

Williamson County Master Gardener Journal

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Dedicated to growing with Williamson County

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The President's Corner

Grace Bryce

Hi Everyone,

I know we are all looking forward to some cooler weather and working more in our gardens. I have enjoyed watching my son mow the grass, since he is now old enough to do it. :)

I want to welcome all of our new Master Gardener students. The new class has started, and I've never seen so many enthusiastic volunteers! What a great class! A big thank you goes out to everyone helping with the class. Great job! I also want to welcome all of our new Master Gardeners who have transferred in from other areas and other states. We are so glad to have you.

We have recently added a "Suggestion Box" on the entry table at our monthly WCMGA meetings. One of the first suggestions was from a guest who would prefer we have our business portion of the meeting after the speaker. We have tried a number of formats for our monthly meetings over the years, and what we do now seems to work best. The plan is to keep our business time short at the beginning of the meeting, 10-15 minutes max, and allow the speaker to speak for a full hour if needed and have plenty of time to answer questions afterwards. In the past, too much time was spent on announcements, most of which, now go through our email group. Also in the past, the speaker was sometimes cut short, so the business meeting could happen at the end, after some members had already left. While a large part of our mission involves providing educational opportunities to the community, we also have to take care of our business as an organization each month. So we ask for patience from our guests, as we do a short business meeting at the beginning of our monthly WCMGA meetings. As members of WCMGA, our minutes and reports are available on the website, for more details and information on the operations of the organization. One of our members suggested sending an invoice for dues when the dues are due, because it would help her remember to pay them. My son suggested we have the delicious cookie bars at every meeting. (I recognized his hand writing.) Your suggestions can be anonymous, but if you would like a direct answer, please include your name and contact info. If you have suggestions, or need some help and want someone to contact you about something, please feel free to drop it in the Suggestion Box at the meeting. If you have questions, please ask. Thanks for your suggestions.

Just a reminder about volunteering, please be mindful of your own physical limitations, if you are given a task to do that you are not comfortable with or have health issues that may be restrictive, please feel free to decline that task and ask if there is something else you can do. This is supposed to be fun, not hazardous, so go have fun with it.

Changes are just around the corner with WCMGA election time coming soon. Any additional nominations will be taken from the floor at our October meeting and new officers will take their posts in January. If you are interested in running for an office or would like to chair or serve on a committee, now is the time to start thinking about it and let us know.

Thank you all for all you do!
That's it for now, so go weed something,
Grace



In the Demo Garden

Chuck McKelley

Summer in the Garden

The vegetable demonstration garden team spent the summer months harvesting fruits and vegetables in the early part of the season, doing bed maintenance all summer long, and planning and preparing for the fall planting in the last couple of weeks of the summer season.

Along the way we have dealt with the heat, unseasonable rain, and a slew of varmints, some winged, some legless, some with four or six legs and, unfortunately, some with two legs. Recently the “Veggie Garden Irregulars” have been joined by some of the interns from this year’s Master Gardener training class. We welcome them to the team greatly appreciate their help.



Our vegetable demonstration garden is divided into two major sections: the raised beds, where we try to grow fruits and vegetables that are typical of central Texas so that folks new to the area can see what does well here, and the row garden, which is our “God’s Little Acre” where we grow produce to be donated to area food banks. Both sections of the garden have produced well this year, and both sections have had some things which didn’t do so well. That’s pretty typical for a large vegetable garden, especially in our hot, dry climate.

The insects that gave us the most trouble this summer were both spotted and striped cucumber beetles, squash bugs and squash borers and some type of webworm (really caterpillars) that attacked all of the herbs of the mint family. We also had our share of fire ants. We used integrated pest management (IPM) to deal with the bugs. We use BT to treat for caterpillars. For the other bugs we use spinosad. We spray with liquid spinosad for bugs that eat the plants and use granular spinosad as a bait for fire ants. If the fire ants are really bad, we drench the mounds with an organic drench that is mostly orange oil. Birds are a big part of IPM and we do have mocking birds that eat a lot of the bugs in the garden. Of course, they also eat some of the tomatoes, but they do leave a few for us.

Although all of the veggie crew are experienced gardeners, we learn things from each other and just from the experience of maintaining a large vegetable garden. One of the things we learned this year was that most varieties of tomatillos are not self-pollinating. Our pineapple tomatillo did very well; but even though our purple tomatillo grew large and lush and produced many blossoms, it didn’t make any fruit at all. So apparently that variety needs another plant of its kind to pollinate it. We’ll know better next year. All in all, though, we have had a pretty good harvest.

We picked blackberries for the first couple of weeks of summer. We had hoped to harvest figs toward mid-summer, but the birds got the few fruits that our trees produced. The good news is that both the row garden and the raised beds have produced a lot of vegetables.

Our summer row garden harvest included: tomatoes, okra, squash, Southern peas, cantaloupes, watermelons and pumpkins. So far this year we have donated more than 300 pounds of produce from the row garden. We would have donated more, but we suffered thefts of nearly a dozen watermelons and a couple of pumpkins. Both the peas and the okra were planted at the beginning of summer. The peas are about done now but the okra continues to produce so quickly that it has to be picked every two or three days. We had also planted corn in the row garden, but summer storms blew it flat, insects ate the silk, and we ended up with no produc-



tion from the corn patch. We've pulled the non-productive corn out as well as most of the spring tomatoes, which were no longer producing. In their place we have planted fall tomatoes and winter squash.

This summer the raised beds and containers produced several types of summer squash, about five varieties of eggplant and at least that many varieties of beans. We've also harvested several varieties of peppers and cucumbers, pineapple tomatillos, many varieties of both cherry and slicing tomatoes, and some okra. Our herb beds have produced a large number of both fragrant and culinary herbs. Many of the spring garden plants in the raised beds are done producing by this time so they have been pulled out to make the beds ready for fall planting. In fact, we've done planting already. In midsummer we planted some Malabar spinach and recently we planted a few fall tomatoes.



We've spent a good bit of time this summer doing maintenance on our beds and other garden items. We've replaced some of the boards in the bed frames and have re-secured others. We've also begun upgrading the irrigation system to add more and bigger drip hoses. We will continue to do that in preparation for fall planting. In addition we will amend some of the raised beds to try to increase their ability to retain moisture between waterings. We are also doing some work on our composting system to try to get it producing again. So we will have plenty to do in the veggie demo garden as we begin to implement our fall planting plan.

Master gardeners will be in the demo garden every Tuesday morning, weather permitting, from 9:00 to 11:00. The garden, which is on the north side of the Williamson County Extension Office at 3151 SE Innerloop Road in Georgetown, is open to the public. Anyone is welcome to stop by to check out the garden or to ask gardening questions of the veggie garden team.

Newsletter Submissions

Thank you to those Master Gardeners who submitted articles, pictures, and ideas for this newsletter issue. If you would like to contribute to the *Williamson County Master Gardener Journal*, please send your submissions to Jane Williamson at jawilliamson516@yahoo.com by the 25th of the month. As you garden, volunteer and learn, take a moment to share with other gardeners.

When to Treat a Tree for Oak Wilt Disease?

Rob Grotty and Patty Hoenigman

Master Gardeners and Oak Wilt Specialists alike are looked to for answers to questions about Oak Wilt Disease, which is considered an epidemic in our area. So it is important that we all understand when it is advisable to treat a tree. Conversations with various MGs have led me to realize that there is a lot of confusion on this topic, so Rob Grotty, our forester with the Texas Forest Service, has answered this question.

“With trees that are within 50 feet or so of symptomatic trees, the disease is most likely already in part of their root system, but the fungus has not yet moved up into the trunk of the tree. At this point you can inject the tree with the fungicide, that goes under the brand name Alamo, and it will kill off the fungus before it enters the trunk of the tree. As the fungus enters the trunk, the tree starts to defend itself by plugging up its water pores, and that's when we start to see symptoms.

So, we recommend injecting trees that are in immediate threat of becoming infected before they show symptoms...thus, a pre-treatment with *pre* meaning pre-symptomatic.

Trees put on a new growth ring every year, that's where the water is being transported, and that's where the fungus enters the tree. That current year's growth ring is where we need the fungicide to be in order to effectively kill off the fungus and protect the tree. When a tree is injected, the fungicide is good for roughly 12 months. After that time period, the growth ring with the fungicide in it starts getting covered up with the new growth ring growing outside of it. The water uptake in the tree "transfers" into the new growth ring, and the fungicide essentially becomes non-effective. That's why we can't inject a tree and have it be protected for an indefinite amount of time.

The green glossy brochure on Oak Wilt Disease mentions injecting trees in the 75 to 150 foot range. From my personal experiences, 150 feet is too far away. The other foresters that I work with will tell you the same. I would stick with the 50 foot range, and then move another 50 feet in 6 months or so. The problem with injecting trees at the 150 foot mark is that the disease front might not get to those trees for several years, and by then the fungicide may be locked up in the previous years' growth rings.”

If you know someone with a tree that they suspect has Oak Wilt Disease, please call the Agri-Life Extension office at 512-943-3300. An Oak Wilt Specialist will be asked to talk with the homeowner, schedule a visit and then ask Rob Grotty to come out if Oak Wilt is found.

Monthly Meetings

Williamson County Master Gardeners hold monthly meetings at the Williamson County Extension Office, 3151 SE Innerloop Road, Suite A, Georgetown on the second Monday of each month at 6:30pm. Master Gardeners and the public are welcome to attend.

Gardening Tips

Winola VanArtsdalen

August

Planting:

Have wildflower seeds ready for late September/early October planting.

Fall is the best time to plant so plants can develop strong root structures before next summer's heat. Walk through your yard and other gardens now, making notes on which plants survive and even thrive in this heat, such as Blackfoot daisy, butterfly weed and four-nerve daisy. Use more of these native/adapted plants and give up those that require extra watering, fertilizing, and disease treatment!

Make plans and prepare soil for fall planting. Mix in an inch or two of compost and cover with mulch. When fall planting time comes, you are ready to pull back the mulch and plant.

Maintenance:

Protect yourself from heat stress by working early or late in the day, in shady areas, and/or for short periods of time. Drink adequate water; wear a hat and use sunscreen.

Potassium is important for plant resistance to stress. Seaweed, 0-0-1 has potassium and other nutrients that help plants during cold or heat.

Oak trees may be pruned this month, but paint all cuts/wounds on oak trees any size, any season, immediately!

Dig weeds; control nutgrass.

Keep watch for insects ready to attack stressed plants, but try hard water hose spray and/or hand picking before resorting to chemicals.

Turf:

Raise mower height during hot weather: Bermuda and zoysia at 1-2 inches.

Do not mow Buffalograss.

Always use sharpened blades and never cut more than 1/3 height of grass in one cutting.

Fertilization is normally recommended for Bermuda in August, but not if we are in drought.

Be prepared to apply a pre-emergent herbicide September 1 for control of annual winter weeds.

If you are away for an extended period of time, ask someone to keep watch for plants that might need supplemental water. If you have an automatic sprinkler system, be sure someone has access to adjust if necessary.

September

After numbing heat of July, August and early September walk your yard to inspect lawn, trees and shrubs. Note areas where grass has thinned and appears as light green, an indicator of need for nutrients. Look for weed and plant pests and overgrown trees and shrubs. Make a sketch of your landscape before plants go dormant. Indicate on it where you have or will plant bulbs, so you do not accidentally dig them up later!

Continue watering and pinching dead blossoms to encourage new blossoms and rejuvenate your heat-stressed garden. Prune back perennials like salvia, buddleia and lantana by one-third.

Earlier, it was important to water once a week to encourage roots to stretch deeper to get water, so they would be prepared for the dry heat of summer. NOW we are in the thick of the battle for summer survival! When the evaporation/transpiration rate is high, you will probably have to begin watering twice a week unless you have deep soil with much added organic matter.

One critical action to save water use in your yard is to audit your irrigation system monthly. It will not help to change settings on your system if water is pouring out on the ground from a broken sprinkler head!

Fall is a good time to divide and transplant spring or early-summer blooming perennials, so prepare flower beds with quality compost.

Planting:

If weather is mild, you can begin mid-September to plant perennials and to transplant and divide over-crowded spring flowering perennials. If it is still blasting hot, wait until October to avoid so much watering. Mulch everything you plant to help it hold moisture and minimize weeding, but keep mulch about 3" away from the stems.

Begin planting container shrubs and trees mid-September. Look at depth of that container and remember that you must water deeply enough to give moisture to the full length of those roots! As always, mulch well.

Turf:

Apply pre-emergent herbicide now for control of annual winter weeds. Water thoroughly.

Watch for brown patch activity and/or Take-All Root Rot.

Brown patch is characterized by circular patches of yellow or brown grass with outside of circle having "smoke ring" appearance.

Take-All Root Rot has area of discolored and dying leaves circular or irregular in shape. Leaves do not easily separate from the plan when pulled. The roots are sometimes so rotted that damaged stolens are easily pulled from the ground.

Replace turf in bare spots with same type as existing turf. Avoid Bermuda seed sold at box stores that may be native Bermuda if you have hybrid Bermuda such as Tif 419 in your yard.

Source: Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service

Horticulture Questions: Contact Wilco Argillite Extension Office Phone 512-943-3300



Mark your Calendars Now!

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities 2012-2013

Call 512-930-0040 Park Office or email sblackledge@wilco.org

for more information.

2012

Friday Sept. 28th: United Way of Williamson County "Day of Caring" 8:30am - 3pm

We are excited about developing the New "Berry Springs Nature Trail" located off of our existing hike & bike trail on the west side of IH 35. Most folks don't know we have property on the west side of IH 35. The trail head already has a beautiful double sided Kiosk which was built by Eagle Scout Zane Robertson. We have started a native plant garden within the turn around of the hike & bike trail. The trail is .3 miles long and has an abundance of beautiful native plants, shrubs and trees and part of the trail parallels Berry Creek. There is an old

bridge trestle that the trail leads to. The trail will be built by volunteers, so the more help we get the sooner the trail will be finished. Bring a Brown Bag Lunch. We will be working on the Trail Head, native plant garden and planting wildflowers.

Sat. Oct. 13th: “Annual Fall Clean Up/Pot Luck Luncheon”

8:30am - 3pm with Pot Luck Luncheon at noon. Spruce up the park for the fall and enjoy a delicious lunch while socializing with fellow volunteers. Fall is the best time for planting and to enjoy the out of doors as the weather gets cooler. We will be weeding, pruning and planting within flower beds as well as other projects through out the park. We will have the pot luck at the smaller Birthday Pavilion. **Rain Date is Sat. Oct. 20th.**

2013

Monday January 21st: United Way of Williamson County “Martin Luther King Day of Service”

8:30am- 3pm. Work day to continue development of the New “Berry Springs Nature Trail”. Brown Bag lunch at noon.

Saturday March 2nd : “Annual Spring Clean Up/Pot Luck Luncheon” 8:30am — 3pm with Pot Luck Luncheon at noon. There is nothing like a good Pot Luck lunch to get folks to gather and work up an appetite. Work day for sprucing up the park for spring. Great opportunity to socialize, show off your favorite recipe and have fun while working and earning volunteer hours. **Rain Date is Saturday March 9th.**

Friday March 22nd & Saturday March 23rd: “8th Annual Archeology Days” Can’t believe we have been open for 8 years now! This was are very first special event. Event is hosted by Williamson Museum and WILCO Parks & Recreation Department. Volunteer to work a booth and learn to teach others while learning yourself about archeology. **Friday** is a field trip day for area middle schools. Event time is 8:30am till 2pm. Saturday’s event is open to the public. Saturday volunteer shift times are 8:30am until 12:30pm. Lunch volunteer shift is 11am until 2pm and afternoon shift is Noon until 4pm. Many volunteers are needed on these days. The last two years, Saturday’s attendance was 1,000!

Ongoing volunteer work hours at the park are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 8:30 - Noon or 1-4pm. Call or email for further information.

As these events draw nearer, you will be notified about event details. To sign up go to <http://wcmg.ivolunteer.com>. Any questions call Susan Blackledge @ 512-930-0040 or email sblackledge@wilco.org.

Berry Springs Park and Preserve is near and dear to our community, and all of the hard work that volunteers provide shows. We can’t do it without you. You are truly appreciated!!!

Grimmett Receives Award

Susan Blackledge

Master Gardener Adrian Grimmert, winner of "Name the New Donkey" county wide contest, was given a weekend of camping at Berry Springs Park and Preserve. Adrian also received a bag of carrots and firewood for naming the little guy "Amigo". Pictured are Adrian and his granddaughters Lauren (in back) and Emma giving Amigo and Poco a snack. Amigo and Poco are half brothers that had never met before Amigo arrived in March. Amigo didn't even know what a carrot was till he came to his new home.



PHENOMENAL BENEFIT OF BEING A MASTER GARDENER

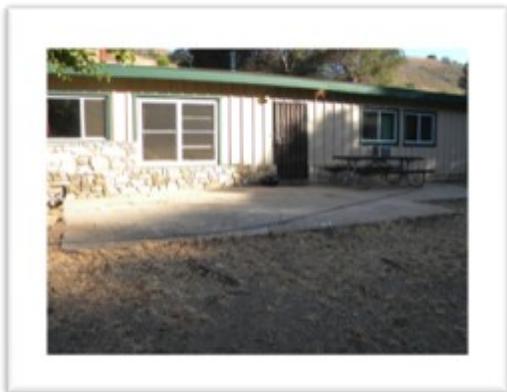
Rebecca Caldwell

One of our sons is the ranger at Firestone Scout Reservation, a 3,000 acre Boy Scout Camp in Los Angeles County. He was hired 18 months ago to oversee a camp that had been neglected for almost 15 years. As the camp itself was our son's main priority in bringing it back to life for the youth, the ranger's residence fell to the bottom of the list. And, as he is a recent bachelor, the time he could give to his living quarters was minimal. We had spent five days last year helping at the camp, so we were aware of the myriad of projects needing to be done to just make the place a home. We planned on spending another five days at the camp this year.



Walkway leading up to house; note the squirrel holes and massive stickers

My husband would tackle the pressing challenges inside the house, and I would concentrate on the yard; or should I say lack of yard; lack of ANYTHING. The front yard has one tree that only has a couple of years left due to a bug infestation. There is NO grass but at least 50 to 60 ground squirrel holes--some as large as a small Cub Scout! What was green was actually cockle burr stickers which covered everything including the walkway.



Side of house with stickers and squirrel holes



Walkway cleared, society garlic on one side of sidewalk and pepper tree on right side behind fence

Before leaving Texas I contacted the Orange County Master Gardeners web site and asked for any place that might consider donating shrubs or trees and suggestions as to what to plant. Two days before we left an OC Master Gardener, Barry Wilson, contacted me, His expertise was propagating shrubs and trees! He sent me the following list of plants he had available to GIVE to us for the camp:

- 1 – *Quercus agrifolia* , Coast Live Oak
- 3 – *Rosa californica*, California Wild Rose
- 1 – *Schinus Mole* – California Pepper
- 1 – *Punica granatum* – Pomegranate
- 1 – *Heteromeles arbutifolia* – Toyon
- 4 – *Rhamnus californica* – Coffeeberry
- 3 – *Rhus integrifolium* – Lemonadeberry
- 2 – *Olea europaea*—Olive



Olive trees, pomegranate, plumeria



Front of house

In addition he had 5 pots of society garlic and 6 pine trees! My work was cut out for me! I was also able to get two cuttings of a plumeria from friends. The first few days were spent trying to clear the land of cockle burr sticker plants and drown the squirrels. But all of the plants were used with the exception of the pine trees. These will be planted on one of the hiking trails in memory of a volunteer Scout who had recently died after hiking the trail.



Coffee berry plants, coastal oak, and lemonade berry plants on back of fence

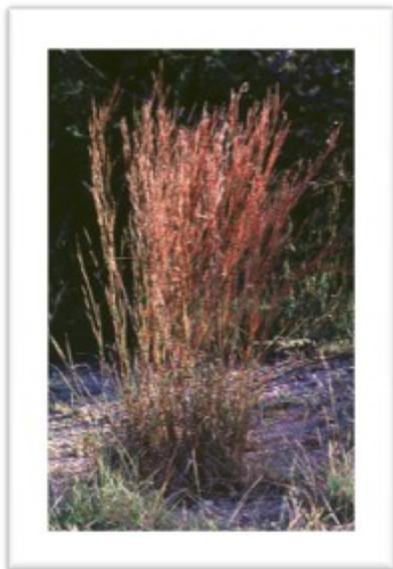
I have to share one other amazing incident. When my son's own troop came out for their weekly meeting, one of the father's noticed my Master Gardener Texas license plate. To the surprise of all of the adult leaders, he announced that he too is a Master Gardener and when he found out what I was trying to do, he offered his help to maintain the yard and add to it. He plans on bringing in top soil and even having a demonstration garden for the Scouts to learn from!!! AND, he is making application to be the merit badge counselor for Gardening and all badges related!

Needless to say our 5 days of working at the camp turned in to two weeks but it was all worth it. What a wonderful benefit of being a Master Gardener. Hope you enjoy the before and after pictures.

Appreciating Fall Grasses

Shirley Loflin

Driving from Austin to our Master Gardener Classes I am inspired by the beauty of the fall grasses I pass along the way. The mid-to-late summer showers we were blessed with helped our fall grasses to flourish.



Little bluestem

The Silver bluestem is especially prolific this year and seems to be everywhere in the Hill Country to Interstate I-35 and beyond. They are especially dazzling as the sun shines through the seed heads just after sunrise and before sunset.

Little bluestem is just about knee-high now and is putting on growth quickly with its distinctive red and green stems. But the real show starts as it matures and turns a stunning shade of russet. Bushy bluestem has just started to emerge but will be really beautiful by November. It too, turns a beautiful russet color after it has matured. This fluffy grass is a good indicator that water is not far away.



Side oats grama

Side oats grama, our official state grass, is equally prolific. They always remind me of tall slender soldiers standing very straight at attention.

There are many other lovely grasses out there if we only look for them. Some are sun loving and others crave to grow in the shade. But more importantly, we can bring the beauty of grasses into our landscapes and gardens. With a little study we can see that they come in many colors, shapes, heights and textures. You can grow them from seed or buy them from the nursery, usually in 1 gallon containers. The fact that native grasses are mostly disease-, drought- and pest-resistant make them a very attractive choice to use. And unless they are starving, deer generally won't eat grass. I hope they read this.



Gulf muhly and bluestem

Some of my favorites for the home garden are Gulf muhly, with its cotton candy, pink seed heads, Inland sea oats (now called Broadleaf wood oats) in the shady areas and Mexican feather grass (some call it Wire grass) as a border. This grass can add softness to a garden.

In the last few years we have seen native Lindheimer's muhly grace many, many commercial businesses. It's large and in charge and seems to be everywhere. And equally important in landscaping these days is Maiden grass, especially in some of the new subdivisions. I know it's not native but it has proved itself to be just as tough as the Texas grasses. It is also very attractive when it blooms.



Lindheimer muhly

All of these grasses I've mentioned are gorgeous in a fall dried arrangement. You can keep them from dropping their seeds and falling apart with a good extra heavy hairspray. There are several great books available for arranging grasses.

You might even try your hand at pressing some of the prettier grasses to frame. But that's a completely different article and I promise to write about it another time.

In closing, take time to look at the grasses around you and appreciate their uniqueness and variety. You can even take time to watch the grass grow.

Shirley Loflin is co-author of *The Grasses of Texas Hill Country*, with her husband Brian K. Loflin.



Ornamental grass

Officer Slate for 2013

President: *Jeanne Barker*

For those who don't know me, I was part of the first WCMGA class. Previously, I had been a MG and a Master Composter in North Carolina. I was thrilled when Williamson County decided to start a MG program. Being a MG supports my goal of being environmentally friendly, I love promoting native plants, rainwater harvesting, and composting. I have served on the board as secretary, for several terms. I think I could be a good president because I am very organized, thorough and extremely fair. It is important to me to always consider all sides of any issue. For a relatively young volunteer organization, WCMGA has accomplished many great things. I'm glad I've had a chance to be a part of it.



Vice-President: *Clyde Adley*

I was fortunate enough to sneak into the 2008 MG class due to some last minute cancellations, and have enjoyed the continuing learning experience ever since. It's been great to be a part of the organization and watch it grow over the last few years. I'm an engineer by nature and profession, and appreciate the balance that taking a moment to tend to the plants and thinking of the bigger picture brings. As a practicing propagation specialist, I've also discovered the pleasure that taking too many cuttings, or planting too many seeds, and sharing with friends and colleagues brings - it appears to be a family trait as my mother has always done the same. The sense of community among gardeners feels quite strong to me, and has led to some great friendships.

As Vice President, I'd love to help out wherever needed, and especially try to make the President's job easier. We have many talented people in the organization, and facilitating progress while keeping the organization's goals in mind is a privilege.



Treasurer: *Claire Hall*

My husband Terry was in the Army and I discovered that being married to a soldier has its advantages. I've been able to garden in places like California, Louisiana, Germany and Alaska. Texas is my new challenge. Terry and I retired and moved to Williamson County in 2008 and have never looked back. This is heaven, and the Master Gardener organization here has the most wonderful members.

In my professional life I've sold computer systems, managed retail stores, run a law office, and taught World and American History in high school. While teaching I was advisor to the Student Council and National Honor Society and put on a Renaissance Faire every year. I have served on the boards of various organizations including the Augsburg Officers' Wives Club, the Fairbanks Republican Women's Club and our church's parish council. In 2006, the Governor appointed me to the Alaska Public Offices Commission.

Most importantly, I am the mother of Wendy, Allison and Anne and grandmother to their 8 children.

In 2011, I stepped in as VP for WCMGA for several months and have been Project Chair for the past year. I look forward to serving WCMGA in 2013.



Secretary: *Quenby Gartner*

I grew up in San Marcos, Texas and then moved to Heidelberg Germany in the 4th grade as a Civil Service Brat. I came back to Texas to get my Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Theatre and haven't left since! I met my husband on a summer vacation visiting my parents in Germany and eventually brought him back to Texas. Now we have two wonderful children who put up with my love for gardening. While I lived in Dallas for 17 years I was a working actress and part-time secretary so I have quite a bit of experience typing letters and taking notes. I was also Secretary for our Honorary Theatre Fraternity, Alpha Psi Omega while attending Texas Tech University. I have extensive volunteer experience as parent chaperone for Theatre field trips at Walsh Middle School, other field trip events and school functions at all the Elementary and Charter schools my kids have attended. I enjoyed coaching soccer for my daughter's team in the Greater Lewisville Area Soccer Association.



I was certified as a Williamson County Master Gardener in December, 2010. I may not be as experienced in gardening as some MGs I know, but I have a lot of energy and love working with people. I also have an awesome rock (semi-xeriscape) garden at home and am always working on becoming a better vegetable gardener! It would be an honor for me to serve as Secretary on the Williamson County Master Gardener Board.

Whatcom County WA Master Gardeners

Carol Parsonage

This summer I spent six weeks away from the heat of Central Texas, visiting my brother in Ferndale, Washington. Shortly after my June arrival I visited the demonstration gardens maintained by the Whatcom County Master Gardener Association.

The demonstration gardens are located in Hovander Homestead County Park in Ferndale. The park includes an old farmhouse and barn that are regularly open to the public. The barn contains a variety of farming equipment and machinery. There are also a few cows in an adjacent field, some caged rabbits and a chicken coop. A significant part of the Master Gardener demonstration gardens surrounds the farmhouse. Flowering plants are featured in front and along the sides of the house. The back yard "kitchen garden" contains vegetables, fruits, and berries laid out as you might expect to meet the needs of a farming family. Mid-June was still a bit early for many of the flowers, and I noticed that they were growing many of the vegetables we grow in our winter gardens.



Flowers beside the farmhouse

Just beyond the kitchen garden there are a number of special purpose gardens. There is a dahlia garden that showcases a plant grown commercially in Whatcom County. A nearby pumpkin patch supplies free pumpkins to area children each fall. New this year was a weed garden. This clever garden helps community members identify unwelcome plants that come up in their lawns and beds.



Artichokes in the kitchen

The last garden I visited was a children's garden. In summer the Master Gardeners use the garden and the adjacent greenhouse to host a multi-generational program for children and their parents and/or grandparents. The garden was full of flowers and vegetables and the scarecrows that each child created from articles brought from home. The greenhouse contained a demo on bean plants complete with information posters and a final quiz.



Whatcom County Master Gardeners at the Children's Garden

I arrived at the demonstration gardens on a Saturday morning, in time to observe the program in the Children's Garden. After the program I had a chance to speak with the Master Gardeners. The Whatcom County Master Gardener Association was founded in 1975, three years after the original association was founded in King County WA (Seattle). They have about 200 active members. The demonstration gardens are open from April through October. During that time Master Gardeners are at the garden on Wednesdays and Saturdays to work and to answer questions. The gardeners I spoke with liked being at Hovander Park because it was a popular place to visit and because it had good parking and public restrooms. They were all active in the children's programs and were familiar with the Texas Jr. Master Gardener Program. However, they did not see it working in their area because the school year does not overlap much with the growing season. That is why their principal children's program is a summer program.

I was impressed with both the variety of gardens and their attractive layout. And even though our climates and our growing seasons are quite different we still found much to discuss in our mutual interest in gardening and in increasing gardening knowledge in our communities.



Weeds are carefully grown to keep them from spreading.



Scarecrows in the Children's Garden

Online Learning Available for Advancing Training Credit

Claire Hall

In past years, many Master Gardeners have made use of the EarthKind training available online through Texas A & M at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training>. There are approximately 12 classes available although Master Gardeners can receive advanced training credit for no more than 3 in any given year. The topics include irrigation, landscape, roses, and IPM. Individuals may work at their own pace from home. At the conclusion of the class, a test is taken and successful completion reported to the local Master Gardener coordinator (County Agent).

In an effort to broaden the opportunities for webinar training, the WCMGA board recently decided to allow Master Gardeners to also view webinars available through the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Two webinars are scheduled for the near future as part of the center's **Go Native U**. On October 3, the topic is *Grocery Store Botany*, while on November 7 the topic will be *Tree Selection and Establishment*. No test is involved but there are questions during the course designed to keep students engaged. The webinars are broadcast from noon until 1 pm, but if you register and can't attend at that time, the webinar will be available online for 48 hours. There is a cost involved. Each webinar costs \$15 for non-members and \$10 for members. For more information, the web address is <http://www.wildflower.org/webinar>. It is likely more webinars will be offered in the spring. Check the website often to see what's coming up.

Interns, please check with Winola before you register for one of the Wildflower Center webinars.

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