

The Green Thumb

<http://nacogdoches-tx.tamu.edu>

A Quarterly Horticulture Newsletter for
The Nacogdoches County Master Gardeners & Other Horticulture Enthusiasts
Fall 2009



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From the President

Well, it looks like fall is just around the corner, and not a moment too soon. I know that everyone is ready for cooler weather and for a chance to get into our yards again. It was a fantastic summer, and we accomplished many things as Master Gardeners.

The September Lunch'N'Learn was a huge success. Everyone who came thoroughly enjoyed themselves and the food was great. Thank you, to all of the ladies who always provide wonderful desserts. I really enjoy that part of my lunch. It was so nice to have the Master Gardeners from Rusk County as our guests. They were quite impressed with our little undertaking and are very excited to sit down and talk with us at length on how to make it all happen. The Mayor and County Judge seem to really enjoy themselves. It was wonderful to have this meal in the garden so that we could really show how far we have come in such a short time. And to thank everyone who has made it happen.

Now that being said, there is no time to slow down. The momentum is there and we have to keep rocking and

rolling. With everyone back in town, we will begin in earnest to get this pavilion all pulled together. So be ready for more great things to come.

It is time for the Pineywoods Fair and I hope that everyone will be at the October business meeting so that we can get our sign up sheet together.

As for myself, I can not express how grateful I am for all you as Master Gardeners, and my friends, have done to help me this year. I have thoroughly enjoyed being President and I hope that we as a group have made an impact on our community as Master Gardeners in teaching others about the joys of gardening. I know that it has been a blessing in my life, even the days when we thought we couldn't survive another day. Thank you, each and everyone.

**Jo Ann
Carter**

Master Gardener President



Chad's Chatter

Fall is just around the corner. My how things change so fast in East Texas. We go from being really hot and dry in June, to wet in many places around the county in September. Special thanks to all the Master

Gardeners and others that worked so hard this summer in the YouthGrow summer program. The garden really looks great. Here is a quote I thought might be appropriate for you gardeners: 'To love what you do and feel that it matters...how could anything be more fun?' by Katherine Graham.

Chad Gulley

County Extension Agent—Ag/NR

(Editors Note: Did you see Chad's recent article in the Daily Sentinel about fall/winter care of your turf grass? Thanks Chad; great article with super advice.)



Lunch'n'Learn Updated

Wasn't it a great day at the September Lunch'N'Learn? The party in the park was attended by almost 80 guests and members and hotdogs and hamburgers were enjoyed by all. Thanks to everyone for participating and for making our guests feel welcomed.

Here are the speakers lined up for the remainder of the year. So, mark your calendars now and plan to attend. And, remember, ***we will be at Liberty Hall in October.*** We hope to be able to return to the community room at the County Extension office in November.

October 8th @ Liberty Hall Speaker - Terry Briggs on Ornamental Grasses

November 12th @ the CEO Speaker - Ted Thompson on 4-legged Pests: What Works; What Doesn't

December 10th @ the CEO Speaker - Kimberly Binning on Decorating for Christmas

The December Lunch'N'Learn program will mark the conclusion of Penny Horne and Gay Thompson's reign as coordinators. Penny and Gay have done a wonderful job of lining up speakers and insuring all the details necessary to make this one of the hallmark projects of the Nacogdoches County Master Gardener program. Hearty and sincere thanks are extended to Penny and Gay for all of their hard work these last two years.

Beginning with the January 2010 session, Gerry Peacock, Marilyn Nerren and Gwen Jeffers will be coordinating Lunch'N'Learn. So, if you have any leads or suggestions for upcoming speakers/programs, please contact Gerry, Marilyn or Gwen.

The Demonstration Garden

Another Eagle Scout Project has graced the garden. Scout Thomas Cox has installed a series of bluebird houses in the garden creating a bluebird trail. (For more information about bluebirds, see **From the Editor** column.)

Things are continuing to 'pop' in the Demo Garden. With the help of the Youth/Grow program, a significant amount of plant material, dirt, compost and mulch was acquired. Most of the plants and trees have been installed throughout the garden. Also, the herb beds are in and the water lines are all in place. A number of beds have had drip irrigation installed, but there is always more to do.

Take special note of the location of the tree groupings in the back areas of the property. By strategically placing three or four trees at the major waterline junction boxes, it is hoped that this will insure that these junctions remain intact.

If you are short on volunteer hours, please check with Jo Ann to see

what the work schedule is in the garden. Or just take it upon yourself to spend a few hours weeding; there is always something to do in a garden.

Also, remember that the Demo Garden planning meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of each month at the Extension office at 5:30 p.m. The meeting is open to all Master Gardeners and MG trainees and is the best forum for learning what is happening and what needs to happen next in this project.



The Nacogdoches County Master Gardeners continue to be most appreciative of all of the monetary and in kind donations that are made to our organization.

Here's the list to date of donors:

Bailey Bark Materials - Nacogdoches
Trees USA – Doug Arnold, owner-
Lindale, TX
Brigate Farms, LLC – Rusk, TX
Dr. David Creech – SFASU –
Nacogdoches
The SFASU Arboretum - Nacogdoches
The Pines Garden Club –
Nacogdoches
The Four Seasons Garden Club –
Nacogdoches
Vital Signs – Nacogdoches
Nacogdoches CVB – Nacogdoches
Naconiche Gardens – Nacogdoches
Worsham Landscaping –
Nacogdoches
Scott Jacobs – Nacogdoches
The Bank Clearinghouse –
Nacogdoches
East Texas Stone – Craig Herman,
owner – Nacogdoches
Nacogdoches Rotary Club
The Flora Garden Club -
Nacogdoches

Pine Straw Direct - Nacogdoches
Mr. Johnny Palmer
G & S Lumber - Nacogdoches
Sutherland's – Nacogdoches
Lowe's – Nacogdoches
Texas 4-H Foundation
Nacogdoches Evening Lions Club
Duane Horne - Nacogdoches
Susan Shaw – Nacogdoches
Dean Seiser - Nacogdoches
(We will maintain this list and add to it as additional contribution and support are received.)



One of the primary goals of all Master Gardener programs is to provide and staff volunteer opportunities in the local community. NCMG Association is no exception.

Upcoming volunteer opportunities:

October 7th – 12th – Pineywoods Fair (contact – Jo Ann Carter)

To get the latest on any upcoming projects, just come to a regular monthly meeting of the Master Gardeners and help make decisions about the plans. **Regular club meetings are on the first Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the county extension office.**



Road Trip (to SFA)

In October there is no need to fill the gas tank and get out the map; all you really need to do is head on over the soccer fields at SFA for the Fall Arboretum Plant Sale.

This press release says it all. The annual Fabulous Fall Festival plant sale at Stephen F. Austin State University's Mast Arboretum will be from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 3, at the intramural field on Wilson Drive.

"As usual, a great selection of rare, unusual, native, and Texas-tough trees, shrubs, vines, herbaceous perennials, grasses and groundcovers will be available," said Dawn Stover, Mast Arboretum research associate. This year's sale will feature an outstanding selection of maples including connoisseur Japanese maples, southern sugar maple, and the rare chalk maple, plus the hard to find native chinquapin. Almost all of the plants are produced at SFA by the staff, students and volunteers.

Proceeds from the plant sale help support the SFA Mast Arboretum, the Ruby Mize Azalea Garden, the Pineywoods Native Plant Center, and educational programming.

The public is encouraged to arrive early and bring a wagon. For more information, call (936) 468-4404 or visit the Web site at: <http://arboretum.sfasu.edu> and click on "upcoming events."

Greg Grant

Director, Pineywoods Native Plant Center

Texas Seed Gardeners' Seeds

From time to time you will find mention of an email newsletter I subscribe to, *Texas Gardeners' Seeds*. The newsletter always has some tidbit or article or posted event that catches my eye. This time I'm sharing with you from the "Did You Know..." section of recent issues.

The **1015Y Onion** that is so famous for its size and eating quality was so named because October 15 or 1015 is the optimal time to plant onions in the Rio Grande Valley where the best onions in the world are grown. Move over Vidalia!

Systemic pesticides are absorbed by the plant so that any part of the plant — leaves, roots, stems contain lethal amounts of the pesticide — enough to effectively control the targeted pest.

(see *Did You Know?* p. 5)

McKown Memorial Dedicated

Earlier this summer a lovely bench and beautiful Japanese maple (*Acer shirasawanum*) placed in the Ruby Mize Azalea Garden by the Nacogdoches County Master Gardeners were dedicated to the memory of Dr. Ronald McKown. Many long time members of NCMG remember Dr. McKown's intense love of gardening and his dedication to the Master Gardener program. According to Gerry Peacock, Dr. McKown was an outstanding leader in the Master Gardener program. At the time of his death in 2005, Dr. McKown was serving as president of MCMG.



Pictured enjoying the bench are Master Gardeners (standing l. to r.) Jimmy Rodriguez, Jesse Richardson, Gerry Peacock, Bill Teague and Sara Richardson, Sue English and Lynn Teague (seated l. to r.)

(Did You Know continued from p. 5)
Consequently, plants that are treated with systemic pesticides should not be consumed by humans. Systemics should never be applied to vegetable, fruit or nut crops or any plant that may be consumed by humans.

"Rooting cuttings in water on the kitchen windowsill is fun," writes **Helen Quinn**, "but the new roots are fragile. To avoid root damage when removing from the wide mouth container, try adding a little potting medium to the water as soon as roots appear, and repeat until the cutting is ready to transplant."

Holiday Mistletoe, a parasite of our trees can actually be cultivated, using either the remains of holiday decorations or freshly gathered berries, which seem to germinate even better. Squeeze the berry until it bursts, then stick the gummy seed on the bottom (preferably bruised) side of a young twig that is growing on a deciduous tree like hackberry or cedar elm. It helps if you gently wound the twig before placing the seed on it. In about a year you should notice some leaves beginning to develop and by next Christmas you could be in the mistletoe business.

(Above excerpts are reprinted with permission from Texas Gardeners' Seeds.)



Earth-Kind Rose Symposium

The Victoria County Master Gardener Association and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are hosting an all-day Earth-Kind Rose symposium

on October 17th. The event will be held from 8 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. on October 17 at the Victoria County 4-H Activity Center, 259 Bachelor Drive, located across from the Victoria Regional Airport control tower.

Speakers for the symposium will include Gaye Hammond, past president of the Houston Rose Society; Dr. Steve George, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Horticulturist of Dallas, who created the trademarked Earth-Kind Environmental Landscape Management System; and Steve Chaney, a Horticulture Agent with Texas AgriLife Extension Service stationed in Fort Worth; and Dr. Shari Koch, Horticulture Agent with Texas AgriLife Extension Service stationed in Rosenberg.

Seating is limited for this event. To register, send checks made payable to Victoria Co. Master Gardeners in the amount of \$65 to P. O. Box 1723, Victoria, TX 77902. Prepaid reservations must be received by October 1st. Admission will include all sessions, boxed lunch, snacks, an Earth-Kind handbook, a 2-gallon rose, and a guided tour of the Victoria Co. MG Earth-kind Rose Research Study Garden and the award-winning Victoria Educational Gardens.



From the Editor

Since we have a newly installed bluebird trail in our garden, I thought I'd use this space to share with you some interesting facts about this lovely creature. Fortunately for many of us, the Eastern Bluebird is a frequent visitor to our gardens, especially those of us

lucky enough to live in a more rural area of the county.

Thanks to Thomas Cox and his Eagle Scout project, there are now several nesting boxes for this lovely creature in the Demonstration Garden. These nesting boxes serve as the “bedrooms” for the bluebirds. But, what good is a bedroom without a kitchen? While open spaces are essential to these birds, which forage by sight for insects, wintertime forces the birds into a nomadic search for fruiting trees and shrubs. The more commonly taken food sources are Sumac, followed by flowering dogwood, wild grape, Japanese honeysuckle, climbing bittersweet, multiflora rose hips, pokeweed, *Viburnum* species, green briar and poison ivy, of all things. Thus our garden could be an ideal spot for them.

Water is another sure-fire way to attract bluebirds. The birds bathe daily preferring pools of only two (2) or so inches of water and are readily drawn to the sight and sound of dripping water.

For those of you interested in creating a feeding station for resident bluebirds, the trick is to lure them in with some obvious natural food like a branch of climbing bittersweet or flowering dogwood fruit draped across a simple, post-mounted platform type feeding station. Many successful bluebird feeders are stocked with a mixture some call “Miracle Meal” (see recipe below).

Typically, bluebirds do not partake of normal bird seed or bird feeders. Once you think you have tempted your flock to use a feeder, it is time to construct a true bluebird feeder. This will protect the birds from the starlings and mockingbirds that will attempt to fend off the bluebird. (see instructions below)

We thank Thomas Cox and his Scouting friends for providing what we hope will be homes for many of these colorful birds. And, I hope some of this

information will encourage you to look for and try to attract bluebirds to your garden.

One more thing, this concludes my eighth issue of The Green Thumb. So, after two years of editing our Master Gardener quarterly newsletter, aren't you ready for a new look??? I hope there is someone in our organization who would love to step in and take over as the editor of the newsletter. If you are interested in this, please let me or Jo Ann know. Now is the time to be planning for our 2010 year.

Lynn Teague

Editor

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Miracle Meal (basic recipe)

4 C. yellow corn meal

1 C. all-purpose flour

1 C. lard or melted suet

1 tsp. corn oil

Melt lard and stir in other ingredients.

Spike the mixture with sunflower hearts, peanuts hearts, or chopped soaked raisins, as desired. Let set, cut into chunks and feed as suet.



Bluebird Feeder

1. Retrofit an old nest box with a shelf inside, just under the hole, on which to put the food.
2. More advanced designs look like covered bridges, with 1 ½ “holes at either wooded end and Plexiglas sides. The clear sides allow the birds to see the food and the entry holes protect

against starlings and
mockingbirds.
(Resource - "Enjoying Bluebirds More"
by Julie Zickefoose)

