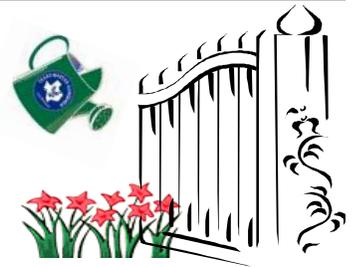




# Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume IV, Issue 5

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

June, 2010

**W**elcome 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](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

## What's Happening in June

**Saturday-Monday, May 29-31, 9-5**, Lavender Ridge Farms - **Lavender Festival**. Free admission/parking. [www.lavenderridgefarms.com](http://www.lavenderridgefarms.com) (map on website), 940-665-6938, 2391CR 178, Gainsville, TX.

**Garden Inspirations' Saturday "classes" at the Farmer's Market.....\$10.00 each**

June 12, 8:00 a.m., "Container Gardening"

June 19, 8:00 a.m. "Kid's Corner, Father's Day Craft"

June 26, 8:00 a.m., "What to do with all of those vegetables?"

**Saturday, June 5, 9:30**, Petal Pushers, Cedar Hill, 813 Straus Rd., 972-291-7650 . Val will be discussing mid-season veggies and seed saving for next year.

**Saturday, June 19, 9-11 a.m.**, Cedar Ridge Preserve, 7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas, 972-709-7784. "Conservation in Action Workday". [www.info\\_CRP@yahoo.com](mailto:www.info_CRP@yahoo.com)

**Monday, June 21, 7:00 p.m.**, Garden Inspirations, **2nd Annual "Sustainable Table"**. A chef-prepared meal by Jeri McGinty, using food only organically grown and produced by local farmers. Hosted by Ted and Bea Roacha. \$15.00, **Pre-paid**, per person. Please **RSVP** to Marilyn to make arrangements for payment and directions: 214-497-3918. Space is limited; don't delay!



## 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

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

Saturday, May 22 through October 16

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



Visit the Ellis Co. Master Gardener's booth

**Free handouts ♦ Help with gardening questions  
2010 Gardening Calendar ♦ Master Gardener Cookbooks  
plus many more items of interest.**

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A Useful Link for your plant questions:

**TexasA&M Plant Disease Handbook**  
<http://165.91.154.132/TEXLAB/Index.htm>

*It's June - What Needs to be Done***Sunflower***Photo by Linda Moxley*

*Sunflowers are an annual plant native to the Americas. Facing east at sunrise, they follow the sun from east to west, throughout the course of the day. They draw many beneficial insects and are pollinated by bees. Birds are attracted to the sunflower. They are a good choice for butterfly gardens; especially attracting the Monarch butterfly. Seeds are used as bird feed, commercially for snacks, as well as cooking oil.*

**Planting and Sowing**

- This is the best time to plant vinca (periwinkle), in full sun, and caladiums in shade only. They like the hot weather. Use a variety of vinca that is resistant to soil borne diseases. It comes in many colors except yellow. A caladium called 'Red Flash' is one to try.
- You can still plant warm season color in containers or in the ground using 4-inch or larger nursery stock; keep well watered. Containers may need water twice a day.
- You can plant seeds of fall tomatoes, but get the type that mature early.
- Buy crepe myrtles in bloom to be certain to get the color and size you want. They come in a wide range of colors and sizes.

**Fertilizing and Pruning**

- Prune back by 1/3 *Salvia greggi*, and *Salvia farinacea* (mealy blue salvia); they will continue re-blooming until late fall. Also prune as necessary fall blooming plants such as *Salvia leucantha*, Mexican mint marigold, Copper Canyon daises, 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.

**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.

**This and That**

- Plants will need supplemental water if rainfall is inadequate. Visually check each sprinkler head weekly to be sure your irrigation system is working properly and make any needed repairs or adjustments.

**Tips for June**

The EPA estimates that 60 to 70 million birds are poisoned annually in the United States due to pesticides. Following a system of Integrated Pest Management will allow everyone to do their part in sustaining our ecosystem.

**Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month**

*Submitted by Melinda Kocian  
Ellis County Master Gardener*



*Nama hispidum* Gray  
**Waterleaf Family (Hydrophyllaceae)**

**Rough Nama, Sand-Bells**

**Zone:** 2-10, (Ellis County is zone 4)  
**Size:** 4-20 inches  
**Blooms:** March through November, Annual

Variable in form, rough nama is freely branching or sprawling from its base. It is covered with short, appressed hairs, making it rough to the touch. Bell-shaped flowers are in small clusters or solitary, from the axils of leaves, a half-inch across. They are pink to purple, with a yellow or white throat. The leaves are especially variable, one-half to two inches long, stalked, generally linear, but sometimes divided, lobed, or toothed, with edges rolled under. They are alternate and have a pungent odor. Masses of the purple flowers are often seen as mats along the shoulders of highways, or wherever gravelly, sandy, or alluvial soils are found. Rough nama is an attractive landscape choice when used in a sunny rock garden or border. Twelve species of *Nama* are found in Texas.

## Vegetable Gardeners Monthly

By Rick Daniel

Ellis County Master Gardener/Vegetable Gardening Specialist

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

Sow tomato seeds for your fall transplants early this month. Onions should be harvested this month, if not sooner, as they don't do well with hot temperatures like we see late June. It is critical this time of the year to apply the right amount of water at the right time. As the weather warms, you might need to water every 2-4 days and not once a week like you can get by with during a wet spring. I use drip irrigation in my garden, which applies the water only where needed, and keeps the vegetation from getting wet, which can lead to disease. I also use rainwater, which I capture and store during the wet season, to make available during the long dry season.

### Featured Vegetable of the Month

*By Rick Daniel*

*Ellis County Master Gardener*



## OKRA: Vegetable of the Month



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

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

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

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

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

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

Weather means more when you have a garden. There's nothing like listening to a shower and thinking how it is soaking in around your green beans.

~ Marcelene Cox

## Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton  
Ellis County Master Gardener



### Parsley - June Herb of the Month



Curly leaf



Flat leaf



parsley

Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum* and *neapolitanum*) has the misfortune of being a token herb on plates of steak and fish as a garnish. But the resilient sprig is edible and its high chlorophyll content makes it a natural breath sweetener which is good reason to nibble some after a heavy meal.

There are three common varieties of this popular biennial: flat leaf (Italian), curly leaf and, parsnip rooted or Hamburg. Parsley leaf has a gentle flavor and works especially well at blending the flavors around it. Both curly leaf and flat leaf varieties are used in cooking, but the flavor of the flat leaf is preferred by chefs. Parsley works with most foods except sweets. It is an important part of the Middle Eastern tabbouleh. The French feature parsley with ham in aspic, with garlic, butter, and escargots; and as persillade, a fine mince of garlic and parsley added at the last moment of cooking to sautés, grilled meats, and poultry. The Belgians and Swiss are fond of fondue with deep-fried parsley on the side. The Japanese also deep-fry parsley in tempura batter. The Mexican and Spaniards use parsley as the prime ingredient in salsa verde, and the English make parsley jelly. When making Italian pesto try substituting some of the basil with parsley.

Parsley seeds can be sown early in the spring for a spring crop or in the late summer after our Texas nights have cooled down to the 50s for a fall crop. Although hardy all winter, the plants that germinate in the fall tend to consider spring their second season and will flower and set seed early. I generally plant half of the seed packet in the fall and the rest in the spring so there are always fresh greens to enjoy with winter soups and summer salads. Because of its deep tap root parsley is difficult to transplant so should be sown where it is to grow. Be patient when planting seeds as they are extremely slow to germinate – up to six weeks. Parsley prefers moderately rich, moist, but well drained soil. It will tolerate partial shade.

As an attractive bright green, compact plant, parsley has earned a place as a border or edging in both herb and ornamental garden beds. It is used as the border of a tussie-mussie. Placed in the vegetable garden, parsley is supposed to repel asparagus beetles. Parsley is susceptible to crown rot. It may be attacked by carrot weevils, parsley worms, or nematodes.

Although the preferred use of parsley is fresh; it can be dried and stored in an airtight container. Frozen parsley is superior to dried.

**Chef tip:** Create a sauce for cold beef, shellfish, and pasta by pureeing a bunch of parsley with garlic, olive oil, and ricotta cheese in a food processor or blender.

## Landscape Gardening

By Gail Hayes, 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 Texas A&M horticulture website. Questions for Master Gardeners will be answered with a return telephone call or email if you leave a message at 972.825.5175.



**Pesticide Information:** It's now possible for people to receive answers quickly by telephone, to commonly asked questions about pesticides, emergency information for use in potential poisoning episodes, or assistance with such problems as pesticide clean-up and disposal, laboratory analyses or pesticide incident investigation seven days a week, from 6:30 am to 4:30 pm Pacific Time. The toll-free number to the National Pesticide Information Center is: 1-800-858-7378.

Esperanza, or 'Yellow Bells' (*Tecoma stans*) is a relative newcomer among popular, commercially available Texas garden plants. As native shrubs or small trees, Esperanzas could be seen and admired from a great distance in west Texas country landscapes when covered with bright yellow flowers, but the plants were tall and often took too long to come into bloom. Since the introduction of several improved varieties by plant breeders, Esperanzas have been utilized to provide masses of color in the landscape practically throughout the warmer periods of the season.

(Continued from page 4)

The original *Tecoma stans* from northern Mexico and Texas often reached 15 to 20 feet in height, although in regions with frost they were never able to realize their height potential. *Esperanza* is closely related to desert-willow, catalpa, cross-vine, trumpet-creeper and other members of the *Bignoniaceae* family.

Robert Vines in his book "Trees, Shrubs & Woody Vines of the Southwest" writes that *Tecoma stans* was long known and used by the Indian and Mexican peoples of the Southwest and Mexico for bowmaking, bee fodder and medicines. Also referred to as 'Hardy Yellow Trumpet,' it was included in medicines for diabetes and stomach cramps and was thought to have diuretic and anthelmintic uses. A sort of native beer was brewed from the roots.

The cultivar 'Gold Star' was selected by Texas plant breeder Greg Grant from a private garden in San Antonio, Texas. It blooms much earlier than the standard *Esperanza* and appears to be intermediate in characteristics between *Tecoma stans stans*, (a more tropical variety) and *Tecoma stans angustata* of West Texas. In 1999 'Gold Star' became one of the Texas Superstar plants, with a top rating for being a spectacular heat-tolerant Texas native with striking masses of golden yellow, trumpet-shaped flowers and dark green, glossy divided leaves. The Texas Superstar program rated it as highly pest resistant, healthy and suitable for mass plantings or container use. This plant is capable of growing in many soil ranges; from the slightly acidic to alkaline.

As would be expected of a plant so well known for so long a time, *Esperanza* has many common names: Yellow-elder, Trumpet Flower, retamo, retama, tronodor, tronodora, trompetilla, Gloria, Palo de Arco (another reference to its use as a wood for bows), Flor de San Pedro, Corneta Amarilla, Flor Amarilla, as well as a host of Indian names.

Velvety Yellow Trumpet, <var. *velutina* has softer, more downy leaves, and Elderleaf Yellow Trumpet, *T. stans* var. *sambucifolia* has leaves more reminiscent of those of the elder. The apricot-colored *Esperanza* is considered to be a bit more cold hardy than the usual commercially available Yellow Bells, which is able to survive mild winters as far as Central Texas. 'Orange Jubilee' is an orange cultivar, and 'Sunrise' is a variety that has yellow blooms veined with copper threads.

All *Esperanza* varieties should be considered as tender plants. Occasionally they will survive the winter if earth is banked over the base of the plant. They may be propagated either by seed or by rooting cuttings.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service has a new tomato course:

### **Tomato 101 - The Basics of Growing Tomatoes**

Tomatoes tend to be the top choice for the home vegetable garden. Tomato Growing 101, an online course by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, is meant to help home gardeners grow with greater success and to lay the foundation for other online courses.

"Of all the vegetables, the tomato is the No. 1 interest of home gardeners," says Dr. Joe Masabni, AgriLife Extension vegetable specialist. They developed a self-paced, self-taught course, the needs and demands were for tomato information." Just log on by selecting the course at <http://www-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/>. There is a nominal fee of \$10.00 says Masabni, which will support the development of future online courses such as Squash 101 and Cucumber 101.

Masabni has been writing about gardening, often vegetable gardening, for about 20 years. He said that the experienced as well as the novice gardeners will find the course useful.

It's nice to have so much information about growing tomatoes in Texas all in one spot. There are eight chapters covering a variety of topics: seed starting, transplanting, training plants, fertilizing and more. Short tests wrap up each chapter, and a ninth concluding chapter lets you give input on the course. The course includes reminders, such as the signs of overwatering and under-watering, which result in wilted plants. Chapter 5 reminds gardeners to check the soil with an index finger. "If the soil is the same temperature as your finger, it is dry and you should water. If the soil feels cool, it is moist and you should hold off on watering."

The course includes helpful illustrations, such as in Chapter 3: "avoid transplants that are leggy or stretched." There are photos of well-proportioned and disproportioned transplants so that you know exactly what those words mean. In Chapter 7 there are pictures of plants affected by different diseases, as well as the possible offenders, such as aphids, whiteflies, spider mites, tomato hornworms and Colorado potato beetles.





## Grandma's Yellow Rose selected as Texas Superstar

By Robert Burns

Texas AgriLife Extension Service

Grandma's Yellow is not the perfect yellow rose, but your grandmother might say it's 'mighty dang near close,' according to Texas AgriLife Extension Service horticulturists.

Grandma's Yellow rose is the newest Texas Superstar selection, one of five that will be announced for 2010, said Dr. Larry Stein, AgriLife Extension horticulturist and one of the developers of Grandma's Yellow rose.

AgriLife Extension and Texas AgriLife Researchers extensively test and designate plants as Texas Superstars that are not just beautiful but perform well for Texas consumers and growers.

Stein and his fellow horticulturists named the new Texas Superstar in honor of Stein's grandmother, Tillie Jungman, who loved the yellow rose and helped grow test varieties in her garden near Castroville, Stein said.

Stein noted the name 'Grandma' has other connotations in addition to his grandmother helping test the plant. The new Texas Superstar is tough yet beautiful, self-sufficient on its own root stock, and low-maintenance, requiring little intervention except some occasional tender loving care, which is a lot like how his grandmother Tillie was, Stein said.

"This is a rose which does not need constant spraying to survive and produce lovely yellow Valentine-like blooms," Stein said, becoming more serious. "It produces successive flushes of blooms — from spring until frost — and is so disease tolerant that fungicide sprays are seldom required. However in wet, high-pressure disease years, fungicide sprays will be needed to keep black spot in check. It is an outstanding performer even in highly alkaline clay soils."

And though it has a lot in common with antique roses, including growing on its own root stock, Grandma's Yellow rose produces large, modern "Valentine's Day" blooms, he said. And like most people's grandmothers, the rose has a rich, interesting history. "Valentine's Day" bloom is a rosarian term for long-stemmed, cutting roses, typical of the type favored as Valentine's Day gifts, Stein said.

A team comprised of Stein; Jerry Parsons, retired professor and AgriLife Extension horticulturist; and Greg Grant, horticulturist with Stephen F. Austin State University, former AgriLife Extension horticulturist in Bexar County, and *Texas Gardener* columnist, began looking for a better yellow rose in 1996. In addition to aesthetic value and good performance, they wanted a plant that was both easy to take care of and to root and otherwise propagate, Stein said.

"There are a lot of yellow roses on the market, but most you have to spray every week or so to really make them do well," he said.

"One of the main elements of being made a Texas SuperStar is it must be able to be propagated and mass-produced in sufficient numbers to meet the increased consumer demand generated," he said. Grandma's Yellow is readily propagated.

The team looked for yellow roses that had lived a long time in the area where they were found. Five candidates were identified and were given names for where they were discovered. One group was found near Sabinal, which is northeast of Uvalde. Another series was identified near Seguin, east of San Antonio. A third candidate came from Somerville, Tenn. The fourth series came from Nacogdoches, where one plant was found blooming near an abandoned motel. And the fifth was found off a street named Brady in southwest San Antonio, Stein said.

The Brady and Seguin roses were almost identical in color and fragrance but Seguin was very difficult to root, and was one of the first to be rejected, he said.

The other roses were ruled out, one by one, for various reasons. The Nacogdoches roses showed the most promise, and the selections were eventually weeded down to a few varieties, which were tested in Miss Tillie's garden for four years, from 1999-2003, with attention to disease resistance. The results were encouraging, as Stein and his team partners remarked in their official report. Even when red roses in the garden were completely defoliated with black spot fungus disease, the Nacogdoches yellow roses were clean.

"We put this test plot in of six plants of Nacogdoches, and there was one plant that was different which ended up being Grandma's Yellow," Stein said. "So it either sported or mutated for us to get this plant that was even better than any of the original Nacogdoches (plants). It was just one of those things that happen in nature."

It was after Miss Tillie died in late November 2005, the name Nacogdoches was changed to Grandma's Yellow. At the funeral, her pallbearers each wore a yellow rose bud in their lapels, Stein said.

More information on the history and characteristics of Grandma's Yellow rose can be found online at [http://plantanswers.com/grandmas\\_yellow\\_rose07.htm](http://plantanswers.com/grandmas_yellow_rose07.htm).

Texas Superstar is a registered trademark owned by Texas AgriLife Research.

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

By Carolyn Foster  
Ellis County Master Gardener



### **Vegetable Facts**

Healthy soils make healthy gardens. Be it flowers or vegetables, often we need to feed the soil. Vegetables absorb huge amounts of nutrients from the soil. Some like corn and spinach, are nitrogen hogs, while onions and peppers, use and store more phosphorus, potassium and minor nutrients like magnesium. Frequent nutrient replenishment is a must. Compost is one of the best ways to maintain soil health. A ½-inch application each spring replenishes what crops have removed during the past growing season.

2-inches will help build up deficient soils' organic matter and nutrients.

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

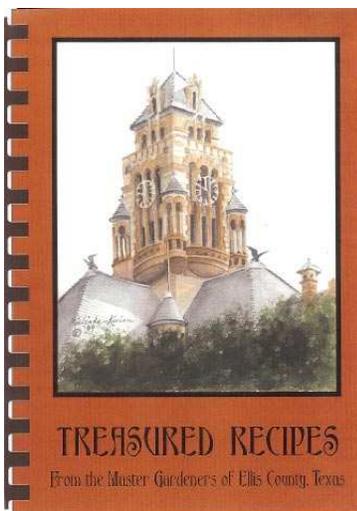
### **Growing Smart**

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

Open-pollinated" seeds are similar but not identical to parent seeds. Plants grown from these seeds produce seeds "true-to-type" with characteristic traits from the parents, and are called "heirlooms".

"Hybrid" seeds result from crossing two or more plants. They are different from parent plants but almost identical to every other plant grown from the same cross.

"Saved" seeds from these can resemble any part of the combined plant crossing.



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