



## Aransas/San Patricio

### The President's Corner



Lonnie Matthew

As I'm sure all of you know, we have a general membership meeting on the first Tuesday of each month. The purpose of the meeting is to include the membership in the decision making process and to share information. Many of you have commented that you do not like to attend meetings and that's why we don't see you at our monthly meetings. That would be fine if it were not for the fact that occasionally a decision is made or information is imparted that you do not agree with and are unhappy about. It is not fair to the members that make the effort to come and participate in the business of our association to have to listen to the complaints of the others who choose not to be a part of the process. The great thing about our association is the many ways that Master Gardeners can follow through on our mission statement and I applaud all of the work that you all do. The important thing is to respect each other and acknowledge that we are each doing our best to retain the high standing that the Aransas/San Patricio Master Gardeners Association has attained.

### October Brown Bag

**Tuesday, October 20 12:00-1:00 pm**

### **"Creating a Pocket Prairie Garden"**

**Aransas County Library, 701 E. Mimosa, Rockport**

Learn about creating a small prairie at your home or business for a beautiful, low care, low water alternative to high maintenance turf.

**By Ellen Reisinger, Master Gardener**

### **In Area Newspapers this month watch for...**

*Rainwater Harvesting* - Anita Garrett-Roe

*The Hard Working Gourd* - D.J. Chilcoat

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.

October 2009

### **Green Acres Garden Days**

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

### **October 6th, 9 am Monthly Meeting & Election Nominees for 2010 Officers**

**President-** Ellen Reisinger  
**1st VP-** Gay Hetmajcek  
**2nd VP-** Loretta Brandt  
**Secretary-** Francis Frizzell  
**Treasurer-** Beth Wilson

Thank you for your commitment!

### **Happy Birthday !**

Mary Ann Geer, 1<sup>st</sup>  
 Todd Cutting, 3<sup>rd</sup>  
 Gail Bergan 14<sup>th</sup>  
 Jennifer Thomas 14<sup>th</sup>  
 Shirley Windhorst, 15<sup>th</sup>  
 Lonnie Matthew, 17<sup>th</sup>  
 L'Ella Andrews, 18<sup>th</sup>  
 Patricia Baugh, 22<sup>nd</sup>  
 Barbara Mahan 22<sup>nd</sup>  
 Ruth Hoese, 26<sup>th</sup>  
 Marthanne Mitchell 29<sup>th</sup>

**2009 Officers**  
**President:** Lonnie Matthew  
**1st VP:** Sandy Stanley  
**2nd VP:** Ellen Reisinger  
**Secretary:** Susan Lopez  
**Treasurer:** Beth Wilson  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
**Extension Agent:**  
 Amy Freeman  
**Extension Office Manager:**  
 Ernie Edmundson  
**Secretary:** Thea Edmundson  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
**Website:**  
[www.aspmastergardeners.org](http://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](mailto:aransas-tx@tamu.edu)

### **Editors**

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**Our Mission:** *Improving the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high-quality, relevant education.*

## From Our Writers

### RAINWATER HARVESTING

By Anita Garrett-Roe, Master Gardeners Aransas/San Patricio Master Gardeners

Would you like to save some money on your water bill? Would you like to help the environment at the same time? There is a way you can do it! Harvest rainwater! Mother Nature gives it to us for free. Once you know how to harvest rainwater, you will be amazed and wonder why more people don't try it.



Years ago, Texas settlers all used rain barrels for their water supply. As municipalities put in public water supplies, people abandoned rainwater harvesting and their rain barrels. But

population growth and its attendant demands on a finite water supply have created renewed interest in this ancient and easy to do process.

We are facing climbing water rates all across the state. Municipalities are having to pay more to get their water and are passing these rates on to the ultimate consumers: you and me. Close to home, Portland's City Council has just voted to raise rates, a pass through of increasing prices from regional water supplier, San Patricio County Municipal Water District. We are all going to gradually feel the increase in the cost of our water wherever we live in the Coastal Bend.

Government entities in some cities in Texas are already taking steps to encourage their citizens to harvest rainwater, either through providing rebates on water harvesting supplies, or not counting rainwater catchment devices on property valuation for taxing purposes. In Austin, it is considered "cool" to have a rain barrel, and descriptions of Homes for Sale often mention the rain barrel.

Even though we are in an "almost desert" climate, where our annual rainfall can in some years be one of the lowest in the state, we can still harvest a significant amount of water for free. When there is 1 inch of rainfall, about .06 gallons of water will fall on

each square foot of your roof. That means a 1000 square foot area of roof could yield 600 gallons of water for each inch of rainfall. This is significant.

Landscapes, gardens, pets and livestock can all use captured rainwater. Of course, it is also possible to filter and disinfect rainwater for use in homes and businesses in place of other sources of water. Rainwater is already soft and is perfect for your plants and garden.



Setting up a rain catchment device is simple and not expensive, depending on how elaborate you want to go. The simplest type of rainwater catchment is a bucket placed under a gutter. Tie on some window screen on top to keep the leaves and bugs out. You will probably want something bigger, however. Plastic barrels are

available that come with leaf and insect filtering screens and are kid proof. Their narrow top openings are small enough that even a tiny child could not fall through.

Decide where you want to place your rain barrel, remove a piece of your gutter and set the barrel under it. When it rains, water will splash in, but if you are more particular about not missing a drop, you can channel all the water flowing out of the gutter by attaching a PVC pipe to the gutter. The PVC acts as a



guide for the water and delivers it exactly to the top of the barrel. If one barrel is not big enough for you, place another one beside it and use a PVC pipe splitter to channel overflow water to the second barrel.

You don't need a plumber or an electrician to collect your own rainwater. In fact, this would be a fun project to do with your children. Just get a plastic bucket and some window screen material for the cover. Tie the screen onto the bucket with some rope or a bungee cord. If you don't have gutters, look at the ground around your house and select a location for your rain barrel that shows a

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strong imprint on the ground where rain seems to flow heavily off your roof.

Place your rain barrel on cement blocks so it is a little elevated. This elevation causes gravity to help deliver the water later on when you have a hose attached, and also gives your hands plenty of room to operate the faucet.

If you get a larger rain barrel you will need a hose attached to the side of the barrel, near the bottom. Drill a hole in the side of your rain barrel and install a hose bib, or faucet, that is threaded to accept a water hose. People at the hardware store can tell you how to do this. By adding this faucet, you have easy access to the water at all times. Attach soaker hoses to this faucet for watering your plants. It is possible to find rain barrels that come with the hose bib already attached. I like the ones that are kid proof and narrow at the top. If you want to get fancy, you can get a timer from the hardware store that operates on batteries. It will turn the rainwater barrel faucet on and off at the times you set on its digital clock.

Rain Barrels were once so common that even children sang a song that included a reference to them. Perhaps you remember the words to this old song: I think the reference of "crying" down the rain barrel was about yelling into the rain barrel to hear the different sounds of one's voice.

*Playmate*

Hey, hey, oh playmate,  
Come out and play with me.  
You'll bring your dollies three,  
Climb up my apple tree.  
Cry down my rain barrel,  
Slide down my cellar door.  
And we'll be jolly friends  
Forever more.



**Be the first on your block to have your own rain barrel!**

## 2009 Earth-Kind Landscaping Class Schedule

Date/Location	Topic	Instructor/Speaker
Tues Oct 6, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Aransas Co. Library	Introduction to EK Landscaping; Soil Samples; Developing a Scale Drawing; Hardscapes	County Agent; Russ & Marilee Bell
Tues Oct 13, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Library	Seven Principles of EK; Practical Turf; Composting & Bed Preparation	Russ & Marilee Bell
Tues Oct 20, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Library	Principles of Design; Landscape Design Technology	Jeanna Godfrey; Richard Snyder
Tues Oct 27, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Library	Plant Selection for Beauty & Wildlife; Creating a Plant Palette	Ernie Edmundson
Tues Nov 3, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Ext. Office	Tree Selection, Planting & Maintenance; Integrated Pest Management	Dr. Michael Womack; Michael Potter
Tues Nov 10, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Library	Water Conservation, Water Audits & Irrigation Options; Rainwater Harvesting; Soil Test Results	Lee Wehring; Russ Bell
Tues Nov 17, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Ext. Office	Design Presentations; Wrap-up & Evaluation	Class Members; Russ & Marilee Bell

## 2009 Master Gardening Class Schedule

*Tues. Oct. 6th	Landscape Plant Selection **Gill's Nursery, 2810 Airline, C. C.	Kathy Hubner, Landscape Designer Gill's Landscape Nursery
*Tues. Oct. 13th	Home Vegetable Gardening *First Methodist Church, 801 E. Main, Rockport	Tom LeRoy, Montgomery Co. Extension Agent-Horticulture
Tues. Oct. 20th	Propagation I – Seeds Propagation II- Vegetative *Green Acres Greenhouse	Master Gardener Propagation Specialists: Annette Fowler, Vicki Coble, Sandy Stanley – Aransas/San Patricio Co. Master Gardeners
Tues., Oct. 27th	Soils & Fertility	Speaker-Dr. Dan Fromme, Associate Professor and Extension Agronomist
Tues. Nov. 3rd *Extension Office	Container Gardening Tropicals	Carol Krank & DeAnna Baumgartner, Nueces Master Gardener & Darlene Gooris, Aransas/San Patricio Master Gardener
Tues. Nov. 10th	Citrus and Fruits Composting / Worm Composting	Dr. John Fucik, Retired Horticulture Professor & Nueces Master Gardener
*Wed. Nov. 18 1:30-5:00 pm **CC Museum of	Landscape Design and Xeriscape/MG Program Science & History, 1900 N. Chaparral St.	Dr. Carol Brouwer, Harris County Extension Agent-Horticulture CC - Lecture Hall
Tues. Dec. 1st	MG Phone Desk & Common Homeowner Questions / MG Post Test & Surveys	Aransas Co. Extension Agent

## Earth Kind Rose Symposium

The 2009 Earth-Kind(R) Rose Symposium will be held Saturday, Oct. 17, at the Victoria County 4-H Activity Center, 259 Bachelor Dr., near Victoria Regional Airport off of Business Highway 59. The symposium will be held 8 a.m. through 5:30 p.m., and is open to rose growers from throughout the state. The event is being presented by Victoria County Master Gardener Association and the Victoria County Texas AgriLife Extension Office.

Keynote speaker will be Dr. Steve George of Dallas, creator of the Earth-Kind Environmental Landscape Management System which is based on environmental friendly gardening techniques. Attendees will get an introduction into growing low-maintenance roses, bed preparation, companion plants, landscaping and growing an Earth-Kind garden. There will be a planting demonstration.

The \$65 registration fee includes a box lunch, morning and afternoon refreshments and snacks, a tour of the VCMGA Earth-Kind experimental rose research site, the Victoria Educational Gardens, an Earth-Kind handbook, and a two-gallon experimental rose.

Reservations must be prepaid and received by 5 p.m. Oct. 1. Late registration will run through Oct. 9, or whenever all seats are taken. Late registration will cost \$75.

A registration form and complete agenda is available at the VCMGA web site, [www.vcmga.org](http://www.vcmga.org). Forms are available through the Aransas County Extension Office, 611 E. Mimosa St. Telephone number is 361-790-0103. Information also is available by telephoning the Victoria Extension Office at 361-575-4581.



“Knock Out” Rose

# Around the State

## Orchid Novice Class at Botanical Gardens and Nature Center Continues 1st Thursday Each Month

South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center Visitors Center, 8545 S. Staples. Meeting the first Thursday of each month on a continuing basis, the orchid class series—taught by Orchid Curator Sam Jones—covers varieties, culture, care, climate, and acquisition. No reservations necessary. For more information, call 361/854-7624.

## Birding & Novel Unite for *National Endowment for the Arts* free seminar at Botanical Gardens & Nature Center October 10

The National Endowment for the Arts, Friends of the Corpus Christi Public Libraries and South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center partner for the free seminar *Don't Mock the Mockingbird*, from 10 am to noon, Saturday, October 10, at the Gardens & Nature Center, 8545 S. Staples.

Local birder Beth Hoejke shares skills and hot spots with all levels of birders, and encourages them to read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, part of the National Endowment for the Arts BIG READ campaign.

Free admission to this educational seminar is underwritten by the Endowment for the Arts, and Friends of the Libraries. For reservations, call 361-852-2100.

## South Texas Wine & Herb Festival at Botanical Gardens October 17

*The South Texas Wine & Herb Festival* will debut at the South Texas Botanical Gardens from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm, Saturday, October 17. The Rockport Rose & Herb Study Group and other wine & herb aficionados will offer different seminars & demonstrations on the half hour in the Rose Pavilion, 8545 S. Staples Street. Partnering with the **Texas Department of Agriculture's 'Go Texan' program**, there will be wine tastings, cooking demos using Texas seafood, and vendors on site with potted herbs and other herb or wine-related merchandise. *Home Grown* editor Judy Barrett will be on site for a program and signing of her new book, *What Can I do with my Herbs?*

General admission applies. Seminars/demonstrations fee is an additional \$4 per person for the day. For more information, call 361-852-2100.

## Rainwater Harvesting Class Friday, October 16th

**Nueces County Master Gardeners**  
Learn the "*How To's*" of Rainwater Harvesting and Build Your Own Rainwater Harvesting Barrel!

**9:00 am—3:00 pm**

**Texas AgriLife Extension-Nueces County Office**  
Speaker: Billy Kniffen, State Rainwater Harvesting Specialist

Fee: \$40 includes lunch & rain barrel  
Make Checks Payable to: Nueces Master Gardeners  
710 E. Main, Suite 1, Robstown, TX 78380  
Send Name, Address, Contact # & Email  
Class size is limited-Register by October 9th

## Floral Design for Fall & Winter Holidays Taught at Botanical Gardens October 24

Get floral design ideas and skills at a *Holiday Floral Design* seminar/workshop from 10 to noon Saturday, October 24, at the South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center Visitors Center, 8545 S. Staples St. Floral hobbyist Nan Bailey will cover centerpieces, baskets, wreathes, bows and other decor for Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Seminar fees are \$6, \$3.50 for members, and include general admission. For reservations, call 361-852-2100.

## Wildscape Workshop & Native Plant Sale at South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center Saturday, October 31

The Native Plant Society of South Texas and South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center partner for a *Wildscape Workshop & Native Plant Sale*, from 9:15 am to 3 pm, Saturday, October 31, at the Botanical Gardens, 8545 S. Staples St.

Taught by Native Plant Society members, the workshop focuses on varieties of native plants and adapted species which not only will improve beauty and quality of your landscape, but also will attract various birds, butterflies and other critters, while lowering your water bill. Lunch is included in the workshop fee which is \$15, \$12.50 members. For reservations, call 361-852-2100.

# October 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>Orchid Novice Class – STBGNC</i>	2	3
4	5	6 9 am MG Monthly meeting 10 am Raffle Mtg. 1:30 pm MG class-Gill's 6 pm E-K class-Introduction	7	8 2:00 pm Budget meeting	9 8-11am Green Acres Garden Day 10:30 am Landscape Committee	10 <i>Don't Kill The Mockingbird-STBGNC</i>
11	12	13 10 am Budget meeting 1:30 pm MG class-Vegetable 6 pm E-K class-Principals of EK	14	15	16 <i>Rainwater Harvesting Class- Nueces MG</i>	17 <i>EarthKind Roses-Victoria MG South Texas Wine &amp; Herb Festival – STBGNC</i>
18	19	20 10 am Board Meeting 12-1 pm Brown Bag –Prairies 1:30 pm MG class-Propagation 6 pm E-K class-Design	21 8-11am Green Acres Garden Day	22	23	24 <i>Floral Design for Fall &amp; Winter Holidays– STBGNC</i>
25	26	27 1:30 pm MG class-Soils 6 pm E-K class-Plant Selection	28	29	30 9 am <i>GA Redesign Committee</i>	31 Time Sheets Due <i>Wildscape Workshop-STBGNC</i>