

# The Green Thumb

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

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Inside this issue:  
President's Message  
Chad's Chatter  
Lunch'N'Learn Update  
Demo Garden Update  
Volunteer Opportunities

that would be great. Or, if you want to get in some extra volunteer hours, you'd be most welcomed. Do check with Jo Ann if you have any questions.

*Jo Ann Carter*

Master Gardener President

## From the President

As most of you know, our President, Jo Ann Carter, can be found on most afternoons in the Demonstration Garden, coordinating the work of the summer work-study program for fifteen high school students. In lieu of her usual column, Jo Ann has asked that we relay to you what's going on out there.

Each afternoon from 12:30 to 4 p.m., Monday thru Friday, Jo Ann, the fifteen students and at least one other Master Gardener are busy setting new beds, weeding existing beds and top dressing other beds in the Demonstration Garden. Every day there is more visible evidence of all of the sweat equity these students are planting in the garden. It has been most difficult over these beginning weeks because of the excessive heat. But the students have really been troopers. They are learning about the garden and also about teamwork, care of their work tools, and how to beat the heat!!!

If you've not yet been out to the garden lately, do stop by. If you can stay for a while and meet some of the students,



## Chad's Chatter

This month Chad asked that we relay to you the answer to a question many of you have been asking. What is the difference between an educational hour and a volunteer hour? As we all know, in order to maintain our membership in the Nacogdoches County Master Gardener organization, we have to have at least 12 volunteer hours and 12 education hours annually.

According to Chad, "volunteer hours are when you (individually) or (within) the group are volunteering your time to help teach, conduct a program, answer questions, work in the garden, and the list goes on (doing any service project as a Master Gardener)."

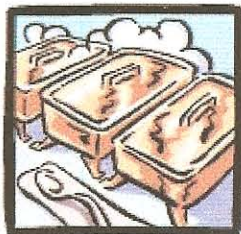
"Education hours are considered continuing education for each Master Gardener in which you individually or in a group setting actually attend a workshop or conference to further your knowledge base of Horticulture topics.

Basically it is when you are learning so you then can take this information and pass it on to others. In our jobs as County Extension Agents we typically call this professional improvement.”

If you still have questions concerning the difference between the two categories of hours, please contact Chad Gulley for more information.

*Chad Gulley*

County Extension Agent—Ag/NR



### **Lunch'n'Learn Updated**

Due to excessive heat; speaker availability and a pending murder trial over the next several months, there have been some changes to the Lunch'N'Learn schedule. Here is the latest update from Penny Horne, Lunch'N'Learn coordinator.

July 9<sup>th</sup> @ the CEO Speaker -Julia Shakelford on the Neches River Preserve

August 13<sup>th</sup> @ the CEO Speaker - Larry Poe on Hydroponics

September 10<sup>th</sup> @ the Demonstration Garden A Picnic

October 8<sup>th</sup> @ Liberty Hall Speaker - Terry Briggs on Ornamental Grasses

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

December 10<sup>th</sup> @ the CEO Speaker - Kimberly Binning on Decorating for Christmas

### **The Demonstration Garden**

In addition to all of the work being done by the students in the summer work-study program, there is other exciting work happening in the garden.

The much needed expansion of the watering system has gotten a boost from Mr. Rigby and his crew. They have dug a grid work of trenches, laid PVC pipe and installed check valves that will allow us to have ready access to water even in the far reaches of the property. We are most appreciative of not only Mr. Rigby and his workers, but also, Jo Ann Carter, Mike and Dana Hasley, and others in our community that have worked and supported this effort.

There are two local Boy Scouts that are focusing their Eagle Scout projects toward improvements in the garden. Mason Proctor is going to design and build a kiosk for the garden. This structure will be similar to others located along The Lanana Trail. And John Mark Kerr plans to provide a bench/table structure for the garden.

For those of you who may not be familiar with the Eagle Scout portion of the Boy Scouts of America program, once a Scout has achieved the rank of Life Scout and held it for at least six months, he is eligible to work toward attaining Eagle Scout status. There are a number of requirements the Scout must complete to gain the Eagle Scout award. One of these requirements is to “plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to any religious institution, any school, or your community. (The project should benefit an organization other than Boy Scouting.) The project plan must be approved by the organization benefiting

from the effort, your Scoutmaster and troop committee, and the council or district before you start.” This is the part of working toward Eagle Scout status that John Mark and Mason will do to benefit the Nacogdoches County Master Gardeners and the citizens of Nacogdoches.

We will keep you posted on the progress of these two Scouts as they work to improve their community through their Eagle Projects.

Also, remember that the Demo Garden planning meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.



There are so many businesses and organizations in and around Nacogdoches that are helping to make the Demonstration Garden and other Master Gardener projects a reality. And for their support we are most grateful.

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 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> – 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.



## Overton Field Day

Word has it that several of the MG Interns attended the Field Day at the Overton Experimental Station. Maybe we can get one or more of them to share with us in this forum or at a meeting what they saw and learned.

## Local Turf Grass Lecture

If you want to know how to resurrect your thin, parched, weedy lawn, plan to attend the SFA Mast Arboretum Gardener seminar Saturday July 11. Local photographer and garden columnist for the Nacogdoches Daily Sentinel, Jeff Abt, will present "Taking Care of Your Turfgrass" where you will learn how to create and maintain a beautiful lawn in our difficult East Texas climate.

The workshop will be held from 9:00 am until noon in room 118 of the Agriculture building on Wilson Drive on the SFA campus. The cost is \$20 for members of the Friends of the SFA Gardens and \$25 for non-members. To register contact the SFA Mast Arboretum education office at 936-468-1832 or e-mail [erodewald@sfasu.edu](mailto:erodewald@sfasu.edu).

## 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 some of the tips from recent issues.

*Invading Grass?* - Is Bermuda or Johnson grass invading your flower beds? If so, mix up a small quantity of a

glyphosate product like Roundup and paint it on the grass with a paint brush. As an added protection, try separating your desirable plants from those weedy grasses with a section of cardboard. The Roundup will only kill the plants it actually contacts.

*How big a container?* -

Vegetables such as tomatoes and cucumbers can be grown successfully in containers but be sure to use large containers like the size nursery folks use for growing trees — at least 15 gallons. Small containers allow the soil to dry out between waterings and cause problems like blossom end rot and stress that reduces production. Be sure to provide substantial support to your container veggies such as the concrete reinforcement wire cage shown in the accompanying photo. Of course, you will need to mulch and keep your container plants watered regularly if you want a successful crop.

*To Feed or Not to Feed* - If you fertilize your tomato plants heavily with a nitrogen fertilizer at planting time, you will likely get very large plants but few tomatoes. Instead, wait until your plants have produced small tomatoes (about the size of a large marble) and then apply a handful or so of fertilizer to each plant every week during the growing season. You may not have 10-foot-tall plants but you should have buckets of vine-ripened fruit to enjoy and share with friends and neighbors.

*Did you know?* - Earthworms are one of the most valuable garden assets we have at our disposal. An average earthworm will produce its weight in castings (poop) every 24 hours. A healthy population of earthworms can deposit up to 50 tons per acre of valuable organic matter each year. They will burrow as deep as 6 feet into the soil, breaking up heavy clay soils and enriching sandy soils.

*More mosquitoes* - To help North Texas residents prepare for the

mosquito onslaught, Merchant and others have developed a new, free interactive Web site called, 'Mosquito Safari.' The site, <http://mosquitosafari.tamu.edu/>, is available to teach visitors about mosquitoes and how to control them, he said, and contains scientifically based information in a lively, entertaining format.

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

### **From the Editor**

What better way to spend a lovely, rainy day than working on the MG newsletter? I must admit that it is not nearly as taxing as those recent afternoons in the heat at the Demonstration Garden.

But, being in the garden with those young folks has helped me better appreciate all of the work that has been done in the past months by our Master Gardeners. To all of you who have dug and planted and watered and weeded and fed and tended to all that it takes to keep a garden growing, my sincere thanks and appreciation for a job well done.

The garden at Main and University is a long-range project. But due to the interest of Master Gardeners, the City of Nacogdoches, and countless others the work is way ahead of projected time frames.

Of course, that doesn't mean any of the work is finished or should stop. It just means that there are more opportunities coming our way. And as the garden grows, so does the need for continual maintenance. We all know that there never was nor never will be a garden that left unattended, thrives and flourishes.

So, I encourage each of you to take some time, as much as you can spare, and spend it in the Demonstration

Garden. Pull a few weeds, add some water or just enjoy the sights and sounds of growing plants and fresh earth.

Until the next issue, happy gardening and I hope you too have a rainy day to enjoy!

*Lynn Teague*

Editor

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