

# Williamson County Master Gardener Journal

## CONTENTS

**1  
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

**2  
2007 CLASS PORTRAIT**

**3  
GREENHOUSE  
AGREEMENT IN PROGRESS**

**7  
BUR OAKS**

**9  
CYLINDER GARDENS**

**11  
HOLIDAY TREATS**

**14  
PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

**PHOTO CREDITS**

**15  
2007 ASSOCIATION  
OFFICERS**

**QUOTE OF THE MONTH**



From the Williamson County Extension Agent

## Looking to the future

I would like to congratulate each of you on your accomplishment of completing the Master Gardener Intern Training Class. I know you feel as I do that it was an intense training program which required dedication and motivation. I also know each of you will soon become certified and attain that which you have sought.

As we move into the Holiday Season, it is for most of us a time to spend with family and friends. I hope each and every one of you has a safe and memorable Holiday Season.

As to our future plans, many of you are aware the Executive Board will be drafting a five year strategic plan for our organization. This is of the utmost importance as we need to position our organization as progressive and fundamentally sound.

First, we will design a course of action which will give each of you many opportunities to fulfill your volunteer hour requirements. Each of these activities will be organized in a manner which supports the mission of Extension and furthers the Williamson County Master Gardener Association. Individual growth of these activities will dictate when we will plan and implement our subsequent Intern Training Classes.

Second, a list of long range objectives will be identified. These objectives will be obtainable as well as relevant. The charge of the Master Gardener Program is to further outreach educational efforts in the area of horticulture. Each objective will meet this charge in addition to benefitting the membership.

Finally, the draft plan will be presented to membership for comment. Our timeline for completing this plan is early next year with its first presentation to the membership in January 2008 at our monthly meeting.





I hope you understand this is a necessary step we must take as our organization matures. Sometimes planning is the hardest part, but in the end it will tell us where we started and at that present point, tell us where we are.

I look forward to the wonderful and meaningful things we will accomplish in 2008, and I hope each of you stays as motivated as you were the first time you heard Williamson County was starting a Master Gardener Program.

May peace and joy find you through this Holiday Season.

A. Zan Matthies Jr., M.S.  
County Extension Agent - Agriculture  
Texas Cooperative Extension  
Texas A&M University System





## Greenhouse Agreement in Progress

Neil Cochran

The WCMGA has begun operation of a state of the art greenhouse through a memorandum of understanding with the Georgetown Independent School District.

In exchange for access to and operation of the greenhouse, including ownership of plants produced, the WCMGA agreed to





support the Horticulture Education program at Georgetown High School. The effort to help in this education process began in a classroom on November 13 with a class on Basic Soils and the botany lecture on Propagation. There was a student activity



evaluating the moisture retaining capability of various media.

On November 15 the students saw the explanation of Soda Bottle Propagator and then we moved to the greenhouse for practical application. Each Student made a Soda Bottle propagator. We are off to a great start in honoring our agreement with the school district



Any certified Master Gardener who has a passion for anything in our Master Gardener Handbook can participate in this program. Monday, Wednesday and Friday classes go for 50 minutes. Tuesday and Thursday classes go for 90 minutes.



This article is illustrated with pictures of the students in class going over soda bottle propagation and then in the Greenhouse with Master Gardeners, Teresa Robinson, Brenda McIndoo, Wayne Rhoden and County Extension Agent Zan Matthies. Anyone else who wishes to join in this effort will be most welcome.

Please contact the following for scheduling: Neil Cochran, [ncochran78628@yahoo.com](mailto:ncochran78628@yahoo.com), (512) 869-0821.

## Texas Trees

## Bur Oaks Jo Groves

In the early 1950's a lady in Lubbock, Texas placed an advertisement in the *Lubbock Avalanche Journal* offering two bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) acorns to anyone who would send in 50¢ to cover her cost of packaging and mailing of the

acorns. My mother sent for two acorns, but only one grew after she planted them on our farm in Posey, Texas. Later, the tree was dug up and moved with my parents to Denver City. Years later, the bur oak was rather unceremoniously yanked from its bed, piled



on a truck, and hauled to a farm in Knox County, Texas. Moving an entire household of farm equipment, cows, and personal items for two old people was no easy task. The bur oak was shoved off onto the ground and forgotten for two or three months.

When the house and farm settled down, the 12- or 15-foot tall tree was noticed. It was now completely bare-rooted, as it lay on the ground. A backhoe scooped out the red sand, the tree set into the hole, and the soil pushed back over the roots. One year passed, no leaves; but the second spring, leaves appeared, and the tree has flourished such that it is now 80 to 100 feet high. Bushels of large acorns fall each year, feeding squirrels, deer, and wild hogs.

My mother gave me two acorns when I moved to Round Rock in 1975. Both sprouted and grew rapidly, soon producing acorns of their own. Squirrels like the acorns, and planted them all over our St. Augustine grass lawn, so we had trees coming up everywhere. I dug these up, and gave them to friends, and these trees are now growing in many areas in Georgetown and Texas.



My method of planting is to watch the squirrels, as they have such success growing bur oaks. As soon as they acorns fall from the tree I put them into a gallon pot of garden soil covered with a screen wire to keep my furry friends out, and water them. One year, I put 21 pots of acorns on my back patio before we left for six weeks in Europe. When we returned home, what a joy it was to see 21 three- or four-inch trees happily growing in the gallon pots.

Bur Oaks have beautiful large leaves and the trunks are so beautiful and rough looking. They have

very few problems, but in this area when it is cool and damp in the spring, aphids like to attack the youngest leaves, and in turn these leaves develop anthracnose causing brown, irregular spots on the upper-most leaves. I have not treated these trees in any way, and they seem to outgrow the problem as they become more mature. This problem is also worse in Georgetown than it was in Round Rock.

Bur Oak is a wonderful tree, and anyone can grow one.

Horticulture in a little space

## CYLINDER GARDENING

Winola VanArtsdalen

What would be a quick and easy way to start gardening, one that did not require much space, cost a lot of time and money to prepare the soil, and then require only minimal care? Is there a type of gardening for all ages-- one that would be fun for children and adults alike? The answer to all of the above is cylinder gardening!

You will need only a minimal investment in tools and supplies. Find some clean five gallon buckets that have never had toxic material in them. Cut out the bottom and then cut them in half. These are your containers, and now you need a lightweight soil mixture for your planting medium. You may purchase a potting mix or mix your own media with one part peat moss, vermiculite or perlite, and one part clean, coarse (builder's) sand.

You will also need flower or vegetable seeds of your choice and some balanced slow release fertilizer like Osmocote 14-14-14. The only tools needed are a hand trowel, a flat shovel, and a watering can or a water hose with a fine spray. If you happen to have a snow shovel souvenir from an earlier life living "up north," this is your chance to put it to



use, but a regular 9 or 10" wide flat shovel will work just fine, too.

Now that you have all your materials ready, the first step is to moisten the soil mix. A garden cart or the driveway is a good workplace for this part of the project, but there must be no wind. The lightweight soil mixture is fine and will blow away with the slightest wind! Add a little bit of water at a time and lightly mix with hand trowel or shovel, depending on the amount. You want it only moistened, not wet, and you want to mix as little as possible. Now, let it sit a few minutes to allow absorption time for the mix to be evenly moist. Next, set the cylinders on the ground and fill the cylinders to within 3" of the top. Sprinkle slow release fertilizer and cover with an-



other 2" of soil. Plant seeds at depth indicated on the package, no deeper. Now, you are ready to watch your crop grow, and, with this easy type of gardening you will never have to pick up a hoe!

Watering correctly is crucial, but safer in cylinder gardening than in other methods. That cylinder with the open bottom makes it almost impossible to leave your plants with "wet feet." You can still use the index finger test to know when to water.

Poke your finger in the mix. If it is dry below 1" from the surface, it is time to water, being sure to water with a fine spray. Since these cylinders do not hold moisture in the bottom, you need to watch carefully, as they can dry out quickly. Now, there's another advantage to cylinder gardening. You can even change the location if you like. Just slip that flat shovel under the cylinder, pick it up, and move it to a new location. Amazing!



The next step is by far the hardest! When your plants have true leaves, it is time to thin those babies. This is absolutely painful for children, but the weaker seedlings must be sacrificed, so that the healthier ones can have enough space and nutrition to reach their full potential. Your seed directions told you this, and you must make yourself do it. If you feel more fertilizer is needed as your plants are growing, you can

add granules or use liquid fertilizer dissolved in water. If little weeds appear, it is easy to just pull them from the loose soil. Soon it will be time to enjoy the fruits of your labor, the beautiful flowers and nutritious vegetables. Now, wasn't that easy!



Treats from the Master Garden

## Holiday Treats

By Margaret Seals



Love the coming Holidays, but dread all the cooking you will have to do? Not me. Now that I have the “secret” to Holiday treats, I’m rarin’ to go! Come a little closer so that I can share that secret with you. First, fire up your computer (No, not your *oven* just yet.) and get <http://www.puffpastry.com> on your screen. Now scroll around until you find the Tips for Using Puff Pastry. Take five minutes to read the tips and watch the great video that Pepperidge Farms provides. You’re now set to have the best Holiday Season ever, with half the fuss. Puff Pastry is one of those thaw and cook marvels that makes almost any filling look and taste twice as good! Your guests will think you have spent days making goodies, and only *you* know the secret! On the following pages are some fillings both sweet and savory that can enliven your Holiday table.

## Glamorgan Cheese Sausage Rolls

Christine Powell

- 1 Package Frozen Puff Pastry
- 4 oz. grated Caerphilly Cheese (Caerphilly is a mild, hard, salty, white, cow's milk, Welsh Cheddar, that is high in moisture content and crumbles, but you can substitute any good quality mild white Cheddar)
- ½ C Breadcrumbs (use a whole wheat, nutty/grainy farmer's type bread)
- 1 small Leek, cleaned well and chopped fine
- 1 t. crushed mustard seeds
- Pinch Cayenne Pepper (or several pinches, to taste)
- 3 Egg Yolks
- Handful of Thyme or Tarragon leaves, chopped finely for garnish (optional)

Preheat oven to 400 Degrees F. for an electric oven or 350 Degrees F. for a gas oven. Use a greased cookie or baking sheet, or cover sheet with parchment paper for baking.

Using a food processor, mix the filling ingredients together, reserving one beaten egg yolk for brushing pastry. Divide mixture into two parts, and make a long sausage shape of each part for filling the pastry. Open out one sheet of thawed frozen pastry onto a floured surface, and cut it into two pieces, lengthwise. Brush pastry with beaten egg yolk. Lay sausage logs on pastry, and fold pastry over them sealing the edges. Cut each into one or two inch pieces. Place on cookie sheet and chill for 30 minutes. Brush pieces with egg yolk, and top with herbs if desired. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until golden brown.

Christine makes her own puff pastry, and says that she often makes these sausage rolls ahead of time and freezes them in an airtight plastic box. They can be baked straight from the freezer, baking in about 15-20 minutes.

## Spinach Cheese Swirls

Pepperidge Farm Recipe

- 1 Package Frozen Puff Pastry
- 2 eggs
- 2 T. water
- 1 C. shredded Muenster cheese or Monterey Jack cheese
- ½ C grated Parmesan
- 2 green onions, chopped
- Dash garlic salt
- 2 (10 oz. pkgs.) Chopped Frozen Spinach, thawed and well drained

Thaw the puff pastry sheets according to package directions. Preheat oven to 400 Degrees F. Mix egg and water. Set aside. Mix cheese, onion spinach and garlic salt. Divide filling in two parts. Open out one sheet of Puff Pastry onto a floured surface, and brush with egg mixture. Top with spinach/cheese mixture, spreading evenly over all pastry to within ½ inch from edges. Starting at short end of sheet, roll up like a jellyroll. Seal edges with egg mixture. Cut into ½ inch pieces. Place on baking sheet, and brush with egg mixture. Repeat with second sheet and remaining filling. Bake swirls for 15 minutes or until golden brown. Makes about 40 appetizers.

## Apple Pecan Pastries

Pepperidge Farm Recipe

- ½ Package Frozen Puff Pastry
- 1 C firmly packed Brown Sugar
- ½ C all-purpose flour
- 1 t. ground Cinnamon
- Dash ground Nutmeg
- 2 C peeled and diced Granny Smith apples
- 1 C chopped pecans
- 1 T cold butter cut into pieces
- Confectioner's Sugar, optional

Thaw one sheet of Frozen Puff Pastry according to package directions. Preheat oven to 375 Degrees F. Mix brown sugar, flour, cinnamon and nutmeg. Add apples, pecans, and butter, and toss to coat apples. Unfold pastry on a floured surface. Roll into a 15" by 10" rectangle. Brush lightly with water. With long side facing you, spoon apple mixture to within 2" of long sides, and all the way to the short sides. Starting at long side, roll up like a jellyroll. Cut into twelve slices (about 1 ¼" each). Place on a greased baking sheet or use parchment paper on the sheet. Bake for about 15 minutes, or until golden brown. Makes 12 pastries. Sprinkle with Confectioner's sugar to serve, if desired.

## Fig and Camembert Ravioli with Honey Balsamic Glaze

Pepperidge Farm Recipe

- 1 Pkg. Frozen Puff Pastry
- 1 egg
- 1 T water
- 8 Oz. Camembert or Brie Cheese, cut into 24 small wedges
- 12 Dried figs, cut in half or ½ C Fig Jam

Thaw pastry sheets according to package directions. Preheat oven to 350 Degrees F. Lightly grease or line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Stir the egg and water with a fork in a small bowl.

Unfold one pastry sheet on a lightly flowered surface. Roll out to a 16" square. Brush with the egg mixture. Arrange the cheese in 4 rows with 6 pieces in each row. Top each piece of cheese with ½ piece of fig or 1 t. Fig Jam.

Roll out second pastry sheet to a 16" square. Place over the cheese-covered sheet pressing firmly between the rows using a fluted pastry wheel or sharp knife. Cut each strip into 6 squares. Crimp edges using a floured fork. Place on prepared baking sheets. Chill about 15 minutes or until firm.

Bake for 20 minutes or until golden. Remove the ravioli from the baking sheets and cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes. Serve warm with Honey Balsamic Glaze (recipe follows).

### Honey Balsamic Glaze

Heat ¾ C Balsamic Vinegar, ½ C water and 1/3 C Honey in a 2-quart saucepan over high heat to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, and cook for 12-15 minutes or until the mixture is reduced by half and has the consistency of syrup. Serve over baked Fig and Cheese Ravioli.

Have Great Holidays, and pass our "secret" along to your friends and neighbors!

President's Column

## Congratulations and Welcome Wayne Rhoden



As all of you assimilate the end of the training phase of your journey to becoming certified Master Gardeners I wanted to tell all of you how impressed with your attitude and willingness to volunteer in our projects and programs. Having six students complete their volunteer service before the end of the training is an accomplishment because of the lack of projects we have had to work on due to the short time we have been formed.

Now there are more places to volunteer your time than ever before with the greenhouse getting started, the Junior Master Gardener Program and several local projects at Berry Springs Park and St. Richards Episcopal Church in Round Rock. Some also have Junior Master Gardener projects in schools where you live and work. All of us are disappointed that we were not able to continue the help desk training but that will happen in time. I also see a willingness to serve on some of the committees that need participants and that will make our Association grow and become more representative of Master Gardener Associations throughout the state.

We have come a long way in a short time. Many associations do not publish a newsletter or have a web site a year or two years into their existence. Some do not have any projects to work on for years. The fact that we held a class two months after forming the association is an accomplishment in itself. I know not all of you were happy that there were not more projects available to perform your volunteer hours but we are giving each of you a longer time to complete your volunteer service than most associations. Normally you would only have six to seven months to complete the volunteer time and you are getting fourteen months to complete yours.

I guess to sum it all up is that we are proud that after years of not having a Master Gardener Association in Williamson County, as soon as we were allowed to start one we did it in record time and we really appreciate the members that came over from Bell and Travis County to form the association, and you, our first students, who have been patient with us through this time of growing. Enjoy the coming holidays.

Wayne

### Photo Credits

- Pages 1–2 (top) — Texas Extension
- Pages 2 (bottom)–6 — Neil Cochran
- Page 7 (top) — Damon E. Waitt (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center)
- (bottom) — Jo Groves
- Page 8 — Paul Cox (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center)
- Page 9–10 — Texas Extension
- Page 11 — Mrs. W.D. Bransford (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center)
- Page 14 — Margaret Seals

# Williamson County Master Gardener Association Officers for 2007

## Officers:

Wayne Rhoden, President	<a href="mailto:mgardener@suddenlink.net">mgardener@suddenlink.net</a>	(512) 869-8016
Janet Church, Vice-President	<a href="mailto:Janet_Church46@hotmail.com">Janet_Church46@hotmail.com</a>	(512) 585-0996
Neil Cochran, Treasurer	<a href="mailto:ncochran78628@yahoo.com">ncochran78628@yahoo.com</a>	(512) 869-0821
Leslie Meyers, Secretary	<a href="mailto:myersls@earthlink.net">myersls@earthlink.net</a>	(512) 671-3002

## Standing Committees/Chairpersons:

Programs/Education:	Janet Church	<a href="mailto:Janet_Church46@hotmail.com">Janet_Church46@hotmail.com</a>	(512) 585-0996
Publicity:	Sam Myers	<a href="mailto:slmeyers58@earthlink.net">slmeyers58@earthlink.net</a>	(512) 671-3002
Membership/Volunteer Opportunities:			
	John Papich	<a href="mailto:texasjayp@yahoo.com">texasjayp@yahoo.com</a>	(512) 863-4098
Awards:	Walt Kruger		(512) 255-1138
Class Training/Facilitation:			
	Neil Cochran	<a href="mailto:ncochran78628@yahoo.com">ncochran78628@yahoo.com</a>	(512) 869-0821
Jr. Master Gardener Coordinator:			
	Neil Cochran	<a href="mailto:ncochran78628@yahoo.com">ncochran78628@yahoo.com</a>	(512) 869-0821
Fundraising:	John Womack	<a href="mailto:roofmn@yahoo.com">roofmn@yahoo.com</a>	(512) 864-0339
Greenhouse:	Vacant		

## Ad Hoc Committees:

New Class:	John Papich	<a href="mailto:texasjayp@yahoo.com">texasjayp@yahoo.com</a>	(512) 863-4098
Mailing address:	3151 Inner Loop Road, Suite A, Georgetown, TX 78626		
Newsletter Editor,	Margaret Seals,	<a href="mailto:marjim@suddernlink.net">marjim@suddernlink.net</a>	
Newsletter Layout	Chriatine Powell	<a href="mailto:powellweb@verizon.net">powellweb@verizon.net</a>	(512) 863-8250
WCMG Website		<a href="http://grovesite.com/mg/wcmg">http://grovesite.com/mg/wcmg</a>	
Webmaster:	Christine Powell	<a href="mailto:powellweb@verizon.net">powellweb@verizon.net</a>	(512) 863-8250

## Quote of the Month

***Go out by yourself, face the wind, hold up your head, and thank God for this gardening year.***

Richardson Wright, *Another Gardener's Bed-Book*, 1933