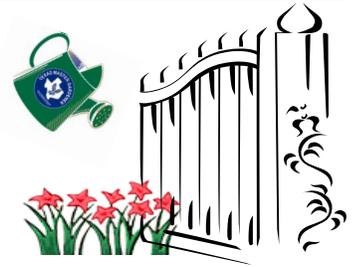




# Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume V, Issue 5

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

June, 2011

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 in your landscape. We 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! Melinda Kocian, editor/Susan Clark, co-editor



## What's Happening in June

**Every Saturday, 8am—1pm Waxahachie Downtown Farmer's Market.**

Visit the Ellis County Master Gardener's booth!



**Monday, June 27, 7pm—8pm Attracting Butterflies in Ellis County** presented by Indian Trail Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program. Carolyn Ross, who is both a Master Naturalist and Master Gardener, will discuss the types of plants needed to attract butterflies and tips for identifying the various butterfly species. The program is free and follows the 6 p.m. Master Naturalist meeting that is also open to the public. It takes place in the banquet hall of the First United Methodist Church in Waxahachie.

### Cedar Ridge Preserve

7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas

[www.audubondallas.org](http://www.audubondallas.org)

**Saturday, June 18, 9am—12pm 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 [jvarnum@aol.com](mailto:jvarnum@aol.com).

### Texas Discover Gardens

3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dallas

[TexasDiscoveryGardens.org](http://TexasDiscoveryGardens.org)

**Saturday, June 18, 1pm—2 pm "Butterflies of Summer" by Dale Clark.** Come see how butterflies survive and grow during the hottest time of the year.

### Garden Inspirations

[www.gardeninspirations-tx.com](http://www.gardeninspirations-tx.com)

**Friday June 17, 7:15pm—10pm Sustainable Table Dinner.** Eat local food from local farmers prepared by Chef Jeri McGinty. Proceeds go towards the DFW Truck Farm Project! \$30.00 per person

## 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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Blackberry Photo by Melinda Kocian

### Mom's Blackberry Cobbler By Linda Ballard

- 2 c. blackberries
- 1 c. flour
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1 c. milk
- 4 T. butter

Melt butter in 10 x 11 inch glass dish at 325 degrees. Mix dry ingredients. Add milk, mix again. Pour batter over hot butter. Spoon pockets of blackberries over batter. Bake 325 degrees for 30-35 minutes, or until golden brown on top. May serve with ice cream. Serves 6.

## It's June....What Needs To Be Done?

### Planting

- This is the best time to plant vinca (periwinkle), in full sun, and caladiums, in shade only. They like the hot weather. Cora is a new vinca cultivar that is resistant to soil borne diseases. It comes in many colors, except yellow. A caladium called 'Red Flash' is one to try. 'Aaron' is a white variety that can take some exposure to the sun.
- You can still plant warm-season color in containers or in the ground using four-inch or larger nursery stock. Keep them well watered. Containers may need water twice a day.
- You can plant seeds of fall tomatoes the first week in June. Buy and plant crape myrtles in bloom to ensure you select the desired color. They come in a wide range of colors and sizes.

### Fertilizing and Pruning

- Prune most salvias back by one-third their size. They will continue re-blooming until late fall.
- Prune as necessary fall-blooming plants, such as salvia leucantha, Mexican mint marigold, Copper Canyon daisies, and mums to keep them compact. Don't prune after September when buds begin to form.
- Fertilize container plantings every week or two with a water-soluble plant food.
- This is the second time to use an all-nitrogen, slow-release fertilizer on turf grasses.

### Garden Watch

- Insects and diseases will be prevalent this time of the year. Treat with an appropriate pesticide, if needed. Vegetable plants that cannot be salvaged should be pulled up and destroyed.
- Look for small spindle-shaped bags hanging from trees. These are bagworms. Pull them off by hand. Insecticides are not effective once the bag has formed. They are usually found on cedars, cypress, and other cone-bearing trees. However, they can be found on other plants including oaks and barberries. They multiply and eventually can kill a tree or shrub by stripping its foliage.

### Odd and Ends

- Plants will need supplemental water if rainfall is inadequate.
- Visually check each sprinkler head weekly to ensure your irrigation system is working properly and that sprinkler heads are clear of new growth, which may interfere with water patterns. Make any needed repairs or adjustments.
- Continue watering newly planted trees. Leave the open end of the hose on the ground about six inches from the trunk and let the water drip for 30 or 40 minutes.

### Facts About Figs

Remnants of figs have been found in excavations of sites traced to at least 5000 B.C. and have been a part of Texas homesteads since the early development of the State. Figs are a significant source of iron, calcium and fiber.



Fig Photo by Brooks Humphreys

## Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian  
Ellis County Master Gardener



### Rainlily

*Coopevia drummondii* Herb,  
Amaryllis Family (Amaryllidaceae)

**Size:** 1 to 1 ½ feet  
**Blooms:** April – October, Perennial  
**Range:** 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 (Ellis Co. is range 4)

Stems and leaves of rainlilies grow from a bulb and each stem usually bears a single flower. White, heavy-textured, fragrant blossoms flare from a pinkish tube that varies in length according to the species. One of the most common species in Texas is *C. pedunculata*, which has a tube up to one and one-half inches long; its six petals spreading to two inches across. It blooms in the spring and early summer. *C. drummondii*, with a tube that may reach seven inches long and a relatively small flower head, is more widespread and blooms from late summer through fall. The habit of appearing in grassy areas soon after rains, often in large numbers, gives rainlilies their name.

### BEAT THE HEAT

By Carolyn Foster, Ellis  
County Master Gardener



This is the season for family vacations and very little rain. Proper watering is critical during this time of the year. If you're going away, get someone to water those container plants and ground covers. Perennials and ground covers grow slowly the first year after planting and speed up as they become better established. So, extra care of plants the first year is very important. Water deeply and infrequently, moistening the soil about 4-to-6 inches down. Make sure plantings are weeded, and mulching 3-to-6 inches will choke out new weeds. Trim and prune dead or broken branches, stalks and stems, and overgrown or leggy plants. Remove spent blooms from plants. This will help plants survive the Texas heat that's on its way.

If you think that planting annuals will guarantee you nonstop color from spring to fall, think again. Unless it's self-cleaning, once an annual plant

has produced a good crop of flowers and they've set seed for the next generation, that's it. The plant thinks its job is done. So, how do we keep the blooms coming? DEAD-HEAD! Simply remove the flowers BEFORE they set seed. The more you clip, the more the plant will churn out new blooms. Same thing with veggies, the more you pick, the more they produce. Most will bloom or produce until frost if the brutal heat doesn't get them first. So, get out there and clip away or pick, pick, pick. You'll fill your house with flowers and your fridge with great home-grown goodies.

When plants start to get leggy and overgrown, one of the best things you can do is to prune them back a bit. Many plants are renewed and revived by this process, but sometimes plants go into "HEAT CHECK". It's a plant's version of a summer vacation. Lobelia, Alyssum, and French marigold are some plants that like to chill out when the weather gets hot. Don't worry; when the nights get a little cooler, they'll start to bloom again. Until then, just keep them watered

and watch out for pests. When they start to bloom, feed them every three weeks and they'll put on a show.

You can take "cuttings" from your favorite plants. Start with a good rooting hormone and a strong, healthy plant. Take a four-to-six inch cutting from a mature stem. Use clean, sharp clippers and clean with a solution of one part bleach to eight parts water after each cut. Wrap the cutting in a wet paper towel and cut again about ¼" below a node (where leaves meet the stem) when you're back inside. Pinch off the lower leaves of the bottom half so the stem is bare. Keep upper leaves in place, but no buds or flowers. Dip in rooting compound and put into a well-misted growing medium (potting soil, rice hulls, etc.). Tamp soil, water lightly or mist again, and cover base of plant with plastic. Remove plastic one hour a day to prevent mildew. In three to five weeks, you should see new shoots forming. Remove plastic, protect as you would any young plant and you're good to go.

Hope these tips and ideas will help you and your garden get through the next few months of intense Texas sun.

## Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton  
Ellis County Master Gardener



**Herb of the Month—Rose Hips** The rose is considered the queen of the flower garden, a symbol of love and beauty for more than 3,000 years. Its petals have been used in potpourri and perfume, as well as, candies, syrups, medicines and cosmetics. The **rose hip**, or **rose haw**, is the fruit of the



rose plant that forms below the flower and ripens to a shiny, hard, red-to-orange seed container. Rose hips begin to form in

spring, and ripen in late summer through autumn. Hips are full of seeds, but the larger ones also contain pulp, which is the part used for food and medicine.

Rose hips are a superb source of vitamin C; they contain twenty times as much vitamin C as an orange of the same volume. Rose hips are used for herbal tea, jams, jellies, syrups, soups, beverages, pies, breads, wines, and marmalades. Hips are ready to pick as soon as they have reached their mature color. However, they become sweeter after a light frost helps convert some of the starches to sugar.

They are not edible if allowed to freeze solid. Avoid rose hips that have been sprayed with pesticides or contaminated with toxins such as automobile exhaust.

To preserve their vitamin C content, keep rose hips cool after picking and process them as soon as possible, either by stewing, drying, or freezing. Wash the hips and cut off the stems and blossoms. Cook them, covered, in a nonreactive pot over low heat for 15 minutes. Steep in the covered pot for 24 hours; then strain. Use the strained juice immediately or freeze for as long as a year. You can also freeze fresh hips in plastic containers after washing and removing stems.

To dry large rose hips: wash hips, remove the blossom and stem ends, cut in half, remove the seeds, spread on a tray and dry in an oven or dehydrator set at 110 degrees until brittle. To dry small hips, leave whole or slice without removing seeds. When thoroughly dry, store in airtight jars in a dark pantry or cupboard.

When you are ready to use the dried hips cover them with water and simmer until soft, at least fifteen minutes. Press the pulp through a food mill. When using simmered and seeded hips for jams and jellies, measure the proper amount after simmering, but before seeding.

### Fresh Rose Hip Jelly

Prep Time: 15 min/Cook Time: 10 min

Total Time: 25 minutes

#### Ingredients:

- 4 quarts ripe rose hips
- 2 quarts water
- 1 package pectin
- 5 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup lemon juice

#### Preparation:

Simmer rose hips in water until soft. Crush to mash, and strain through a jelly bag. This should make about 4 cups of juice. Add sugar and lemon juice stirring until mixture comes to a hard boil. Stir in pectin all at once. Bring to a full rolling boil and boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove jelly from heat and skim off foam with spoon. Pour jelly into hot sterilized jars.

Yield: about 5 cups

**Caution:** When using rose hips for cooking you should remove all the seeds or strain through a jelly bag. They are covered with fine hairs that can irritate the digestive system.



### Hummingbird

*Won't you stop a minute  
While I note your color?  
Dash and flutter thin it;  
Trembling makes it duller.*

*You are like a petal  
Summer winds are blowing,  
Far too light to settle-  
Ah, must you be going?*

-EVA WILLES WANGSGAARD



## Natural Vegetable Gardening

With Rick Daniel

Ellis County Master Gardener



I'm sure most of you have heard of "Organic Gardening". As a Master Gardener, it is referred to within our organization as "Earth-Kind Gardening". To avoid conflict or confusion, we've decided to refer to this practice by an increasingly popular term, "Natural Gardening". To understand the differences, following are the definitions of all options.

**Organic Gardening**—The science and art of gardening by incorporating the entire landscape design and environment to improve and maximize the garden soil's health, structure, texture, as well as, maximize the production and health of developing plants without using synthetic commercial fertilizers, pesticides, or fungicides.

**Earth-Kind Gardening**—Earth-kind uses research-proven techniques to provide maximum garden enjoyment while preserving and protecting the environment. The objective of Earth-Kind gardening is to combine the best of organic and traditional gardening principles to create a horticultural system based on real world effectiveness and environmental responsibility. This is accomplished by promoting water conservation, reduction of fertilizer and pesticide use, and reduction of landscape waste entering landfills.

**Natural Gardening**—Natural Gardening is similar in the basic philosophy of Organic Gardening, but not as strict in its choice of soil amendments. For example, the natural gardener will use a safe, natural product that has good organic matter in it although it contains a minimum amount of preservatives, colorings, etc.

First, let's consider why to utilize Natural Gardening techniques. I'm sure most of you have heard about "sustainability". Most of us are trying to decide how we can contribute our fair share to sustaining our planet and not over-utilizing our natural resources. Did you know that if every person on this planet consumed at the same rate as the people here in the United States, that it would require 5.2 planets to provide for our current population. While the rest

of the world is trying to catch up to us, we need to be working towards consuming far less, as unfortunately, we do not have 5.2 planets to sustain our existing and ever-expanding population.

If you've considered becoming a "Natural" gardener, the vegetable garden is the one place that makes the most sense. The chemicals we ingest in our bodies on a daily basis should be of concern to ALL of us. The amount of carbon footprint required to ship foods around the world should also be of concern. When you purchase food at the grocery market, you may have no idea where it came from, how it was raised, and if it is safe to ingest in your body. I could go on and on, but most of you know, there is a valid reason to be concerned. So, let's get on with the information about how to raise your own vegetables, naturally.

A Natural Vegetable Gardening approach incorporates low-analysis fertilizers, low-nitrogen, natural organic fertilizers, fertilizing based on soil needs, and fertilizers loaded with trace minerals. It also works within nature's laws and systems, treats soil and actual problems, improves soil and plants for natural resistance, utilizes beneficial insects, and uses teas and homemade mixtures over chemicals.

First and foremost, with any natural gardening program, is soil preparation. Here in Ellis County, our primary soil is black "gumbo" clay. Black clay clumps together and needs to be amended before use as garden soil. The best amendments are compost and expanded shale, as well as, other organic materials, like leaves. Besides physical amendments, it also needs chemical amendments, which can be determined best with a soil test. Organic chemical amendments may include animal manures, blood meal, bone meal, cottonseed meal, fish emulsion, kelp spray, green sand, lava sand, and molasses.

Once your garden is growing, you will need an ongoing fertilizer program, as well as a good pest control program. In addition to the chemical amendments mentioned

above, foliar fertilizer feeding is a primary component of any natural program. The best foliar fertilizer is compost tea made with your own home grown compost.

One advantage of Natural Gardening is utilizing beneficial insects over insecticides to control pests. Plant good companion plants, perhaps Nasturtium, Marigold, and Morning Glory, to attract beneficial insects such as lady bugs, green lace wings, and others, to assist in controlling pests. Additional pest control can utilize natural agents such as BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), Neem Oil, Plant Wash, and solutions containing vinegar or citrus juice.

You may decide that one approach is best for you and you may focus on that approach, but you may also find it's good to be flexible. My goal is to be as organic as possible. However, if my garden is being attacked by pests that can destroy my hard work and my current food crop, I may have to alter my approach to utilize the best means to attack that current pest. I would still rather consume a product that I know utilized the least amount of chemicals, rather than purchase the same product from somewhere where the approach might be to use every chemical possible to realize the greatest production.

Hopefully, you are already on your way to becoming a "Natural Gardener" and this article has piqued your interest in this topic. Like any subject, if you want to know it well, you need to do research and study. One of the best sources for information is the internet.

You can contact the Master Gardeners at (972) 825-5175 to learn more about Earth-Kind Gardening. I also recommend that you come by the Waxahachie Farmers Market on a Saturday morning and visit with the Ellis County Master Gardener's booth, a booth of one of our local growers, or stop by our local Organic products provider.



**Growing More Cycads (Sago Palms)**  
**by Cynthia W. Mueller, Galveston**  
**County Master Gardener**

Cycads (*Cycas revoluta* and others), often referred to as Sago Palms, have increased in popularity in Southern landscapes in recent years because of their tropical looks and easy-care reputation. Except for occasional cold damage, sago palms are very tough plants. They cheerfully survive heat and drought, but dislike wet, poorly drained sites. Their positive form and symmetrical leaf arrangement add a bit of formality to a garden.

Cycads work well in containers, but larger pots are best. For hardiness zones 8 and north, be prepared to move them indoors or provide cover during cold spells. Even though they superficially resemble palms or ferns, they are related to neither.

They are slow growing plants, which means they are thought of as some of the more expensive, but permanent, residents of the landscape, so gardeners are often interested in increasing their stocks through rooting offsets or growing from seeds.

The most important virtue for gardeners wanting to grow cycads from seed is—**patience!** Unlike many other plants in the landscape, cycads are dioecious, meaning that each one is either male or female, so that to get viable seeds, both sexes need to be present, or at least one member of the opposite sex should be just over the fence in the neighbor's garden! This proximity is very important because small insects known as thrips (especially *Cycadothrips chadwicki*) move pollen from the male to female cones and are capable of squeezing

## 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.

through small openings in the cones to do so.

When growing conditions are right, and the plants have reached a mature status, each sex will produce a megasporangium in its pithy, fibrous crown, some of which have been likened to a large pinecone or even an ear of corn. The male megasporangium contains clusters of microsporophylls containing pollen grains (microspores).

Cycads are unusual in that they generate both heat and strong, alluring odors in the microsporangia, which are methods of drawing insects to investigate and distribute pollen. Several months may pass between pollination and fertilization.

**Working With Seeds:** Peel off the fleshy material around each seed with a sharp knife. If working with a large number of seeds, it may help to drop the cleaned seeds into a bucket of water overnight so that the heavier, fertile ones will sink to the bottom. Those with a lightweight or incomplete cotyledon will float and can be discarded at this stage. Individual seeds may be scarified, or scratched through with a three-cornered file at the micropylar (pointed) end. After treating with fungicide, the seeds may be buried 1/3 to 1/2 the thickness of the seed in sterilized media such as sand, perlite, or a 50-50 mixture of perlite and peat. Periodically treat the soil media with more fungicide.

Temperatures between 75°F and 90°F are good for germination, and bottom heat is also beneficial. Allow the seeds to take their time. Pick out individual seedlings when they have one or two true leaves, and repot in the same sort of medium and grow for

two to three years under 40% to 50% shade cloth. After this, the light can be increased to suit the species involved.

**Working With Offsets:** Cycads may be increased through rooting the offsets that appear here and there on the trunk of the plant. If the shoots or offsets are from the base of the cycad, they may already have a few roots. These can be pried off carefully, let dry for a day or two, and dusted with sulphur or other fungicide. Then allow them to finish rooting in potting media.

If roots are not present, carefully cut the offset away with a sharp knife and let it dry for up to a few weeks, until a callus has formed over the break. Dust the base of the offset and the wound in the cycad trunk with sulphur or fungicide to promote good plant health. A dusting of rooting hormone powder may also be applied, then set the offsets into good potting media. If only a few leaves are attached to the offset, leave them. If leaves appear to be too numerous, cut away as many as fifty percent. Check occasionally for ongoing root development. Fertilize the developing suckers with a weak solution of a balanced fertilizer and plant them outside when they appear to be thriving independently.

### Checklist for June 2011

- Take a critical look at your landscape at the height of summer development. Make notes of any plants that need replacement, overgrown plants that need to be removed, better arrangements for your landscape, and possible activity areas that can be enjoyed by family members. These are good projects for next winter.

*(Continued on page 8)*

## Using Native and Adapted Plants

By: Shirley Campbell, Ellis County Master Gardener



When you are reading gardening articles and how to be successful with your gardens, you always come across the phrase “use native and adapted plants”. Why and what are they? Native and adapted plants are easier to care for. They flourish in our hot, frequently dry, Texas climate. They are mostly insect and disease free and require less or no fertilization and water once established.

As a master gardener, we hold yearly state conferences where we attend classes and learn the latest and the best in the plant world. Recently, I attended a lecture by Steven Chamblee, Chief Horticulturist of the Chandor Gardens in Weatherford. Steven also writes an entertaining monthly column in Neil Sperry's e-gardens newsletter. His trademark “Texas road trip” articles involve studying native plants. Who better than Steven to give us an outstanding list of native and adapted plants? Below are his Texas Tough Top 50 native and well-adapted species. Ask for these Texas tough plants at your local nursery and enjoy more leisure time admiring your beautiful garden.

### Top Annuals

Coconut Cream Viola (*Viola cornuta* ‘Coconut Cream/Swirl’)  
 Zinnia (*Zinnia elegans*  
 ‘Profusion’ & ‘Zahara’ series)  
 Impatiens (*Impatiens walleriana*)  
 Ornamental Pepper (*Capsicum*  
 spp. ‘Black Pearl’) [pictured]  
 Pentas (*Pentas lanceolata*)  
 Sun Coleus (*Coleus x hybridus*  
 ‘Plum Parfait,’ ‘Burgundy Sun’ )  
 Castor Bean (*Ricinus communis* )  
 Cosmos (*Cosmos sulphureus*, *C.*  
*bipinnatus*)



Nandina (*Nandina domestica* ; dwarf ‘Compacta’)  
 Abelia (*Abelia grandiflora* ; dwarf ‘Edward Goucher’)  
 Japanese Boxwood (*Buxus japonica*)  
 Cenizo/Texas Sage (*Leucophyllum frutescens* /green form  
 --‘Green Cloud’)  
 Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis* ; ‘Arp’ is most cold  
 hardy)  
 Chinese Fringeflower (*Loropetalum chinense*; ‘Purple  
 Pixie’ ‘Purple Diamond’)

### Top Trees

Yaupon Holly (*Ilex vomitoria* )  
 Possumhaw (*Ilex decidua*)  
 Texas Redbud (*Cercis texensis* ‘Oklahoma’; *C. mexicana*)  
 Goldenball Leadtree (*Leucaena retusa*)  
 Eve's Necklace (*Sophora affinis* )  
 Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*); straight species is toughest  
 Crapemyrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica* ‘Natchez,’ ‘Muskegee,’  
 ‘Tuscarora’)  
 Lacey Oak (*Quercus laceyi/glaucoides*)  
 Live Oak (Coastal-*Quercus virginiana*/Escarpment- *Q. fusiformis* )  
 Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)  
 Baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*)

### Top Perennials

Four Nerve Daisy (*Hymenoxys scaposa*)  
 Purpleheart (*Setcreasea pallida*)  
 Iris (*Iris germanica* & cultivars)  
 Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)  
 Ox-Eye Daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*) Shasta Daisy  
 (*C. x superbum*)  
 Gregg's Mist Flower (*Eupatorium greggii*) **A Butterfly Magnet**  
 Powis Castle Artemisia (*Artemisia x ‘Powis Castle’*)  
 Lantana (*Lantana camara* ‘Dallas Red,’ ‘New Gold’)  
 Russian Sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia* )

### Top Groundcovers

Mountain Pea/Sampson's Snakeroot (*Orbexylum pedunculatum*)  
 Liriope (*Liriope muscari* & cultivars, NOT *Liriope spicata*)  
 Mondgrass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*)  
 English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)  
 Japanese Holly Fern (*Cyrtomium falcatum*)

### Top Ornamental Grasses

Gulf Muhly (*Muhlenbergia capillaris* ; ‘Regal Mist’)  
 Maidengrass (*Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Gracillimus’)  
 Variegated Maidengrass (*Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Variegatum’)  
 Hardy Sugarcane (*Saccharum arundinaceum*)  
 Bullgrass (*Muhlenbergia emersleyi*)  
 Lindheimer's Muhly (*Muhlenbergia lindheimeri*)

### Top Shrubs

Autumn/Cherry Sage (*Salvia greggii* ; many cultivars)  
 Dwarf Burford Holly (*Ilex cornuta* ‘Burfordii Nana’)

### Top Roses

Knock Out  
 Belinda's Dream  
 Carefree Beauty (Katy Road Pink)

### Top Vines

Coral Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) [pictured]  
 Trumpet Vine (*Campsis radicans*, ---  
 dwarf ‘Madame Galen’)  
 Crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*)  
 Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)



Creeping Fig (*Ficus pumila*)

### Top Accent Plants

Red Yucca (*Hesperaloe parviflora*)  
 Beaked Yucca (*Yucca rostrata*)  
 Sago Palm (*Cycas revoluta*)  
 Japanese Aralia (*Fatsia japonica*)  
 Hojo Santa (*Piper auritum*)

Landscape Gardening (Continued from page 6)

- Check for insects and diseases. Spider mites can be especially troublesome at this time. Insecticidal soaps or labelled miticides can be helpful in their control.
- The best way to conserve garden moisture is mulching. Mulches are usually applied 2-to-6 inches deep, depending on the material used. In general, the coarser the material, the deeper the mulch. For example, a 2-inch layer of cotton seed hulls will have about the same mulching effect as 6-inches of oat straw or 4-inches of coastal bermuda hay.
- Houseplants can be moved outside this month. Sink the pots in a cool,

shaded garden bed to prevent them from drying out too quickly. Water pots, container plants, and hanging baskets often. Monthly feeding with a household fertilizer encourages continued growth.

- Now is the time to plan for next spring. Consider digging and dividing any crowded spring bulbs. Once bulbs have matured and the foliage has turned brown, it is time to spade them up and thin out the stand. Crowded bulbs produce fewer and smaller blooms. They usually need thinning every three to four years. Replant immediately in prepared soils.
- Fertilize rose beds every four to six weeks. Apply small amounts of

fertilizer high in nitrogen immediately after a flush of bloom or every four to six weeks.

- There is still time to plant some of the heat-tolerant summer annuals. You can direct-seed zinnias and portulaca, and purchase periwinkle, salvia, marigold, and purslane plants for transplanting. Be sure to water transplants adequately until roots become established.
- Reblooming salvias such as *Salvia greggii* and *S. farinacea* should be pruned back periodically during the summer. To make the job easier, use hedging shears and remove only the spent flowers and a few inches of stem below.



## News from the Texas Master Naturalist Program, Indian Trail Chapter

Submitted by Paul Grindstaff

Hello *E-Gardening Newsletter* Readers!

I am guessing that you, as conscientious gardeners, are interested in ensuring that future generations will enjoy our native wildflowers, birds, butterflies, and all other aspects of the out-of-doors. The Indian Trail Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist volunteer program shares your love of nature. You can become a partner in our quest to increase public awareness, understanding, and appreciation of our natural resources through education and active citizen participation.

Master Naturalist training will be held at Waxahachie's First United Methodist Church on eight Thursdays beginning September 8, with two Saturday field trips. Instruction is provided by recognized experts and customized to focus on native ecosystems of North Central Texas and Ellis County, specifically. The course provides an understanding of our natural systems and the detrimental, long-term consequences of imbalances and faulty

management. The training will consist of research-based presentations and relevant field trips. Participants learn how to restore, regenerate, nurture, and conserve plant species and animal habitats.

Requirements to become a certified Texas Master Naturalist:

- Complete and submit your application by August 15. Applications are available online at <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/> or by calling the AgriLife Extension Service Office at (972) 825-5175.
- Attendance of all scheduled classes and field trips,
- 40 volunteer hours, and
- eight advanced training hours.

The cost for the training program is \$150, which covers the manual, handouts, speakers, and background check. The cost is \$100 for the second family member when one handbook is shared.

In return for this training, as stated above, you provide Ellis County with 40 hours of volunteer service in the

form of educational activities, projects, or outreach. Indian Trail Chapter is currently developing Mockingbird Nature Park (Midlothian), connecting children with nature through the "Growing Up Wild" program, identifying trees and plants in Kachina Prairie (Ellis County's only recognized remnant of Blackland Prairie), collecting water quality data for Texas Stream Team, and reporting turtle sightings to Texas Turtle Watch. In addition, we offer a series of Master Naturalist programs for the public on the fourth Monday of each month.

We look forward to your participation in this educational and beneficial volunteer program. Requests for more information, questions, and concerns should be directed to:

Paul Grindstaff  
Training Committee Chairman  
(972) 291-2868  
[pcgrindstaff@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pcgrindstaff@sbcglobal.net)

The Texas Master Naturalist program is co-sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Services and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

## Vegetable Gardening in June

By Pat Dockins

Ellis County Master Gardener



How is your garden doing? That's the question I've been asking my fellow Master Gardeners lately. Most reply that "Everything is looking good, but tomatoes are coming along slowly." In our garden, the tomatoes look good; they're blooming, but not growing like I feel they should. The weather, of course, is the reason. Cool fronts coming through, then warm, then another cool front. Well, the poor plants don't know what to do. When the weather finally settles down, everything will take off.



Tomatoes have those awful looking horn worms [pictured] that just devour the plant. If you notice all the leaves gone on an area of your plant, start looking for the culprit. With patience, you'll see the ugly, green worm. I wear a glove or use a pair of pliers to pick those. I can't bear the thought of touching that thing! Keep a rock handy to squash those critters. Keep an eye out for squash bugs.



Get to those as fast as you can. If you don't want to use pesticides, you might try vacuuming them. We did that one year and it worked for a while. Eventually the bugs won, which was okay, as we had had our fill of squash. We like to use Sevin dust around the base of the plant first thing, but you'll have to renew it from time to time. If the bugs have already won, just replant.

By the end of May and towards the first part of June, the tops of your onions will begin to fall over. When two-thirds or more of them have fallen over, pull the onions. If there is no rain forecasted for several days, you can leave them on top of the ground to dry before storing them. You need to store them in a well-ventilated place out of direct sunlight. The important thing is to keep them away from moisture. My granddad used old window screens to dry his onions. After they dry for a week or two, cut the tops off to about one inch from the base. Trim the roots back at this time, too.

Cool weather crops are coming to an end. Pull plants that are dead, dying, or have bolted. Replant with warm weather crops like beans, squash,

beets, okra, cucumber, black-eye peas, and Swiss chard. I would be afraid to try tomato transplants this late in the season. I don't believe they would have time to make before the really hot weather comes on.

If you haven't thinned your turnips, beets, and carrots before now, do it so the root can develop. The tops of turnips and beets are edible if you like greens. I've never tried the carrot tops, so I can't say if they are any good or not. Most of your plants can use another round of fertilizer at this time.

Get ready for a hot, dry summer. We use soaker hoses with our row crops covered with mulch. We've found that using at least three inches of mulch helps keep the roots cool and moist longer, which in turn keeps the plant producing longer. There is little water loss this way, too. It also helps keep the weeds under control. If you live in the city of Waxahachie, you can get a pick-up or trailer full of mulch free. Call City Hall for directions.





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