



Aransas/San Patricio

April, 2010

The President's Corner

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Website:

www.aspmastergardeners.org

Seeking Serious Plant Lovers

Texas Master Gardeners are a team of volunteer horticulture educators who are under the auspices of:



Green Acres is our award winning demonstration garden located at 611 E. Mimosa, Rockport, Texas. The gardens showcase plants and landscape schemes suitable for the Coastal Bend. For help with plant problems, or for class information, please call (361) 790-0103, or email aransas-tx@tamu.edu

Editors

Marsha Hendrix
marsha.hendrix@the.state.tx.us

Ernie Edmundson
aransas-tx@tamu.edu



Ellen Reisinger

Everyone is working very hard lately putting together the Plant Sale and Hidden Garden Tour as well as our usual day-to-day functions. I would like to give a big thank you to all those involved. We appreciate all your hard work. As volunteers we tend to gravitate to the types of activities that we like or that interest us. I think we can all agree that filling out paperwork is not at the top of anyone's favorite activity. Unfortunately, filling out paperwork is necessary for our organization. We fill out the Purchase Approval Form in order to keep track of spending and stay on budget. Since we are a 501 C (3) group organization, keeping track of all our spending is very necessary. The Education Program Approval Form, the Education Project Approval Form, and the sign-in sheets, help keep track of the programs we give and the number of people reached. This information is necessary for the reports our county extension agent has to submit each month. This also lets the extension know what type of public programs or projects we are working on. All these forms can be found on our web site under Member Info on the left side (Member Forms). At the April monthly meeting we will have a short session on filling out the Purchase Request Approval Form and about the approval process. Hopefully this will help make things easier if a need arises to fill out the Approval Form in the future. So, the next time we are faced with filling out paperwork, remember it is a necessary part of keeping this organization running smoothly-and it is better than a root canal! Ellen

April Brown Bag

Tuesday, April 20 12:00-1:00 pm

Designing with Native Plants

By David Ilfrey, Landscape Designer

Aransas County Library, 701 E. Mimosa, Rockport

Educational programs of Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

GA Garden Days

April 9th & 21st
8:00 - 11:00 am

April 6th-9 am
Master Gardener Meeting
Texas AgriLife Extension

Kid's Garden Fest

Saturday, April 24th
9:30-11:30 am
Children's Discovery Garden

We should Congratulate ourselves for a very successful Spring Garden Sale!

The weather was perfect; the plants were beautiful; and the attendance was phenomenal.

522 people came through the gates!

Kudos to all who worked so hard.

Happy Birthday !

Paula Eulenfeld, 3rd
Darla Cassel, 6th
Susan Lopez, 18th
Kay King, 21st
Barbara Morran 24th
Marilee Bell, 25th
Richard Snyder, 28th

From Our Writers

Refresh Your Garden This Spring

By: Elayne Arne, Aransas/San Patricio Master Gardener

While our gardens may at times seem to give us brief and intense glimpses of eternity the reality is that they are not eternal. The plants we select and cultivate are experiencing their species and individual genetic life cycle - the gangliness of youth, the vigor of maturity, then old age and decline. While the plant lifecycle may be decades or even hundreds of years for some trees, for most trees and shrubs it is significantly shorter.

What happened at the famous Vita Sackville-West designed white garden at Sissinghurst, England that eventually required a major restoration of that famous landscape? For that matter, why a "restoration" of any landscape after a number of years? (Colonial Williamsburg gardens, Fulton Mansion gardens or your own back yard) Why could we have not expected that the gardens would have simply gotten better and better?



The answer is more than the fact that areas which were once sunny are now in deep shade, and vice versa, with the passage of years. The plants themselves have run their life courses and some of those lives can be rather quick. Even among generally long-lived trees, some trees, such as peach, will start to lose productivity and need replacing in only seven years or so. Many tropical trees reach maturity and old age in dramatically short times as part of their evolution, design and adaptation. Several garden writers advocate a complete tear out and restart of a landscape approximately every ten years!

Though we accept the short life cycle of an annual, we tend to unfairly expect and almost demand immortality of our trees, shrubs and perennials. We say, "There! After much hard work, my landscape design is fully installed and implemented and that's all it takes!"

Most experienced gardeners will simply shake their heads at such raw optimism. Fans of native

gardening may think themselves exempt. Native plants may be more adapted to a particular environment so that additional resources need not be used to create the desired growing conditions, but native plant communities are also susceptible to life cycle decline of the collection of plants that make up a particular landscape design.

One generally accepted definition for a native plant is what lived in an area prior to white settlement or approximately 1840. However, we know that humans have lived in Texas since at least 12,000 years ago, and during our time here we are constantly experiencing climate cycle changes in even 100 year cycles or less that cause plant communities to advance or retreat in their territory, regardless of human factors. The use of "pre-white settlement" to define a "native" is simply a datum or point in time at which we can pretty well define an assemblage of plants so that later we can compare how that assemblage has changed over time since then.

Whether native to your area or imported, those leafy companions in your garden, like us, are each spinning in their own track toward their next and ultimate destination – the recycling of their carbon atoms into what will become the future inhabitants of our planet.

This all brings us to, "Why Propagate?" From a botanic and scientific point of view, propagation is a fascinating hobby. With human interventions we can hasten the natural process of plant reproduction. It is additionally a very economical response to the old problem of landscape aging and decline. Home propagation is a means to reproduce those plants, which are fading in the landscape, ending their life cycle and about to hit the compost bin.

Late winter (January or February) is a good time to look around your landscape for plants that are in age decline and are completing their dedicated service to your landscape. Early spring (March) is a great time to start fresh replacements for those hard working favorites. Try giving old favorites a rebirth by propagating them to rejuvenate your own landscape or to share with others. The colder than normal winter has taken a toll on many local landscapes. Refresh your garden this spring with new plants.

Continuing Education Opportunity

Introducing 'Tomato growing 101- Completing this course on-line qualifies for 2.5 hours of Continuing Education for Master Gardeners.

This course teaches all aspects of growing tomatoes in a home garden, at your own pace and in your own home.

The course covers:

- Garden and soil preparation
- Plant selection and training
- Fertilization
- Irrigation
- Weed, disease and insect control
- General care

A short quiz at the end of each section lets you review what you learned before moving on, and at the completion of the course generates a certificate for you.

So get out from the rain, take a seat by your computer and dream about those tomatoes while you go through Tomato 101. Available at:

<http://www-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/>

From Our Extension Agent



Hello, I'd like to introduce myself to those of you I haven't met. I am the Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent for Aransas County and, as such, the Master Gardener Coordinator.

Please feel free to stop by my office, say Hello and discuss the MG program. I will be making some changes to the program; the first one is to do away with the CER and CEL

designations--all Continuing Education will be recorded as just that--CE! This will simplify at least one segment of paperwork and recordkeeping.

My responsibilities also include 4-H, agriculture, and community and economic development. I've been here 3 whole months now (!) and am enjoying the area and the people. I'm new to the state of Texas, but not to Extension as I spent the past 17 years as an Agriculture Agent in Hawaii, where I earned my Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Horticulture Science.

Thank you for all your volunteer time and the assistance you provide to Texas AgriLife Extension!

Ginger Easton Smith

Spring Garden Sale 2010



They came by the hundreds.



D.J. and Vicky get it all figured out.



Loretta, Linda, Patty and Joyce enjoy the bountiful herbs.

Around the State

Sixth Rockport Herb Festival at Paws and Taws Fulton Convention Center April 3

Presented by the Rockport Herb & Rose Study Group, the Rockport Herb Festival has a new location: Paws & Taws Fulton Convention Center, 402 N. Fulton Beach Road, Rockport-Fulton, TX. The festival runs from 8:30 until 3:30 with programs starting at 9:00.

Did you know that there are over 2,000 herbs and that roses are herbs too? And did you know that many of our Texas Native Plants are also herbs? Herbs have been used for centuries for not only culinary purposes, but also for medicinal uses, in cosmetics, cleaning solutions, clothing (one of which is Gossypium cotton), building supplies and art and craft purposes. Come and learn everything you ever wanted to know about herbs. We have a good array of speakers and vendors lined up with lots of live plants. There will also be some cooking demonstrations.

BIG BLOOM! & DOLLAR DAY at the Gardens! at Botanical Gardens & Nature Center April 10

The South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center's **ONLY plant sale and garden festival of the year**, will be 9 am to 5 pm. It's also **DOLLAR DAY**—visitors may both shop and tour the Botanical Gardens for \$1 per person. Members, who may begin shopping at 8 a.m., are admitted free and may enjoy their 10 percent discount on both Botanical Gardens plants and Garden Shoppe merchandise. Parking is free; and entrance to the BIG BLOOM is through the Rose Garden Pavilion.

'Orchids with Sam' Seminar at Botanical Gardens & Nature Center April 17

From 10-noon, Sam Jones, our Orchid Curator, says "you too can grow orchids!" Learn the basics of orchid culture made simple by Sam. Seminar fee is \$7, \$3.50 members and includes general admission. For reservations, call 361-852-2100.

'Bulbs for South Texas' Seminar at Botanical Gardens & Nature Center April 24

Many bulbs flourish in South Texas, some of which can be left in the ground year-round! Master Gardener and bulb specialist John Gilbreath tells which bulb plants make nice and easy additions to area landscapes, and shares hints about their long-term care, at **'Bulbs for South Texas'** seminar from 10 to noon. Gilbreath will discuss Narcissi, Crocuses, Spider Lilies, Crinum, Hurricane Lilies, Iris, Gladiolas, Rain Lilies and more. Class fee is \$7, \$3.50 members, and includes Gardens & Nature Center admission. For reservations, call 361-852-2100.

Expert soil-building techniques & additives at Botanical Gardens & Nature Center May 15

Learn a layman's guide to healthy soil including addition of organics, from 10 to noon. Third generation soil scientist, Dr. Shad Nelson, Associate Professor of Agronomy and Resource Sciences at Texas A&M University – Kingsville, not only will discuss methods of soil building, but also practical theory behind today's common practices. Seminar fee is \$7, \$3.50 members including admission. For reservations, call 361.852.2100.

Rainwater Harvesting Seminar at Botanical Gardens & Nature Center May 22

From drenching rains to killer droughts, South Texas experiences nearly every moisture extreme. But come sun or soaker, from 10 a.m. to noon, Celia Ray Hawkins, a **Rainwater Harvest Specialist accredited by the American Rainwater Catchment System Association**, will teach students storage methods to take advantage of those rainy spells, catching and saving free fresh water for landscape, vegetable garden or greenhouse for the dry period bound to follow. Seminar fee is \$7, \$3.50 for members, which includes Botanical Gardens admission. For reservations, call 361.852.2100.

April 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 County Holiday	3
4	5	6 9am MG Monthly Meeting	7 8:30am Propagation Committee	8	9 8-11am Green Acres Garden Day 10:30am Landscape Committee Texas Master Gardeners Association-Dallas	10
11	12	13 10 am Hidden Gardens Tour Hat Decoration	14 8:30am Propagation Committee	15	16	17
18	19	20 12-1pm Brown Bag 1:30pm Board Meeting	21 8-11am Green Acres Garden Day 8:30am Propagation Committee 10am Tree Team Visits	22	23	24 9:30am Kid's Garden Fest
25	26	27	28 8:30am Propagation Committee	29	30 <i>April Hours Due</i>	