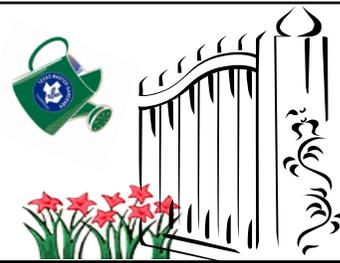




Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume IX, Issue Four

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

April, 2016

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 and click on subscribe. Best of all; it's FREE! Susan Clark, Editor

What's Happening in April?

Every Saturday from April to October from 8am-1pm.

OPENING DAY IS SATURDAY, APRIL 16



410 S. Rogers (across from City Hall in the old lumberyard building)
Visit the Master Gardeners' Booth!

- ☼ Useful gardening tips
- ☼ Plants and herbs for sale
- ☼ Free handouts...Some items for a fee
- ☼ Tell a friend to sign up for the **E-Garden Newsletter**... it's **FREE!**

Mark your calendar and come join in the celebration of the 14th annual Waxahachie Farmers Market on April 16th. You'll find locally grown vegetables, plants, grains and flours, plus local honey, cheeses and roasted coffee beans, homemade baked goods, jams, jellies and salsas, along with pastas, oils and vinegar. Hand-crafters present handmade jewelry, crafts, patio decor and more! The market is located at 410 S. Rogers Street and is open 8am to 1pm every Saturday, April 16th thru Oct 29th.

April 23rd the market is featuring all its plant sellers. Look for lots of spring color in containers and hanging baskets along with vegetables and herbs ready to be planted in your garden. On April 30th, "A Taste of Market" returns with samples of spring greens and herbs waiting for you at the market information and demonstration area.



Indian Trail Master Naturalists Events



Join the **Indian Trail Master Naturalists** at their monthly meeting on **Monday, April 25**. The program for the evening is entitled "**Bringing Nature to Your Backyard**". Born and raised in Katy, TX, **Xandra Morris, Entomologist and Extension**



Agent for Hill & McLennan Counties earned a B.S. and M.S. in Entomology from Oklahoma State University. While there, Xandra served as a Presenter and Husbandry worker for the OSU Insect Adventure. She is currently working on sugarcane aphid population monitoring studies in sorghum. Xandra is married to Cade Morris, another Entomologist, and they have four "children", two dogs and two cats! The program is free and follows the 6pm Master Naturalist meeting that is also open to the public. Meeting location: First United Methodist Church, Family Life Center 505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie. For more info, call (972) 825-5175 or email ellis-tx@tamu.edu

Saturday, April 16, 9am, Wildflower Walk. Members will be leading a walk at Mockingbird Nature Park. Join in this ½ mile stroll along the trails to identify wildflowers and birds. Free to the public. Participants should bring drinking water and binoculars. The walk will be canceled in the event of rain. Info at: <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/> or email: Information@itmnc.com

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



Listen to KBEC

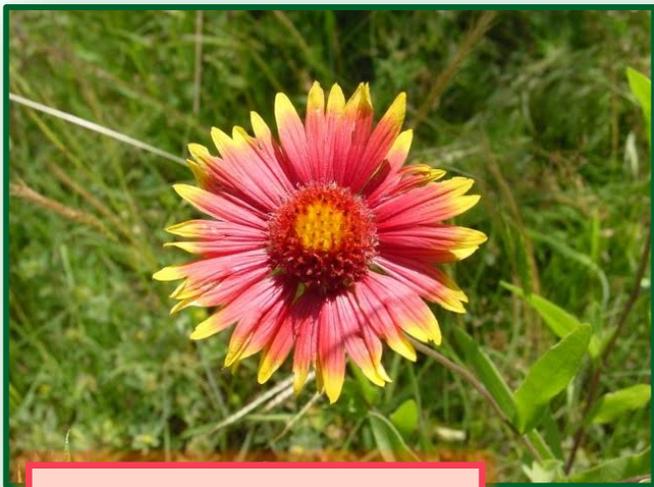
Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m. on 1390 AM.

The Ellis County Master Gardeners have a five 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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Indian Blanket (*Gaillardia pulchella*) This beautiful annual flower covers large areas, but is also a good garden flower. Flower heads are one to two inches across on each main stem.

Each has 10-20 ray flowers, sometimes all red, but usually marked with brilliant yellow on the ends of the rays forming a yellow band along the outside. The plant grows one to three feet tall. Blooms April to June.

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

Planting

- ☼ Plant warm-season annual flowers. *For sun (6+hours per day)*: zinnias, moss rose, portulaca, lantana, pentas, copper plants, firebush, angelonias and sweet potato vines. *For shade (less than four hours per day)*: wax begonias, coleus, impatiens, perilla and torenias.
- ☼ Plant vegetables such as okra and southern peas (black-eyed peas, etc). Squash, cucumbers and melons can still be planted this month.
- ☼ Many herbs can also be planted from transplants (for example: dill, parsley, fennel, mint, oregano and thyme).
- ☼ Plant Bermudagrass and St. Augustine grass sod. Complete grading and smoothing of area prior to installing sod to ensure good soil contact. Keep moist until roots are established.
- ☼ Seeded varieties of Bermudagrass may be sown starting mid-month. Keep soil moist until seeds germinate and grass has established a good root system.

Pruning and Fertilizing

- ☼ Apply a high-nitrogen fertilizer to established lawns. Look for products containing at least half of their nitrogen in slow release form.
- ☼ Mow common Bermudagrass at 1½-inches and St. Augustine grass at 2½-inches. Frequent mowing will keep an established lawn thick and healthy, but avoid removing more than one-third of the leaf surface each time.
- ☼ Prune spring-flowering shrubs soon after flowering. Keep the natural shape of the plant in mind as you prune and avoid excessive cutting except where necessary to control size.
- ☼ Roses have high fertilizer requirements. For most soils, use a complete fertilizer for the first application just as new growth starts, then use ammonium sulfate or another high nitrogen source every four to six weeks, just as the new growth cycle starts following a flowering cycle. For organic sources use cottonseed, rotted manures or alfalfa meal.

Garden Watch

- ☼ Check new tender growth for aphids. A few can be tolerated, but large numbers should be controlled. Always follow label instructions on approved pesticides for control. Washing them off with a strong spray of water may be all that is necessary for adequate control.
- ☼ Eliminate fire ants in your landscape by broadcasting labeled bait while temperatures are between 70 and 90 degrees. Follow label directions closely to achieve best results. If fire ants are still present after using bait, treat the individual mounds with appropriate insecticide. Contact the Ellis County Texas AgriLife Extension Service at (972) 825-5175 for more information.
- ☼ Watch for rose rosette virus. New growth on diseased roses exhibits elongated/enlarged canes, reddish leaves and stems and excessive thorns. Remove and destroy infected plants and roots immediately. There is no control for this fatal disease, which is spread by a mite.
- ☼ Soil purchased for use in beds, low areas and containers should be examined closely. Often, nutsedge and other weeds are brought into the yard through contaminated soil sources.



Indian Paintbrush (*Castilleja indivisa*) The paintbrush presents one of Texas' most beautiful landscape displays. The paintbrush grows six to fifteen inches tall with leaves that are one to four inches long.

Flowers with the attending floral leaves, called bracts, grow around the upper two to seven inches of the stem. The intense red-orange color is due to the bracts, which hide the inconspicuous cream-colored flowers. Blooms March to May.

Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener



Purslane, H.B.K. Portulaca Family (Portulacaceae)
Portulaca umbraticola

Zone: 1-8 and 10 (Ellis Co. is zone 4)

Size: 2 - 6 inches

Blooms: March-December, Annual

Purslane is the little succulent often considered a weed in the garden, although it can be quite showy on barren, sandy sites where it typically grows. Six species of purslane are known in Texas, some with attractive yellow, orange or pink to purplish flowers. Moss-rose (*P. grandiflora*), with two-inch flowers, is a South American native that has escaped cultivation in Texas.

Pussley (*P. oleracea*), thought to be a native of India, has spread nearly worldwide and has been used as food for over two thousand years. Shaggy portulaca (another name for the species shown), as well as chisme (*P. pilosa*), were collected by Indians and dried to store for winter use.

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

Join Ellis County Master Gardeners and Ellis County Extension Agency in a variety of classes to prepare your gardens and yards for spring.

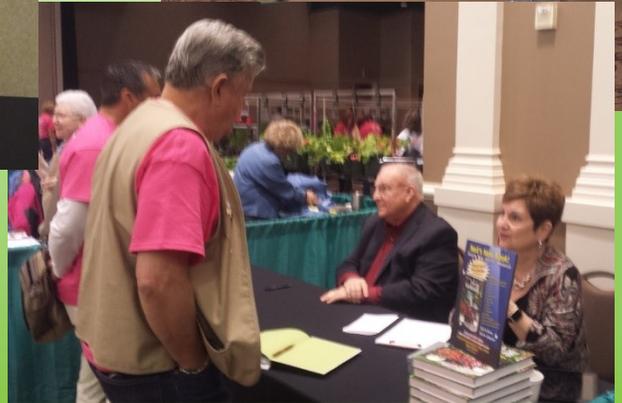
Mondays, April 18 & April 25, 6:00pm–7:30pm. Irrigation Installation in the Home Landscape (with hands on learning). You can have a green lawn or irrigated garden without spending much money. This is a two-part class with the first session in the classroom at WHS. The second session will be at the Horticultural Learning Garden in Getzendaner Park where the class will assist in installing a drip irrigation system in one of the garden beds. Participants will learn about installation and maintenance of different types of sprinkler systems and what is best for your needs. Learn about the importance of a backflow valve, how to test water pressure and how to winterize the system. Instructor: Alan Paxton & Jim Derstler. Cost: \$24.00

Monday, May 2, 6:00pm–7:30pm. Good Bugs in the Garden. It's common for gardeners to go out with chemicals and try to kill all the insects. But wait!! Not all insects are bad – in fact, most have a very important place in the food chain and can be used to your advantage. When you spray, you kill the good as well as the bad. This class will help you identify some of the common good and bad insects. You will also get some non-chemical ideas on how to keep them from taking over your plantings. Bring insect samples if you want. Instructor: Susan Gilliland. Cost: \$12.00

Tuesdays, April 19–May 10 (four classes), 6:00pm–8:00pm. Beginning Farmer/Rancher. If you are a landowner or have newly acquired a farm or ranchland and are seeking information for the best way to utilize your property, join this experienced instructor for advice. Topics covered include soils and soil fertility, soil testing, pasture management, basic livestock productions and pond management. This class will be held at the Ellis County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office at 701 S. I-35E, Suite 3 in Waxahachie. Instructor: Mark Arnold, County Extension Agent, Agriculture & Natural Resources. Cost: \$22.00



Expo Highlights



Expo Booth Winners

**Most Impressive
Earth Tones**



**Honorable Mention
R&E Plants**



**Most Innovative
Wild Thyme Herbs**



**Honorable Mention
Homestead Equipment**



Mosquito Control & Helping Pollinators

With Ginger Cole
Ellis County Master Gardener



How seeking and destroying mosquito habitats could help our pollinators!

What would vigilantly preventing mosquitos have to do with helping our pollinators? Think about it. Haven't you always heard that an "ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure?" We live in Texas and all know that when the spring rains and warmer weather arrive, it brings our unwanted mosquitoes.

With the growing number of serious mosquito-borne diseases in the news, it is more important to protect the environment and ourselves. If mosquito populations get out of balance, often our government engages in the practice of fogging pesticides from trucks or airplanes. These contact pesticides may kill mosquitoes, but they also kill beneficial pollinators and predators that eat the mosquitoes.

It was my personal observation after the city sprayed for mosquitoes in my neighborhood one summer that the morning after brought an eerie silence. Normally, our bucolic neighborhood is alive with the sights and sounds of dragonflies and bees on the wing. I had covered my honeybees and they seemed to have suffered little damage from the mosquito spraying the night before.

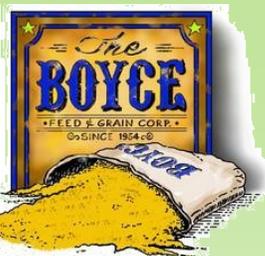
While my bees had been protected, I had no way to quantify the effect the spray had on native pollinators. It was the missing dragonflies that was so startling. The spray to eradicate mosquitoes had apparently killed off most of the dragonflies; ironically, nature's mosquito eaters.

It takes approximately six months for a dragonfly to develop from an egg to an adult. It only takes three days for a mosquito egg to hatch. Six months without our natural mosquito eaters is a long time for mosquito populations to go unchecked. Spraying adult mosquitoes is a last ditch effort when we have not done our due diligence.



Yes, I said "we" have not done our due diligence. That means all of us. The best effective way to prevent mosquitoes is to make sure your home and neighborhood are not mosquito hatching grounds. Develop the habit of regularly walking around your home and neighborhood. Pick up trash. Yes, trash can easily hold a bit of rainwater or leftover soft drink. Something appearing so innocuous as a water bottle cap or plastic bag can hold enough water for mosquitoes to breed.

(Continued on page 11)



Did you visit the bee exhibit in the Children's Workshop Room at the March Expo? Is it something you are interested in pursuing? One of our exhibitors, Boyce Feed and Grain, has lots of supplies to help get started and maintain your beehive.



The Legend of the Pink Bluebonnet

By: Shirley Campbell, Ellis County Master Gardener



Maybe I'm getting old and sentimental, but every once in a while I come across an article that brings tears to my eyes... articles such as this one. Greg Grant is a wonderful, interesting writer and speaker I've had occasion to hear several times at our Master Gardener conferences. I wanted to share this with you.

The Legend of the Pink Bluebonnet

Greg Grant

A number of years ago while roaming the quaint inner city gardens of San Antonio with noted Navasota garden historian and good friend, Pamela Puryear, we came across an elderly hispanic woman with a charming tale..."The Legend of the Pink Bluebonnet".



As Pam scribbled with the skill of a court stenographer, I listened to the old tale...

The two children scampered through the April field of wildflowers near San Antonio, on their way to the old mission church to pay their Lenten devotion. They were followed by their slower grandmother, dressed in rusty black. She was painfully thin and her face was seamed with many fine lines.

"Mamacita! Here is a white flower with all the blue ones!", the excited girl cried.

"Those are bluebonnets," her grandmother explained, "and sometimes, very seldom, there is a white one among them. Some even say that the Lone Star of the Texas flag was fashioned after a spot of white bluebonnets amongst a field of blue."

The little boy stood still and gestured to the bloom at his feet, "But what about this pink one then?"

The small group studied the pure pink bluebonnet a moment before the grandmother turned to the children and spoke.

"If the white ones are special, then the pink ones mean even more." She paused, "When I myself was a little girl, my grandmother told me a special story about these rare flowers.

They seem to only grow downstream from the mission Alamo, and that is because of something which happened here many years ago."

"It was when Texas was not part of the United States, but only a remote province of Mexico. The Americanos and other foreigners had not been settled here for long, but trade was busy, and we all had hopes of a golden future for our country.

Our family owned a fine house and farm near the old cathedral. My Papa would rise early, take his tools, and work the land before the day grew too hot. Then after the noon siesta, everyone would begin to wake in the cool of the dusk. The adults would bathe in the clear river, while we children splashed in the shallows. Everyone would dance, eat and visit until late into the evening. Sometimes there were Americanos who came to celebrate with us, but their talk always turned to politics. The men were angered because the Constitution had been overthrown by a terrible Mexican dictator.

The men all went about with frowns and the women began to be afraid. Then came that bitter spring when we learned that the dictator was on his way to our city with many troops. Papa was torn between joining the Americanos to fortify the old mission compound, and fear for his family.

He decided to hide us in the countryside, and every time I look at the ruins of the mission chapel, I remember the fear we lived in during that time. Day and night, we heard the cannons and the rifles firing in the distance. The brave new Texans fought long and hard, but in the end were overwhelmed by the Mexican troops.

After the shots had finally ended, we crept silently home in



the darkness. Mama and Papa were thankful that our lives had been spared, but it broke their hearts to learn of the many who had lost their lives in that terrible battle. Mama often cried when she passed the homes where friends had fallen.

One day several years later, I found her putting a pink wild-

(Continued on page 8)

Legend of the Pink Bluebonnet (Continued from page 7)

flower in a vase beside the statue of the Virgin. She told me she had found it near the river where it had once been white, but so much blood had been shed, it had taken the tint of it."

The grandmother paused, "That is why you will only find the pink ones near the river, within sight of the old mission," she said.

"So remember, the next time you see a pink bluebonnet, it's not only a pretty flower, but a symbol for the struggle to survive and a memory of those who died so that Texas could be free."

NOTE: Interestingly enough, according to Dr. Jerry Parsons, the only place in the state where the original wild pink bluebonnets were found was alongside the road, just south of downtown San Antonio.



**Interested in becoming a
2017 Expo Sponsor Or
Expo Exhibitor?**

Contact James Kocian at
expo.ecmga@yahoo.com

Reserve the date: March 25, 2017!

The Don Juan Rose
*Submitted by Mattie Thompson
Ellis County Master Gardener*



Don Juan, still an enduring love affair.

Ever since Don Juan was introduced to the U.S. from Italy in 1958 by Jackson Perkins, this hybrid developed by Michele Malandrone has captivated the hearts of many gardeners. What's not to love about this sturdy, repeat-blooming, climbing rose? If the deep velvety red roses born over the dark green leathery foliage doesn't capture your heart, perhaps the intoxicating fragrance will. When the blooms fade they retain their red color and give way to colorful vitamin C rich rose hips.



Find a special place in your landscape that will let you appreciate this lovely rose visually and give you a little natural aromatherapy. While Don Juan is a climbing rose, it has good cutting rose qualities as well.

As with most roses, Don Juan will appreciate good air circulation to prevent fungal diseases. Morning and afternoon sun and a bit

of late evening shade will also provide the necessary environment to let Don Juan achieve his full potential.

A top dressing of good compost or mushroom mulch in the spring and later in the season will keep this rose healthy, happy and repeat blooming. When watering, drip irrigation is a good choice to keep from splashing water on the leaves, which might allow fungal diseases to develop.

If you are looking for a rose to love for years to come, Don Juan might be the right rose for you.

In the Vegetable Garden: Peppers

By Pam Daniel
Ellis County Master Gardener



The Ellis County Master Gardener Lawn and Garden Expo we just completed should have gotten you out of the winter doldrums and motivated you to get that garden planted. Finish planting warm season vegetables by mid April (beans, cucumbers, cantaloupe, peppers, pumpkins, radish, sweet corn and squash and tomatoes) and plant hot season vegetables (okra, black-eyed peas and watermelons) mid-to-late month.

PEPPERS

Planting dates: After all danger of frost and soil has thoroughly warmed, usually about two weeks after tomatoes are planted. Like tomatoes, peppers do best when transplanted. Peppers need to mature and produce while nighttime temperatures are above 60 degrees and daytime temperatures are below 80 degrees.

When temperatures are outside of this range, peppers tend to shed their blooms and most fruit produced will be small. Most varieties completely stop fruiting when temperatures get above 90 degrees. Exposure to temperatures in the low 40's for even a short period of time may stunt peppers, reducing their harvest. It's probably best to replace transplants if there is concern they may be stunted, as they will not recover.

The best method to determine when to transplant your peppers is to measure soil temperatures about two inches below the surface. When you have three consecutive days with soil temperatures above 55 degrees, that is the ideal time to plant. For fall crops, you need to plant about 100 days before first expected freeze date. It is probably best to protect them from weather for a few weeks after planting, in both the spring and summer.

Planting methods: Peppers transplant easily and that is the most common method, 18-24 inches apart. The best transplants are about seven to eight weeks old, five to six inches tall and have good foliage free of any obvious disease.

At planting time, the soil should be slightly moist. Pour about one cup of starter solution in each hole. Deep planting should be avoided. Water thoroughly and protect from the weather for a few weeks.

Varieties: The amount of capsaicin in a pepper determines how hot they are. This can be scientifically measured as Scoville units. Peppers can vary greatly in the amount of heat they generate when eaten. The bell pepper has a Scoville rating of 0, while currently the hottest pepper, the Carolina Reaper, has an average rating of over 1.5 million Scoville units.



The red, orange and yellows are sweeter and almost fruity.

If you want to know the rating of the peppers you are considering planting, you can Google Scoville scale and get the answers. I usually plant a combination of sweet, mild and hot peppers, to have the right pepper for most occasions.

The most popular chile pepper, jalapenos are moderately hot.



Culture: Easy to grow in most any healthy soil. Use lots of compost and organic material, and mulch heavily. Peppers do best when

planted on raised, well drained beds, as they like to have warm feet and don't do well with wet feet.

When you water is more important than how you water. Avoid letting soil dry enough to cause plants to wilt. You may need to water about twice a week if nature doesn't provide needed water. Pepper must be grown in full sun, with well drained soil. They do best with a soil pH between 5.5 and 7.5

Fertilizer: Use about one cup of starter solution for transplants and side dress cautiously after first fruit sets. Too much fertilizer can cause excessive vegetative growth, while too little at first bloom can stunt growth. Peppers are very sensitive to fertilizer and need it in small doses only at bloom time. Use about half a handful of organic fertilizer per plant or sidedress with about two tablespoons of ammonium sulfate or one and a half tablespoons of ammonium nitrate in a circle around each plant.

Harvest: Don't break peppers from plant. Cut them off. Some recommend cutting off the first set of peppers to stimulate faster production. You can pull up the entire plant and hang in garage at first freeze. Most peppers will turn colors (yellow, red, purple, etc), when they are fully mature, but can be harvested when green. The taste will be sweeter if they are left to mature.

Peppers are very versatile and have many culinary uses, so visit a local nursery and check out all the different options. With the right care and attention, they will do well in our Texas gardens and give you an abundant harvest.



Landscape Gardening

From: Gail Haynes, Ellis County Master Gardener

Ellis County Master Gardeners have a website at www.ecmga.com. Check it for information on gardening in Ellis County, sign up for this 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 when you leave a message at (972) 825-5175.

EARTH-KIND® 2011 ROSES—'MONSIEUR TILLIER' & 'MRS. DUDLEY CROSS'

By The National Garden Bureau

Two favorite heirloom roses have recently been designated as Earth-Kind roses and are excellent choices for landscape use across the South. 'Monsieur Tillier' is classified as a Tea rose and was first introduced in 1891. Its flowers are an unusual orange-pink color and the shrub eventually attains a height and width of five to six feet.

Flowers occur during all the warm months of the year and resistance to blackspot is excellent. Austin area gardeners have enjoyed the large hedge of 'Monsieur Tillier' at Zilker Park in the rose garden for many years.

The flowers are good for cutting or as shrubs in the landscape. Tea roses are best allowed to slowly attain large size without extensive pruning. Shaping throughout the year with cutting back about one-third in February and again in August usually works well. Fertilizing with organic sources like cottonseed or alfalfa meal in spring and fall along with watering well on a weekly basis when rains aren't sufficient will help keep them productive during our warm seasons.

'Mrs. Dudley Cross' has been a popular old Tea rose since it was introduced in 1907. It has been particularly abundant in South Texas and was declared "The Yellow Rose of Texas" by Extension Horticulturist Greg Grant and his rose committee during the 1980s after researching a large sampling of heirloom roses found thriving in the San Antonio area.

A special feature is that 'Mrs. Dudley Cross' is almost thornless and also known for its resistance to blackspot disease. The flowers are great for garden display or cutting. They are a lovely blend of pink and pale yellow and occur throughout the warm seasons.

Like all roses, they are best placed where they receive at least a half day of direct sun. Use them in groups, individual specimens or as a hedge where they will reach five to six feet tall and wide. Clay or sandy soils work well, but roses will produce

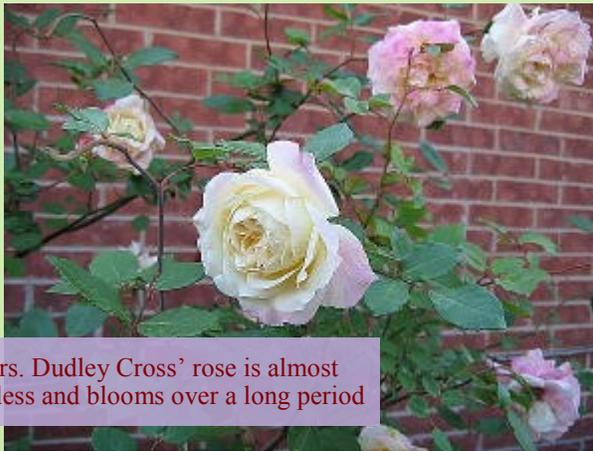
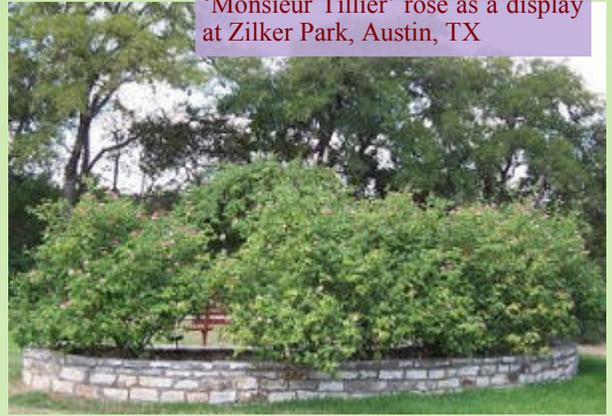
better where the soil has been amended with compost or other organic materials.

Time tested heirloom roses like 'Monsieur Tillier' and 'Mrs. Dudley Cross' have proven to be great choices for Texas gardeners for over a hundred years. They are best grown as "own root" plants and root readily from cuttings. Combine them with proven perennials like rain lilies, crinums, rosemary 'John Fanic' phlox, 'Homestead Purple' verbena and 'Salvia' 'Henry Du-elberg' for many months of low maintenance color.

Closeup of 'Monsieur Tillier'



'Monsieur Tillier' rose as a display at Zilker Park, Austin, TX



'Mrs. Dudley Cross' rose is almost thornless and blooms over a long period

GARDEN CHECKLIST FOR APRIL

Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist, TX AgriLife Ext. Service

- ☼ Continue to spray rose varieties susceptible to black spot, using a spray recommended for fungus control every seven to ten days. Many of the Old Garden Roses and some of the newer ones have considerable resistance to black spot.
- ☼ Climbing hybrid tea roses may be pruned as soon as they complete flowering.
- ☼ Removing spent flowers, trimming back excessive growth and applying fertilizer to an established annual bed can do wonders towards rejuvenating and extending the life of the planting.
- ☼ As soon as azaleas have finished flowering, apply an acid type fertilizer at the rate recommended. Don't over fertilize, as azalea roots are near the surface and damage can occur. Water thoroughly after fertilizing.
- ☼ Seeds of amaranthus, celosia, cosmos, marigold, portulaca, zinnia and other warm-season annuals can be sown directly in the beds where they are to grow. Keep seeded areas moist until seeds germinate. Thin out as soon as they are large enough to transplant. Surplus plants can be transplanted to other areas.

(Continued on page 11)

Landscape Gardening (Continued from page 10)

- ☼ It will soon be time for bagworms to attack junipers and other narrow-leafed evergreens. Control measures, such as a dust or spray, should be applied while the insects and the bags are about one-half inch in length.
- ☼ When caterpillars attack live oak trees en masse, it is very alarming, but usually nothing can be done. A healthy live oak will usually regrow its leaves and resume normal activities.
- ☼ For instant color, purchase started annual plants. Select short, compact plants. Any flowers or flower buds should be pinched to give plants an opportunity to become established.
- ☼ Many flower or vegetable seeds left over after planting the garden can be saved for the next season by closing the packets with tape or paper clips and storing in a sealed glass jar

in your refrigerator.

- ☼ Turn the material in your compost pile to speed up decomposition. Water when needed.
- ☼ Start weeding early in the flower garden. Early competition with small plants can delay flowering. A mulch will discourage weed growth and make those that do come through easier to pull.
- ☼ Soil purchased for use in beds, low areas and containers should be examined closely. Often, nut grass and other weeds, nematodes, and soil-borne disease are brought into the yard through contaminated soil sources.
- ☼ Watch newspaper and other publicity for information regarding wildflower trails and open garden days. Plan to take a trip to enjoy beautiful gardens and trails that are abundant in many areas of Texas.

Mary Kay Hicks of Texas A & M Forest Service surprised J.R. McMahan, our Expo Children's Workshop Coordinator with this plaque for her outstanding work. Congratulations J.R.!

The Children's Workshop Room was a huge success, this year located in the Crepe Myrtle Room. The larger area provided more floor space allowing us to bring in even more educational exhibits and learning opportunities for families, in addition to returning favorites such as Smokey Bear. Over 250 children received a tomato plant and Texas Tree Farms, in Waxahachie, donated a crape myrtle seedling to every child visiting the Workshop Room. **Thank you to everyone who made this year's Children's Workshop Room the best ever!**



Mosquito Control (Continued from page 6)

Remember the Ds of mosquito control.

Dusk and dawn are the most active times for mosquitos.

Defend against mosquitoes by applying mosquito repellent according to label instructions.

Dress in light colored, loose fitting clothing.

Drain standing water around your home including rain gutters. Refresh water in birdbaths and pet water bowls every day or at most, every three days. If water cannot be drained, consider using a larvicide containing *Bacillus thuringiensis*, such as Mosquito Dunks®.

If you feel that adult mosquito populations in your area need to be eradicated with a home fogger or by a professional, be sure the product is applied according to label instructions. Don't assume "professionals" have the proper training and licensing.

Ask lots of questions before hiring a professional to treat mosquitoes or any other pest. Are they licensed? What chemicals will they be using? Look up the information on the chemical before you allow it to be sprayed on your property. You can verify licensing of chemical applicators on-line at <http://www.texasagriculture.gov/RegulatoryPrograms/Pesticides/StructuralPestControlService.aspx> or request a copy of the contractor's current license. If you are a serious, over the top do-it-yourself person, the Texas Department of Agriculture offers courses in Vector Management. Yes, mosquitos are vectors that definitely need management. The courses are listed at <http://ceusearch.texasagriculture.gov/CEUDetail.aspx?acctnum=0732417&coursetitle=VECTOR%20MANAGEMENT%20WORKSHOP>.

For more information on the lifecycle, prevention and control of mosquitoes as well as information on mosquito repellents, visit <http://www.epa.gov/mosquitocontrol>.

Let's all do our part to mitigate mosquitoes and keep our homes in balance with nature.

Thank You All!

Thanks to the sponsors, exhibitors and visitors for making the
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