

September 2019

### Lamb's Lettuce

By: Cary Lam

What?!

#### Time To Think About My Fall Garden Now?



The good news is that we can grow a fall garden in Bastrop County. Due to our relatively longer Fall season, a number of cold-hardy plants allow us to harvest through November without too much weather protection. It is time to start planning and buying seeds for

your Fall garden NOW. Consider one plant that is an excellent fall/winter gap filler, both in the vegetable garden and at the dining table: **Lamb's Lettuce**

#### Lamb's Lettuce, Mache, Vit, Corn/Field Salad?

The Loire Valley in France is where I had an unforgettable salad made with Lamb's Lettuce (la mâche in French). I was recently reminded of this experience in the middle of a sleepless night while flipping through 500 channels. I landed on a French cable station showing a Nantes chef's farm-to-table relationship with a grower and his mâche salad creation filmed in Nantes and in a nearby bistro.

La mâche is a cold-season green with mild flavor with a slightly "nutty" taste that's easy to grow for spring and autumn crops. It is a flavorful salad green, native to the temperate zones of Europe. In addition to being found in

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### We Need These "Weeds"!

By: Marianna Hobbs

This Summer taught me some valuable lessons on gardening in extreme heat. There's a lot to be learned from what comes up naturally in the garden, and the Fall season offers some very good examples of helpful "weeds". I have my favorites and plan to show them the respect they so deserve.



Let's start with Tall Boneset (*Eupatorium altissimum*) because it is already up and blooming in a lot of places. Related to Shrubby Boneset and Mist Flower, its credentials speak for themselves. Pollinators love them and they are extremely heat and drought tolerant. The season is short, but they are there when you need them.

Fall Aster (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*) provides a beautiful bloom that attracts pollinators and birds of all kinds. Deadheading them prolongs the bloom cycle, but during winter the seeds provide food for wild things, and the decaying foliage becomes needed shelter.



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## September = Education

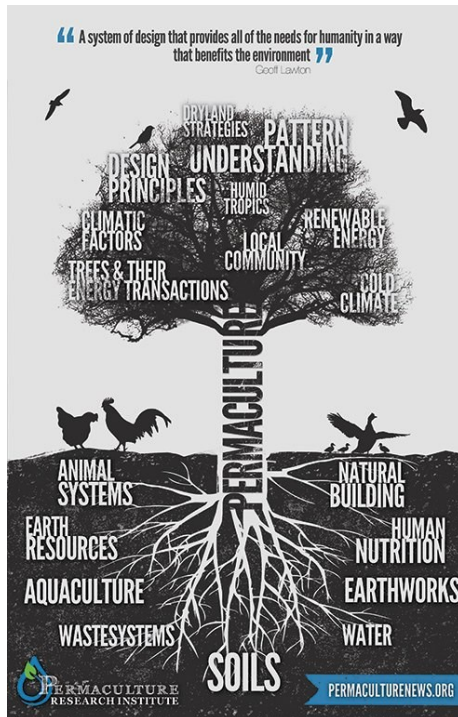
September is turning out to be a really full month of educational events. With HEB classes every Saturday. The first one kicks off with Dave Posh and a timely



“fall” presentation on making your own DIY cattle panel greenhouse (hoop-house). Gary Buckwalter’s discussion of landscaping and planning follows.

Following very closely on the 9th is a Lunch and Learn with Marcia Erickson who will give us her “secrets” for having a successful fall garden. It’s just in time for our Oct 5 plant sale to get your fall garden going.

Then get ready for the monthly meeting on the 17th where Brittney Benton, a certified Permaculture Designer since 2004, will discuss **Principles of Permaculture** from the perspective of her personal experiences. She has years of work and growth in this area and it promises to be a very interesting talk.



## Who is Brittney?

As a central Texas native , I started my career in horticulture and herbalism in 2001, apprenticing with Aus-

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## Upcoming Events



- **Sept 7, 14, 21, 28**—HEB Backyard Classes  
Topics vary—see our website for more detail  
10:00 AM–11:00 AM  
104 Hassler Blvd. (follow signs inside store)  
Bastrop, TX 78602
- **Sept 9**—Lunch and Learn  
Topic: Fall Gardening with Marcia  
11:30 AM-12:30 PM  
Bastrop County Court House / downstairs  
804 Pecan Street. Bastrop, Tx 78692
- **Sept 17**  
BMCGA Education & Business Meeting,  
Topic: Principles of Permaculture  
5:30 for snacks & social—6:00 PM–7:00 PM  
Bluebonnet Electric HQ  
155 Electric Ave, Bastrop, TX 78602
- **Oct 5**  
Fall Plant Sale  
9:00 AM-2:00 PM  
Bastrop County Show Bard at Mayfest Park  
25 American Legion Drive, Bastrop, TX 78602
- **Oct 14**  
Lunch and Learn  
Topic: Butterflies and Gardening  
11:30 AM-12:30 PM  
Bastrop County Court House/ downstairs  
804 Pecan Street, Bastrop, Tx 78692

Note:

The Nov 11th Lunch and Learn has been cancelled.

**All of our events are free and open to the public.**

Please check out website for full details.

<https://txmg.org/bastropcounty/>

And like us on [Facebook](#)

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tin area herbalists, while building medicinal gardens on the east side of Austin .

I started propagating and observing plants when I was four years old, after discovering a seed starting kit in my dentists “treasure chest”. It was then that my love of growing plants became known.

I received my certificate from the Austin Permaculture Guild in Permaculture design in 2004.

I began learning more about Texas native plants and habitat restoration through my work in the environmental conservation corps in 2007.

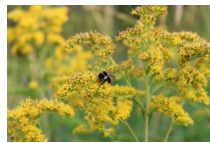
In 2007, I started my herb farm and Apothecary business in Bastrop, Texas.

I have continued to study, implement and teach the principles of permaculture and sustainability within my community through local non profits and the international organization World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms which pairs international and American volunteers with organic farms to learn about sustainable farming practices and topics pertaining to natural living.

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## We Need These “Weeds”!

Goldenrod (many species) is a beautiful tall stately plant that is medicinal, easy to care for, and beneficial to insects and others. Some gardeners actually plant it.



Liatris (many species) is another beautiful addition to the garden. They are flowing, long flowering purple flower stalks that droop and sway independently. They are excellent for birds, insects, bees and can be dead-headed for a longer blooming period.

There are many more, but these plants are beautiful, easy to grow, naturally occurring and good for the world.

Marianna Hobbs is the lead for the Cedar Creek Park Butterfly Garden. She is both a Master Gardener and Master Naturalist

## October 5 = Plant Sale

Twice a year we have a plant sale to help raise funds to support our community educational efforts. Our Spring sale is all about getting those early vegetable starts into the ground as soon we can after the danger of frost is gone. Everyone is always very anxious to get started after a long cold spell of not growing anything.

When Fall comes around, we all look forward to those winter vegetables that love cooler weather. Lettuce,



kale, spinach, radish, broccoli, brussels sprouts, and cabbage, to name a few, all fill that bill.



We will have a variety of those cool weather vegetables at the sale, along with a limited selection of hardy herbs and perennials. We’re also featuring native shrubs and trees, in pot sizes you can take home and plant easily. Fall is the best time to plant shrubs and trees: Due to our relatively mild winters, they continue growing roots, making them hardier when next year’s hot season arrives.

Also, many of our Master Gardeners have been propagating to get their favorites ready for the sale. Fall Aster, Dwarf Yaupon Holly, Flame Acanthus, Gregg’s Mist Flower, Ox Blood Lilies, to name a few, will be on sale. You’ll just have to come see all the goodies!



Fall Plant Sale

9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Bastrop County Show Barn at Mayfest Park  
25 American Legion Drive, Bastrop, TX 78602



# DOGS and NATURE

Hope everyone is having a good summer. When I was growing up, always heard this time of year called the "dog days of summer." Like many of the expressions I grew up with (who can forget "fair to middling"?), I never really knew where it came from.

According to the Farmer's Almanac—if you remember that—it turns out that during this time, the sun is in the same region of the sky as Sirius, which is the brightest star visible from any part of Earth. Sirius is part of the constellation Canis Major—the greater dog—and is sometimes referred to as the Dog Star. In the summer, Sirius rises and sets with the sun.

On July 23rd, it appears to move with the sun, and because it is so bright, the ancient Romans thought it gave off heat and added to the heat from the sun which is what made this time of year especially hot. They referred to it as dies caniculares, or "dog days." The term "dog days of summer" came to mean the 20 days before and after July 23rd.

Whatever the origins, as my mom used to say, "it's hotter than blue blazes."

Cary Lam



## For Our Friends on Facebook

Last month Kerry Fossler attended a couple of Master Gardener classes. She took pictures and posted really cute stories about them. They were shared to the Bastrop County Master Gardener Association Facebook page. If you missed seeing them, here's some short links to them. I really enjoyed the read..



<< Howard's class on Xeriscape

<https://tinyurl.com/Kerrys-Howard-post>

>> MG tree class-Daniel Lewis A&M Forest Service

<https://tinyurl.com/Kerrys-tree-post>

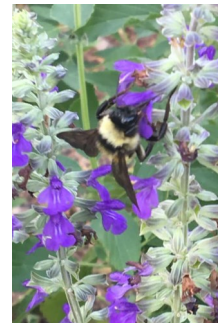


# News In The Garden

The Butterfly Garden that is. From all the photos people have been sending me about what has been going on in the Butterfly Garden, it looks to be a good time for the plants and bees and butterflies despite the lack of rain. If you get a chance, go for a visit and enjoy the garden or come on down for a workday.



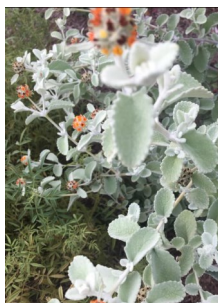
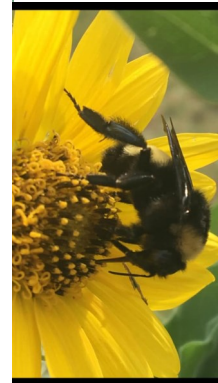
Marianna and MG students



Bees love it



Not often that we get a picture of Gary



Woolly Butterfly Bush



Trailing Verbena



Desert Willow



New 2019 MG students came out to play

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the wild in many parts of Europe, the green is also sold in markets, especially in the spring, when the tender young shoots are the most flavorful.

The name corn salad comes from the fact that it was commonly found growing wild in English wheat fields, back when wheat was commonly referred to as corn. It was originally collected from the wild by European peasants. It was not until the early 1800s, when the royal gardener of King Louis XIV introduced it to the world, that people began to cultivate it in gardens.

Several different species in the *Valerianella* genus are known as lamb's lettuce, and there are many alternate names for this green, which can cause confusion. It is also sometimes called field salad, because it often grows wild in cultivated fields—more so in Europe. The common name appears to stem from the fact that it tastes best during lambing season, and some people also call it lamb's tongue because the leaves resemble small tongues.

When fresh and young, lamb's lettuce has a slightly nutty, tangy flavor. It can be used like spinach in salad mixes, or eaten on its own. Some cooks also steam it and use it like a vegetable. The nutty flavor pairs well with a range of dressings and other ingredients. If it is cooked, it is usually just briefly wilted to retain the flavor and nutritional value.

### **Cultivation and Growing Tips**

While Lamb's Lettuce will grow in nearly all soils and condition, it thrives in rich, moist soil. Sow in late summer to late autumn in full sun/part shade. Space seeds 1" apart if direct seeding, and thin to 3-6" between growing plants, with 4" between rows. Water the young plants during dry spells, and ensure that weeds do not smother the plant. This winter hardy plant should be lightly mulched during very cold weather. Harvest 30-60 days from sowing. Cultivate in the same manner as lettuce. Established plants should be able to survive the rigors of winter. It can be harvested all winter long.

### **Even More Nutritional than Spinach**

Like many zesty-flavored foraged greens, lamb's lettuce has a high nutritional value. It provides several vital minerals and nutrients, including three times as much vitamin C as lettuce, and Vitamins E, B6, B9, along with beta carotene and omega-3 fatty acids. It also is a significant source of iron—it contains 1/3 more iron than spinach!

### **Fit For A King and Your Table**

In France this humble plant has an elevated gourmet status, especially when harvested from the rich-soiled Loire Valley. It's found on bistro menus and in open air markets alike. Try it in a simple salad dressed in olive oil and lemon with mushrooms and red onion. The French prefer la mâche with cooked beets and walnuts. Whatever your preference, once you've tried it, this easy-to-grow gourmet green might become a welcome regular in your winter or spring garden. Pair with a good Loire Valley Vouvray! *Remember—things that grow together go together!*

[www.wisegeek.com/what-is-lambs-lettuce.htm](http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-lambs-lettuce.htm)

<http://www.heirloom-organics.com/guide/va/1/guidetogrowinglambslettuce.html>

"Come Grow With Us"

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