



**BIRTHDAYS**

**May**

Pat Briggs

5/09

Marsha Sasser

5/28

**June**

Jorja Merrick

6/6

Jennifer Lay

6/7

Paula Marshall

6/29

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We welcome all of our Master Gardeners to forward articles or information for our newsletter to our Editor: [sandrarosen42@yahoo.com](mailto:sandrarosen42@yahoo.com)

News Committee:

Sandra Rosen    Joan Driver  
 Paula Marshall    Anna Baker

## Welcome the 2016 Class of Interns

By Paula Marshall

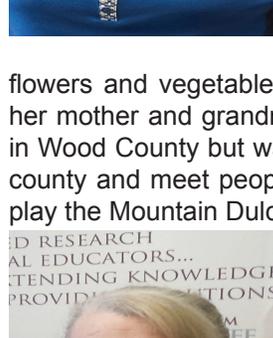
We are so fortunate this year to have a diversified, energetic and friendly group of interns join the FSMG organization! If you have not introduced yourself to these new members, please do. As you will read below, they have a wealth of experience and knowledge, and are a great asset to our group.

**John Clark:** John is retired but works part-time. He lives near Lake Tawakoni and has been gardening full time for about five years. John's interest is mostly irises and roses and he is an active member of the American Rose Society. He volunteers often at the National Rose Gardens in Shreveport.



**Connie Tramel:** Connie lives in Wills Point and is retired from Koni's Cuts and Style Shop in Terrell. Connie has a special place in her heart for children and the elderly and has always enjoyed meeting people from all walks of life.

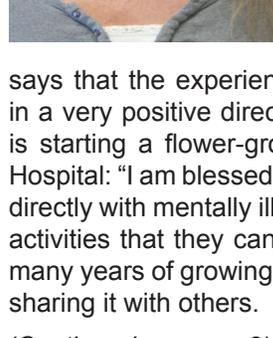
Connie's passion is beautiful flowers but she enjoys fresh vegetables such as okra, squash, cucumbers and purple hull peas with a big hunk of cornbread!



**Jimmie Pierce:** Jimmie lives in Canton and enjoys gardening, music and art. She grows flowers and vegetables and inherited her interest in gardening from her mother and grandmother. Jimmie is a certified Master Gardener in Wood County but wanted to be certified in VZ County to serve this county and meet people of like interests here. Jimmie is learning to play the Mountain Dulcimer and enjoys small art projects.



**Heidi Stone:** Heidi has lived in Van Zandt County for 25 years. She especially enjoys growing flowers but does grow vegetables as well. Heidi thoroughly enjoyed the Master Gardener classes, meeting her fellow class members, and is sad that the class is over. When asked what she would like to learn from future Master Gardeners programs, she replied that she would love to go on a field trip and learn more on propagation, herbs and native plants.



**Karen Gonzalez:** Karen lives near Wills Point and is very pleased with the MG classes. She says that the experience is "going to shoot my gardening education in a very positive direction." Her husband, Fred, has just retired and is starting a flower-growing business. Karen works at Terrell State Hospital: "I am blessed to instruct patients in horticulture and art. I work directly with mentally ill patients that need assistance in finding healthy activities that they can use to aid in their recovery. I look forward to many years of growing in gardening life, expanding my knowledge and sharing it with others. Life is good in the garden."



(Continued on page 3)



## Gardening Chores

Tommy Phillips  
County Extension Agent, Ag/NR

April showers bring May flowers and lots of gardening activities. Visits to local nurseries and public gardens will stimulate lots of new ideas and possibilities. Here are a few items that can help you with your gardening activities.

Although pansies are still looking great, it's about time to pull them and plant summer flowering plants. There are too many to list here, but your choices are many, and nurseries are stocked with them. It's better to go ahead and dig out the pansies even though they may still be looking quite good. Once it gets hot, they'll go down fast. Annuals give you lots of color bang for your buck.

Transplant or sow seeds of angelonia, ageratum, sunflower, zinnia, morning glory, portulaca, marigold, cosmos (Cosmos bipinnatus with pastel colors and C. sulphureus with hot reds and yellows), periwinkles, gomphrena and gourds. Plant vinca (periwinkle), which prefers hot, sunny sites, later in May once the weather turns warmer.

For shady spots, grow these favorite plants: impatiens, coleus, caladium and begonias. Flowering tobacco (Nicotiana) is a great fragrant annual for partial shade.

Perennials for the sun include Shasta daisy, dusty miller, garden mums, coreopsis, mallow, salvia (many kinds), daylily and summer phlox. Shade loving perennials include hosta, columbine, phlox, ferns, violets, ajuga, and liriopse. Achimenes, cannas, dahlias, caladiums and other summer bulbs can also be planted in May.

Some plants can be grown as either annuals or perennials. Lantana loves the summer heat and sun, blooming from late spring through first frost. Most years it will come back from the roots. Lantana comes in bush and trailing forms, and in many colors.

Firebush or Hamelia is another favorite summer bloomer with bright orange/red flowers that is a magnet for hummingbirds. It is usually slow to emerge after winter, and many folks simply replant it every year.

### FLOWER BED MAINTENANCE

If you cut off old blossoms on early spring flowering annuals like pansies, snapdragons, stock and calendulas, you can prolong the flowering season a few more weeks.

Allow foliage of daffodils and other spring flowering bulbs to mature and yellow before removing. Do not hide or cover their leaves.

Pinch back growth of newly planted annual and perennial plants. This results in shorter, compact plants with more flowers.

### TREES AND SHRUBS

There's still plenty of time to set out container shrubs and trees. While they will need regular watering this summer, be certain you are not pouring too much water on your new plants. Folks with sandy soil may have the tendency to apply lots of water, keeping the soil where there are currently no roots saturated with water. Roots do not grow well in wet, soggy soil. Regularly check both the surrounding soil and the original soil root ball with your finger to determine the need for supplemental water during the year.

Fertilize roses every four to six weeks with small amounts of a balanced fertilizer. Control black spot on roses with triforine (Funginex) or other labeled product.

**LAWNS** The first application of fertilizer for centipede lawns should be made soon, and if you have not yet fertilized St. Augustine or Bermuda grass, it is certainly not too late. The best way to determine what type and how much fertilizer is needed is to have a soil test done; otherwise use a 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 fertilizer ratio.

### VEGETABLES

As soon as tomatoes and peppers first set fruit, lightly apply nitrogen fertilizer (called side dressing) about 12 to 14 inches from the base of the plants. This supplemental feeding keeps the plants vigorous and growing, allowing them to set and mature the maximum amount of fruit without stunting the growth of the plants.

Cool season vegetables, like lettuce and spinach, will begin bolting (flowering) and quickly go down in quality once it gets hot. Harvest them soon and replant empty spots with warm-season vegetables like okra, sweet potatoes, pumpkins or watermelons.

### TROUBLESHOOTING

Don't take the description "evergreen" plants too literally, expecting leaves to persist forever. Plants like magnolias, live oak, gardenia, hollies and some azaleas lose some of their old leaves in late spring and early summer. The flush of new growth on many evergreens will cause older leaves to yellow and drop, sometimes all at once. It's nothing to be concerned about; just nature putting on a new spring coat of green and discarding the old.

Unfortunately, the month of May would not be complete without a few pests messing things up. Here are a few of which you

should be aware. If you know what might be showing up, you can periodically check your yard and take action before things get out of hand and more difficult to control.

Check azaleas for lace bugs. These small, slow moving, black insects with clear, lacy wings feed on the underside of the leaves. Damaged leaves look stippled or bleached and have small, shiny black specks on the undersides.

Leaf spot on Red Tip Photinia is a disease which can defoliate, weaken and potentially kill limbs. Indian Hawthorns can also get this disease which is characterized by dark, purple-colored spots on the leaves. Prevention is the best remedy to control Entomosporium leaf spot. First, rake up and remove all old, fallen leaves from underneath Photinias. The disease will be more severe if the leaves are frequently wetted, either by rainfall or by an irrigation system. If your sprinklers are hitting the plant's leaves, make adjustments to prevent this from occurring.

A preventative fungicide spray will help control Entomosporium leaf spot, particularly if the photinias were affected last year. Alternate trifenox (Funginex) or bayleton with chlorothalonil (Daconil, Bravo, Multi-Purpose Fungicide) during the rainy season. This disease can be difficult to control and new growth must be protected.

Aphids, or plant lice, can be found on tender, new growth of all types of plants. Aphids are small, soft-bodied insects that suck plant sap, often occurring in very large numbers. There are several naturally occurring enemies of aphids which can efficiently reduce a small infestation. Usually beneficial insects (lady beetles, lacewings, parasitic wasps) do a good job of keeping aphid populations under control.

Look closely to see if plants with aphids have any parasitized aphids. Parasitized aphids appear fat, motionless, and salmon-colored. Very tiny wasps lay eggs in the aphid bodies. The eggs hatch and develop into small larvae which eat the aphid's insides! A close inspection of parasitized aphids might even reveal a tiny exit hole where the new adult wasp emerged to continue the cycle of destroying more aphids. Obviously, there is no need to spray there if you find insect predators or parasites working over an aphid infestation.

Cabbage worms and loopers will be on all cold crops including broccoli, cabbage, collards, kale and cauliflower. The biological insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), sold under several brand names like Biological Worm Killer, Thuricide, Dipel, etc, is a specific and very safe product to use to control these and other moth and butterfly caterpillars on vegetables and other plants. Use Bt late in the day and thoroughly cover the leaves with the spray.

Not all "critters" are pests, nor are all spots diseases – be sure to get any unknown suspect or problem correctly identified before considering treating with a pesticide.

## Class of 2016 Interns (Continued from page 1)



### **Kathy Massey:**

Kathy has lived in VZ County, south of Wills Point, for 40 years. Kathy works part-time for the Wills Point EDC and Van Zandt County Regional Airport. She says she is not an "extreme" gardener (yet), but has always enjoyed growing flowers and has a fairly large vegetable garden. When asked about what she has learned for the MG program, Kathy replied, "What I know for sure is that I don't know nearly enough! I'm excited to be part of the MG program. It's a great group of share-ers with so much interesting and valuable information. I am enjoying my new friends and look forward to learning and working with you all in the future."

### **Jennifer Lay:**

Jennifer and her husband have lived in Canton for about 20 years. She enjoys gardening, camping, fishing, hiking and spending time with her family. She feels fortunate and blessed to be a part of the Free State Master Gardeners Association and hopes to be a great member for years to come.



### **Susan Dahlman:**

*(Editors Note: we did not hear from Susan, but she helped with the geranium sales and has attended several MG meetings.)*

Welcome, Susan!



## Gardening Events –May/June 2016

By Marsha Sasser

Saturday, May 14: (with rain date of Saturday, May 21) Hunt County Master Gardeners' Garden Tour, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Tickets are \$10. (Call 903-455-9885 for info.)

Saturday, May 14: Master Gardener Day at Holly Ross's Hollyberry Farm in Canton. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Program from 11 – noon: "The Rabbits' Place in the Garden". Program from 2-3 p.m.: "How to Make an Herb-Infused Vinegar".

Tuesday-Thursday, May 17-19: Texas Master Gardener Conference in McKinney (Additional information provided at May 12th FSMG meeting).

Saturday, May 21: Texas Discovery Garden at Fair Park, Dallas. 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. "Edible Wild Plants". Director of Horticulture Roger Sanderson shares which are tasty – and which are not! Sample some of the native fare. \$25; \$20 members. (Call 214-428-7476, x343.)

Saturday, May 28: Tyler's Annual Home Garden Tour, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Five homeowners open their private gardens for viewing with SCMG-ers at each home to answer questions. Tickets \$10 in advance or \$12 day of tour. Homes on the tour: 527 Pam Drive, 2115 Holly Creek Drive, 4486 Cascade Shoreline Drive, 4350 Cascade Drive, and 810 W. 9<sup>th</sup>. Tickets available by mail to: MG Garden Tour, 19461 Sandhill Drive, Flint, Tx 75762. (Call 903-590-2980 for info.)

May and June at the Dallas Arboretum: Quite a few Lunch and Learn programs. Most cost around \$25. 11:30 – 1 p.m. (Go to their web site, click on "Adult Programs", then "Gardening and Design".)

Wednesday, June 1: FSMGers' trip to Myers Park in McKinney for tour with Dr. George; tour Rose Demo gardens in Rockwall. (Details to follow.)

Tuesday, June 7: "First Tuesday in the Garden" lecture in the SCMG-er Idea Garden in the Tyler Rose Garden. Noon. (Topic not announced yet. Check SCMG web site.)

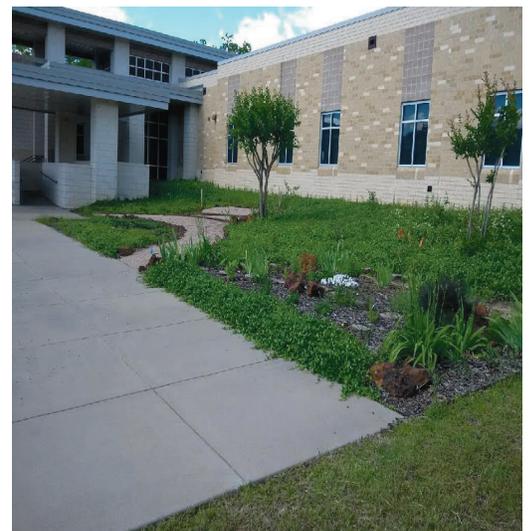
Thursday, June 16: Henderson County MG-ers Summer Series #1. "Beautiful, Low-Maintenance Roses for Your Landscape," with Mark Chamblee. 6-7:30 p.m. First Methodist Church, 507 N. Broad Street, Chandler.

Saturday, June 18: Free State Jubilee

Thursday, June 23: Horticulture Field Day in Overton. (Go to [flowers.tamu.edu/horticulture-field-day/](http://flowers.tamu.edu/horticulture-field-day/) or call 903-834-6191.)

Saturday, June 25: Texas Discovery Garden in Dallas, "Water-Wise Organic Gardening". 10 am – noon. Dr. Peter Schaar. (Must RSVP to Fran at [FThompson@TexasDiscoveryGardens.org](mailto:FThompson@TexasDiscoveryGardens.org).)

## Butterfly Garden Path Construction



## Landscape Project

By Joan Driver

Who is so jaded that he hasn't sighed over home landscaping in *Southern Living*? A year or so after my master gardening training I had what at first seemed like a lunatic notion of doing my own project across the front of my home. Only when I was fairly well along did I finally decide that my dream was actually do-able. In the end, I had a miniature, low-maintenance paradise that I've enjoyed year after year. These are the steps of my gardening adventure:

- Soil test. Have you had one? Identifying and alleviating deficiencies will help your plants thrive as they should.

- A landscape plan. Sharon Smith of Blue Moon Gardens came to my home, took measurements, and discussed with me my wish for a French cottage garden. Taking into account the eastern exposure, an existing tree, and surrounding shade planting, she produced a scale drawing showing plants, placements and quantities. The cost was minimal compared to the outcome!

- Recycling. Use what you have, use what you love. I incorporated some "freebies," including a relocated bed of hardy cast iron plant, favorite day lilies, and a couple of surplus rose bushes gifted by another master gardener. Flat stones left over from an earlier backyard project became a walkway through my garden. I also used several large field stones my husband had unearthed while he was leveling our home site. Piled together in the middle of a shaded bed, they made a focal point and base for a bird bath. I also made an accent of pieces of petrified wood. Sharon worked these elements into the plan.

- Who's going to do the work? Just to see what I was getting into I got a bid from a popular landscaping company in Tyler. Their price was \$6,000, on top of the cost of plants. I decided to do the work myself. With the savings I felt comfortable in purchasing a heavy duty tiller, which my husband was kind enough to operate to break ground. After the initial breaking and removal of uprooted grass and other roots, he tilled in a good quality compost, which both lightens and enriches the soil. (If you decide that you are unable to tackle the project alone, shop for an ambitious teen or available adult who can work under your supervision.)

- Hint: A garden hose is a wonderful tool for bed design. You can lay it out on the ground to help visualize size, depth, and curves. You can let it stay there until you dig or use spray paint to mark your lines.

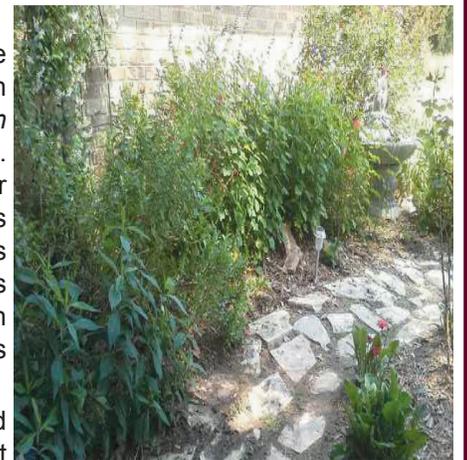
- Shop for your plants. Selections and prices vary from one nursery to another. Some plants were interesting exotics from Blue Moon, while others were more common plants found elsewhere at lower cost. I studied gardening manuals – *The Southern Living Garden Book* and Dale Groom's *Texas Gardening Guide* are two of my favorites. Texasuperstar.com has excellent recommendations for wonderful and hardy plants for our particular climate. (Consider smaller plants when they are available; in a year's time they will be the same size as the larger, more expensive plants.) Select varieties that will not overgrow their allotted space. I googled a specific new nandina species I wanted, made a few phone calls and saved enough to justify a trip to a nursery in Malakoff to get them. If you're making your own plan, combine perennials and annuals to create a pleasing variety of colors, textures, and leaf shapes.

- Place the plants in their containers to correspond to your landscape drawing and adjust their intervals. Before planting, plants benefit from a brief soaking in a tub, at least until they quit bubbling, in a mixture of water and liquid plant nutrients. Having the roots soaked guarantees that plants get a good start. Dry roots are difficult to get wet once already in the ground. Plant at the same level plants were in their growing containers. This is the hardest part of the project. I literally finished several work days crawling inside my front door to collapse on the carpet, but the results were worth the effort.

- Mulch. At least 2 inches of mulch will help reduce shock to new plants by keeping moisture in the ground and reducing stress of summer heat. It will also help with weed control.

- Keep an eye on your new landscaping as each day progresses to ensure that plants do not wilt in afternoon heat. Daily watering will be necessary at first. After several weeks less frequent deep moisture is preferable.

- Reward yourself with a late afternoon lemonade break each day to observe and enjoy your growing and developing landscape!



## Pat's Reminders

- There are lots of different events happening around us so make the best of it, especially while the weather is so wonderful. Marsha Sasser does a great job of keeping us informed so check out the newsletter for those events.
- Our June 1 tour to Myers Park in McKinney will be fun and informative, so please try to attend. You'll receive details for travel, etc., as soon as they are finalized.
- The County Jubilee is just around the corner and it was lots of fun last year. I think we were very much "stars" for the day last year. And you don't have to stay all day, so sign up for when you can be there and where you want to help. Nancy Szabo is leading this project for us.
- *"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."* William Shakespeare

## Extension Office Work Day



On Wednesday, May 4th John Clark, Paula Marshall, Gay Mitchell, Anna Baker, Pat Briggs, and Michael Stevenson worked on weeding at the Extension office garden. This year's interns are going to work on the front of the Extension Office. It will be great to watch the change in this area.



## Ten Different Vegetable Gardening Tips

By Sandra Rosen

We all really like to find ways to make our gardening easier and better and more fun. Here are some that may be a bit different from the usual ones.

1. It is so hard to get a fall garden going for many reasons. However, one reason is the summer heat in Texas. To combat this, you can use a shade cover over your plants in the hot August and September heat. If the plants get morning sun, and are shaded in the afternoon, you may have a really good fall garden.
2. Use egg shells as fertilizer. They are rich in calcium carbonate.
3. Water your plants with chamomile tea. This will ward off bacterial and fungal infections.
4. Plant by the light of the moon. Your plants will grow stronger and faster. (Possibly a good science experiment for some student.)
5. Plant your shorter plants on the south side of your garden bed. Plant taller plants on the north side. This will prevent taller plants from casting unwanted shadows over the shorter ones.
6. The water used to cook pasta or vegetables is full of vitamins and nutrients. Cool, and then water your plants with this water.
7. There is an easy way to mix compost into your soil without a lot of work. Spread compost on your garden in late fall. Cover with a winter mulch such as hay or chopped leaves and let nature take its course.
8. A simple 5% increase in organic matter (compost) quadruples the soil's ability to store water.
9. Your plants don't like "wet feet." However, digging a well when you plant the new plants ensures that they get plenty of water at first when they really need it. The well will eventually, on its own, fill in so that the plant doesn't stand in water.
10. Turn a long handled tool into a measuring stick. Lay it on the ground next to a tape measure and use a permanent marker to write inch and feet marks on the handle. Very handy!