



Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume VI, Issue 10

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

November, 2012

Welcome to the Ellis County Master Gardener's **E-Gardening** Newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to give you a month-by-month agenda of what you should be doing with your landscape. We will feature horticultural articles that we hope you will find interesting, and important dates where you can find the Master Gardeners speaking, demonstrating, and passing out information relative to your garden. If you would like to receive this newsletter monthly via your email address, log onto our website www.ECMGA.com, click on subscribe, and it will be sent around the 1st of every month. Best of all; it's FREE! Susan Clark, Editor

What's Happening in November



- The Market is extended through December 15th!**
8am—1pm * NEW HOURS starting Nov 24th: 10am—3pm
Visit the Master Gardeners' Booth! Located at 410 S. Rogers.
(across from City Hall in the old lumberyard building)
- ☼ Useful gardening tips
 - ☼ Plants and herbs for sale
 - ☼ Free handouts...Some items for a fee
 - ☼ Tell a friend to sign up for the FREE **E-Garden Newsletter!!**

Monday, November 26, 7pm, Indian Trail Master Naturalists present "Christmas Bird Count". Tania Homayoun, from the Audubon Center at Cedar Hill, will discuss the Count's history, how it has contributed to conservation of North America's birds, and how to get involved. 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, 505 West Marvin Ave, Waxahachie.

Cedar Ridge Preserve

7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas, www.audubondallas.org

Saturday, November 17, 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 email jvarnum@aol.com.

Texas Discovery Gardens

3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dallas, TexasDiscoveryGardens.org

Saturday, Nov. 10, 10am—3pm Fall Plant Sale. The Fall Plant Sale now has extended hours!
Note: Member's Preview Sale—Friday, Nov. 9, 4pm—7 pm for the first time in the fall. Members receive 10% off plants, and family memberships cost just \$45! Sign up in advance or at the preview.

Friday, Nov. 9, 3pm—4pm, OR Saturday, Nov. 10, 9am—10am, Fall Plant Sale Safaris. Join a guided tour to see established plants and learn how to care for them. Led by Horticulture Director Roger Sanderson. The tour shows how to incorporate native and adapted plants into your landscape. Learn about the environmental conditions they thrive in and the beneficial insects they attract. **\$10, \$5 for TDG Members. Advance registration strongly encouraged.**

For complete details for events, go to http://texasdiscoverygardens.org/events_and_classes.php

Garden Inspirations

www.gardeninspirations-tx.com

November and December, various dates: Classes for Salsa & Jams, Landscaping 101, and an All-Day Christmas Workshop. For complete details and to register for classes, go to <https://clients.mindbodyonline.com/ASP/home.asp?studioid=30097>

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



Listen to KBEC.....

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

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

Melinda Kocian

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Photo by Mox Moxley

English Gardens

Having evolved out of the formal gardens of Europe, the less stately English Gardens were less expensive and easier to maintain. These gardens were some of the first to employ principles of sustainability with the idea that nature should look natural. Originally developed as natural gardens, evolution brought us the colorful, peaceful image of today's English Garden.

Native and adaptive plants make recreating the thirsty English Cottage Gardens a reality for Ellis County gardeners. Creating a tranquil, natural English Garden starts with the design and preparation. Visit local nurseries, study magazine articles, and consult the Master Gardener's website at www.ECMGA.com for links to information on creating your garden. A blend of plant heights and varieties, hardscape, and water and other natural features can create that special secret garden just for you.

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

Planting

- ✓ This is the ideal time to plant trees and shrubs. They will use less water to establish before spring and summer weather arrives. Consider the size of the plant—especially trees—at maturity. Allow plenty of distance from property lines and structures.
- ✓ Dig a hole two to four times the diameter and one-inch shallower than the root ball. Make sure the root ball and the hole are thoroughly wet before planting. Back fill with the existing soil only and water well.

Fertilizing and Pruning

- ✓ Feed and water vegetables that you are growing now.
- ✓ Feed winter annuals growing in the ground and containers with a water-soluble plant food.
- ✓ Remove the tops of herbaceous perennials after they have died.

Garden Watch

- ✓ Caterpillars like to feast on some cool-season annuals. If they are a problem, pick them off by hand and move them to another location. A spray containing Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) can be used, but it kills all caterpillars.
- ✓ Check potted plants growing outside for insects and spray, if needed, before bringing them indoors.
- ✓ Look for scale on cast-iron and other plants. Use a horticultural oil to control.

Odds and Ends

- ✓ Apply two to three inches of mulch around perennial flowers, newly-planted trees, shrubs, and vines. It protects against winter freeze damage, conserves moisture, and moderates soil temperatures.
- ✓ Collect leaves for the compost pile. Use a mower with a bag to remove leaves from the lawn.
- ✓ Perform maintenance on all power equipment. Run gasoline-powered engines until they are dry.
- ✓ Sharpen mower blades and any other tools as needed.



Photo by Homer McCain

Earth-kind® Gardening: A Sensible Approach
 By Maureen Nitkowski
 Ellis County Master Gardener



After the long, hot North Central Texas summer, true gardeners take a break and evaluate their gardens of last year. Whether better soil preparation, water conservation, or plant selection is indicated for next year, Earth-Kind® landscape practices can help. Earth-Kind® is a research based landscaping program developed by horticultural specialists, agents, volunteers, and industry representatives of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The program focuses on creating beautiful, easy-care landscapes, as well as, vegetable gardens and fruit plantings while conserving and protecting natural resources.



Texas Native 'Desert Willow' is low maintenance and drought tolerant.



If a gardener does decide to start a new landscape bed, proper soil preparation is the first step. Since the dominant soil type in Ellis County is dense black clay, Earth-Kind® research recommends that 3" of expanded shale plus 3" of finished compost be mixed into the soil, and then 3" of native tree mulch cover the amended soil. Both the expanded shale and compost will improve the soil texture by increasing

porosity and drainage, but the expanded shale will last for 10-15 years while compost is broken down by microbial activity. Expanded shale will not help sandy soils, and it must be tilled in to a depth of six to eight inches to be effective. Mulch reduces evaporation from the soil, moderates soil temperature, and reduces annual weeds. Native tree mulch will be broken down by microbes and will become part of

the soil. The gardener needs to add more mulch when the depth of the layer is reduced by half.

Since water sources in our area are decreasing while water demand by the growing population is increasing, water conservation must be a priority in our landscapes. Replacing concrete and asphalt areas with gravel or pavers helps to prevent runoff and erosion. Choosing native plants and adapted drought-tolerant plants can yield a beautiful landscape with low water requirements. Rainwater harvesting for the garden or landscape reduces de-

mand on the public water system. Designing turf areas to be reduced in size and utilizing less water-hungry varieties of turf will help your water bill. Irrigating efficiently and only when needed is not difficult to do, but does require some planning and moisture monitoring.

Selecting plants that can take the heat and dry summers does not mean limiting your landscape to cacti. The Ellis County Master Gardeners offer the public lists of recommended plants that include trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, turf, annuals, perennials, fruit and nut trees, herbs, and vegetables. Drought-resistant and easy-care varieties are the best choices. Earth-Kind® has tested roses and recommends 21 varieties thus far, which are disease resistant and require minimal care. At present, Earth-Kind® is conducting research trials on perennials; the results will be published as the various trial phases are completed.

For more information about Earth-Kind® landscaping, visit the ECMGA website at <http://earthkind.tamu.edu> or call Ellis County Master Gardeners at (972) 825-5175.

Save The Date!
Saturday, March 16, 2013

Lawn & Garden EXPO
 Ellis County Master Gardener

It's almost time to **Fall Back**

back Don't forget to set your clocks 1 hour at 2:00 a.m on Sunday, Nov. 4, 2012!

Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton
Ellis County Master Gardener



November Herb of the Month: Pumpkins

Yes, I know pumpkins are not classified as an herb, but the definition of an herb is "a useful plant". No doubt the beautiful, orange orb has many useful qualities. According to Wikipedia, pumpkins are squash in the Cucurbitaceae family, which include gourds. They are native to North America, have thick orange shells, and contain seeds and pulp. Pumpkins are used for food, decoration, and recreation. Think jack-o'-lantern and pumpkin chucking competitions.

The oldest evidence of pumpkin-related seeds dating between 7000 and 5500 BC, were found in Mexico. Pumpkins range in size from less than

one pound to over 1,000 pounds. They are a warm weather crop, usually planted in late June, require a warm soil (at least 60°) and will suffer from cold temperatures and lack of water.

Pumpkins produce both a male and female flower; honeybees play a significant role in fertilization. Pumpkins have historically been pollinated by the native squash bee, *Peponapis pruinosa*, but this bee has declined, probably due to pesticide sensitivity, and today most commercial plantings are pollinated by honeybees. Although I have not been able to grow any squash successfully in Texas, when we lived in Missouri, the Hamilton men and I would self pollinate our pumpkin patch with a small artist paint brush. This method usually produced several small pumpkins suitable for carving

and one for our traditional Halloween meal of Stuffed Pumpkin and Chili.

In the southwestern United States and Mexico, pumpkin and squash flowers are a popular food item. They may be used to garnish dishes, or dipped in a batter and then fried in oil.

Pumpkin seeds, also known as pepitas, are small, flat, green, edible seeds. Most pumpkin seeds are covered by a white husk, although some pumpkin varieties produce seeds without them. Pumpkin seeds are a popular snack that can be found hulled or semi-hulled at most grocery stores. However, roasting pumpkin seeds (usually scooped out of jack-o'-lanterns) is a popular Halloween treat. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of protein, magnesium, copper, and zinc.

In addition to the traditional Halloween jack-o'-lantern and Thanksgiving pie, there are numerous pumpkin festivals, celebrations, and competitions throughout the world. The record for the world's heaviest pumpkin was broken September 30, 2012, at the Topsfield Fair in Massachusetts. Ron Wallace of Greene, Rhode Island, entered a pumpkin weighing 2,009 pounds. We will see if someone can top that record next year.

Baked Stuffed Pumpkin

- 1 medium unblemished pumpkin
- 1 package prepared stuffing mix, such as Pepperidge Farm
- 4 Tbsp. butter
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup celery, chopped
- 1/4 cup carrots, chopped
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 8 oz. each, Swiss cheese and cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 cup Half & Half

Salt & pepper to taste and one bay leaf
Directions: Cut a cover about 4" in diameter in top of pumpkin. Scrape out all of the seeds, strings, etc. Sprinkle inside lightly with salt. Sauté onions, celery, and carrots in butter until tender and transparent. Add stuffing mix to butter mixture; season with salt and pepper and toss gently. Stir in the cheeses and spoon the mixture into the pumpkin. Combine the milk, eggs, salt, and pepper; pour over stuffing. Lay a bay leaf on top and replace the cover. Place on a buttered baking dish and bake in a 400° preheated oven for 1-1/2 hours, or until the pumpkin is beginning to soften on the outside and the inside is beginning to bubble. Reduce heat to 350° and bake an additional half hour.

I add chopped spinach to this recipe sometimes to make it healthier. Serves 8 to 10 as a side dish.

This has been a long time traditional Halloween meal served with a bowl of chili. Enjoy!



In the Vegetable Garden

With *Monica Nyenhaus*
Ellis County Master Gardener



Each fall I marvel at how the growing season went by so fast. I reminisce about what I was going to get done versus what actually happened. That always is the same. The well-laid plans just went out the window very early on, as weather and life interrupts my diligent plan to stay ahead of the game “this year”. So now that the rest of the yard is pruned, mulched, fertilized, and ready for a long (well, in Texas not so long) winter, it’s time to begin to plan for next year’s harvest... wait, there’s stuff still growing in my veggie garden!

November is a transitional month in the garden, if you have everything already pulled and have not planted winter crops, then you are just cleaning up and getting ready for a new spring garden. However, if you are a diehard that can’t let a pepper or tomato plant go until you have harvested the last fruit before frost, then you are not alone. With summer plants mixed with fall plants in the garden, it’s a challenge to get ready for your next spring crop.

For fall gardeners, we know that it’s just a matter of time before the first frost. Making sure that you are ready is key to keeping some of those not so hardy fall veggies going through to harvest. If you don’t buy row covers, you can use old sheets and cover your plants when the weather forecasts for frost. Be sure to have a frame, if you can, so the actual cover does not lie on the plants. It will help keep the dampness off of the plant. If you have tomato and pepper plants with fruit, you can keep them going, but you will not get any new fruit as they need warm weather to bloom. Regardless of what you are growing, it’s almost time to clean out the garden of all plants that

are not going to make it through winter. So long peppers, tomatoes, basil, marigolds, and any other plants that are not fall harvesting. It’s always sad to see them being pulled up, but then after everything is cleaned up and ready for the next planting. It keeps you dreaming about the fresh spring veggies that will be coming on soon.

Oh wait, there’s still things growing out there that need to be watered and fertilized. Making sure to water in the winter is something you need to take care of. Because there is no daytime heating, the soil does not dry out as fast, but the plants still need moist soil to absorb the nutrients. When there is a forecast for frost or freeze, make sure you water the soil beforehand. It helps to keep the roots warm and more tolerant of the cold. Mulch is very important in keeping the weeds down and keeping the plants insulated from both heat and cold.

Now it’s off to start the list of plants that you are going to grow next year, poring through seed catalogs and dreaming of the spring. If you are going to be cleaning up the garden, you need to start amending the soil for spring; adding compost and other amendments now, so they have time to break down in the soil. Tilling helps to expose the little pests to freeze and help control the little buggers in the spring. Let’s not even think about cover crops! But if you feel challenged you can do that too, just more planting and tilling in the spring. Cover crops help put back nutrients in the soil naturally.

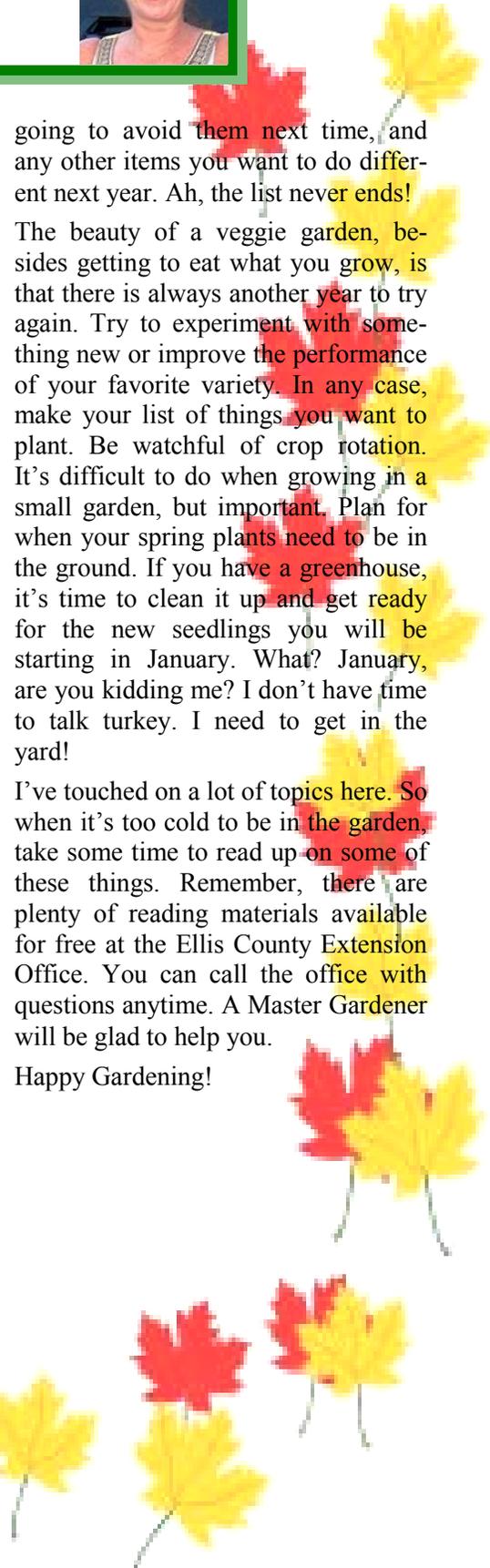
November is a good time to sit and write down...if you can remember, what grew well, the weather for the past growing season, what problems you encountered, and how you are

going to avoid them next time, and any other items you want to do different next year. Ah, the list never ends!

The beauty of a veggie garden, besides getting to eat what you grow, is that there is always another year to try again. Try to experiment with something new or improve the performance of your favorite variety. In any case, make your list of things you want to plant. Be watchful of crop rotation. It’s difficult to do when growing in a small garden, but important. Plan for when your spring plants need to be in the ground. If you have a greenhouse, it’s time to clean it up and get ready for the new seedlings you will be starting in January. What? January, are you kidding me? I don’t have time to talk turkey. I need to get in the yard!

I’ve touched on a lot of topics here. So when it’s too cold to be in the garden, take some time to read up on some of these things. Remember, there are plenty of reading materials available for free at the Ellis County Extension Office. You can call the office with questions anytime. A Master Gardener will be glad to help you.

Happy Gardening!



Garden To-Dos for November

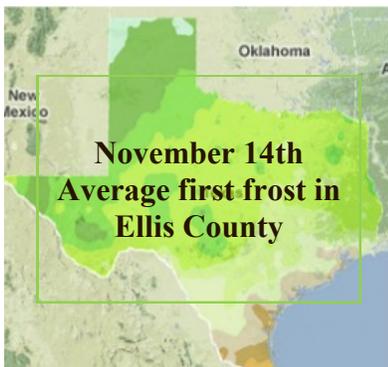
With *Jeanne Bolin*

Ellis County Master Gardener



Here is what's on the to-do list for the month of November:

- *Plant winter vegetables such as carrots, radishes, lettuces, and spinach.
- *Plant herbs such as cilantro, lemon balm, chamomile, and dill.
- *Plant hardy perennials, shrubs, and trees.
- *Mulch plants six inches from tree trunk and don't mulch plants shorter than three inches. Mulch will help retain moisture and protect against freeze damage by moderating the soil's temperature.
- *Check vegetables for caterpillars and insects.
- *Wash potted plants with one tablespoon of orange oil to a gallon of water before bringing them inside.
- *Deadhead perennials, and if gone to seed, save the seed in an airtight bag for planting in the spring.
- *Clean up garden to reduce insect and disease potential for next year.



- *Chill tulip and crocus bulbs. They need six to eight weeks in the refrigerator, but not near the fruits and vegetables, which give off ethylene gas that will cause the bulbs to perform poorly.
- *Plant perennial strawberries.
- *Plant wildflower seeds.
- *Be prepared to cover your plants with breathable coverings such as old sheets, tablecloths, or pillow cases. You may want to use your tomato cages by covering them with cloth and securing it with clothespins. Be sure to remove the covers when the temperature is above freezing.
- *Plant bulbs other than tulips or ones that have to be chilled.
- *Cut up holiday gourds and pumpkins for the compost pile. Don't forget the leaves and if you don't have a compost pile, spread them on your garden beds.
- *Prepare beds for pansies, violets, stock, snapdragons, and dianthus.

They need well-drained soil and at least a half-day of sun.

- *Divide and reset perennials such as phlox, violets, hollyhocks, irises, day lilies, and shasta daisies.
- *Don't forget to water if there is not enough rain.
- *Drain gasoline from power tools and run the engine until fuel in the carburetor is used up.
- *Drain and store garden hoses and watering equipment in a readily accessible area. This way you may water plants easily during a dry spell or before a sudden freeze.



ECMGA Amateur Photo Contest

The Ellis County Master Gardener Association announces its annual photo contest is under way beginning September 1, 2012. **Last date for submissions is March 1, 2013.**

Grab your cameras and get out in your yard, garden, and Ellis County and take your best shot! **You can submit up to five photos**, so you may want to submit photos from different seasons, as well as, your personal favorite. Vegetables and summer garden pictures are great, but don't forget to include beautiful fall and winter photos, too. Please **do not include** people in your photos.

For contest details and submission of entries, go to **Photo Contest** at www.ecmga.com. There is **no cost to enter** the contest, and photographers can enter up to **five photographs per category**. Prizes will be awarded to first, second, and third place in each of two categories: "single specimen" and "in the garden". Each winner will receive a gift certificate from one of the following businesses: Roland's Nursery or The Greenery in Waxahachie or EarthTones Greenery in Midlothian.



The Junior Master Gardener Program

By: Shirley Campbell, Ellis County Master Gardener



Suck-A-Bug. Gas Gobblers. Plant Parts Rap. Pinwheel Plants. Intrigued? These are all activities from Junior Master Gardener™, a youth gardening curriculum developed at Texas A&M University and administered through the extension network. If you want to incorporate fun, inexpensive, environmental education activities into your child's schooling, look no further than Junior Master Gardener™. JMG™ is a gardening curriculum designed for grades 3—5 (Level 1) and 6—8 (Level 2), but the activities are suitable for K-12.

JMG™ incorporates hands-on, project-based learning, leadership development, and community service. It is a flexible curriculum appropriate for families, camps, scout groups, after-school programs, schools, and public gardens. Access to a garden or plot of land is preferable, but not required.

The Level 1 curriculum encompasses eight areas: plant growth and development, soil and water, insects and diseases, environmental horticulture and ecology, vegetables and herbs, fruits

and nuts, landscape horticulture, and life skills and career exploration. Each chapter has a selection of group and individual activities. Activities include arts and crafts, games, field trips, backyard explorations, experiments, cooking, and more. Many activities use items found in nature or around the house (film canisters, coat hangers, cookie cutters, paper plates, newspapers, window screens, etc.). Activities vary from 'quick and simple' (no supplies required) to more involved -- requiring more supplies and time (days, weeks). Do one activity or do them all—it's your choice; the curriculum is flexible.

The Level 2 curriculum has two different units: Operation Thistle™: Seeds of Despair, which covers plant growth and development, and Operation W.A.T.E.R™: Dr. Thistle Goes Underground, which covers soils and water.

In addition to the core curricula, there are several supplemental curricula at Level 1: Literature in the Garden™, Health and Nutrition in the Garden™, and Wildlife Gardener™. Literature in the Garden™ engages youth through activities based on garden- and ecology-themed children's books. The goal of the curriculum is to enhance under-

standing of the messages behind the stories.

Health and Nutrition in the Garden™ has chapters in thrifty gardens, basic gardening, growing techniques, food safety, ABCs of healthy eating, and healthy snacks. The activities aim to teach youth health, nutrition, food safety, and decision-making skills. Wildlife Gardener™ helps youth understand wildlife and their needs, their contribution to the garden, and their



aesthetic value. Chapters in Wildlife Gardener™ include habitat gardening basics, essential elements, birds, mammals, insects, reptiles and amphibians, wildlife habitat sites, and life skills and career exploration.

It only takes five youth to form a registered JMG™ group! Registered groups get a certificate recognizing their group, a free page on the JMG™ website, and are entered into monthly drawings for garden-related prizes. In addition, registered youth can work toward various levels of certification in the curriculum. JMG™ registration is free, and the curriculum is inexpensive.

E-mail the Ellis County Master Gardeners at ellis-tx@tamu.edu or call (972) 825-5175 for more information. Whether you are looking for activities to fill weeks, months, a whole summer, or even just one hour (or less), JMG™ is sure to have something that will fit your needs.



**Interested in becoming a
2013 Expo Sponsor Or
Expo Exhibitor?**

Contact James Kocian at
expo.ecmga@yahoo.com

Reserve the date: March 16, 2013!

Dealing With Disease

By Jackie Wilhite
Ellis County Master Gardener

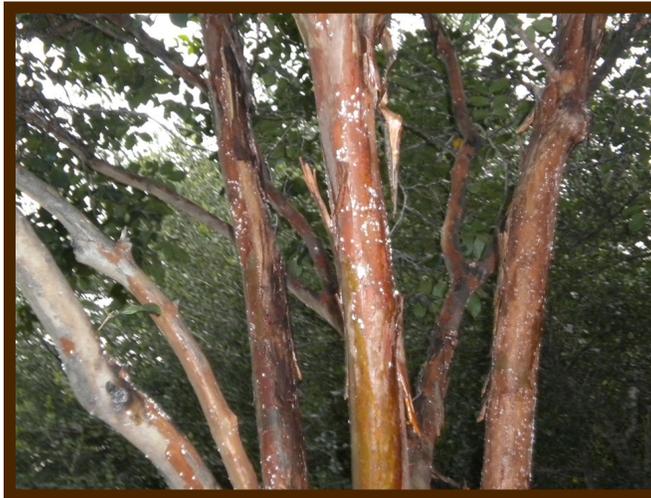


Crape Myrtle Scale

A new insect pest has been quietly invading North Texas crape myrtles. Up until recently this scale on crape myrtles was primarily found in the urban areas around Dallas. It does not officially have a name as of yet, but falls in the genus *Eriococcus*. This is a felt or bark type scale that has never been associated with crape myrtles, but has relatives that are known as Azalea bark scale. According to Texas A&M systems, evidence suggests that this scale may be a migrant from Asia, *Eriococcus Lagerstroemia*, which is common on the timber tree *Lagerstroemia indica* in Japan and China.

What's a little scale to a big tough plant like a crape myrtle? This is no little scale. It covers all stems and limbs with a white powdery waxy looking substance. These insects are the scales. They have sucking parts to feed on the plant causing the limbs to look black and sooty from the honeydew that is secreted. The leaves can become sticky and turn black with sooty mold. If this sounds familiar, then you probably have seen aphids accomplish the same results with their

honeydew. The honeydew also attracts ants, who in turn protect the scale from predators, so that they may feed on the sticky substance. Scale populations will flourish while being tended by the ants. There is no easy way to treat this scale. You must break the cycle as scales hatch and infect the plant once again.



I found that homeowners have tried a multitude of treatments for scale infestations. Some recommendations were to use horticultural oil since the application of oil will smother the scale. This type of treatment can be a problem during the heat of summer when the scale is thriving and is better suited to winter applications to avoid

damaging the plant. TAMU reports that the application of horticultural oils has not been effective. They do recommend Greenlight Tree and Shrub Insect Control with Safari or Merit® or Bayer Advanced™ Garden Tree and Shrub Insect Control. Before application of products to the plant, it is beneficial to wash the trunk and all limbs that can be reached with a mild dishwashing solution and a soft brush. This will remove any female scale and their eggs to help the treatment process. This will also help with removing the honeydew and blackened leaves. Let the plant dry about 24 hours before application of the insect control product. If the plant is not allowed to dry completely, the insecticide will not adhere to the plant for optimum results. It may be necessary to retreat the plant or change up the treatment as the seasons change.

The crape myrtle bark scale had been observed primarily in the north Dallas area of North Texas according to TAMU information, but some Ellis County residents have reported battling the pest for several years. The best treatment for crape myrtle scale may be yet to come.

Light House for Learning

(With the Ellis County Master Gardeners)

For reservations, call Melissa Cobb at (972) 923-4631.

Register online at http://www.wisd.org/default.aspx?name=CO_LighthouseforLearning

Monday, December 3, 6:00-7:30, Vermi-Composting. Worm your way into composting by using worms to eat your food scraps! Vermicomposting, or worm composting, is an easy way to recycle your kitchen waste and produce rich compost to use in your garden and house plants. This class will teach you the basics of vermicomposting. During the class, you will assemble your own worm bin, complete with worms, to take home so you can get started right away. There is a \$12.00 fee payable to the instructor at the beginning of class for supplies. **Instructor:** Susan Clark, Cost: \$12.00 + \$12.00 supply fee





Landscape Gardening

From: Gail Haynes, Ellis County Master Gardener

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

Bulbs: Tips on Tulips

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

The association of the popular tulip with Holland has led many to believe that it is native to that country; however, the tulip was brought from Constantinople in the mid-to-late 1500s. The tulip is a member of the lily family.

Research has proven that with proper treatment and variety selection, tulips may be just as spectacular in Texas as they are in more northern areas. To achieve long, graceful stems and successful blooms, the colorful tulip demands a pre-chilling of the bulbs in the vegetable bin of your refrigerator for 45 to 60 days prior to planting. Be certain that the bulbs remain dry to avoid mold or rot; wrap them in paper towels and put them in paper bags or plastic to help assure dryness. Plant the bulbs immediately upon removal from cold storage in December or early January.

The following are some recommended types and varieties for Texas gardens. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive, as most varieties of tulips will perform if handled properly.

Darwin Tulips: The Darwin is an ideal all-purpose tulip, and is by far the best for general garden use and beauty. Darwins appear on long, graceful stems, and usually reach peak bloom in late March and early April. Some recommended Darwin varieties include 'Aristocrat' (soft rose), 'Paul Richter' (bright red), 'Golden Age' (golden yellow), 'Red Master' (deep crimson), 'The Bishop' (deep violet), and 'Zwanenburg' (pure white).

Darwin Hybrids: These are improved, larger-flowering Darwin types. Darwin hybrids usually bloom several weeks earlier than the regular Darwin types. Outstanding varieties include 'General Eisenhower' (large, scarlet red), 'Apeldoorn' (warm orange-red), 'Roosevelt' (orange-red), and 'Diplomat' (vermilion red). 'Jewel of Spring' is yellow, marked with red, and

'Elizabeth Arden' is deep salmon-pink.

Cottage Tulips: This variety has many colors and flower forms, and blooms later than Darwin types. The blooms are usually large and egg-shaped. Outstanding varieties include 'Halcro' (carmine-red), 'John T. Scheepers' (soft yellow), 'Renown' (red), 'Smiling Queen' (light pink), and 'White City'.

Parrot Tulips: Parrot tulips have fringed and scalloped edges. There are numerous varieties of parrot tulips; however, many have weak stems and do not flower properly. Because of their large, heavy blooms, wind and rain can damage parrot tulips. Some varieties include 'Red Parrot' (deep scarlet), 'Blue Parrot' (bluish with gray sheen), 'Texas Gold' (golden yellow), 'Orange Favorite' (bright orange), and 'Fantasy' (soft rose with apple-green stripes) *pictured*.

Peony or Double Tulips: These tulips of many petals bloom late in the spring season. Good varieties include 'Eros' (rose-pink), 'May Wonder' (clear pink), and 'Orange Triumph' (soft orange).

Other Tulip Types These include lily-flowered tulips, Breeder tulips, Rembrandt or broken tulips, Fosteriana tulips, and Duc van Thol tulips.

Regardless of tulip choice, locate the planting in full sun or partial shade in well-drained soil and on a raised bed. Planting the bulbs beneath a deciduous tree will provide adequate sun before foliage appears in spring.

Tulips make a more effective display when planted in masses of one variety and color. However, a number of varieties will assure a longer season of bloom and show of color. For vivid garden displays, mix tulips with other spring bulbs, perennials, spring-flowering shrubs, and annuals.

Garden Checklist for November

- Don't forget to give your landscape a steady amount of water, through irrigation or by hand, if there is not adequate rain.

As soon as the November weather appears to be settled, it is time to select and plant such annuals as pansies, violas, and ornamental cabbages and kale.

- Plan now for your spring flowering season with a mixture of annuals and perennials.
- Place orders for seeds this month so you will have them available when you are ready to plant. By ordering early, you will be more certain of getting the varieties you want. In addition to ordering seeds that you are already familiar with, try a few new kinds each year to broaden your garden contents.
- November through February is a good time to plant trees and shrubs.
- Bring in late-blooming plants such as decorative kalanchoes or Christmas cactus so they may finish flowering in the warmth of the house.
- Continue to set out cool-season bedding plants, such as pansies, violas, stock, snapdragons, and dianthus.
- Prepare beds and individual holes for rose planting in January and February. Use composted manure, pine bark, and similar materials mixed with existing soil.
- Take advantage of good weather to prepare garden beds for spring planting. Work in any needed organic matter, and have beds ready to plant when needed.
- Berrying plants, such as holly and yau-pon, may be pruned now while they can be enjoyed as cut material inside the house.





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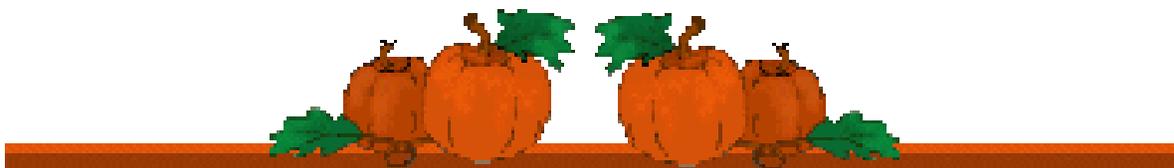
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