers visit <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/>.

PATIENCE, PATIENCE, PATIENCE

By Nancy Fenton, Ellis County Master Gardener



One of the hardest things about gardening is just waiting for everything to grow. We can know intellectually that it takes a while, but the wait is hard! This unusual weather has thrown the plants a bit, but not really that much. The roots still have to grow to support the blooms and foliage. A little "tender loving care" and some thoughtful neglect really seem to go a long way! Rest assured that the 1 gallon *Salvia Greggii* you planted last year that seemed to sit there will come on strong as it develops roots to support the top growth. Mine have been beautiful this year, as have the bulbs that didn't bloom last year, but came on strong this year.

You can do a lot this month while you are watching and waiting. Those plants and shrubs that haven't shown any green need to come out and be replaced by some new ones; drought tolerant if possible. If you have the space, plant a pumpkin or watermelon this month. They should be ready for fall and jack-o-lantern season. I've promised myself that I will put more energy into the edible garden this year so am preparing the plot right now for the fall garden. It's too late for greens right now but it will be ready and the compost mellowed by the time to plant comes around. This summer heat may take all my tomatoes except the 444s and the cherries, but there will be time in July and August for beans, broccoli, cabbage, okra, peppers, squash and more tomatoes! The key to a fall garden is getting the ground right and having it hold the water as well as not allow the soil to heat up too much.

Getting the ground right isn't as hard as it sounds. A raised bed with a foundation of old box cardboard layered with compost and a bit of sand is a good start. The cardboard will block the Bermuda and attract the worms. Compost stirred with sand or topsoil will feed those veggies this first year and help hold the water where the roots need it. If you start with 8-10 inches of "stuff", it'll settle down to about 4" to 5" and you can add mulch if you need it! Just wet every thing down as you add it and stand back and wait a few months. It'll be ready for seeds in late August and plants in early September. Yes, it's hard to wait, but worth it!!

Remember to empty out standing water so we don't all end up mosquito food!!!!
Mosquitoes won't wait!

A Major Threat to U.S. Crops

Branched Broomrape is a parasitic weed that has invaded and is spreading in Eastern Central Texas.

ATTENTION!

In the Spring of 2000, Branched Broomrape, a parasitic weed and a major threat to crops of the United States, was found in eastern central Texas in the following counties: Limestone and Freestone (records but apparently not established), Washington and San Jacinto (established but limited populations), Robertson, Leon, Madison, Walker, Grimes, and Brazos (well established throughout county). Branched broomrape was found in 10 Central Texas counties in 2000 and has been found in 22 counties in 2001 including Anderson, Angelina, Brazos, Burleson, Falls, Fayette, Freestone, Grimes, Harris, Lee, Leon, Liberty, Limestone, Madison, Milam, Montgomery, Navarro, Robertson, San Jacinto, Walker, Waller, and Washington Counties. At this time surveys were only conducted along state roads in areas where wildflowers had been planted. These plant surveys were only conducted along roadside right-of-ways but there are reports of infestations on winter legumes in pastures. Broomrape plants are not found in areas limited to grassy vegetation because this parasitic plant requires a broadleaf host to survive. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Texas Department of Agriculture, and Texas Cooperative Extension requests that you survey your property for Branched Broomrape and report any observations of this plant. The following photos were taken during the Spring 2000 survey. Photos were taken in early March 2000. In each photo the green leaves are dicots that broomrape uses as hosts and grasses that are not used as hosts. Broomrape does not have any green tissue.



BIOLOGY

The pest, a root parasite, lacks chlorophyll and takes all its nourishment from the host plant. It is spread by tiny (less than 0.5 mm) seeds which are easily carried by farm and construction equipment, water, wind, or animal droppings. Germination takes place in December through February. Each Branched Broomrape seed puts out a root-like growth which attaches to the roots of nearby hosts. Once attached to a host, the Branched Broomrape robs its host of water and nutrients. The above ground stems first start to appear in February with the majority appearing in March and April. The first flowers appear just three days after the plant breaks ground, and seed pods mature in just 14 days. Each plant may produce 50,000 or more seeds. The seeds are long lived, some surviving in the soil for more than 10 years. Only a portion of the viable Branched Broomrape seed in the soil will germinate each year.

DESCRIPTION

The broomrape plant is small, only 4 to 12 inches tall. The pest is best recognized by its yellow to straw color stems and blue or white, snapdragon like flowers. The leaves are merely triangular flaps. The seeds are minute, tan to brown and blacken with age. The plant generally flowers from February through May.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, along with the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas Cooperative Extension, and the Texas Department of Transportation are requesting that you survey your property for the presence of Branched Broomrape. The best places to look are: fence lines along state or county roads, areas which have been mowed in the last few years, especially if the mower has been used on the highway right-of-way, and areas where mowers, tractors, and other implements are stored. Once you have completed your survey, please let your Extension office know if you found the plant.

Broomrape is most likely to be seen from late February or early March to May with a peak in April. Should you find suspected Branched Broomrape plants **DO NOT PULL THE PLANTS UP** or carry them around loose because this could cause further spread of the seed. **Mark** the spot where plants were found with a flag or stake so it will be easy to locate and write the exact location on a card. Take this information to your County Extension Agent or call any of the people listed below to report it.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE AND THREAT

Branched Broomrape is an obligate parasite that is known to grow on the roots of a broad range of wild broadleaf plants including Engelmann daisy, burr clover, blue bonnet and wild geranium. Several crop plants that are parasitized are tomato, eggplant, potato, cabbage, coleus, bell pepper, sunflower, celery, and bean. In heavily infested areas, Branched Broomrape can cause total crop failure.

DISTRIBUTION

This weed is native to southern and central Europe, where it has caused severe problems to crops. Recently Branched Broomrape

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

was introduced into Cuba, Mexico, Australia and finally to California and Texas in the USA. In an earlier version of this brochure (1987), it was reported to be in New Zealand, however we have been informed by the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry that *Orobanche ramosa* does not occur in New Zealand and has never been established there.

CONTROL PROCEDURES

At present control procedures consist of a combination of mechanical, chemical, and cultural procedures. Generally control consists of physically removing the Branched Broomrape plants, treating the area with low rates glyphosate (Roundup) and planting false host crops.

HISTORY

A white flowered form of Branched Broomrape was first found in Karnes County, Texas in March, 1981. Annual surveys by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Texas Department of Agriculture show that Branched Broomrape occurs on 640 acres in Karnes County. Small infestations have also been located just across the Karnes County line in Goliad and Dewitt counties. The blue flowered form of Branched Broomrape was found by students in plant taxonomy classes in 1997. Presently Branched Broomrape is mainly confined to the highway right-of-way, but has spread onto private property in Karnes County. The blue form in eastern central Texas was only found along right-of-ways in 2000.

For further information go to <http://www-aes.tamu.edu/mary/brmraper/brmraper.htm>. If you see this plant or if you need further information please contact your local Agrilife Extension Agent, Mark Arnold, 972-825-5175.

How Often Should You Water Your Lawn?

By Jackie Wilhite, Ellis County Master Gardener

Water your lawn only when the grass needs it. When you do water, wet the soil to a depth of 6 inches. Do not water again until the grass shows symptoms of drought-stress such as a dull bluish color, rolled or folded leaves or persistent footprints. This usually occurs in five to 10 days, depending on the weather. Follow these steps to determine how long to water in order to apply the right amount:

- Set out five or six open-top cans randomly around the lawn
- Turn on your sprinkler or irrigation system for 30 minutes
- Measure the depth of water in each individual can and record the depths
- Calculate the average depth of water from all of the cans (Example: You placed five cans in your yard. The depths of water in the cans were 0.5 inches, 0.4 inches, 0.6 inches, 0.4 inches and 0.6 inches = 0.5 inches in 30 minutes.)
- Using a garden spade or a soil probe, dig down to find out how deeply that volume of water wet the soil in the 30 minutes. Your findings will determine how long you must water to wet the soil to a depth of 6 inches. (Example: If your sprinkler sprayed 0.5 inches of water in 30 minutes and wet your soil to a depth of 3 inches, you need to apply 1 inch of water to wet the soil to 6 inches. To do this you must water for one hour.

Run-off from watering a lawn can waste a significant amount of water, which is costly and a poor use of a limited resource. Do not apply water faster than the soil can absorb it:

To prevent run-off:

- Check lawn while watering. If water begins running into the street or gutters, note how long it took before run-off occurred. This is the maximum amount of time you should water at one time.
- Stop watering and allow the soil surface to dry (30 minutes to one hour).
- Begin watering again and continue for the amount of time you have determined.
- Continue this cycle until the appropriate amount of water has been applied to wet the soil to a depth of 6 inches.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.



What is a weed? I have heard it said that there are sixty definitions. For me, a weed is a plant out of place.

~ Donald Culross Peattie

Controlling Aphids in the Garden

By Diane Hopkins, Ellis County Master Gardener



Controlling aphids in your garden will require constant monitoring for early detection and to determine if any intervention is needed. Lady bugs and lacewings are natural predators of the aphid and their presence on the infested plant may indicate that no treatment is required.

It is best to avoid applying toxic pesticides whenever possible; they destroy beneficial insects as well as pests and leave plants unprotected if pests return.

The aphid is a tiny insect, 1/16-1/8 inches long, with a soft body, long legs and antennae. There are 250 species of aphid and they reproduce faster than any other insect. Aphids attack new growth or the underside of the leaf. They suck the sap from plants and excrete a clear, sticky "honey dew" that often causes black sooty fungus that blocks sunlight from leaves. Aphids can stunt growth, deform and discolor or cause leaves to drop prematurely. Some aphids also transmit plant diseases.

Aphids will attack bedding plants, crape myrtle, hibiscus, oaks, oleanders, pecans, roses and many vegetables. Most aphids are host-plant specific and usually don't move to other species.

The least toxic solution to control minor infestations of aphid is to spray host plants with water at high pressure to dislodge the pest. Once the aphids have been dislodged, it is unlikely they will return to the plant. Keep in mind their eggs will still be present on the plant and it will need to be retreated with a high pressure water spray every few days to control the next generation.

Insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils will help control heavier infestations of aphid. The soap and oils require direct contact with the pest to provide the best results; apply it to the entire plant surface, especially under the leaves.

If you must use a pesticide, apply only to plants specified on the label. Some formulations injure tender ornamental plants and new growth.

Mix according to directions and apply only recommended doses. Systemic pesticides are taken up by the plant and make its tissues and fluids toxic to the feeding aphids. Never use systemic pesticides on plants you intend to eat.

Wildflowers, All a Matter of Timing

By Betty Reuscher, Ellis County Master Gardener



Wildflowers don't happen overnight. In fact a meadow of wildflowers had its start about six months ago when the soil was prepared and seeds were sown.

Planning for a wildflower meadow for next spring should begin now and culminate in the fall, with the sowing of the seeds. Then stand back and watch the show in the spring.

The Ellis County Master Gardeners recommend six steps to successful wildflower gardening:

- **Select the site now.** Select a site that will have full sun for most of the day. At least six hours of sun is best. Since most Texas wildflowers don't like wet feet, select a spot with good drainage. Begin the site selection now for flowers next spring; it's not too early.
- **Clear the land and prepare the soil.** Seeds have the best chance for germination when they fall on bare soil. So begin this summer (August). Eliminate all plant matter from the site. Grass and broad leaf weeds and plants may be removed by applying a glyphosate product (Roundup). After a few days, lightly till the area to remove remaining plants. Be aware that deep tilling may bring up undesirable weed and grass seeds. After leveling the site, you have completed the preparation. No added soil amendments are necessary.
- **Check the catalogs and select the seeds.** Seeds may be purchased as mixes (North Central Texas mix) or single

variety packets. Many nurseries have appropriate seed mixtures available beginning the first of September. Even though some wildflowers reseed, it is wise to purchase fresh seeds every year.

- **Sow the seeds in the fall.** The best time for sowing seeds in North Texas is between late September and December 1. Seeds sown later than December 1 may not germinate and give time for strong roots to form. Mix the seeds with sand for easy, even spreading. The sand shows up well on the surface of the soil to let you know where the seeds are. Sow seeds by hand going in one direction and re-sow the entire area again walking in a perpendicular direction.
- **Insure seed contact with the soil.** After seeds and sand have been spread, tamp the soil to be sure the seeds have firm contact with the soil. For larger areas, a roller filled with water may be needed.
- **Water when necessary.** Moisture is necessary during germination and early seedling stages especially if there is insufficient fall rain. Rosettes may form and stay green throughout the winter. Watch for them.

It's that easy. No need to add soil amendments or fertilize. These plants are very well adapted to living here. Enjoy the process and the results.

Featured Flowers of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener



Common Jujube *Ziziphus zizyphus*

For many people, the common name jujube conjures up images of a fruit-flavored gummy candy with a dense, stiff texture.

It is also one of the common names for *Ziziphus zizyphus*, a deciduous fruit tree that is relatively easy to grow in warm climates.

The species is probably native to Syria and/or North Africa, but thousands of years ago, it was exported to China where it has been in cultivation ever since. It was introduced to the U.S. in the 1800s at Beaufort, North Carolina and is hardy to at least zone 6.

The smooth-green fruit darkens as it matures, first to red then purplish-black and wrinkled. The end result is a sweet, dried, wrinkled fruit; hence the common name Chinese date.

Type of plant:	Edible Fruits and Nuts, Trees
Bloom color:	Pale Yellow, Inconspicuous/none
Bloom time of year:	Late Spring/Early Summer
Sun requirements:	Full Sun, Sun to Partial Shade
Cold hardiness:	Zone 6a to Zone 11
Height:	0-30 ft.
Spacing:	20-30 ft.



Hardy Begonia *Begonia grandis*

Most gardeners are familiar with begonias, but only as tender house plants or annual bedding plants. Rarely do the words "hardy" and "begonia" find themselves in the same sentence.

However, *Begonia grandis* is a hardy perennial plant, at least to zone 6 and perhaps in even colder climates with protection.

Rarely offered commercially, it's a well-kept secret among gardeners in the know, and a perfect plant for the shade garden.

Begonia grandis can be slow to peek out in the spring, but once it does, the plants can grow to two to three feet tall by fall. The leaves are green, with red veining that hints of the ruddy undersides.

Beginning in mid-spring and continuing through fall, the plants put on a display of translucent rose-colored blooms. A white variety 'Alba' is also sometimes offered. These plants are in the tradition of southern heirloom plants, passed along from gardener to gardener down through the generations, so ask around and you may find a gardener willing to share some divisions with you.

Type of plant:	Perennials
Bloom color:	Pink, Red, White/Near White
Bloom time of year:	Mid Summer, Late Summer/Early Fall
Sun requirements:	Partial to Full Shade
Cold hardiness:	Zone 6a to Zone 9b
Height:	18-24 in.
Spacing:	12-15 in.

Places of Interest

DOGWOOD CANYON - Cedar Hill

Audubon Dallas, in cooperation with Audubon Texas and National Audubon Society, is developing a new sanctuary and education center known as Dogwood Canyon. <http://www.tx.audubon.org/Dogwood.html>.

Dogwood Canyon is comprised of 250 acres of critical habitat located within Dallas County in the city of Cedar Hill. The Canyon lies along the Cedar Hill Escarpment, 12 miles southwest of downtown Dallas, and can be accessed from FM 1382. The Audubon Center at Dogwood Canyon will be within a 50-minute drive of four million people - a 20-minute drive from downtown Dallas and 15 minutes from 24 schools.

Dogwood Canyon sustains the Metroplex's greatest variety of rare and endangered species. It is the last known nesting habitat in Dallas County for two endangered songbirds: the Golden-cheeked Warbler (prior to its discovery here its last known Dallas County nesting was 45 years ago) and the Black-capped Vireo. Species from East, West, and Central Texas converge here, making the Canyon the only place in the North America where one can find the Black-chinned Hummingbird of West Texas nesting in the Flowering Dogwood of East Texas.

Dogwood Canyon also provides outstanding habitat for migrating and nesting birds. Orioles, tanagers, warblers, hummingbirds and others feed on the rich nourishment provided by its lush vegetation. White-eyed, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Chuck-will's Widows and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, sing their songs seemingly from every tree.

CEDAR RIDGE PRESERVE - Cedar Hill

At an elevation of 755 feet, Cedar Ridge Preserve is a slice of the hill country just 20 minutes outside Dallas. Located at 7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas, Texas 75249, Cedar Ridge Preserve is a not-for-profit natural habitat of 633 acres featuring 10 miles of hiking trails, a native plant nursery, butterfly gardens, and picnic areas. www.tx.audubon.org/cedaridgepreserve.

Preserve Hours

Nov. 1 – Mar. 31

6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Apr. 1 – Oct. 31

6:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Closed Mondays

972/709-7784

Don't forget!! Waxahachie Downtown Farmer's Market!

Saturday, May 31 through the end of October

Hours: 8:00 a.m. thru 1:00 pm.

Visit the Ellis Co. Master Gardener's booth

**Free handouts • Help with gardening questions
2008 Gardening Calendar • Flower and butterfly wheels for sale
Master Gardener Cookbooks • plus many more items of interest.**

The flower is the poetry of reproduction. It is an example of the eternal seductiveness of life.

~ Jean Giraudoux

I t's June - What Else Needs to be Done?

By Mindy Phillips, Ellis County Master Gardener



June begins summer for real in north Texas and there are several things that need to be done this month if you haven't already done them.

- As our spring rains probably come to an end, it is time to consider the efficiency of your watering program. If you have an automatic sprinkler, check the amount of water it is providing each time it is on. Check that all pop up heads are able to get through the grass or plants and that the sprayers are aimed onto vegetation, not sidewalks or streets. Run a full cycle and walk from station to station checking that each sprinkler head actually is providing water where you want it. Put shallow cans out to measure the amount of water that is put out during the run time. Empty cat food or tuna cans work great for this. Your yard needs about 1" of water per week, total of rain and sprinkler system.
- If you water using moveable sprinklers and hand watering, the same rules apply. Get a rain gauge and check how much water you get from rains and adjust your sprinkling schedule accordingly.
- Remember, watering in early morning is best. There will be less evaporation, usually less wind, and your plants have a chance to dry out during the day to prevent fungal and other plant problems.

June is getting hotter every week, heading for our real heat in mid summer. Your plants and landscape will be adjusting this month for the peak hot weather to come in the next 2-3 months. Help them to be ready for that challenge.

Watering regularly and deeply is good for deep root development. Choosing plants that thrive in our north Texas climate also helps. Native and low water use plants adjust better to our hot, alternating humid/dry and our windy conditions. Planting trees, flowers, and shrubs in places they will be happy is also important. Shade-loving plants will not thrive in full sun and sun lovers won't bloom or grow their best in shade. Check your landscape and determine your growing conditions before bringing home any plants.

Conserving water by mulching and only watering in the early morning both are also good practices. There should be no bare soil in your yard. Mulching conserves water and keeps roots protected from the wide temperature variations that are possible between early morning and late evening

June is a great month to enjoy the results of all your hard work in the yard and garden this spring; flowers are blooming and trees are in full leaf. Take some time to sit outside and look at the blooms and greenery in your yard or in a community garden. June is one of our loveliest months in the landscape.

We enjoy flowering plants all summer long, but flowers aren't flowering for our enjoyment. Flowers bloom to make seeds to ensure that they survive into the next year. If you want your flowers to keep blooming throughout the summer, there are several things you can do.

- Select plants that flower well in our area. Keeping flowers deadheaded, fertilized, watered and putting them in their preferred settings – sun or shade – will give you blooms until frost.
- Deadhead the old blooms when they fade. Deadheading is cutting off old blooms before they can go to seed. This encourages the plant to flower again so it will have seeds for next year. If you have a compost pile, put the dead blooms in there and you can use the compost in a few weeks to add some nutrients to the soil around your flowers and anywhere else in the yard.
- Fertilize your flowers and blooming shrubs regularly. Pick a fertilizer with a high middle number in the formula. This encourages more blooming. Follow package directions on any good fertilizer or bloom booster product.

June is also the month we begin enjoying our vegetables from the garden. Greens are about done as the heat builds up, but tomatoes, peppers, okra, and a host of other warm weather vegetables are coming into full production.

Vegetables require full sun and adequate water. You can put smaller tomatoes and all peppers in pots if space is limited in your landscape. Mulching is important once again to keep soil temperatures regulated and to conserve water.

We have lists of recommended varieties of all sorts of vegetables along with fruit tree varieties at our office and would be happy to share those with you. Growing the best adapted varieties gets you a leg up on your produce production.

If growing veggies is just not your thing, come to the Waxahachie Farmer's Market every Saturday between 8:00 am and 1:00 pm. You'll find a large selection of locally grown produce at great prices. The Master Gardeners have a booth at the Farmers Market every week and we'd love to have you stop by and visit. A wide selection of literature about growing flowers, vegetables, shrubs, and trees is available for you to take home and there is always a Master Gardener on site to answer any questions you may have about your landscape.

If you would like to learn more, check out our website www.ecmga.com or call Ellis County AgriLife office and speak with a master gardener at 972-825-5175. Also listen to the live Saturday morning broadcasts at 9:00 am on KBEC every week.