

# Williamson County Master Gardener

# Journal

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Dedicated to growing with Williamson County

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## The President's Corner

### *Winola Van Artsdalen*

In this, my last President's Message, I want to thank you for giving me the honor of being your president. The executive board, project and events leaders, their many committees, and all of you who helped made this a special year. We began with highly successful spring plant sales, had great impact with our first ever Spring Master Gardener Garden Fair, enjoyed three successful field trips, shared with children in JMG activities in many elementary schools and three junior high schools, shared in labors of love in work projects, our speakers bureau and other events throughout the county, and ended the year with the most enthusiastic, energetic class of interns ever! It has been a grand experience!



I have loved this communication with you each month but am now eager to exchange my administrative role to being the new president's supporter and your cheerleader. With good projects and events in place, while others are being added, there will be many educational opportunities for you and for teaching others. We can look forward to 2011 as another great year for Williamson County Master Gardeners!

## ***Book Review***

### ***Paradise Under Glass – An Amateur Creates a Conservatory Garden***

**Ruth Kassinger**

**Review by Teresa Robinson**

I just completed reading a book which I think is perfect for MG's as well as all gardeners. It is the quest of the author to create an attached greenhouse/conservatory to her home in Maryland.

We follow the author through the history of conservatories throughout the centuries beginning in 1536. As she has her blueprints, she is faced with difficulties with the building permits and the ultimate construction. Upon completion, she is now faced with the daunting task of filling her greenhouse with plants that can withstand growing conditions in a heated greenhouse. Ultimately she constructs a Living Wall with the help of her husband.

She travels from Connecticut to California in her collection. She begins with a collection of citrus trees and proceeds onto tropical foliage plants. We follow the author through the difficult process of both trying seeds, taking cutting, and the pests that invade her greenhouse. She goes into great lengths to explain the history of insecticides including DDT and the ultimate elimination and outlawing of DDT and eventually learning of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The author travels to both Florida and California to visit wholesale nurseries, and we get a feel for the production and failures of thousands of plants.

We get to grow with the author as she is struggling through a difficult time in her life. She is suffering the loss of her 47 year old sister to brain cancer and her own breast cancer.. At the same time, her children go off to college.

I feel this is a worth-while read both for entertainment and education. The book is *Paradise Under Glass – An Amateur Creates a Conservatory Garden* by Ruth Kassinger – 635.0483 KASS. It is available in the Georgetown Library, where it can be reserved or ordered through your local library.

# New Master Gardeners Graduated

## *Winola Van Artsdalen*

In November, we completed the 2010 Master Gardener Class, and what a wonderful experience it was, for students and all of those of us who worked with this capable, eager group! JoAnne Dieterich, the class facilitator, Wayne, who kept us wired and did everything else needing to be done the entire fourteen weeks, and myself, “Granny Mentor”. We all lost our hearts to this group and will always answer the call to help them in any way possible. We expect great things of them!



***Milly Nunis, Beverly Hamilton, Katy Wallace, and with back to camera Debra Klaus and Patsy Bredahl share gardening stories.***



***Liz Grieder, Jerry Lester, Julie Townsend, and Nancy Blansett visit during lunch.***

This month the students had special greenhouse instruction, enjoyed by all, and during the last class was the much anticipated luncheon for the students, mentors, and others who worked with the class. Linda Zazula planned the lunch and decorations and did an excellent job, helped by the able kitchen crew of Liz Grieder, Bonnie Sladek, Ingrid Langdon and Jeanne Holmes. We hope the excitement and warmth of that lunch will last forever!



***Brigid Mejia, Jessica Woods, Linda Clark, John Clark, Collene Sweeney, and Juanita James enjoy the luncheon.***

The project leaders will tell you how much they have benefited from the enthusiasm and hard work of these students from the class of 2010. We hope all of you will soon get to know them better and enjoy working with them in all the worthy efforts of Williamson County Master Gardeners Association.

## Greenhouse Grows New Master Gardeners



*Bunny Phillips, Jennifer Lucas and Beverly Hamilton propagate in the greenhouse.*



*JoAnne Dieterich helps interns Susan Poteete and Bunny Phillips.*



*Quenby Gartner, Jennifer Lucas, Beverly Hamilton, Susan Poteete, Debra Klaus, JoAnne Dieterich, and Bunny Phillips work in the greenhouse.*

## Our Trip to the Holistic Garden of A & M University

*Mary Hargita*

On the morning of November 3<sup>rd</sup> under the guidance and driving of Bob Whitney, Williamson County Master Gardeners and several new class candidates arrived in College Station to visit the Holistic Gardens there.

First we went to the Horticulture-Forest Science Building on the West campus of A&M University. Here we met our guide, the very knowledgeable Professor of Garden Sciences and Horticulture, Dr. Joe Novak. The Holistic Garden has been directed and maintained under his guidance since the 80's. Professor Novak also teaches courses at the Horticulture Department of the university.

"Holistic" means that this garden provides complete interaction between all elements of the garden's ecosystem and the gardener. It teaches us to work with nature instead of against it and makes gardening a more pleasurable experience.



We learned that the gardens began as a small teaching garden offering instruction in Garden Science to about 20 students in 1984. Today there are over 1000 students and volunteers involved with projects to improve gardening for everyone. They do research, tours for children and adults, and even an occasional plant sale. What started on a small plot of land, is now occupying about 2 acres of a plant-paradise, which teaches us to work with our ecosystem instead of fighting it. This educational garden teaches everyone to maintain an environment designed to improve quality of life for people of all ages and even for persons with disabilities. We all know that working in the garden is very therapeutic, but why is that? Research has proven that working with nature has restorative effects for our parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems, which can result even in organ repairs. In simpler words, gardening can reduce

our stress-related ills and being in contact with nature has definite healing effects on humans. Our mental fatigue is reduced, our happiness restored, peace and relaxation is ours, when we find time to work in our gardens.

Dr Novak told us about, a recipe for **a natural ant killer:**

**Add 1 gallon active compost to 5 gallon water, stir it well, then add ¼ cup of molasses and 2 Tablespoon of citrus oil, stir it again and strain it, it will be ready to be sprayed.**

(Left over amount is good for at least a month) According to the professor, it is as effective or more effective against ants, than anything else.)

The Holistic Gardens contain several areas, and we walked through them all.

The *Heritage Garden* is where there are plants that were introduced to Texas by various ethnic groups from all over the world. Many fruit species are found here, like pear, peach, grapes, fig, pomegranate, persimmon and plum. In the center is a tiny rustic cottage that could have been home to a large family in the 1800's.

The *Kitchen Garden* shows us how many edible plants (veggies and herbs) can be grown in a relatively small garden space by organic means.



*Discovery Garden* is where children can learn about the ecosystem of gardens and the beneficial insects and critters. It has a butterfly garden too. Colorful painted illustrations delight the visitors.

*Enabling Garden* shows that anyone, even people with various disabilities can practice gardening. There are ideas, structures, garden beds in different heights and tools all catering to the elderly and the disabled. We noticed an espaliered plum tree here.

The *Wetlands* has submerged and floating plants. Lots of beneficial organisms grow in and by the water. They expand to all other areas and help the ecosystem working.

The *Sensory Garden* is a small area with plantings that stimulate our senses of taste, smell, sight, touch and hearing.



*Tropical Rainforest Garden in the Greenhouse* shows the climate, where most of our houseplants come from originally. We saw giant pothos ivy, yellow chalice vine, Mexican hydrangea and various orchids among many other cultivars.



After the visit to the Holistic Gardens, Bob, our fearless leader drove us over to the A&M Gardens. We were sorry to hear that the garden will not be there for very long.

To end our trip on a full stomach, we had a delightful lunch at a very nice Italian restaurant, before heading back home under Bob Whitney's expert navigation and driving.



## Seed Cleaning Parties for 2011

Seed cleaning parties at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center are starting again for the new year. The first one is scheduled for Saturday, March 19, 10 am – 2 pm. Come for the camaraderie as well as the learning experience.

Contact Flo Oxley ([oxley@wildflower.org](mailto:oxley@wildflower.org)) if you are going to attend so she can make sure there is space for you and seed to clean.

Future dates include the following:

April 23

May 21

June 18

July 16

August 20

September 17

October 22

November 19

Be sure and mark your calendar for these upcoming dates.

## **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](mailto:jawilliamson516@yahoo.com) by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month. As you garden, volunteer and learn, take a moment to share with other gardeners.

## **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.

## Williamson County Master Gardener Officers for 2010

### Officers:

Winola Van Artsdalen, President	<a href="mailto:jimwin@verizon.net">jimwin@verizon.net</a>	(512) 863-4923
Ed Myatt, Vice-president	<a href="mailto:emyatt@dexcopolymers.com">emyatt@dexcopolymers.com</a>	(512) 869-4293
Jeanne Barker, Secretary	<a href="mailto:jubarker@yahoo.com">jubarker@yahoo.com</a>	(512) 608-1296
Sandra Lawrence, Treasurer	<a href="mailto:swlawrence@austin.rr.com">swlawrence@austin.rr.com</a>	(512) 351-9678
Wayne Rhoden, Immediate Past President	<a href="mailto:mgardener@suddenlink">mgardener@suddenlink</a>	(512) 869-8016

### Standing Committees/Chairpersons:

Programs/Education	Paul Lawrence	<a href="mailto:pwlawrence@austin.rr.com">pwlawrence@austin.rr.com</a>	(512) 351-9678
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