

# What's Growin' On . . .

The BCMGA Newsletter

November 2003

Vol. 3, Iss. 11

## IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION:

This is the last issue of the newsletter for 2003. (There will be no December issue - not much MG activity and too much Christmas activity!) Beginning in January 2004, those members who are on the email distribution list won't receive a copy in the mail. You will receive an email notification when the newsletter is available online. Remember, this is being done in order to reduce postage and paper costs at the extension office. If you are able to access the newsletter online, please do so.

If you are on the email distribution list, PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO ACCESS THE NEWSLETTER ONLINE. A few people have had problems, so please don't assume that you will be able to view it. If you have any problems, please email me or call me ASAP. The sooner I know about a problem the better.

Thanks, Anna

## At the Meeting:

**Speaker** - Our speaker this month was Steve Carter who gave a presentation on bamboo. Steve has over 70 varieties of bamboo on his property. He gave a great presentation with a lot of information on bamboo.

**Executive Board Meeting** - John Alcorn invited all BCMGA members to attend the Executive Board meeting which takes place before the general Tuesday meetings. The meetings begin at 5:30 and generally last an hour. (Please note that there will not be a December Executive Board meeting.)

**January Planning Meeting** - Mark your calendar for the Planning Meeting. It will be held on Thursday, January 8, 2004, at 5:30 p.m. at the Extension Office. All Officers and Chairman will be in attendance, but all members are invited, so everyone can give their input for our 2004 plans. We will be having a pot luck dinner, so please bring a covered dish.

**Spring Plant Sale** - Barbara Brown is excited about not only the spring 2004 Plant Sale but the 2007 Plant Sale as well. Many BCMGA members have dropped off seedlings, cuttings and plants for the sale, and Barbara is working on keeping them in good condition so that we have some impressive trees and plants in the years to come. If you have any baby plants or cuttings you want to donate, bring them by the greenhouse.

**2004 Lazy Gardener Calendar** - Ted Jagen will be taking orders for the 2004 Lazy Gardener Calendar. The cost is \$5 per calendar and must be paid when you place your order. The deadline to do so is at the meeting on December 9. You can bring your money to Ted at the meeting. If you can't make it to the meeting, you can mail your check to Ted. The calendars will be distributed at the January meeting.

**Dr. Doug Welsh Radio Program** - Dr. Welsh has a one hour radio program on on KAMU 90.9. You can access it over the web from 12:00-1:00 on Thursdays at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/mastergd/gardensuccess/>. Gardening questions can be submitted over the phone (979)845-5689 or via email at: [gardensuccess@tamu.edu](mailto:gardensuccess@tamu.edu).

**2004 Officers** - Here are our new officers for 2004. Officer installation will take place at the December meeting.

President - John Alcorn  
1<sup>st</sup> VP for Volunteers - Don Gerard  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP for Programs - Donie Stowers  
Treasurer - Ted Jagen  
Secretary - Judy Wood  
State Reps - David and Pam Peltier  
State Rep alternates - Evelyn Moon and Christine Kern

**December Meeting** - In addition to officer installation, we will have our annual Christmas dinner and gift exchange at our December meeting. BCMGA will be providing hams, so bring a covered dish, salad or dessert. You are also welcome to bring your spouse or significant other. If you wish to participate in the gift exchange, you should bring a garden-related, non-gender specific gift with a maximum cost \$15.

**Christies are Retiring** - Mary Lou and Jim Christie are retiring from their position of Hospitality Chairs. Thanks to them for all of their help with coordinating all of the great refreshments we have had.

**New Hospitality Chair** - Cheryl Vining is taking over as the new Hospitality Chair. No doubt she'll have a sign up sheet available in the near future!

### **At the Demonstration Gardens:**

**Buzzing Buzzing Bees** - Beware of the bees in the tree by the blue house. It's the tree with the tape around the upper part of the trunk. Please keep clear of it. We are in contact with Roger Woolsey to try to relocate the bees to somewhere else on the property.

**Veggie Garden Update** - The veggie gardens are looking good. The beds are free of grass and we are just waiting for production.

**Tiller Donation** - Thanks to Marvin Petter who donated a Troybilt tiller to the Demonstration Gardens. Thanks, Marvin - we really appreciate it!

**Finally, a New Tractor Mower** - Ray Michalik is pleased to announce the arrival of a John Deere 425 mower. He says that anyone who wants to come out and give it a spin through the grass is welcome to, however, **the oil must be checked EVERY TIME the mower is used**. It is very important that this be done, and it is every operator's responsibility.

#### **TO CHECK THE OIL LEVEL IN THE MOWER PROPERLY - every time it is used:**

- Unscrew the dip stick and wipe clean.
- Reinsert the dip stick into the cylinder - **DO NOT SCREW DIP STICK BACK INTO THE CYLINDER AT THIS POINT**. It will give you an incorrect reading.
- Lift the dipstick out of the cylinder and check the level.
- Screw the dipstick back into the cylinder when you are finished.

**Landscape Plans** - Barbara Ross will be preparing a map for future plantings at the Demonstration Gardens. It is planned that BCMGA members who have attended the Landscape Seminar at A&M will be working with Barbara on this project.

**Hang It Up** - If you use any tools from the horse barn, please make sure that you return them and hang them up, so they don't get wet in the event of rain.

**Are you Feeling Citrus-y** - Gil Livanec is the Chair of the newest committee: Citrus Committee. Right now there are two other members - John Alcorn and Smitty Smith. Interested in joining this committee? Contact Gil.

The current goal of the Citrus Committee is to plan a citrus orchard at the DG. They are trying to put together a list of grafting material sources. If you are a citrus grower or if you know of a source for them to use, please get that information to Gil.

**Free Fertilizer** - A cleaning up of the "head house" turned up several large garbage cans filled with fertilizer. One is labeled "10-20-10 mixed," another is labeled "15-5-10," and a third is unlabeled but appears to be a time release one. It is fertilizer that the MGs got when work at the Demo Gardens first began. This material needs to be disposed of and one good way is for any Master Gardener who would like some to come take it home. There will be someone there on the normal workdays but you are welcome to pick it up any time. If you go by at a time when no one is there, the fertilizer containers are in the back room where the tools are kept, on the left side, toward the rear of the room. Bring whatever size container you want to fill, no limit on size.

**A Thank You Note From Barbara Ross** - Thanks to all the volunteers who have put in so much effort at the greenhouse. We now have the beds looking good and we can start doing some fun new things instead of playing catch up all the time.

**Work Days** - Tuesdays and Fridays from 7:30/8:00 a.m. until noon.

**Mark your calendars for these  
December and January work  
days:**

December 2	December 5	December 9
December 12	December 16	December 19*
December 30	January 6	January 9
January 13	January 16*	January 20
January 23	January 27	January 30

\*Third Friday

**News to Know:**

**Volunteer Hours** - It's getting to be the end of the year. We need to get our volunteer hours turned in. Please turn in your hours to Don at the next meeting or mail them to.

**Dues Will be Dues** - Annual dues need to be in by January 15. Ted Jagen will be collecting them at the December and January meetings. If you are unable to attend either meeting, your check for \$12 can be mailed to him.

**Spring MG Training Classes** - Plans for the Spring MG Training are well underway. About 2/3 of the instructors have been lined up. The classes will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays with two classes a day: morning from 9:00 to 12:00 and afternoon from 12:30 to 3:30.

Help will be needed for lunch during the training classes. The morning refreshments are taken care of, however, volunteers are needed to bring food for lunch. If you are able to do so, please contact Pat Gerard.

**New Audit Committee Members** - At the October meeting, Patty Varnado and Gil Livanec agreed to help Ray Michalik on the Audit Committee.

**How About a Little Teaching** - The City of Clute will be holding their Landscape Seminar on January 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. The event is a partnering between City of Clute, the MGs and the TCE. A request has gone out for MGs to volunteer as speakers at the programs. The presentations should run approximately one hour and should concentrate on either veggies, ornamentals, perennials, citrus, fruits, herbs, etc., which are appropriate for Brazoria County. For those who are teaching at Brazosport College, Paula suggested you may want to test run your program at this event. If you are able to help, please contact Paula Craig.

**Aaahhhhh Cruise** - The Southern Region Master Gardener Cruise is scheduled for June 24-28, 2004. You can find all the details at <http://www.poetravel.com/corporate/trip1.html>.

**Leader of Agriculture Program to Retire** - Dr. Edward A. Hiler, whose leadership has shaped the course of Texas agriculture over the past 37 years, has announced that he will retire effective Aug. 31, 2004. You can read the full story on the web at: <http://agnews.tamu.edu/dailynews/stories/AGPR/Oct3103c.htm>.

## Calendar of Events:

*\*see below for details*

*new items in bold*

### 2003 Dates:

- December 7: Growing And Eating Citrus-Our Best Fruit\***  
**December 8: How to Start a Community Garden\***  
 December 9: December Meeting  
**December 13: Amaryllis Society Christmas Display & Sale\***  
**December 15: How to Start a Community Garden\***  
 December 18: Creating a Certified Wildlife Habitat  
 December 19: Third Friday  
**December 28: Recycle that Holiday Tree\***

### 2004 Dates:

- January 8: Planning Meeting**  
**January 8: Care Of Fruit Trees\***  
**January 9: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning\***  
**January 10: Container Gardening Workshop\***  
**January 10: Peaches, Plums, Pomegranates & Other Fruit\***  
**January 12: How to Start a Community Garden\***  
 January 13: January Meeting  
**January 14: Gardens in England\***  
**January 14: An Introduction to Permaculture\***  
**January 15: Organic Vegetable Specialty Series Begins\***  
 January 16: Third Friday  
**January 16: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning\***  
**January 17: Fruit Tree Sale\***  
**January 21: Permaculture-The Ecological Foundations of Design Begins\***  
**January 23: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning\***  
 January 24: Haak Winery Pruning Day Seminar  
**January 24: Arbor Day\***  
**January 24: Apples, Pears & Persimmons\***  
**January 27: Terrific Tomatoes\***  
**January 30: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning\***  
**January 31: Berries, Figs & Grapes\***

### February 7:

- February 10:  
 February 10-  
 March 18:  
 February 20:  
 February 24:

### March 4:

- March 9:  
 March 19:  
 April 3:  
 April 13:  
 April 16:  
 April 17:

### May 6-8:

- May 11:  
 May 21:  
 June 8:  
 June 18:  
 July 13:  
 July 16:  
 August 10 :  
 August 20:  
 September 14:  
 September 17:  
 September 18:  
 October 12:  
 October 15:  
 November 9:  
 November 19:  
 December 14:  
 December 17:

### Everything's Coming Up Roses\*

- February Meeting  
 Spring MG Training  
 Third Friday  
 MG Training Class Field Trip to Mercer Arboretum  
**Tomatoes: Varieties and Growing Tips for Gulf Coast Gardeners\***  
 March Meeting  
 Third Friday  
 Spring Plant Sale  
 April Meeting  
 Third Friday  
 TAMU Hort Gardens Spring Plant Sale  
 State MG Conference  
 May Meeting  
 Third Friday  
 June Meeting  
 Third Friday  
 July Meeting  
 Third Friday  
 August Meeting  
 Third Friday  
 September Meeting  
 Third Friday  
 Fall Plant Sale  
 October Meeting  
 Third Friday  
 November Meeting  
 Third Friday  
 December Meeting  
 Third Friday

**Backyard Orchard #1: Growing And Eating Citrus-Our Best Fruit** - Date: December 7; Time: 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). Oranges, grapefruits, lemons, kumquats and many other types of citrus trees can easily be planted this winter and in a few years will produce large amounts of fruit in the fall in time for the holidays or even earlier. These will be many times better than what is in the stores. Citrus are evergreen in the winter and are beautiful, small trees that have fragrant flowers in the spring. They also attract North America's largest butterfly and are good bird habitat. But what should you grow? And how do you avoid mistakes? This class will let you taste at least three-dozen varieties including some of the most delicious and most hardy. Since the seeds will mostly produce the same fruit, you can also start an orchard. Basic ideas on the types of citrus, how to grow them, and where to get the best varieties will be discussed. Dr. Bob Randall grows a wide variety of citrus at his home and at the Urban Harvest demonstration garden.

**How to Start a Community Garden** - Date: December 8 and January 12 from 4:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.; December 15 from 1:00 p.m.-3:45 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). Have you or your group been thinking about starting a community garden at a school, place of worship, in a park, or on vacant land? In this class you will learn about the history of community gardens, the basic ingredients for a successful one, how to get them planned and started and problems to avoid. Pre-registration is required two or more working days in advance. Gary Edmondson is the School & Youth Gardens Coordinator for Urban Harvest. Dr. Bob Randall, the director of Urban Harvest, has advised over 150 community gardens over the last 15 years. FREE. 1 Meeting.

**Amaryllis Society Christmas Display & Sale** - Date: December 13; Time: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.; Location: Houston Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston; Phone: 713-284-1989. Bulbs, art & crafts for sale.

**Recycle that Holiday Tree - Urban Nature Series** - Date: December 28; Time: 2:00 p.m.; Location: Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, 4501 Woodway, Houston; Phone: 713-681-8433. Presented by: J. Kolenovsky, Native Plant Society. Hear some tips and learn techniques on how, why, where, and when to recycle and compost a seasonal symbol of beauty. FREE!

**Backyard Orchard # 2: Care Of Fruit Trees** - Date: January 8; Time: 6:15 p.m.- 8:15 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). This class dispels the myth that fruit trees require too much work and are a waste of time. Learn basic organic fertilization requirements and techniques along with how to plant, water, mulch, and prune the many kinds of trees. Dr. Bob Randall grows a wide variety of fruits at his home and at the Urban Harvest demonstration garden.

**Backyard Orchard # 3: Hands-On Fruit Tree Pruning** - Date: January 9,16,23,30; Time: call to confirm; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). Learn by doing! Prune trees under the supervision of a skilled gardener. Winter is the season for this garden maintenance activity so critical to healthy trees and successful fruit production. We start with apples and peaches, then do pears, pomegranates, figs, bunch grapes, blackberries, citrus, persimmons, and then hybrid muscadine grapes. You will learn the most in this class if you take #2 above, and all of the hands-on sessions, but if you just show up for one session, we will teach you something. Bring long sleeves and pants, eye-glasses, gloves, and shears if you have them. Dr. Bob Randall (see above). Diana Liga is Urban Harvest Community Gardens and Horticulture Coordinator. 8 meetings - come to any one or more of these, but do call ahead to let us know you're coming.

**Container Gardening Workshop** - Date: January 10; Time: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Learn how to plant a beautiful garden in your own container. Local landscape designer Norm Arnold will lead this class on preparing, planting and maintaining a container garden. Plants and soil are included, but participants must bring a container (17" diameter or less) for the workshop. Class size is limited. Reservations are guaranteed through payment on a first-come, first-served basis. Mercer Society members \$20. Non-members \$25. Make checks payable to The Mercer Society.

**Backyard Orchard # 4: Peaches, Plums, Pomegranates & Other Fruit** - Date: January 10; Time: 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). These are some of the best tasting fruits you can grow and many are beautiful ornamentals too. The ones we grow in our area are far better than the often sour and hard ones available in the market. However, they are a challenge to grow. This class covers the best varieties, how to grow them, and also discusses other fruits such as apricots, mayhaws, jujubes and feijoas. Ethan Natelson, MD is President of the North American Fruit Explorers. He grows a broad selection of fruit including many that are usually found only in research facilities.

**Lunch Bunch: Gardens in England** - Date: January 14; Time: 12:00 p.m.-1 p.m., Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Join Mercer volunteer Sam Levine as he leads a tour of the gardens of the British Isles. From home landscapes to historic public gardens and castle estates we will visit some of the finest gardens England has to offer.

**An Introduction to Permaculture** - Date: January 14; Time: 7:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest-Richmond/Kirby Area - call for location; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). Permaculture has made a big difference in the lives of many people who have studied it or received help from permaculturists. In this orientation, learn about four courses that will be offered over the next year. They will help you turn your yard or farm into a vibrant bird and butterfly-filled space, resplendent with gourmet vegetables and fruits. Permacultural concepts help create sustainable environments in urban and rural settings. If, after this orientation, you enroll in

one or more of the four courses over the next year, you'll learn how to renew rural Texas and how to produce a city with less concrete, fewer dead trees and unproductive lawns, and without noisy leaf blowers. **STUDENTS WHO COMPLETE ALL FOUR COURSES TOTALING 75 HOURS RECEIVE A PERMACULTURE DESIGNERS CERTIFICATION.** The Permaculture Guild of Houston consists of permaculture design certificate holders. Those teaching in the courses include John Dunbar, Gary Edmondson, Diana Liga, Shawn McFarland, Karolina Mueller, Dr. Bob Randall, Ray Sher, Kevin Topek, Jennifer Walker, and Cas and Gita VanWoerden. Call to register. Free Class.

**Organic Vegetable Specialty Series** - Dates: Jan. 15, 29; Feb. 5, 19, Mar. 4, 18; Apr. 1, 15; May 6, 20; Time: 6:15 p.m.-8:45 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). Urban Harvest is once again offering a vegetable course leading to an Organic Vegetable Gardening Specialist Certificate. With 25 hours of classroom instruction, and 6 hours of hands-on instruction, this is by far the most comprehensive organic vegetable course in Texas. This 31-hour class focuses on the best varieties of common vegetables and their care, as well as less-well-known vegetables particularly suited for Gulf Coast gardens. Topics include the advantages of organic and ecological approaches over chemicals; vegetable garden design; irrigation and drainage; soil fertility, mulches and composts; organic pest control; seeds, transplants, where to get them; how to plant them; and detailed discussion of selecting, growing and using a large number of vegetables, annual herbs, and fruits. To receive the certificate, students must attend all classes, and complete 31 hours of community service within one year in either a community garden or on an Urban Harvest committee. Community gardens are typically at elementary schools, religious congregations, and in parks. Pre-payment is required. Bob Randall, Ph.D., Gary Edmondson, Diana Liga, and guest speakers. \$100 for the class, \$50 for a refundable deposit on award of Certificate, plus \$ for Urban Harvest membership and a recent copy of Year Round Vegetables, Fruits and Flowers.

**Fruit Tree Sale** - Date: January 17; Time: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.; Location: Outside Urban Harvest at the Old Dow School Building; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). Free Admission. Choose from an abundance of excellent varieties that grow exceptionally well in our area. Knowledgeable volunteers will help you select fruits best for you, and give you information on planting and care.

**Permaculture-The Ecological Foundations of Design** - Dates: Jan. 21, 28; Feb 11, 25; Mar 10, 24; Apr 7 from 7:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; and Feb 21 9:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. at farm approx. 2 hrs. west of Houston. Location: Greenway Plaza Richmond/Kirby area. Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). This course (one of the three that can be taken in any order) explains the permaculture OF world and local eco-systems, and ties this information to techniques you can use to build sustainable communities. Topics include world ecosystems, climate, water conservation, supply and waste treatment, soils, trees and forests, pests, and Texas ecosystems. The Permaculture Guild of Houston. \$100 plus \$35 for room, materials and food.

**Arbor Day** - Date: January 24; Time: 9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m., Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Join tree expert John Ross as he discusses great trees for the Houston area. After the talk there will be a tree planting demonstration and a tree seedling giveaway. Celebrate Arbor Day and plant a tree for yourself!

**Backyard Orchard # 5: Apples, Pears & Persimmons** - Date: January 24; Time: 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). These are three easy-to-grow warm weather fruits, but they are planted in winter. They are sweet, tasty, reliable, fairly pest-free and easy to care for. This class will focus on the best varieties both for flavor and adaptation to our climate. It will explain both chill requirements and dwarfing rootstocks. Grafting techniques will be demonstrated so you can learn how to get hard-to-purchase varieties. Also, there may be free trees. Ethan Natelson.

**Terrific Tomatoes** - Date: January 27; Time: 6:15 p.m.-8:15 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). Explore the biology and the basic techniques for growing them from seed to fruit. Varieties, watering, fertilizers, sunlight, heat, and mulch will be discussed. Tips on dealing with pests, diseases, caging, harvesting, and plant rotation will be shared. An out-line is provided. Mark Cotham co-authored Growing Tomatoes in Greater Houston: the Community Garden Experience. He is an attorney, community gardener, and a founder of Urban Harvest.

**Backyard Orchard # 6: Berries, Figs & Grapes** - Date: January 31; Time: 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). If you plant strawberries in November, you will be eating them by March. In later years you will get possibly thornless blackberries, boysenberries, Youngberries, and even blueberries. Figs, too, are some of the easiest and most productive fruits we can grow. They are easy to grow from cuttings and are high in fiber. By selecting the right

varieties, you can have delicious fruit for months. This winter you can plant fine disease resistant bunch grapes and the delicious hybrid muscadine grapes. In this class learn how to get good plants cheaply, how to plant and trellis, and how to care for these berries, figs and grapes. There will be grape cuttings given to students. Dr. Bob Randall (see above). Jim Mullins owns Orchard Creek Farm and Vineyard. He grows dozens of kinds of bunch grapes and many berries at his pick your own farm.

***Everything's Coming Up Roses*** - Date: February 7; Time: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.; Location: Varner-Hogg State Park, West Columbia. Workshop sponsored by Brazoria County Master Gardeners, Texas Cooperative Extension, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

***Tomatoes: Varieties and Growing Tips for Gulf Coast Gardeners*** - Date: March 4; Time: 6:30 p.m.; Location: Brazoria County TCE Office; 1800 C. R. 171, Angleton; Phone: 979-864-1564, 979-388-1564, 281-756-1564. Montgomery County Horticulture Agent, Tom Leroy, will give a workshop on choosing, planting and growing tomatoes on the Gulf Coast. Literature, door prizes and refreshments. Books and plants for sale. Fee: \$5 in advance, \$8 at the door. Call the Extension Office to register. Advanced Master Gardener Training Credit (2 hrs.) available.

### **Junior Master Gardeners:**

Viki Brushwood is looking for volunteers to assist in teaching classes for the Junior Master Gardener program. This requires about 1½ hours once a month. The class meets on the third Friday of the month. The planning meeting for each class is the second Tuesday of the month from 10-11. Anyone interested should contact Viki.

### **Meet a Master Gardener - John Alcorn – “The Prez”:**

*from Viki Brushwood*



John is our reigning President and has been elected to serve us again next year! John was born in Beaumont and moved around a lot while growing up. His family moved to Santa Fe when he was 11. While growing up in Texas, John was involved in FAA, Hauling Hay and egg farming. John enlisted in the Navy at the young age of 17 where he served our country on a destroyer. He served 4 years in such places as San Diego, Vietnam, Philippines and Alaska. After finishing his tour of duty he attended college and received his Associates Degree. He worked a short while for Carnation Milk and Lipton Tea companies. He took his civil service exam and went to work as a postal carrier in Texas City. He then moved up the ranks as a Supervisor and finally as the Postmaster of Bay City. He retired in 1996 after 35 years of service. John lives in Angleton with his wife Mimi. They were married on October 15, 1984. Between them they have 4 children Mike, Kelly, Steve and Julie. They have 5 grandchildren and are expecting their 6<sup>th</sup>. (I am sure those grandkids have John wrapped around their little fingers!) John also enjoys Country & Western, Soft Rock and Old Time Gospel Music. He has also worked with divorced parents in the “For Kid’s Sake” program which teaches parents to be alert for beginning signs of troubled behavior from their kids.

John has been involved in gardening his entire life. Growing up there was always a vegetable garden at his home. At one point, after being reprimanded by his Dad for not doing his job in his family’s garden, he thought he would never have a garden at his own home. But he discovered he has a real love of gardening and nature. Although he has a vegetable and flower garden, his passion is citrus and fruit trees. John loves to cook and experiment with all types of food and herbs. He is planning to put in an herb garden so he can have fresh ones all the time. He and Smitty have spent many hours checking out the nurseries around the area. John is a graduate of the 2001 MG Class. He went to one of the plant sales, bought a pineapple quava and decided that he would like to get involved. And involved he is! Not only our President, but he also works at the Greenhouse, started the Junior Master Gardeners program (and teaches too!) and helps out with the plant sales. His word to all of his fellow MG’s is: “We need to be involved in what we are doing and keep on doing what we are doing.” We are all blessed to have such a caring and involved President!

### **Give it a Grow - Jujube (*Zizyphus jujuba*):**

*By Dr. William C. Welch, Landscape Horticulturist*

Every fall, I receive plant and fruit specimens of a curious brownish, date-like fruit for identification. Although it is as tough as any native plant, it is actually a Chinese date, or jujube. Jujubes grow and thrive in just about every county in Texas. They are not commonly found in nurseries, but are propagated by root sprouts, seeds, or by grafting. Root sprouts can be a problem if not mowed or removed. Jujubes can be identified from a distance by the nearly impenetrable thicket they often form if not maintained. Chinese dates are among the most persistent

and long lived imported trees in the South. Some sources indicate that they were introduced from Europe by Robert Chisolm in 1837, and first planted in Beaufort, North Carolina. They have also been mentioned as being in the early Spanish missions in California, and were possibly brought to America at an earlier time. They are thought to be native to Syria or China, and are widely distributed in the warmer parts of Europe, southern Asia, Africa, and Australia. The Chinese have been known to cultivate as many as 400 varieties of jujube, and have a great fondness for the fruit; it is sometimes processed with honey and sugar, and sold as a dessert confection. The jujube has been cultivated in China for hundreds of years. Roger Meyers, a member of the California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc., has published several articles on jujubes, and is attempting to research the names and provide sources for some of the best varieties that have been introduced in the past. Jujubes can reach 50 feet tall, and have shiny, deciduous, dark green foliage and, sometimes, thorny stems. They are pruned and trained to much smaller plants at times. Flowers are small and inconspicuous, appearing in the axil of the leaf. The fruit ranges from 1/2 to 2 inches long, and changes from green to reddish brown as it matures in late summer and early fall. In addition to their culinary uses, Chinese dates have traditionally been used for medicinal purposes, with the fruit being made into pastes, tablets, and syrups that were supposed to be soothing to the mucous membranes.

Source: TAMU Horticultural Gardens, November 2003 Newsletter

Date: November 20, 2003

### **Garden Checklist - January:**

- \* Now is an excellent time to transplant mature or established trees and shrubs while they are dormant.
- \* Make flower and vegetable garden plans now before the rush of spring planting. Time spent in armchair gardening before the fireplace will pay off in improved plant selection. Besides, it is fun to page through the garden catalogs.
- \* Sow seeds in flats or containers to get a jump on plant growth before hot weather arrives. Petunias, begonias, and impatiens should be sown in early January. Warm temperature plants, such as tomatoes, peppers, marigolds, and periwinkles, should be sown in late January or early February.
- \* Apply a light application of fertilizer to established pansy plantings. Use one-half pound of ammonium sulfate per 100 square feet of bed area. Repeat the application every 4 to 6 weeks, depending on rainfall. Dried blood meal is also an excellent source of fertilizer for pansies.
- \* Prepare beds and garden area for spring planting.
- \* Select and order gladiolus corms for February/March planting. Plant at two-week intervals to prolong flowering period.
- \* Check junipers and other narrow-leaf evergreens for bagworm pouches. The insect eggs overwinter in the pouch, and start the cycle again by emerging in the spring to begin feeding on the foliage. Hand removal and burning of the pouches are ways of reducing the potential damage next spring.
- \* The life of the plant received as a Christmas gift can be prolonged with proper care. Keep the soil moist, but provide drainage so that excess moisture can flow from the pot. Keep the plant out of range of heating ducts and away from heating units. Keep in a cool room at night, preferably at 60 to 65 degrees F.
- \* Don't fertilize newly set out trees or shrubs until after they have started to grow, and then only very lightly the first year.
- \* When buying plants, the biggest is not always the best, especially when dealing with bare-root plants. The medium to small sizes (4 to 6 feet) are usually faster to become established and more effective in the landscape than the large sizes.
- \* Hold off on pruning bush roses until February or early March. Use good shears that will make clean cuts. Remove dead, dying, and weak canes. Leave 4 to 8 healthy canes, and remove approximately one-half of the top growth and height of the plant.
- \* Now is an excellent time to select and plant container-grown roses to fill in those bare spots in your rose garden.
- \* When pruning shrubs, first prune out any dead or damaged branches; then thin out by removing about one-third of the canes or stems at ground level, removing the oldest canes only; and last, shape the rest of the plant, but do not cut everything back to the same height.
- \* Water foliage plants as well as other containerized plants only when needed and not by the calendar.
- \* Climbing roses should be trained but not pruned. Weave long canes through openings in trellises or arbors and tie them with jute twine or plastic/wire plant ties. Securing canes now prevents damage from winter winds, and contributes toward a more refined look to the garden when roses are blooming. Wait until after the spring flowering period to prune climbing or once-blooming shrub roses.

Source: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/newsletters/hortupdate/jan03/art10jan.html>

Date: November 24, 2003



## On the Herbal Side - For Flu and Colds:

from DiAnna Munson

I found this remedy in one of my text books. It is to help relieve symptoms for flu and cold bugs. I think it is a good soup for cold weather too.

### Sick Man's Soup

Put two quarts of clean water in a pot and add

1/2 head green cabbage, chopped  
1 large onion, chopped  
1 head garlic, chopped  
3 carrots, sliced  
3 pieced of celery, diced

Boil for 30 minutes. Add:

6 tablespoons grated ginger  
3 tablespoons crushed rosemary

Boil for another 5 minutes. Garnish with parsley, chopped.

I like to add chicken boullion for flavor, and 1 teaspoon of turmeric (for added flavor and medicinal enhancement) when I add the ginger and rosemary. I hope this helps you stay healthy during the holidays.

DiAnna

## *Happy Birthday!*

### ***Happy January Birthday Wishes...***

Don Gerard – January 4

**Ellen Pedisich – January 14**

E.J. Rosser – January 24

**Anise Schonert – January 29**

Judy Wood – January 31

Thanks - Anna Gawlik, Editor

### ***Happy Gardening!!!***

The Brazoria County Master Gardener Association shall not be affiliated with any commercial enterprise for the profit of an individual member or group of members. No member shall use their position with the Association to further the manufacture, distribution, promotion or sale of any material, product or service in which they have either a direct or indirect financial interest.



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