

# The Green Thumb



## Newsletter of the Nacogdoches Master Gardener Association

Fall 2011



Hummingbird at rest in the Butterfly Garden

### Presidential Ponderings

*Jo Ann Carter*

Well, it looks like summer may finally be winding down and none too soon. Everyone is discussing the record breaking heat and drought that is destroying the Texas agriculture industry this summer. I know I'm just a youngster, but the extreme weather has taken its toll on me this year. But, I know with cooler weather and maybe some much needed showers on the horizon, we'll be okay. It's a great thing that gardeners are such optimists!

We have all heard about water wise and xeriscape gardening; now is the perfect time to set an example for the community and put all our knowledge to use. I know

that there are some things in my yard that are gone and I won't be trying to grow them again - more cacti and succulents for me. For those of you struggling with what to plant, look around and see what's doing well in the Master Gardeners' demonstration garden (e.g. Turk's cap, grasses, vitex and several other perennials). Go to the SFA fall plant sale on October 1<sup>st</sup> and look for water wise plants. Greg has new plant varieties in addition to the natives that are holding up well this summer. I know that it will get better outside and I'm looking forward to being outside this fall. I hope you are too. Hang tough and good gardening to you.



For more information on xeriscaping and Water Wise plants visit:

Xeriscaping from TAMU <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/xeriscape/xeriscape.html>

What is a Water Wise Landscape from TAMU <http://urbanlandscapeguide.tamu.edu/waterwise.html>

Water Wise Landscaping from landscape Texas <http://www.landscapetexas.org/irrigation.html>

*"In the garden of your soul, plant kindness and simplicity." ~Unknown*

*Contributed by: Frances Lastracco*

## September in the Demonstration Garden



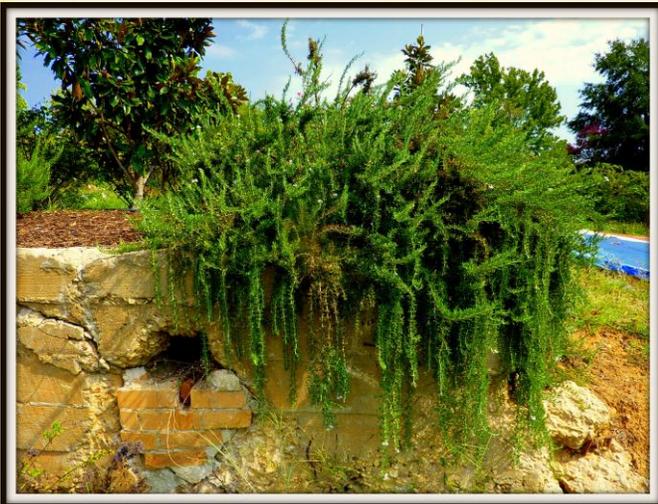
“Summer 2011, Good to the Last Drop”  
~Richard Galan



Master Gardeners attending “1861 at Nacogdoches University” in support of Donna Christopher and the preservation of local history and culture

If you have a minute, then check out “You Bet Your Garden” online at <http://www.whyy.org/91FM/ybyg/> or on Red River Radio (88.9) Saturdays at 6 am.

**From the Desk of Your  
Extension Agent: Crispin  
Skinner**



Herbs in the Demonstration Garden

**Garden Task**



Cut back perennial herbs to encourage well branched growth next year. A plant or two of parsley taken from the garden will do well in a sunny window. Chives, sage and thyme will also do well. To save caladium tubers, dig them up late this month, allow them to dry completely and store them in vermiculite or similar material. It is also time to prune damaged or diseased branches from shrubs and trees in late fall or early winter. Dispose of debris to minimize disease carryover to spring. Rake regularly and begin compost piles. Clean up around perennials, as well as, dispose of leaves and

stems on the ground which can harbor disease or provide hiding places for pests. Mulch plants to protect roots and conserve moisture. Plant a cover crop of legumes in used sections of the flower and landscape vegetable garden. In early spring, till under to provide extra nitrogen to new crops. Fall is the best time for planting trees and shrubs. Nurseries have a good selection now. Consider buying some for the fall color they will provide or for the interest the bark or shape may bring to the winter landscape

**Lawn Care**

St. Augustine, Bermuda and centipede lawns should be fertilized no later than the first week of October if you have not already made your fall application. Use a 3-1-2 or similar ratio. Lawns are not growing quite so fast now, but keep up with the mowing. Continue mowing at the same height, and do not remove more than 1/3 of the length of the grass blades to prevent stress. If St. Augustine or Bermuda grass does not seem to be growing well, it could be the pH is too low. Fall is a good time to add lime if the soil is acidic. Get a soil test done to determine the soil pH and add lime if pH is below 5.7. Centipede lawns usually do not need liming since centipede tolerates moderately acidic soils. Perennial and annual ryegrass can be sown now to cover bare soils to protect from erosion.

More on East Texas Gardening  
October-

<http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/homegardens/Monthly/oct.html>

November -

<http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/homegardens/Monthly/nov.html>

December -

<http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/homegardens/Monthly/dec.html>

## Member Spotlight

### *Donna Christopher*

Master Gardener and Keeper of the Historic Gardens at the Old University Building



We have a treasure in our town that many residents don't know about. It's the Old Nacogdoches University Building chartered under the Republic of Texas and opened in 1859. Today, NISD has ownership of the building and land; however, the Nacogdoches Federation of Women's clubs (formed in the 1950s to save the building from destruction) serves as trustee of the building, responsible for its care and use.

Currently, I serve as 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President (Finance) and head the Landscaping/ Courtyard Committee. The gardens are well ordered and kept in the style of formal 19<sup>th</sup> century gardens with period-appropriate plants. The roses are known as "Old Garden Roses" (before 1867). Others of these roses were in cultivation prior to 1890. At the southeast corner of the courtyard is Old Blush or Parson's Pink which was the first China Rose in America. It was introduced in 1752. Probably the most unusual is the Green Rose (introduced before

1854 located near the south entrance. As the name indicates, it produces green roses – not particularly pretty, just different.

Did you know that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the "Language of Flowers" was so popular that a conversation between lovers could take place without a single word being used? Each flower, color, and number had a specific meaning. Red roses signify love and respect. Even the shade of a color had a meaning: cardinal red –sublime desire, while fiery red –flames of passion. Some meanings continue today. White roses symbolize security and happiness and are used for weddings. Red and White roses in a bouquet together mean unity. Even the number of roses in a bouquet, the bend of a rose in an arrangement, the position of the bow, and how one wears roses have something to say. If worn over the heart –love, in the hair –caution, or worn in cleavage – friendship or remembrance. Now, we are able to add to our list of "other languages spoken". What a gift!

More on the language of flowers:  
The Language of Flowers, By George Routledge and Sons, 1884 (e-book) -

[http://books.google.com/books?id=8MITAAAAQAAJ&source=gbs\\_book\\_similarbooks](http://books.google.com/books?id=8MITAAAAQAAJ&source=gbs_book_similarbooks)

The Language of Flowers -

<http://www.thelanguageofflowers.com/>



A white rose for happiness.

## Hey, pal, can you spare a glass of water?

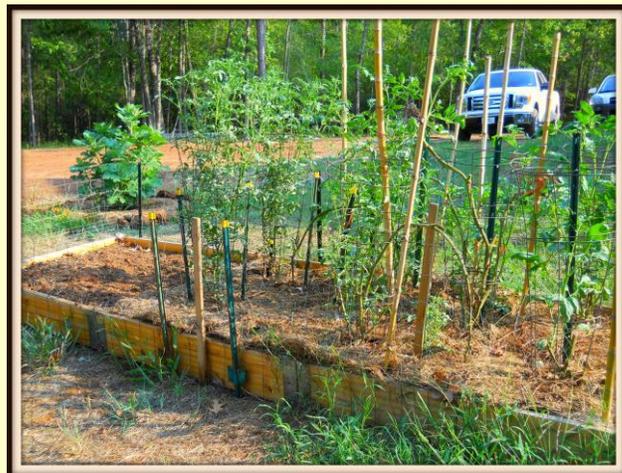
~John Makow

Having lived most of my life in grow zones four and five, the longest-lasting drought I saw was when we did not have rain for a couple of months, and the lawns went dormant. This year's East Texas drought has taught me a big lesson . . . actually lots of big lessons.

If you enjoy watching nature like I do, it's amazing the things you learn. You can read all the books that you want, but nothing will top your own personal observations. Mother Nature is indeed an awesome lady! Even creatures that need a bare minimum of moisture to survive are looking in the most unusual places for a drink. I watched a snake crawl on top of a container that I use to wash my dog's paws in order to quench his thirst. While watering some of my plants (those that are still alive), I observed a little green lizard jump off a leaf and start licking the drops of water that were clinging to the plant. But the best one I saw was when another lizard crawled up on the hummingbird feeder and tried to lick the moisture that was condensed on the inside of the glass. Now that's thirsty!

As bad as this year has been, I have observed a few positive things. I have not found any powdery mildew on my plants nor have I found any branches cut down by the twig girdler. Also, no mosquito bites! But what is more amazing than that is that I have tomatoes growing. This particular variety is an heirloom tomato called "Wapsipinicon Peach." I got the seeds from my sister in Chicago. The September/October issue of Texas Gardener has an article that mentions this variety. It will grow and set fruit in temperatures above 100 degrees.

The fruit looks like a peach and almost tastes like one. I was able to save some seeds for next year. For those interested, I might be persuaded to part with some.



Bent and buried tomato plant branches

To get a second crop, what I did was to gently bend and bury a branch from the parent plant with only about three to four inches of the top of the buried branch showing. I removed all the leaves and stems from the part I buried. Then I fertilized the parent plant and watered it well. But the most important thing I did was to **MULCH!** The mulch I used was old hay, and I made sure that it was at least four inches thick. I did this the first week in August. Now the tomatoes are over four feet tall, blooming, and setting fruit. Some of the green tomatoes are about the size of a quarter. Even though the new plant has its own roots now, I did not separate it from the parent plant. I keep watering both of them, and the parent plant is sprouting side shoots. So my garden is proving that things **can** be grown even in the middle of the worst sustained drought we've seen in East Texas as long as you plan carefully and provide at least minimal WATER. I am having success with other plants, but that is for the next newsletter.

## John Makow on Fracking

(Excerpt from his article "Hey, pal, can you spare a glass of water?") Now, let me ask you this: how is it that creatures most people would kill on sight have a better understanding about the importance of water than us humans? The most flagrant examples of water waste I've seen here in East Texas are the large ponds that have been built to hold water used for "fracking" rock to extract natural gas. I always have wondered how many millions of gallons of water get injected into the ground while the cattle are dying of thirst. I fully support the "drill, baby, drill" idea, but there are those who view oil and gas wells as some kind of a deity. Why don't we take a break and wait till our lakes and rivers are full again before we resume the drilling? Our aquifers are approaching critical stages. Does that mean we will be importing our drinking water along with our oil? Sorry, but I had to get that off my chest.



From the editor

Interested in the pros and cons of fracking? NPR ran a great story September 20, 2011 on the issues enveloping fracking and spoke with Pulitzer Prize winning author Daniel Yergin about his new book *The Quest: Energy, Security and the remaking of the Modern World*.

<http://www.npr.org/2011/09/20/140606249/daniel-yergin-examines-americas-quest-for-energy>

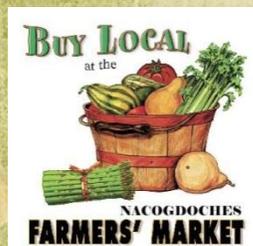


### Stuffed Jalapeño Peppers

~Anita Kite

22-24 jalapeno peppers  
1 pound Jimmy Dean sausage  
1-8 ounce package cream cheese, softened  
1 cup shredded parmesan cheese

Cut the stems and ends off the peppers. Cut in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Wash, pat dry with paper towels, and set aside. Fry sausage until well done; drain, place on paper towels and pat dry. Combine dried sausage, softened cream cheese, and parmesan cheese together until well mixed. Fill the jalapeno pepper halves. Spray a cookie sheet with non-stick spray and bake in a preheated 425° F. oven for about 22 minutes or until cream cheese mixture is bubbly. NOTE: Once the peppers are filled, they can be frozen. Transfer them directly from the freezer to the preheated oven to bake when you need a quick appetizer for unexpected guests or if you want to have the work done ahead of a party.



Visit Wednesdays & Saturdays  
At West Main & Pearl Street  
<http://www.farmermktnac.blogspot.com/>

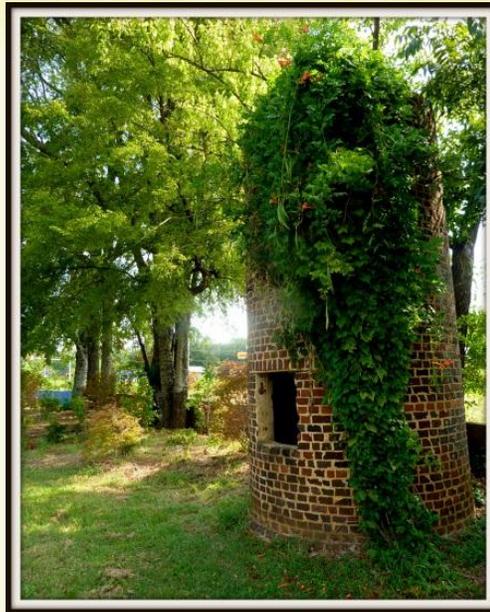
## Demonstration Garden Archaeology

~Victor Galan, Deep East TX  
Archaeological Consultants

In 2004, DETAC conducted an archaeological survey for what is now the Master Gardener's Demonstration Garden. Historic research found that the demonstration garden was initially used as a residence, followed by a park (Aqua Vita) and then heavily modified in the 1960s with the construction of a chicken processing plant. Despite the modern disturbance, the remains of one elevated water well structure (locally called the "Silo") from the Aqua Vita park was found on the property.

The historic resources were compiled into a general story of Aqua Vitae Park published in the OCT 25, 1992 issue of the Daily Sentinel. The newspaper story describes how "Uncle" Charlie Bird sold his property to Robert Lindsey and June Harris in 1909. Before the sale Mr. Bird sold water from his well for medicinal purposes. Robert and June marketed the water as Aqua Vitae (water of life). The land was cleared of Charlie Birds' house, leveled and gated. Two wells were erected with pavilions and pumps. The park was opened with much fanfare on Monday April 5, 1909. Water of life was sold at 10 cents for half a gallon. The property was roughly 14 acres, approximately 700 x 870 feet east of and adjacent to LaNanna Creek. "Vestiges of this privately owned public park still remained at the site..." until the 1930s (Hayter 1927).

This description of the origins and history Aqua Vitae Park is generally accurate. The 1983 (Johnson) SFA Oral history program interviewed Ruth Fouts Pochmann who described Aqua Vita Park with two elevated bandstands and as a place several families would meet to pick-nick. Adults would visit and the children would play under the bandstands around the wells. Well No. 1 was enlarged to 8 feet in diameter and lined with



The "silo" at the Demo Garden

cement; new pumps and a bottling apparatus were installed September 11, 1909. A large pavilion was erected over well No. 1 and a pump was added. Well No. 2 was dug close by.

What is untold in the Daily Sentinel story is the reason the park closed. Robert Lindsey and June Harris wanted to market the park as a summer attraction and utilize the Railroad to bring in tourists from Houston. Without city support, the investors moved their operation to Houston and continued to bottle water from the park and ship it to Houston for sale. The park closed March 1910 and Robert Lindsey became sole proprietor in 1911. He eventually turned the property over to the city and a local club took responsibility for the property with the goal of getting the park accredited. A February 28, 1927 letter from Mr. S.B. Hayter, representing the club, discusses the renovations of the property and the failure to acquire A1 status by the state as a park because of the absence of public toilets. With the Club's inability to secure the public facilities, they returned the property to the city with "houses etc..."

Hayter, S.B.

1927 Letter to the City of Nacogdoches. Hayter collection located in the East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University. Nacogdoches Texas.

Johnson, B.H.

1983 Stephen F. Austin State University Oral History Program, Nacogdoches History Project. Oral History Interview with Ruth Fouts Pochmann, 14 July 1983.

## More Member News...

### Master Gardener Fundraiser ~Gwendolyn Jeffers



I have set up an account at Top Drawer (Upscale Resale Consignment shop) at 321 East Main Street, next to Glass Castles, downtown Nacogdoches for the Nacogdoches County Master Gardeners. We can take our used clothing, shoes, belts, decorations, small furniture, knick knacks, etc. there and, as consignor, we will receive 40% of the selling price of each item as commission.

If you like to donate items to the Women's Shelter, Good Will etc... consider donating half, and consigning half to Top Drawer. Please contact Top Drawer (936-462-1311) about their requirements for items to be donated.

### History "Snapshot" of the Nacogdoches County Master Gardener Association

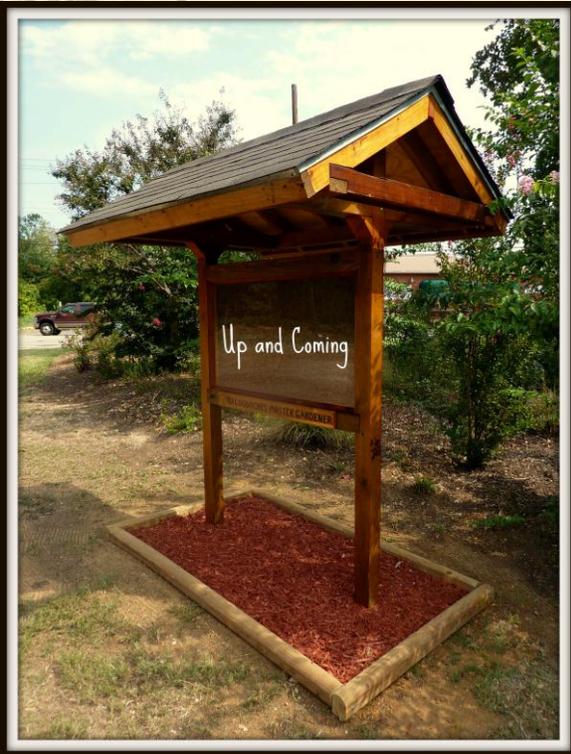
~Bill Teague

The overall program started in Washington State in the early 70's. Texas started its program in Montgomery County (north of Houston's Harris County) in 1979 and the Nacogdoches County program started in 1995; we're really still a youngster at sixteen years old. In 2009 (most current statistics available), Texas had 88 programs thru which 6,402 volunteers gave 454,036 hours which equates to 227 FTE's with an economic value of \$9 million.....pretty impressive!!

In 2009, Nacogdoches County offered 35 Certified MG's who donated 5,220 hours equating to \$105,705. We enjoyed our first 'Summer Program' with NISD students, had our annual plant sale in May, reached an average of 70 people per month at our 'Lunch 'N Learn' programs and earned a "Landscape Leadership Award" from *Keep Nacogdoches Beautiful* for our Demonstration Garden.

Nacogdoches County has produced 57 certified MG's; something we can all be proud of but should produce more. In 2009, Texas boasted of 6,393 MG's who donated 500,144 hours for a \$10 million economic impact. That's the equivalent of 260 FTE's! These MG's took 32,557 phone calls, supported 273 'youth gardens (a 23% increase over 2008) and made 2,614 presentations that reached 153,847 people.

If you have a minute, then check out "Get it Growing" on Red River Radio (88.9) at 7:19 Monday – Thursday [http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/communications/news/get\\_it\\_growing/](http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/communications/news/get_it_growing/)



New Kiosk at the Demonstration Garden

OCT 1 – SFA Plant Sale

Theresa and Les Reeves Lecture Series (SFASU)/ Third Thursday of the month

OCT 20 – Jim Kamas, *Overcoming Pierce's Disease, A New Lease on Life for Growing Grapes in the Gulf Coast*

NOV 17 - Keith Johansson, *Metro Maples, Fort Worth – A Maple for Every Spot – the abridged version*

DEC 8 – Dr. Dave Creech– *SFA Gardens and critical mass – understanding the physics of Nacogdoches Naturally*

Fall Specialist Training & Events (TMGA) \***Huge List!**

<http://txmg.org/files/2011tmgaSept.pdf>

## Lunch N Learn

Second Thursday of each month  
12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.  
Courthouse Annex, 203 West Main.

October 13	Jeff Abt
November 10	Trey Anderson
December 8	Kimberly Wright

Around East Texas

**Pineywoods Herb Farm** (Kennard, TX <http://www.pineywoodsherbfarm.com/index.htm>) Saturday, October 15th 9:00 a.m. – (FREE Workshop) “Planting For Extreme Weather Conditions”

**1st Tuesday in the Garden Lecture Series at the IDEA Garden located in the Tyler Rose Garden (12:00)**

OCT 4 - Anne Brown & Bibi Blonn, *Guided Tour of the Heritage Garden*

NOV 1 – Herb Course, *Aristocratic Camellias & Sasanquas*

Great List of more gardening events from the Smith County Master Gardeners - <http://scmg.tamu.edu/coming-events/>



## Editor's Note

Thanks to all of you who forwarded me ideas and content. You helped make this a rich addition of our newsletter. Keep on writing and collecting ideas! Rachel

*Garden Tip: If you are having trouble with your San Augustine grass drying in patches, try spreading a ½ inch layer of peat moss over the lawn. It can really help!*

~Teena Perkins