



GardenChatter



Fall / Winter 2008

Walker County Master Gardener Association

President's Message by Jean McClaren

I prepared the following article prior to our loss of Sandy. Sandy became a Master Gardener in 2005, and it's truly incredible what an impact she had on us and our program in such a short time. In looking over the article I find that if I think about Sandy while reading it, the article takes on even more meaning. I hope you all agree.

During the summer, I worked on a presentation for the Recycling Alliance of Texas, which I also presented at our August meeting. It's basically an account of how WCMGA and LEAF-PRO are tied together, and not only did working on this project clarify the LEAF-PRO program for me, it gave me the opportunity to review our WCMGA history. More importantly it made me think about what a Master Gardener truly is, and what Walker County Master Gardeners in particular have accomplished over the past seven years. Take a good look around our facility, and remember the bare bones pasture we started with in 2001. It is truly astounding!

Sometimes we forget what we, as Master Gardeners, are all about. First and foremost we are educators, getting the environmentally sound landscape practices message out to the residents of Walker and surrounding counties. We're paying back for the wonderful education we received in class, and we are doing an outstanding job! Billie Lee tells us we have participated in 44 programs and projects as of the end of July!!

There are so many MG's working hard behind the scenes to improve our program in ways most of us never see. Just a few of those individuals are being recognized in this issue of the Newsletter.

Being a great Master Gardener is not only volunteering your time in the greenhouse and demo garden, although the need there is tremendous, it's teaching and helping our county neighbors who are horticulturally challenged. It's coming out to our meetings and gatherings to enjoy each other's company and to hear about the wonderful things our group is doing. It's volunteering to help with an MG project. It's pulling together as a group and inspiring each other to get projects done. In order to survive and thrive, our Association needs each and every one of you to participate on a regular basis. Many of us travel and enjoy vacations and family gatherings during the hot summer months, but with the approaching cooler weather, I'm hopeful that you will recommit to the program and step up to help wherever help is needed. WCMGA NEEDS YOU!

Happy Gardening



**Every noble life leaves its fiber interwoven forever
in the work of the world. -- John Ruskin**

In Memory:

Walker County Master Gardeners lost two valued members this summer. On August 6, Jim Miller passed away in his sleep after a long battle with cancer.

Sandy Tycol was killed several weeks later when Hurricane Ike blew a tree into her home on September 13. More inside ...



Leafing thru...



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**When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced.
Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and
you rejoice.— Indian saying**

In Loving Memory

Saundra Lee Tykol , "**Sassy**," was born June 8, 1942, in San Mateo, Calif., to Howard and LaVaun Sloan, and left on Sept. 13, 2008, to tend the gardens in heaven. She is survived by her loving and devoted husband, George Robert Tykol; son, Matthew Tykol and wife Paula of Arkansas; daughter, Hettie Stein and husband Robert of Spring, Texas; four grandchildren, Lacey and Evan Tu, and Travis and Nathan Tykol; and sisters, Peggy Burch of Sunnyvale, Calif. and Hettie Sprague of Newport, Ken.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

Sandy has lived in Huntsville for the past 34 years and is well known for her community service to the Walker County Master Gardener's Association. She joined the program in January of 2005. Her enthusiasm and cheerful demeanor made an immediate and everlasting impact on the organization. She set a standard of commitment and dedication which served the program well during her presidency from Jan2007 to Dec2008.

Sassy was a true wife to George, recently celebrating their 47th wedding anniversary, and a loving, caring mother, grandmother, and friend to many who touched numerous lives with her giving ways. Sandy, in your life, was an eternal blessing.

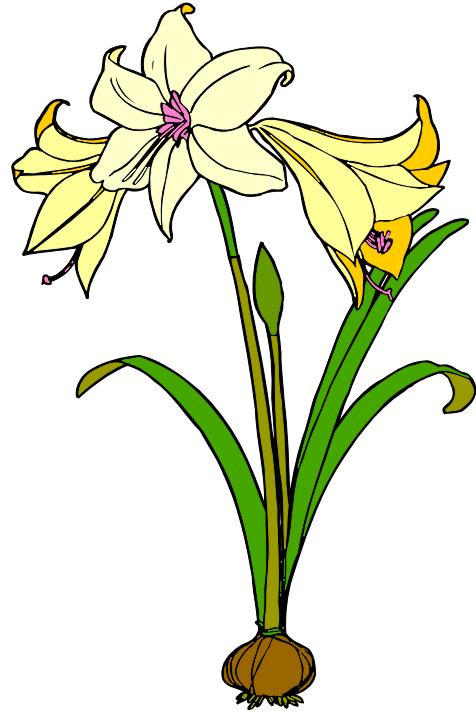
Visitation with the family was held on Saturday, Sept. 20, 2008 at the Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home and her life was celebrated with a Memorial Service on Sept. 27, 2008 at the First United Methodist Church with the Rev. Scott Dornbush officiating. Memorial donations may be made to The Walker County Master Gardener Association - "Sandy Tykol

*Roses love sunshine & violets love dew,
The angels in heaven know that I love you .*

Jim Miller was born in Nebraska on August 25, 1938, and after a long battle with cancer, died in his sleep at home in Huntsville on August 6, 2008. He was preceded in death by his wife, Julee, also a victim of cancer, in 2004. Jim is survived by his daughter, Lee Mary Miller and granddaughter Emma Giacomello, of Huntsville, and his son, Eric Stone Miller and daughter-in-law, Sarah Hart Miller, of Austin. As many of you know, Jim was the Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance at SHSU from 1976 until his retirement in 2004. Jim was well-known and respected throughout Texas for his teaching and promotion of Theatre Arts.

But Jim will be remembered by us as a lover of plants and a hard-working member of the Walker County Master Gardener Class of 2007. Before cancer incapacitated him, Jim spent many hours working in the greenhouse and demo gardens. Even after he could no longer work, he liked to visit the gardens whenever he could get someone to take him. He will be missed.

A memorial service for Jim was held on October 4, 2008 Sam Houston Funeral Home in Huntsville. Memorial donations may be made to the Jim and Julee Miller Theatre Scholarship Fund at the SHSU Department of Theatre and Dance, Box 2297, Huntsville, TX 77341-2297.



Hymn Of Promise

In the bulb there is a flower; in the
seed, an apple tree;
In cocoons, a hidden promise: butter-
flies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter
there's a spring that waits to be,
Unrevealed until its season, some-
thing God alone can see.

There's a song in every silence, seek-
ing word and melody;
There's a dawn in every darkness,
bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future;
what it holds, a mystery,
Unrevealed until its season, some-
thing God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning; in our
time, infinity;
In our doubt there is believing; in our
life, eternity,
In our death, a resurrection; at the
last, a victory,
Unrevealed until its season, some-
thing God alone can see.

IN CELEBRATION OF SANDY by Jean McClaren (as spoken at Sandy's Memorial)

Good things oft come in packages small,
Without any ribbons or bows;
But this little gift is special, you see – If planted, it blossoms and grows!
It's also been said that such simple things
We value the most, don't you know; So plant them yourself,
Or give them away – It still will be love that you sow. (Anonymous)



This poem reminds me in so many ways of Sandy, as she sowed the seeds of love and joy into our hearts every day of her extraordinary life.

Like so many of you here today, I first met Sandy when she signed up for Walker County Master Gardener classes in January 2005. At first, she was a little reluctant to sign up, but friends convinced her she would love it, and indeed she did. She got that Master Gardener volunteer spirit from day one, jumped in with both feet and never slowed down. She became so passionate about it that she convinced George to sign up in 2006 and together they became the gardening dynamic duo, fighting weeds and disorder, embracing the Master Gardener program, and devoting themselves to making our education center an incredible show-stopper.

I remember asking Sandy if she would consider becoming an officer of our organization, and ultimately its President in 2007, and her eyes got big and round, and she hesitated for a moment and then said, "I've never done anything like that before, but, maybe, yes, sure, I can do it". And do it she did as only Sandy could do. She used her cheerful grin, sunny personality, and her distinctive voice to persuade and motivate all of us to get out there and get involved and showed us by example how to get things done.

She wanted Master Gardeners to be recognized when we were out volunteering in our demonstration gardens and in our communities, so she urged us to adopt and wear our bright gold "sunflower" T-shirts, and so today we are wearing them and our white polo shirts proudly as a way to honor her memory and to show our love and respect for her enormous contribution and remarkable leadership.

She was not only a gardener extraordinaire, we soon discovered she was a talented artist and she created a wonderful work of art for us on a simple white cabinet located in our greenhouse, something we will always cherish. We eagerly looked forward to her creativity in teaching us about using simple things from our gardens and homes to fashion wonderful decorations for use during the holidays. She had such a knack for doing something truly different and unexpected.

If you had a question about what kind of plant was appropriate for attracting butterflies and birds, or perhaps you had a question about a particular plant or problem in your own garden, she had an answer for you. If someone were needed to put together an educational program, or to host a tour of our gardens she would help find that special someone, or do it herself. She was "The Little Engine That Could" and no project was too large or too small. Just this past spring, she rallied our gardeners into putting out extra effort into having our gardens look their very best for the tour of our facility by other Master Gardeners from across the State of Texas.

Sandy was a whirlwind and had more energy than ten of us put together, often spending three, and sometimes four or even five days a week, caring for our scores of plants. She was always the first one there at the garden and the last one to leave. I remember many times as I'm sure many of you did, wondering on the drive in to the greenhouse if we would get there before Sandy, and if we did, it was extremely rare.

Sandy always had a grin and a "Hi Honey" accompanied oftentimes with a heartfelt hug when you arrived. She cared deeply about every one of us and was a truthful and trustworthy friend. No matter if your day was good or bad she could always get you to smile and encouraged you to look on the bright side of any situation. Many of our gardeners tell me that she taught them so very much and I know that it wasn't just about horticulture. She also taught by example about treating each other with respect and looking for the best in each of us.

Sandy dedicated herself to our gardens and could be found repotting plants, or snipping off dead blooms, and always seemed to have a garden hose in her hand. She took additional classes and became a Propagation Specialist and loved to team up with other Master Gardeners to teach classes on how to propagate plants. The list of her achievements and activities goes on and on. She was never idle, and heaven forbid if she found you standing around without a job, for she would surely find one for you. You can count on Sandy being up in heaven today, gathering up all the other angels, shaking her finger and telling them "now we really have to get to work and get this garden in order."

Sandy's hands and heart touched each and every plant in our garden and greenhouse that she so loved. We will truly miss her unbelievable commitment and dedication.

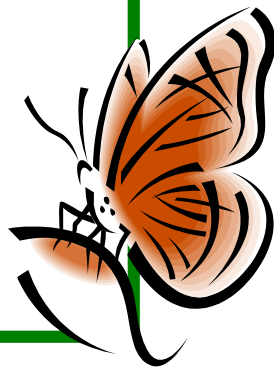
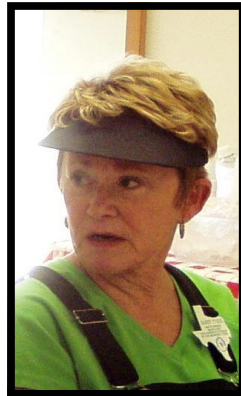
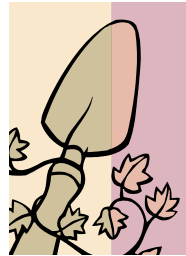
George, I know I speak for all our Master Gardeners when I make you this promise that our gardens will continue to be cared for and nurtured, and will grow and expand just as Sandy would have wanted.

We all loved and treasured Sandy and while we were not ready to have her taken from us so suddenly, we know we were very blessed to have her with us even for a short time. We miss her love and support terribly, but we are certain that as long as we have our gardens and greenhouse, we'll have Sandy right there beside us whispering encouragement, giving us advice on how to get it done, and helping us make it even more beautiful than it is today.



I've had the garden tidied up,
 As she would have me do.
 This little pal who couldn't stay
 To see the season through.
 The flowers were her dearest friends,
 The garden was her own,
 I've watched her work, but never knew
 The things that she had grown.
 Her catalogues keep coming, and
 Her garden magazines;
 I run across the queerest names,
 And study what they mean,
 I read them too, from end to end,
 And when the spring is here,
 I'll have a garden just like
 hers,
 As though my friend were
 near.

Albert H. Pedrick



GET READY, THEY ARE COMING!

BY MARIAN CZAJA

Texas winter birds are already moving south. Although some birds are residents year-round, in a short time “new” birds will be at your feeders. Fall migration is in progress. Changes in feeding strategies are needed. Birds that rely primarily on insects during the warm months often shift to rely on seeds or fruits during the cold months. Insects may still be a regular source of food, but feeders help birds greatly. Counting on native plants as “feeders” will suffice only if you have planned well in advance. Plenty of seed-bearing/fruit-bearing plants available and loaded with their produce—sunflowers, American Beauty berries, wild oats, many grasses, juniper berries, bayberries, viburnum berries, dogwood berries, pokeweed, grapes, apples, hawthorns and more—are needed to attract and keep beautiful birds. Water, too, is always necessary in any feeding site.

Feeders of various designs are often used in winter. Tube feeders, ground platform feeders, suet feeders, and tray feeders should be arranged in a cluster so larger seeds, smaller seeds and suet can be offered. Seeds will be offered at different levels using clusters so that ground feeders such as Mourning dove, Dark-eye juncos and various sparrows can get their fill. Sunflower seeds and millet, red and/or white are often mixed with corn to produce a “Wild Bird Seed” that can be used in all the feeders. Cracked corn and sorghum attract House sparrows and Starlings so it might be wise to avoid these. Most birds prefer white millet. Red millet is often pulled out and dumped on the ground. Birds with the larger bills such as Northern cardinals, House sparrows, Blue jay, and House finches can crack the heavy coat of sunflower seeds. Smaller birds having a short sturdy bill that can pound on these seeds are tufted titmice, Carolina chickadees, and White-breasted, Red-breasted, and Brown headed nuthatches. Suet, a high-energy source of fats and oils, may be hung in a wire cage to encourage feeding by woodpeckers and others. Peanut butter can be used to fill log-style feeders. Peanut butter can also be smeared on pinecones, which are hung from a tree or other support. One other food, Niger or thistle seed, is a staple for American goldfinches and the House finch, Purple finch and Pine siskins that we see. These seeds are hung in fine socks.

Last year, as part of Project Feeder Watch sponsored by Cornell University from November to the April 1, I observed 40 different species of birds in my backyard. Among those seen primarily during the winter are the American kestrel, Red-breasted nuthatch, Cedar waxwing, Yellow-rump warbler, Chipping sparrow, Field sparrow, Lincoln’s sparrow, White-throated sparrow, White-crowned sparrow, Purple finch, Pine siskin and American goldfinch. Each of these birds has specific eating habits and colorations. You will have more time to observe them and learn about them if you feed and water them. Look at your plantings, and your other feeders. Consider what food, shelter and water is readily available for the birds. If necessary, make adjustments. Prepare well, and they will come.



Huge thanks to all who helped with our Fall Plant Sale. From all accounts the sale — from selling the many plants to the baked goods to seeds — was very successful.

Seems the seminars were enjoyed by many, and folks walked away with not only plants and cookies, but with ideas for their gardens and lawns.

With our many hard working Master Gardeners and ideal weather, the day could not have been more perfect!

RECIPE

Corn Salad from Billie Lee
(As enjoyed @ the MG social)

2 (15 oz.) cans whole kernel corn,
drained

2 cups grated cheddar cheese

1 cup mayonnaise

1 cup green bell pepper, chopped

½ cup red onion, chopped

1 (10 oz.) bag coarsely crushed
chili cheese corn chips.

Mix first 5 ingredients and chill.
Stir in corn chips just before serving.

Walker County Master Gardener Association

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