



<https://txmg.org/smith/>

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**The next SCMG Association
meeting is
Thursday, August 7, 2025
At 10:00 AM at
Tyler Rose Center**

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What's Up?

Possibilities! That's what's up!

If I learned anything from my recently departed partner, Joe, it's that when you encounter a breakdown, look for the *possibilities*. At one point in his life, he traveled the world as a project consultant for oil companies, such as BP. It was his job to work with those involved when a setback or breakdown threatened timelines and completion dates, which could cost the companies millions of dollars. He would get those people onboard by helping them see the *possibilities* rather than focusing on negative aspects of the task.



So it seems that Smith County Master Gardeners have encountered a breakdown. By that I mean the prospect of not maintaining our beloved Botanical Gardens beginning next year. And that's a big deal, given that many of you have worked in the same spot for years. So long, in fact, that it has become a part of your identity. And the thought of no longer doing that leaves a big hole in you that you aren't sure how to fill. Breakdown big time. But is there a chance that we don't have to remain stuck there? Perhaps, if you are willing to consider the *possibilities*.

One thing I forgot to mention. It wasn't Joe's responsibility to come up with a long list of *possibilities* for the client's project. He was just the facilitator. It was the Project Managers and Foremen, those overseers who were accountable for getting the job done, that brainstormed to come up with the *possibilities* that would enable the crew to transcend the breakdown.

Enter the PMs, Foremen, and overseers, a.k.a. Smith County Master Gardeners. I wish I had Joe here to coach me, as he often did. But even without a facilitator, I am confident and optimistic that we can work together to come up with *possibilities* to afford us the opportunities we need in order to remain the time-honored group that we have become.

Possibilities. I challenge you to think on it.

Gary Gardner



Mission, Mandates, and Meaning

Greg Grant

There is a plethora of conversation right now about what we are doing, what we are going to be doing, and what we should be doing. Now is a great time for internal reflection about our mission and future direction. Since the Texas Master Gardeners are a volunteer program within the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service it's important that everything we do line up with the missions that sit above us, somewhat like Russian nesting dolls. Please read the following closely and carefully so we are comfortable with our direction.

Texas A&M Mission Statement:

Texas A&M University is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication, and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Mission Statement:

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service works daily to make Texas better by providing innovative solutions at the intersection of agriculture, natural resources, youth and health, thereby improving the well-being of individuals, families, businesses and communities through education and service.

Extension Master Gardener National Mission Statement:

Extension Master Gardener programs educate people, engaging them in learning to use unbiased, research-based horticulture and gardening practices through a network of trained volunteers directed and supported by land-grant university faculty and staff.

The Mission of the Texas Master Gardener Program:

The Extension Master Gardener Program is a volunteer development program offered by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and is designed to increase the availability of unbiased, research-based horticultural information to the residential public and to assist with the mission of Extension. The mission of the Extension Master Gardener Program is to provide quality and relevant horticulture education to the people of Texas.

District 5 Extension Program Planning Guidelines for In-Depth Programs

Innovation – Extension educators will use a new approach with a new audience during the year.

Visibility – Programs and activities will be planned to increase agency visibility.

Technology – In-Depth programs will incorporate some use of technology in educational delivery

Partnerships – Strategic partnerships will strengthen and bring additional resources to programs.

Volunteers – All programs will be planned with significant strategies to mobilize volunteers.

Mandates for county agents:

Each agent will have at least two In-Depth plans, and additional outreach plans to address county needs. (*My In-Depth programs are the Smith County Master Gardeners and the Earth-Kind Water Plan. My outreach plan is "General Horticulture."*)

In-Depth programs will include a series of educational events and a variety of educational methods targeted to a specific issue and a specific audience. These programs will lead to strong participant outcomes, measured by specific evaluation tools.

In-Depth programs will be guided by a planning group that will meet at least four times a year and be actively engaged in the planning, marketing, implementation, evaluation, and interpretation programs.

During program planning group meetings, specialists or other technical experts will provide subject matter updates and training for committee members. Agents will collaborate with specialists and involve them in the early stages of program development.

Multi-county programs will be guided by planning groups that include volunteer representation from the counties involved.

Agents will plan for interpretation – target audience will include elected officials, stakeholders, planning group members, partners, other Extension volunteer groups, and the general public.

I am actively working on my plan of work for next year (September 2025 through August 2026) which is due now for review by my bosses who I am meeting with this week.

In addition, if you haven't watched the YouTube video I showed where then Brazos County Horticulturist Skip Richter spoke at the state meeting on "When Programs are on Target, Amazing Things Happen" please do so. I would even suggest watching it again if you have already saw it. His experience with four different Master Gardener programs (Montgomery, Travis, Harris, and Brazos) gives him a unique, in-depth perspective.

REPORT FROM THE TBC

IDEA Garden



The **Superstar** section has two recent additions, which are themselves relatively recent additions to the growing list of Texas Superstars. Rock rose joined the list in 2021 and Gregg's blue mistflower joined in 2024. **Both are Texas natives.**

Rock rose (*Pavonia lasiopetala*) has a number of other common names, among them Texas mallow, Texas pavonia, Wright pavonia, rose mallow, rose pavonia, and las rosas de San Juan. It is a small shrub in Zones 9-13, a herbaceous perennial in Zones 7-8, and a suitable container plant in colder climates.

Its claim to fame is that it tolerates heat, drought, and sun and keeps on blooming from April to November. The hot pink flowers look like miniature hibiscus blooms and add a splash of color to any Texas landscape. The medium to dark green, velvety leaves contrast nicely. The small, 2-4 feet high, shrub is site responsive, meaning it may not grow as large in our home landscape as it does in the IDEA garden's fertile growing conditions. It tolerates most soil types, if well drained, even rocky and high pH. Hence, it is suitable for xeriscapes and rock gardens. It attracts hummingbirds, butterflies, and other pollinators. Pruning is not necessary but can help maintain shape and encourage more blooms. It has few pests or diseases. As one author put it, its "only drawback is the lack of color variety". So, what's not to like?

Gregg's blue mistflower (*Conoclinium dissectum*, formerly *Eupatorium greggii*) also has a number of other common names, e.g., palmleaf thoroughwort and Texas ageratum. It prefers full sun to mostly sunny locations, is adapted to many well-drained soil types, and is hardy in Zones 7-9. Its small, sky blue, baby blue or lavender blue flowers cluster together to form puffy, cushion-like flower heads that appear from late April to mid November. The plant grows 12-18 inches tall and 12-24 inches wide. Water requirements are low to medium, although modest irrigation in summer heat improves growth and flowering. It is extremely low maintenance.

Its primary claim to fame is that since it is a magnet for late-season butterflies, especially queens and migrating monarchs, it belongs in any butterfly garden. It also adds a pop of color when many other plants have quit flowering. So, again, what's not to like?

Both rock rose and Gregg's blue mistflower are in the south end of the Superstar section. If you aren't already familiar with them, you can check them out for possible inclusion in your home garden.

Martha Fowler



REPORT FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING JUNE 2025

The following topics were discussed:

- Approval of May meetings and Treasurers Report reviewed which are placed in VMS for member review.
- Lifetime Member Award review by Board Subcommittee with proposed revisions for eligibility requirements. Application forms, and policy changes to sync up within ByLaws. Changes were passed by Board and Will go to next Member meeting for vote.
- Google WorkSpace for NonProfits- Board received a review of the new platform by invited guest, Terri Gerber. It is currently a live working website and can be reviewed by all members by going to its site name: **txmgsc.org**.
- Members should refer to Grapevine article submitted by Development Committee for June for more information.
- Three new laptops have arrived and are available.
- Association Office Nominee Guidelines: committee to be appointed in conjunction with a review of Bylaws and Policy by Mary Beth McCown-2025 Nominating Committee Chairperson.
- Home Garden Tour reviewed by Laurie Graham- successful HGT for 2025 with increase in tickets sold over 2024. Home selection for 2026 is in progress and close to completion with new committee co-chairs.



Gail Bean, Past President/Parliamentarian

VMS Update

We are now **half way through the calendar year** and realistically more than half way through the gardening year. We have 4 more monthly meetings that have a CE, and only one more large project, B2B. After B2B, volunteer hours will have to come mostly from garden work and a limited number of Help Desk slots. As a note, working the Help Desk requires prior training.

So with that said, we have 4 from Class 31, and 33 other Certified MGs who have less than half of their volunteer hours and/or CEs recorded in VMS. We know that some of these MGs have hours and CEs, they just haven't been inputting them in VMS. And we also know that some of our MGs are having health and family issues that make it difficult to participate. But the bottom line is that by December 31, Class 31 must have 9 CEs and 18 volunteer hours in VMS to be recertified, and other certified MGs must have 12 CEs and 24 volunteer hours in VMS to be recertified. We occasionally get asked if it's possible to transfer hours/CEs to someone else. The answer is no, each person must do their own work.

If you are behind at this point in the year, it's important to get a plan. It can be very hard to make up a lot of hours and CEs in a short amount of time. The opportunities just don't exist.

If you are having issues getting in your requirements, please get with Gary Gardener grgardener53@gmail.com, Belinda Kromer kromerb@aol.com or Mary Hamlin mhamlin@flash.net. We want to help where we can, but you have to plan on how you're going to get mandated requirements.

And as a plea, PLEASE get your data into VMS!!

Mary Hamlin

Seed Bank Update



To all you Pocket Prairie folks— now is the time to start collecting (especially native) seeds, if you haven't already! Many winter perennials are done. Poppies, Larkspur, and Coreopsis are done! Spotted Beebalm and other spring bloomers are getting there! We would love to have any extras that you collect!

Mary Jo Madden

PR

Tyler Morning Telegraph (Weekend only)

July 6 – East Texas Tomatoes – **Cheri Lundin**

July 13 – Succulents for Beginners – **Vickie Harper**

July 20 – Is it a Christmas Cactus or Is It? – **Julie O'Brien**

July 27 – Mulching - SCMG

Tyler Morning Telegraph under Lifestyles at <https://www.tylerpaper.com>.



Tyler Today – Reminder!

2025 SCMG “Nature Breathes Life Into the Human Spirit” by **Katy Barone**.

This is a wonderful article – loved it, thank you Katy for submitting.

The June/July issue is on the racks or you can check it out online at:

<https://www.tylertodaymagazine.com/inside-this-issue/> .

Archived issues available on their website as well.

PUBLICITY PITCH

Committee/project leaders – when you have ANY KIND of events or projects we really need to get the word out – PLEASE let me know as soon as possible so we can get that information out into the universe! We can post it on so many community calendars, newsletters, websites and Facebook to help publicize your event/project. We can also do press releases to let the media know of the event/project. Keep me in the know and I'll get it out there.

lynnmac@suddenlink.net or 903-954-0181.

Lynn McGinnis

Social Media



We're Growing, Thanks to you!

Over the past month, we saw a 20% Increase in views on our posts. That means more people are discovering our content, our mission to educate, and the work happening within our community. Even better? Interactions were up by 15%.

Every time you like, comment, or hit that share button, you're helping us reach a broader audience and bring more people into the conversation.

Our top posts were:

- #1 It's Time to Care for Azaleas - **Greg Grant**
June 2nd - 9,118 People
- #2 If your house is a disaster... just walk away. - Funny Friday
June 6th - 4,809 People
- #3 And to my grandchild, I leave my cell phone plant pics - Funny Friday
May 30th - 4,403 People

Stephanie Osborn

From Bulbs To Blooms



Exciting news! Due to popular demand, we are bringing back the T-shirt! We need your help to design it so we are having a slogan contest to find a cute slogan for the front of the shirt (we will advertise the bulb sale on the back). Put your imaginations to work to think up a cute or funny slogan and send to me by August 3rd and we will have all members vote at the August membership meeting for the best slogan. The winner will get a free t-shirt! Orders for t-shirt purchases will be taken later in August with the goal of having the t-shirts delivered in time for our September meeting. You may submit up to 3 ideas. I can't wait to see what all you humorous and/or artistic Master Gardeners come up with! You can email me at julieo-brien17@icloud.com or text me at 903-780-3913.

Thank you to all who participated in the Member Only Bulb Presale. Sales went up this year thanks to the "staff recommendations" from **Lenka, Brenda** and **Anne**. Thank you gals!

Bulbs have been purchased from Brent and Becky's and Colorblends and should arrive by October 1, which is when we will start our serious work in preparation for SCMGA's biggest fundraiser and educational event on October 25—the Bulbs to Bloom Conference and Sale. If you haven't already marked your calendars, take a second to do so now as we will be needing everyone's help!

Do you have any bulbs to donate this year? Many of our local bulbs are blooming now including white spider lilies, canna lilies, daylilies, voodoo lilies, rain lilies, crocosmia, and crinum; and, Philippine lilies and gingers will be blooming soon. If you have any to share, please let **Teresa Bristow** or me know. Just mark where they are and we will send our professional bulb acquisition crew to dig them a few weeks before the sale if you need help digging help. If you have any jonquils, daffodils or other Narcissus, they are dormant currently so they can be dug now and we will be happy to store them in the bulb room. We just need to make sure that they have been approved by Greg in the past. If not, we will need a picture of the bloom, a picture of the plant, and some information about where you got them (see Greg's write up in last month's Grapevine).

We are still looking for sponsors for the Conference and Sale. If you have a contact person with a business or organization that might be interested in donating money in exchange for recognition, please let **Morgan Wood** or me know.

And lastly, we are looking for garden-themed artwork for this year's sale. If you have any items or talent to donate, or small frames, please contact **Neysa Mueller**. Stay cool!

Julie O'Brien

Help Desk Update (1)

What's wrong with my lawn? What's this bug, is it bad? Can you tell me what this is and how to kill it? I saw a pink rose over at the Tyler Rose Center, and you tell me which it is and where I can buy one? Should I plant an Eastern Redbud or a Texas Redbud? I want to be a Master Gardener, what do I do? I grew great plums in Alabama, I don't know the variety, but they were so good! Do they grow well here?

I'm not kidding, we got these questions, among others, within the last few weeks! Are you up to the challenge of answering them?

Education Dispatch

This was a very busy month. We started off on May 31st with a talk at the Troup Library on succulents with just a few faithful folks.

June 7th we went to the Fire and Nature Festival, where we spoke with 66 people and played a game with all the kids doing the Nature Bingo to help them identify native flowers. We were there with AgriLife agent **Zach Schaeffer** from Overton and we think we will be invited back next year. I want to shout out **Holly Pritchett** for being such a good sport and great help on short notice in 100 degree heat.

June 12th we went to the Whitehouse Library and did Flora and Fauna for 22 kids and parents, and then made pinecone bird feeders. It was only a little messy, (wink, wink) but the library staff was very supportive and we all had a fun time. **Kim Smith** kept everyone in paper towels and suet. Thank you soo much for all your help Kimberly.

June 20th we went over to the Lindale Library as an pinch hitter fill in for an AgriLife agent who had to cancel. While we didn't know much about his subject, trees, we did a great session on seeds where Greg's sword bean (Jack and the Beanstalk bean) and a coconut were the stars of the show. We got to read a story on gardening, have a lesson on seeds and show and tell, and then we acted out being a seed and growing. There are many young thespians in Lindale who grew into to beautiful flowers.

The next day we went to Keep Tyler Beautiful's Bee Day at Goodman where we set up two tables - one for information and one for the children, and a few adults, to make pollinator seed bombs. It is fun for everyone to play in the mud. I want to thank **Belinda Kromer, Becky Wade, Sharon Walhood, Anthe Caruso, Lois Kelly**, (who did double duty that day, what an amazing lady.) **Joyce Napolitano**, and **Betty Conejo** for helping and being such enthusiastic educators for 105 folks!

Finally we wrapped up the month on the 25th back at the Lindale Library presenting a Fairy Garden class to 17 children and adults where we planted and decorated little fairy gardens.

It was a busy month and we will enjoy a little 4th of July break, but it is very gratifying how much the community appreciates our outreach and educational offerings. Everyone is always so welcoming and kind everywhere we go.

Elizabeth Waldrop



Help Desk Update (2)

Here's the link to sign up for a shift! (PS—we are climate controlled!). If you haven't volunteered for a shift in a year or so, please consider signing up with an Experienced MG on your first shift.

[SCMGA: HelpDesk](#)

Mary Jo Madden

Overton Trials Report

It was a great day at Overton Thursday! Thank you to all of our volunteers who worked the event and our members who came out to help make this field trial day successful. We registered 220 participants at both the East Field and Demonstration Garden and container garden locations.

What happens now?

After the Trial Day, the plants will continue to grow and be evaluated through the summer heat conditions experienced in East Texas for further data collection.

Gail Bean



Goodman-LeGrande Project



Not complaining but the rain in June definitely made gardening days a little challenging! However, the amazing Goodman Garden team took full advantage of the wet muddy beds! Yep, weeding, removing unwanted aggressive liriopse, trimming a few azaleas and even planted a few new things June, Friday the 13th. Thanks to those die-hard, dedicated master gardeners who are okay with getting a little mud on their boots, gloves and even clothes, progress was amazing! There is always so much to do there due to the limited work-days, so working on a soggy day just had to happen.

The incredible team of two interns: **Larry McCarver** and **Terri Scamardo**, with the leadership of certified Master Gardeners: **Suzanne Taylor, Barbara Nelson, Heather Stephens, Marlyn Waddleton, GG Martin, Elizabeth Waldrop** and **Belinda Kromer** shaped up many of the beds for the Annual Bee Day held Saturday, June 21st. We even had the regular history lesson at the break

by our own 'Sallie Goodman LeGrande'. A big thank you to all those who worked!

Please join us in July on **Friday, July 11th at 8:30am!** We will try to focus on the shady areas. Bring your gardening tools, wear your gloves and be ready to work hard and have fun too!

(Remember if the gate isn't open when you get there, wait in the Salvation Army parking lot directly across from the gate.)

Belinda Kromer

July 2025

Smith County Master Gardeners

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 HRG/IDEA Garden Work-day 8:30 Calendar 1:00 Rm 116	2 Shade Garden workday 8:30	3	4 <i>Office Closed</i>	5 Shade Garden workday 8:30
6	7	8 HRG/IDEA Garden Work-day 8:30	9 Shade Garden workday 8:30	10 SFA Garden Lecture 7:00 PM	11 Goodman workday 8:30	
13	14	15 HRG/IDEA Garden Work-day 8:30	16 Shade Garden workday 8:30 Class 33 Orientation 10:00	17 Nature in the Garden 10:00—noon Rm 116 SCMGA BOD 1:30	18	19 Shade Garden workday 8:30
20	21	22 HRG/IDEA Garden Work-day 8:30	23 Shade Garden workday 8:30	24	25	26
27	28 <i>Grapevine deadline</i>	29 HRG/IDEA Garden Work-day 8:30	30 Shade Garden workday 8:30	31		