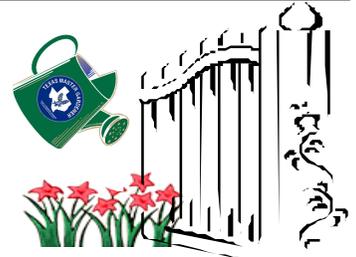




Ellis County Master Gardener's Ellis-Gardening Newsletter



Volume I, Issue 3

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

April, 2007

Welcome to the Ellis County Master Gardener's **Ellis-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 landscape. 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.

What's Happening in April

Tuesday, April 9, 7:00 pm - The Greenery, XERISCAPES - Marie Tedei with Eden's Organic Garden Center, Dallas and current President of the Dallas Organic Club, will share her expertise in water-wise planting for Dallas and surrounding area.

Saturday, April 14, 9:00 am - The Greenery, "How To Plant A Rose Garden", Jim Suggs, an Ellis County Master Gardener, a Consultant Rosarian for The American Rose Society, and a board member of the Fort Worth Botanical Society has been growing roses since 1968. Jim will go over many aspects of rose gardening. After this class, you won't just want to stop and smell the roses, you will want to grow them!

Saturday, April 14, 10:30 - Petal Pushers in Cedar Hill: "English Gardening and Petal Pusher Picks" with Andria Rucker, who grew up north of England. She is a member a large family with a long tradition of gardening. Always an adventurer, she spent a season running a small restaurant in Saas Fee, Switzerland. She came to Dallas Texas in 1977 and began gardening and was amazed when her first attempt to garden in our climate was described as "a real English Garden". Her interest led her to become a Master Gardener with the Dallas County Agricultural Extension Service. She is keen to share her knowledge and love of gardening as you tour the beautiful gardens of her childhood...only Texas style. Along with gardening, her current interest is taking individuals to Europe to visit gardens of England and the South of France. The Curious Traveler Inc. is Andria's newest and very successful venture.

1:00 pm - Join our partner in crime....Rosa Finsley, Landscape Architect and former owner of Kings Creek Gardens...now Petal Pusher's Garden Emporium. Over the years Rosa and her gardening partner Logan Calhoun collected unusual plant material to be tested in our harsh Texas climate. Once it proved itself in Cedar Hill, we began propagating it for sale; now known as Petal Pusher Picks. The unusual group of plant material has began an ongoing process for over 17 years, and it is one of the featured attractions of this garden center. As avid gardeners we are always on the prowl for new and unusual plant material. Rosa and Logan have been the backbone to this venture along with our own in-house employee Barney.

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There can be no other occupation like gardening in which, if you were to creep up behind someone at their work, you would find them smiling.
~ Mirabel Osler

Coming Soon!
Waxahachie Downtown Farmer's Market!

Saturday, May 26, 2007
8:00 am - 1:00 pm

(Continued from page 1)

Lighthouse for Learning

(with the Ellis County Master Gardeners)

For reservations, call 972-923-4631, ask for Melissa Cobb

Thursday, April 19 - 6:00-8:00 pm - Plant Propagation, Instructors: Lois Yarborough and Melinda Kocian, \$10 plus \$10 supply fee paid to instructors. Learn to create new plants from your favorite existing plants, then share them with friends and family.

Monday, April 23 - 6-7:30 pm - Composting, Instructor: Jamey Guarascio-Cosper, \$8.00. Learn the basics of composting, from where to locate your pile, what type of bin to purchase and what to put in and not to put in your pile. This class will get you started with the basics - experience will allow you to build from there.

Thursday, May 3 - 6-7:30 - Container Gardening, Instructor: DeAnn Bell, \$8.00 plus \$15.00 supply fee (plants and soil) paid to instructor. Create a beautiful container for your front steps or patio to welcome visitors to your home. You will create your own container garden with plants that grow well in our area. Bring one pot of your choice, no larger than 12 inches. Registration deadline is April 18.

It's April - What Needs to be Done?

Planting and Sowing

- Start new turf from sod. Be certain that you have good root-to-soil contact and keep the new sod evenly moist until new roots are established.
- Direct sow warm-season annuals (amaranthus, celosia, cosmos, marigolds, moss rose, gomphrena, purple fountaingrass, zinnias) in their growing beds. Keep seeded areas moist until germination. Thin seedlings to recommended spacing soon after first true leaves have appeared.
- Corn can be sown early this month, but only after soil temperature has reached 65 degrees F. Hot-weather vegetables (okra, black-eyed peas, watermelons) can be sown mid- to late-month.

Fertilizing and Pruning

- Remove spent flowers, trim excessive growth and lightly fertilize an established annual bed to extend the life of the planting.
- Prune climbing and once-blooming roses as soon as they're done flowering.
- Frequent mowing will keep an established lawn thick and healthy, but avoid removing more than one-third of the leaf surface each time.

This and That

- Start weeding your flower garden. Early competition between small plants and weeds can delay flowering. Thick mulch will discourage weed growth.

Garden Watch

- It's alarming when caterpillars attack live oak trees en masse, but usually nothing can be done. However, a healthy live oak will usually recover.
- Check tender, new growth for aphids. A few can be tolerated, but large numbers should be controlled. Dislodging them with a fairly strong spray of water may be all the control you need until the ladybugs move in. If chemical pesticides are called for, follow label instructions carefully.

Monthly Tip:

Good mulch conserves water by significantly reducing moisture evaporation from the soil. Mulch also reduces weed populations, prevents soil compaction and keeps soil temperatures more moderate.

Featured Plant for April

Prairie Verbena (Native)



Verbena bipinnatifida 'Verbena'

Low spreading perennial ground cover blooms in several colors all summer long. Easy to grow or transplant from wild. Low water and fertilizer requirements.

Exposure: Sun or Part Shade

Size: Ht 6-12" Spread 12-24"

Spacing: 9-12"

GARDEN TALK

By Homer McCain

Ellis County Master Gardener



Angelface® Blue Angelonia

I found this plant to be an outstanding performer and think everyone should try it. Spires of super saturated blue flowers held high on extra sturdy stems give Angelface® Blue a larkspur-like appearance, but with continuous blooms from early summer to the first fall frost. Its concord grape scented foliage adds to its appeal. With a vase life of 10 days, this is a great choice for cut flower gardens. Sometimes called the summer snapdragon, this Angelonia is not only heat and drought tolerant, but also thrives with wet feet. Grows to 18 - 24 inches tall. Annual, Full Sun to Partial Shade, Upright



Bluebird Nemesia,

Bluebird is not a new Nemesia, but it is worth listing because it is still one of the best on the market. Although it can stand up to the heat better than some varieties, the quality that I rely on is its frost tolerance, so it is ideal for the early spring garden. Bluebird has snapdragon shaped, blue-purple flowers that mix beautifully with other cool season favorites such as violas, ornamental kale, and pansies. Annual, Full Sun, Upright



Superbells® Calibrachoa

Calibrachoa are often described as mini petunias. The two plants are closely related and both were introduced in Europe in the early 19th century. In 1988 wild samples were collected from South America, developed and then released four years later as the Million Bells® cultivar. They were an instant hit. Superbells® is an improved series that is a disease tolerant, self-cleaning and with a self-branching form. For gardeners, this means the low growing, compact plant stays vigorous, blooms profusely without deadheading and doesn't need to be pinched back to keep it from becoming leggy. Calibrachoa is especially suited for containers because it prefers soil a little on the dry side and doesn't need much fertilizer to bloom continuously. This makes it a must have for busy gardeners who want plants that aren't fussy. Superbells® Red is covered in deep red flowers that look great in combinations with orange, purple and golden yellow and are also ideal for patriotic containers. Superbells® Plum is a light plum with dark purple veining and a yellow throat. Annual, Full Sun to Partial Shade, Cascading

The following came from the P. Allen Smith Gardening Newsletter of March 23rd - Plant Picks for 2007. To view more plants selections, the web site is: WWW.pallensmith.com

Did you Know?

By Betty Reuscher, Ellis County Master Gardener

Scabiosa columbaria, Pincushion Flower; one Tough Plant

The first flower blooming in my garden in mid-March was the Pincushion flower (*Scabiosa columbaria*)—charming, pale lavender mounds of softness. It's a good thing, too, for a swallowtail butterfly just happened by looking for nectar. Yes, butterflies are out and about early in March depending on the air temperature. When temperatures reach the high 60s or 70 degrees, butterflies come out of their hiding places (diapause or hibernation) and begin their search for nectar-bearing blooms. Since the pickings are so slim during March, this swallowtail lingered around the *Scabiosa* for an hour or more sampling each and every blossom, and of course, I ran for my camera.

Scabiosa is one tough survivor remaining evergreen throughout the winter and weathering the heat and drought of the summer months with barely subsistence watering. It grows in clumps about two feet high which makes it perfect for borders and beds. My *Scabiosa* lives in a wooden flower box where it gets minimal attention. This hardy perennial comes in blue, pink and lavender. If you add this charmer to your garden, place it in full sun and well-drained soil.



Growing Wisteria

By Diane Hopkins, Master Gardener

Wisteria is a member of the Pea family. The genus was named in honor of an anatomy professor at the University of Pennsylvania, Caspar Wistar.

Wisteria is a vigorous, twining vine with wide landscape usage where space permits and gardeners are committed to keeping them in bounds. They are greatly valued for their large pendulous flower clusters that occur in the spring. Flowers are pea-like and may be white, pink, lilac-blue, bluish-purple or purple in color. The fruit is a long, green flattened pod that is not particularly ornamental. The plant climbs by means of twining stems and has alternate, pinnately compound leaves. Older, established plants may have a twisted, woody trunk several inches in diameter. Plants that have been grown from seed remain in a long juvenile stage and often do not bloom for 10 to 15 years or longer. Plants that are grafted and plants grown from cuttings or layered from a flowering plant will usually begin flowering earlier than seedlings.

Two species of wisteria are typically grown in home gardens: Chinese wisteria and Japanese wisteria. The Chinese wisteria is the more popular plant due to its flowering habit. It grows to a height of 25 feet or more and has flower clusters six inches to a foot in length, which open before the foliage has expanded. Individual flowers are violet-blue and of Chinese wisteria which is very fragrant. After planting; however, the juvenile period



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In order to bloom well, wisteria requires full sun and a deep, moderately fertile, moist soil that doesn't dry out excessively. They will adapt to most soils, though they prefer a neutral to slightly acid soil for best results. Some type of support will be necessary as mature plants can be quite heavy.

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Wisterias climb best on trellises, arbors and pergolas. Wisteria can also be grown as a single trunk standard or a tree-form. To accomplish this, the plant must be staked in an upright position. When it has reached four to five feet in height its top is cut off. Side shoots are allowed to develop on the upper part, but are continually removed from the lower stem. Side shoots are pruned each winter to six inches to a foot in length until the top is as large as desired. Future pruning consist of cutting summer shoots to the sixth or seventh leaf as it expands and of cutting off secondary shoots that develop just beyond the first or second leaf. In winter, these secondary shoots are cut back to within an inch of their base.

Some annual pruning is required to maintain plant quality; it isn't advisable to allow the vine to grow randomly and take over surrounding plants and structures. Pruning will help reduce the vigor of the vine and promote flowering.

Attracting Hummingbirds to a Wildscape

By Diane Hopkins, Master Gardener

Wildscape is a version of Xeriscape that uses drought resistant plants that meet the needs of wildlife. Hummingbirds are one of the primary targets of wildscaping.



The hummingbirds will be returning to Ellis County soon. There are two ways to attract hummingbirds to your landscape – provide nectar producing blooming plants and feed the birds with sugar water in special hummingbird feeders. Blooming plants somewhere in the neighborhood are usually necessary to attract the hummingbirds originally and the feeders bring large numbers in for close observation.

Irises are beginning to bloom and the daylilies will be blooming in early summer. They sometimes attract hummingbirds. The number of active little birds will increase as the *Salvia greggii*, society garlic and dwarf ruellia begin to bloom. As the summer progresses, the blue salvias, *Esperanza*, lantana and trumpet vine provide excellent nectar sources. Firebush is an outstanding hummingbird plant. Place one in a five gallon container in an area of your landscape that receives full sun. In addition to providing a round globe full of attractive red flowers, the plant will be the most popular nectar source. Many a hummingbird "dogfight" will be centered on winning dominance over the firebush. For shady areas, plant Turk's cap and pentas to attract hummingbirds. Pentas are not usually thought of as Xeriscape plants but fit in a Xeriscape if they are planted in soil enriched with compost and are mulched.

In addition to planting a mix of flowering plants from early spring until late fall, those of us who want to attract hummingbirds to our gardens feed sugar water to the interesting little birds.

Obtain a sugar water feeder with a perch so the birds don't have to consume precious energy hovering while they eat. It must also

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have bee guards to discourage bees from visiting the feeder. Place the feeder under the house eave or under an open part of the trellis in a spot that is easy to observe from the window or patio. The feeder you select should be easy to clean. Rinse your feeder out every week and add fresh sugar water. You can purchase the colored sugar water but sugar from your pantry works just as well. Mix four parts water with one part sugar by volume and stir until the sugar dissolves. The addition of a few drops of red food coloring is not necessary to attract the birds but there is no proven-research that shows it harms them. The solution can be heated in the microwave for 10 minutes to help it dissolve. Any excess solution should be stored in the refrigerator.

There may be a problem with the male birds challenging one another at the feeder. The answer is to place more than one feeder in your yard, providing a distance between them.

A shallow source of clean water is a necessity for the birds. The little creatures adore running, misting or dripping water but a regular bird bath can be modified with rocks to provide the quarter-inch of water they need.

Encouraging hummingbirds to visit your garden will provide a relaxing source of entertainment for you, as well as providing a desirable habitat for the birds.



EarthKind™ News

by Diane Hopkins, Ellis County Master Gardener

2007 EarthKind Rose of the Year

By Diane Hopkins, Master Gardener



The title "EarthKind Rose of the Year" is awarded only after years of field research during which roses are grown and evaluated under very tough conditions. They aren't fertilized or pruned. They must thrive with little irrigation, and must never be treated with pesticides. The resulting winners are so easily grown that anyone can have great success with these outstanding cultivars.

An old garden rose, "Perle d'Or", was recently chosen as this year's EarthKind Rose of the Year by Texas Cooperative Extension's EarthKind team. Dr. Steve George, a horticulturist at the Texas A&M University System Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Dallas, said the honor created by Extension horticulturist recognizes the best performers in their EarthKind Rose program.

This year's winner is a peach-colored, repeat-blooming rose that attains a manageable height of about 4 feet with an equal spread. The rose is very healthy and produces flushes of very double blooms from spring, through the summer heat, and on into fall. It will do best planted in a location with at least eight hours of direct sun daily and good air flow over its foliage. Once established it is very heat- and drought-tolerant. "It's only limitation, according to Dr. George, is that it usually doesn't do well in areas with high saline (salty) irrigation water."

"Perle d'Or", (1884), makes a very handsome landscape shrub and its growth habit and shape are very attractive even with no pruning. The Texas Cooperative Extension's EarthKind team recommends planting this wonderful old rose throughout Texas. This dainty little rose has a powerful perfume that can scent an entire room. Buds that are similar to 'Cécile Brunner' change from nearly orange to golden pink as they unfold in small clusters. The silky petals curl back neatly upon opening into a delicate pompon shape. Foliage is a soft apple green, healthy, and full on a plant that is seldom out of bloom.

The EarthKind Environmental Landscape Management System was created by Extension to help provide beautiful landscapes with minimal maintenance and maximum environmental safeguards.

Dr. George was one of three featured speakers at our 2007 Lawn & Garden Expo at the Waxahachie Civic Center on March 17th.

In my garden there is a large place for sentiment. My garden of flowers is also my garden of thoughts and dreams. The thoughts grow as freely as the flowers and the dreams are as beautiful.

~ Abram L. Urban

HOME GARDEN TOMATOES FOR 2007

By James Kocian, Ellis County Master Gardener



What better way to add to delicious summer salads than by growing your own juicy, mouth-watering tomatoes! The versatile tomato can be grown almost anywhere there's sunshine for all or most of the day in planters, pots, hanging baskets, on patios, windowsills, balconies, and of course, in the garden. For best results with tomatoes in containers choose a container that is at least 5 gallons in capacity; smaller pots lack sufficient soil volume to support the root system and maintain adequate moisture on warm sunny days.

With the recent rain most garden sites should have ample moisture. Now the key is to watch the temperature. Many gardeners start their tomato plant in a covered tomato cage or wait to set out plants until after March 20.

Some of the varieties recommended for Ellis County are: Celebrity, Carnival, Sun Pride, Tomato 444, Better Boy, and Early Girl; the cherry types Sweet 100 and Sweet Million. These are just some of the varieties that work.

Any average garden soil will grow tomatoes, and whatever you do to improve it will be amply rewarded by larger and more plentiful fruits. Before planting, condition it by adding organic matter like compost or leaf mold. Incorporate the organic matter a depth of 6-8 inches.

Select plants that are approximately 6 inches tall; have a stocky appearance, good stem, good green color, and good root development. Plants that are grown in pots tend to have better root development and start growing quicker. With peat pots, make certain all of pot is covered with soil, exposed peat acts as a wick which causes moisture loss from root system.

Plant tomatoes about three feet apart. Make each hole sufficiently deep so that the lower part of the stem will be buried. Although tomato plants root vigorously from the buried stem portion, planting too deep is not an advantage and actually slows growth. However, make certain that the seedling is planted deep enough to insure complete coverage of the root ball with soil if possible. I like to plant tall plants horizontally in a trench turning up the top few inches of the plant. The plant will grow roots from the buried stem. To protect plants from cutworms, use collars of tar paper, heavy cardboard, or plastic from milk jugs around each plant at planting.

Use a complete fertilizer such as 20-10-20 at the rate of 2 pounds per 100 square feet if the garden site is new (put into production within the last 3 years). Once they're growing well, tomatoes benefit from adding a tablespoon of 21-0-0 per plant **at first fruit set**. Fertilizing at first fruit set tells the plant that setting fruit is what you want it to do. Fertilizing too early tells the plant that all you want it to do is grow. Ideally fertilizer rates should be based on soil sample analysis.



Water well as soon as the tomatoes are planted, and check often to be sure the soil does not dry out. A watering saucer or depression around each plant helps direct water to the young roots. Mulch with grass clippings, straw or black weed blocking fabric to retain moisture and discourage weeds after the soil warms up.

Continue to water thoroughly whenever soil starts to dry out. Soaking every time is better for the whole root system than frequent sprinkling that dampens and encourages only surface roots. An even supply of water is especially important when tomato fruits are developing. Putting drip irrigation under the mulch will help to insure a uniform supply of water to the plants.

Tomatoes respond well to vertical culture. Caging is ideal in home gardens and concrete reinforcing wire is the best for making cages, although many garden centers and nurseries do sell rolls of tomato cage wire that will also do a good job. When cutting the wire to form a cylinder, cut 5 ½, or 6 ½ feet which will allow for 20 to 30-inch diameter after the cylinder is formed.

Tomatoes grown in cages are superior in the following ways: 1) the plant will need no pruning, 2) the fruit is kept off the ground reducing loss of rotting, and 3) the leaves act as an umbrella to protect the fruit from sun scald and reduces damage by hail and they enable the foliage to dry more rapidly and reduce the incidence of diseases.

It is good to be alone in a garden at dawn or dark so that all its shy presences may haunt you and possess you in a reverie of suspended thought.

~ James Douglas, Down Shoe Lane

Melinda's Tomato Bruschetta

(From the family recipe file of Melinda Kocian)

1 large loaf Italian bread, sliced into ½ inch slices
 1 clove garlic, halved
 Ripe Roma tomatoes, when in season is best
 Balsamic vinegar
 Salt and pepper, to taste
 Basil leaves, sliced into thin julienne strips
 1 shallot, minced very fine
 Virgin olive oil
 Freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Chop tomatoes into bowl; add shallot. To taste, add vinegar, salt, pepper and basil slices. Add a drizzle of olive oil. I can't give exact quantities; it depends on how much you are making and your own preference for taste. I have a saying, "you can always add to, but you can't take away." Part of the enjoyment is the

tasting until you get it just right. Make at least one hour ahead so the flavors will meld together. If necessary, drain off some of the juice, but not all.

On a large cookie sheet, place bread slices. Toast until lightly browned. Turn to the other side and repeat toasting. With a pastry brush, lightly brush olive oil on one side only. Lightly rub the garlic on the oiled side. I like to serve the bread in a basket, letting your guests put the bruschetta on their own toast; otherwise it gets soggy. Have a bowl of **freshly grated parmesan cheese** to sprinkle on top.

NOTE: It's best when made when tomatoes are in season and have flavor - preferably fresh grown not from the grocery store. But it's still good anytime! Enjoy!

Texas Bluebonnets

Submitted by Diane Hopkins, Master Gardener

Bluebonnets have been loved since man first trod the vast prairies of Texas. Indians wove fascinating folk tales around them. The early-day Spanish priests gathered the seeds and grew them around their missions. This practice gave rise to the myth that the padres had brought the plant from Spain, but this cannot be true since the two predominant species of bluebonnet are found growing naturally only in Texas and at no other location in the world.

As our state flower, bluebonnets have a most interesting history. In the spring of 1901, the Texas Legislature got down to the serious business of selecting a state floral emblem and the ensuing battle was hot and heavy. One legislator spoke in favor of the cotton boll since cotton was king in Texas in those days. Another extolled the virtues of the cactus. But the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in Texas won the day. Their choice was *Lupinus subcarnosus* and it was passed into law on March 7.

And that's when the polite bluebonnet war was started.

Lupinus subcarnosus is a dainty little plant which paints the sandy, rolling hills of coastal and southern Texas with sheets of royal-blue in early spring. But some folks thought it was the least attractive of the Texas bluebonnets. They wanted *Lupinus texensis*, the showier, bolder blue beauty which covers most of Texas.

In 1971, the Legislature handled the dilemma by adding the two species together, plus "any other variety of bluebonnet not heretofore recorded", and lumped them all into one state flower.

Among the many things the Legislature did not know then was that the big state of Texas is home to three other species of Lupines and the umbrella clause makes all five of them the state flower as well.

The five state flowers of Texas are:

1. *Lupinus subcarnosus* is often referred to as the sandy land bluebonnet. The plant's leaflets are blunt, sometimes notched with silky undersides. It reaches peak bloom in late March and is not easy to maintain in clay soils.
2. *Lupinus texensis* has pointed leaflets; the flowering stalk is tipped with white and hits its peak bloom in late March and early April. It provides the blue spring carpet of Central Texas and is the easiest of all the species to grow.
3. *Lupinus Havardii*, is the most majestic of the Texas bluebonnet tribe with flowering spikes up to three feet. It is found on the flats of the Big Bend country in early spring, usually has seven leaflets and is difficult to cultivate outside its natural habitat.
4. *Lupinus concinnus* is an inconspicuous little lupine, from 2 to 7 inches, with flowers which combine elements of white, rosy purple and lavender. It is found sparingly in the Trans-Pecos region, blooming in early spring.
5. *Lupinus plattensis* sneaks down from the north into the Texas Panhandle's sandy dunes. It is the only perennial species in the state and grows to about two feet tall. It normally blooms in mid to late spring.

Excerpted from "Texas Bluebonnets--Texas Pride" written by Jerry Parsons, Steve George and Greg Grant of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.



Things To Do in April

By Cheryl Marusak

Ellis County Master Gardener

Week 1 -

April is among the busiest gardening months in Ellis County, and although our last average frost date is around March 12th, we've experienced frosts as late as mid-April.

Nevertheless, almost anything can be planted this month. If we should happen to have a light, late-season frost, simply cover your new seedlings and transplants with a frost cover made of cloth, not plastic. Frost covers are available at most home centers and hardware stores.

So, go ahead and set your transplants for warm-season vegetables such as tomatoes, beans, peppers, squash, cantaloupes, and cucumbers this week.

The Ellis County Master Gardeners are here to answer your landscape and gardening questions. You may contact us at 972-825-5175 or go to our website at www.ECMGA.com.

Week 2 -

Corn can be sown early this month, provided the soil temperature has reached at least 65 degrees F.

Check the tender, new growth of your plants for aphids. A few can be tolerated, but large numbers should be controlled. Dislodging them with a strong spray of water every couple of days may be all the control you need until the ladybugs move in.

Start weeding your flower gardens early. Competition between small plants and weeds can delay flowering. A thick layer of mulch discourages weed growth and helps to conserve water by reducing evaporation from the soil. Mulch also helps prevent soil compaction and aids in keeping soil temperatures moderate.

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Week 3 -

Now that the soil has warmed to 65 degrees F, seeds for hot-weather vegetables such as okra, black-eyed peas, and watermelons can be sown now to late-month. Seeds for warm-season annuals such as cosmos, marigolds, moss rose and zinnias can be sown directly in their growing beds, as well. Be sure to keep the area moist until the seeds have germinated. After the first true leaves have appeared, thin the seedlings to their recommended spacing.

Prune spring flowering shrubs soon after flowering. Except where necessary to control size, avoid excessive cutting, instead keeping the natural shape of the plant in mind as you prune.

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Week 4 -

Following are a few things to watch for as the season progresses:

- Thrips will cause rose buds to fail to open properly and will turn the outer petals brown. Control thrips with systemic insecticide.
- Damage to tender new growth occurring at night is usually caused by snails and slugs. Treat the area with snail bait or dust.
- Powdery mildew causes a white dusting on leaves of zinnias, roses, and crape myrtles. Control it with a labeled fungicide and avoid overhead and evening watering.
- Black spot on roses should be controlled with a systemic fungicide applied each week. Once again, avoid overhead and evening watering.

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