

# What's Growin' On . . .

## The BCMGA Newsletter

September 2004

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### At the Meeting:

**Dues** - Ted Jagen will begin collecting dues for 2005 beginning with the October meeting. He's hoping that if he begins that early he will have them collected in time. If you are coming to the next meeting, please bring your checkbook. You can also mail your check to Ted. Don't forget: Dues for 2005 are increasing by \$1.00. They are now \$13. The increase of \$1 will provide insurance to cover each member at any BCMGA function or any program at which you are presenting as a Master Gardener.

**Logo Design Contest** - A logo design contest was kicked off at the September meeting. This logo will be for a stitched design unique for the Brazoria County Master Gardeners and will be used for polo and denim shirts in the future. Logo size to plan on is about 3 inches with no lettering to be less than 1/4 inch in size. Exact wording is still being finalized, but you should plan on including "Brazoria County" and "Master Gardeners" in your design. Final wording will be included in next month's newsletter. If you need to know it before then, contact Dorothy Babbington.

Be creative! The winner will receive a free shirt of their choice. Send your logo designs to Dorothy by December 1st. The winner will be announced at the December meeting.

**2005 Planning/Budgeting Meeting** - A meeting will be held to discuss the 2005 budget on October 8 at 12:00 noon at the Extension office. You should attend if you are in charge of a project that requires funding. You should also attend if you are just interested in what is going on.

**Budget Adoption Meeting** - A meeting will be held on October 29 to adopt the finalized budget. Time: TBA.

**Fall Plant Sale** - A good part of the meeting was spent on the logistics of the Plant Sale. Barbara Brown said "Thank you, thank you, thank you" to everyone for their help with the plants.

I don't know how well we did at the plant sale, but I do know that there were a bunch of MGs who showed up to help. The food was, once again, delicious, thanks to Dick and everyone who brought something. I can't believe Dick didn't melt while getting all of the food organized - it was soooooo hot in the "kitchen!"

**Dow Grant** - We didn't get the grant from Dow to install our fruit orchard.

**Fruit Orchard** - John Alcorn is trying to get someone from El Campo to assist us with the installation of the fruit orchard. The cost of the orchard will be in the 2005 budget.

**Fruit Tree Sale** - The fruit tree sale will be held in February. John is working out the details with Heidi Sheesley from Treesearch.

**Scholarship Committee** - The members for the Scholarship Committee are: Ted Jagen, Patty Varnado, Barbara Brown and Donie Stowers.

**HerbFest** - HerbFest has been cancelled.

**Extension Office Beds** - Big thanks to Lisa Darby and those who helped her who finally got control of those Extension Office beds. They look great!

## At the Demonstration Gardens:

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

**Mark your calendars for these**

**October work days:**

October 1

October 12

October 22\*

October 5

October 15

October 26

October 8

October 19

October 29

\*Third Friday

### Calendar of Events:

*\*see below for details*

*new items in bold*

#### **2004 Dates:**

**Sept 24-**

**Oct 17: -Take Flight: Live Tropical Butterfly Exhibit\***

**-Monarch Butterfly Tagging Demonstration\***

**-Texas Garden Railway\***

Oct 2: Naturalizing Fall Bulbs for the South

Oct 2: Buchanan's Annual Fall Festival

Oct 2-3: Peckerwood Gardens Open Days

Oct 4: Water, Pond & Bog Gardening

**Oct 5: Gardening Basics III: Fertilizing Fundamentals\***

Oct 6: Propagation

Oct 8: Garden Workday: Daylilies

**Oct 8: 2005 Planning & Budgeting Meeting**

**Oct 9: "Come & Stay a While"**

**(Hummingbirds) Seminar\***

**Oct 9-10: Fall Plant Sale and Gardening Festival\***

**Oct 9-10: Men's Garden Club Show and Sale\***

**Oct 9-10: Garden Festival of Roses\***

Oct 11: Critters & Plants

Oct 12: October Meeting

Oct 13: Roses Are Red ... and Wonderful!

**Oct 13: Lunch Bunch: Daylilies\***

**Oct 14: Legacy of the Forest\***

**Oct 16: Taxonomy Made Simple\***

**Oct 16-17: Peckerwood Gardens Open Days**

**Oct 16-17: First Austin African Violet Plant Sale\***

Oct 18: Soil & Soil Additives

**Oct 19: Gardening Basics IV: Growing Transplants with a Focus on Tomatoes\***

Oct 20: Turf

Oct 22: Third Friday

**Oct 22-23: 11th Annual Oktober Gartenfest Symposium\***

**Oct 23: Mystical Swamp Tour\***

**Oct 23-24: Violet Crown Flower Show\***

Oct 25: To Bee or Not to Bee?

Oct 27: Insect Management

**Oct 28: 2005 Budget Adoption Meeting**

**Oct 28: Orchids-Enigmatic, Exotic and Easy\***

**Oct 30: 4th Annual New Growers Seminar & Exhibit and Sales & Exhibit Heart O'**

**Texas Orchid Society\***

Nov 1: Landscape Design

**Nov 2: Gardening Basics V: Ecological Pest Management\***

Nov 3: Citrus and Fruit Trees

**Nov 5-7: 17th Annual Fall Festival of Roses\***

Nov 9: November Meeting

**Nov 10: Lunch Bunch: Plant Now for a Beautiful Spring\***

**Nov 16: Gardening Basics VI: Irrigation for Gardeners\***

Nov 19: Third Friday

Dec 14: December Meeting

Dec 17: Third Friday

#### **2005 Dates:**

Jan 11: January Meeting

Feb 8: February Meeting

Mar 8: March Meeting

Apr 12: April Meeting

April 20: Spring Plant Sale

May 5: State MG Conference

May 10: May Meeting

June 14: June Meeting

July 12: July Meeting

Aug 9: August Meeting

Sept 13: September Meeting

Oct 11: October Meeting

Nov 8: November Meeting

Dec 13: December Meeting

**Take Flight: Live Tropical Butterfly Exhibit** - Date: September 24-October 17; Time: 10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Location: Texas Discovery Gardens, 3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Fair Park. Fair Park is three miles east of downtown Dallas just south of Interstate 30. Phone: 214-428-7476. Inside the conservatory, magnificent tropical

butterflies float through the air and drink nectar from hundreds of flowering exotic plants. The breathtaking beauties include 40 different species from the Philippines, Malaysia, Belize, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Ecuador. Visitors will be able to witness the miracle of metamorphosis as the butterflies emerge from chrysalides inside a large display case. Bring your entire family to experience the thrill of observing a butterfly unfold its wings for the first time. Texas Discovery Gardens members admitted free with paid admission to the State Fair of Texas.

**Monarch Butterfly Tagging Demonstration** - Date: September 24-October 17; Time: 2:30 p.m.; Location: Texas Discovery Gardens, 3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Fair Park. Fair Park is three miles east of downtown Dallas just south of Interstate 30. Phone: 214-428-7476. See live Monarch butterflies tagged to track their migration and released into the garden. During the demonstration, a tiny circular piece of polypropylene is adhered to the outside of the butterfly's hind wing. The tag is printed with a series of numbers that identifies Texas Discovery Gardens as the location where the butterfly was tagged. The tagging is conducted as part of the University of Kansas Monarch Watch program. Free with paid admission to the State Fair of Texas.

**Texas Garden Railway** - Date: September 24-October 17; Time: 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.; Location: Texas Discovery Gardens, 3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Fair Park. Fair Park is three miles east of downtown Dallas just south of Interstate 30. Phone: 214-428-7476. This enchanting miniscape includes a waterfall, a suspension bridge and replicas of Texas historic landmarks. Click here for more info. Free with paid admission to the State Fair of Texas.

**Gardening Basics III: Fertilizing Fundamentals** - Date: October 5; Time: 6:15 p.m.-8:15p.m.; Location: Urban Harvest, in the MECA building at 1900 Kane; Phone: 713-880-5540 (Monday through Friday). Explore the many excellent organic fertilizers on the market today. An easy understanding of soil fertility and plant nutrition will be covered. Application tools and techniques will be profiled as well as fertilization schedules. Pete Cangelosi is an organic specialist with San Jacinto Environmental Supplies, a local wholesale supplier of organic gardening products. Dr. Bob Randall is the executive director of Urban Harvest, Houston's community garden organization and author of Year Round Vegetables, Fruits and Flowers for Metro Houston. \$20, \$10 for members, free for community gardeners.

**"Come & Stay a While" (Hummingbirds) Seminar** - Date: October; Time: 11:00 a.m.; Location: Martha's Bloomers, 8101 Highway 6 Navasota; Phone: 936-870-4111. Presented by Darrell Vollert, member National Audubon Society.

**Fall Plant Sale and Gardening Festival** - Date: October 9-10; Time: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.; Location: Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin; Phone: 512-292-4100. Fall is the perfect time to plant native plants and seeds, and this festival is the perfect way to get expert advice and a great selection for your garden. Choose from more than 290 species and 23,000 of your favorite or hard-to-find native plants at this annual festival and plant sale. Get some of the best advice around on how to help your native plants flourish. Guided walks and talks will be offered throughout the day to help you plant your fall garden or get ready to sow seeds for spring wildflowers. View a list of available plants online at [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org) prior to the sale. More details to come.

Trees of Texas Book Signing - Ria McElvaney and Carmine Stahl sign their book, Trees of Texas, 1-4pm

**Men's Garden Club Show and Sale** - Date: October 9-10; Time: 1:00; Location: Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, 4501 Woodway, Houston; Phone: 713-681-8433. Come learn the Dos and Don'ts for growing beautiful plants! These experts will be exploring the propagation of plants by seeds, cutting, and other methods. A portion of the proceeds benefit the Nature Center.

**Garden Festival of Roses** - Date: October 9-10; Location: Antique Rose Emporium, San Antonio Retail Display Gardens; Contact: Jean Shoup [arebuzz@industryinet.com](mailto:arebuzz@industryinet.com).

Speakers on October 9: Burr Williams: The Stories of the Garden-The Perfect Setting for Learning About the Culture of All People; Allen Armitage: Perennials: Blue Collars and Blue Prizes; Steve George: Earth-Kind™ Roses; and Tom Christopher: Annuals with Style, Design Ideas from Classic to Cutting Edge.

Speakers on October 10: Bob Webster: Organic Techniques, Recipes and Why; Jim Kennedy, Bat Conservation International: Bats of Texas; and Glenn Schroeter: Spread the Fun: Propagating Your Roses.

**Lunch Bunch: Daylilies** - Date: October 13; Time: 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Join Horticulturist Suzzanne Chapman as she

demonstrates proper techniques for dividing and replanting daylilies. Bring a sack lunch to enjoy. Reservations required.

**Legacy of the Forest** - Date: October 14; Time: 7:30 p.m.; Location: McCullough Campus, The Woodlands High School, 3800 S. Panther Creek Dr. For more information, call 218-210-3900. Presented by Carmine Stahl as a part of The Woodlands' Walk in the Woods Nature Lecture. Every tree species in East Texas has a story intertwined with the cultural history of our area. FREE.

**Taxonomy Made Simple** - Date: October 16; Time: 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Join Program Manager Greg Harmison as he shares basic information about plant taxonomy (scientific classification) and why common names may not always mean what they say. Reservations required.

**First Austin African Violet Plant Sale** - Date: October 16-17; Location: Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Rd., Austin; Phone: 512.477.8672.

**Gardening Basics IV: Growing Transplants with a Focus on Tomatoes** - Date: October 19; 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). Fall and spring, gardeners search stores for the right varieties of peppers and tomatoes. Often, they settle for a poor selection of non-organic expensive transplants. In this class, learn to grow transplants from seed. Everything from a greenhouse you build to a light you buy for less than \$15 that will grow 100 plants will be covered. Diane Norman is co-owner of the Arcadia Nursery & Farm. She grows and sells organic transplants and vegetables. \$20, \$10 for members, free for community gardeners.

**11th Annual Oktober Gartenfest Symposium** - Date: October 22-23; Location: Roundtop. The Symposium is sponsored by The University of Texas Center for American History and Texas Cooperative Extension. This year's program will focus on "Sustainable Gardens." Mary Anne Pickens will be speaking about Adina de Zavala; Other speakers will address a variety of topics, including Greg Grant on the "History of the Belgian Gardeners of San Antonio, Texas," William Adams "Sustainable Fruits in the Home Garden", Billy Kniffen "Rainwater Capture/Harvesting", Lucinda Hutson "The Fall Garden's Bounty: Grace, Gratitude & Glory" and "Favorite Edibles and Ornamentals in a Kitchen Garden." There will be plant sale emphasizing both well adapted antique varieties of fruit and garden plants as well as interesting novelties. A tour is planned of several local gardens. The plant sale will emphasize both well adapted heirloom varieties of fruits and garden plants as well as interesting novelties. For more information visit the Web site: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden>, or call (979) 845-7344.

**Mystical Swamp Tour** - Date: October 23; Time: 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.; For more information and class registration, call 409-880-8907 or email [info@lulearn.net](mailto:info@lulearn.net). Presented by Eli Tate in conjunction with Lamar University, Environmental Learning Center (Course ENVR50023). View different types of swamps from heavily wooded to open fields of flowers and what causes the swamps to differ. Meet inhabitants of the swamp (gators, eagles, wading birds, etc) up-close and personal. Cost: \$50.

**Violet Crown Flower Show** - Date: October 23-24; Location: Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Rd., Austin; Phone: 512.477.8672.

**Orchids-Enigmatic, Exotic and Easy** - Date: October 28; Time: 6:30; Location: Texas Cooperative Extension Office, 21017 CR 171, Angleton TX 77515 979-864-1558, 979-388-1558 or 281-756-1558 ext. 112. Presentaton by Dotty Woodson, Tarrant County Extension Service Horticulture Agent. The tickets are \$8 in advance at the Extension Office (979-864-1558, ext 112) or \$12 at the door. Anyone with a "sick" orchid is invited to bring it along for Dotty's expert diagnosis.

**4th Annual New Growers Seminar & Exhibit and Sales & Exhibit Heart O' Texas Orchid Society** - Date: October 30; Time: 9:00 a.m. -12:30p.m. and 12:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.; Location: Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Rd., Austin; Phone: 512.477.8672.

**Gardening Basics V: Ecological Pest Management** - Date: November 2; 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). Manage pest problems in your landscape and garden by enhancing and restoring it's ecology. Learn how to attract and sustain beneficial organisms that destroy pests. Plants, insects, habitat requirements and management

techniques will be covered. Bring pictures or a baggy filled with your latest insect problems (leaves or insects). Ron Breland is owner of Organoscapes, a natural landscape and maintenance company and has many years experience in organic insect control. Dr. Bob Randall is the executive director of Urban Harvest, Houston's community garden organization and author of Year Round Vegetables, Fruits and Flowers for Metro Houston. \$20, \$10 for members, free for community gardeners.

**17th Annual Fall Festival of Roses** - Date: November 5-7; Location: Antique Rose Emporium, Independence Location; Contact: Jean Shoup [arebuzz@industryinet.com](mailto:arebuzz@industryinet.com).

Speakers on November 5: Glenn Schroeter, Production Manager, Antique Rose Emporium: Spread the Fun; Propagating your Roses; Kathy Huber, Garden Editor, The Houston Chronicle: Texas Gardens For Sun and Shade; and Ruth Knopf, South Carolina Rosarian: Tell Me a Story of Roses.

Speakers on November 6: Doug Welsh PhD, Extension Horticulturalist, Texas A&M, Garden Writer and Radio Personality: Keys for Successful Gardening; Pat Toolan, Australian Rosarian and 2001 Churchill Fellowship Recipient: Cemetery Roses - Australian, USA and European Preservation; Sharon Lovejoy, Author, Speaker, and Lifetime Gardener: Haven on Earth: Recipes for the Design and Care of a Personal Paradise; and Stephen Scanniello, Author and Past Curator of the Cranford Rose Garden, Brooklyn Botanical Garden: Many Years of Roses.

Speakers for November 7: Pat Toolan, Australian Rosarian: Old Gardens, Old Roses-Horticultural Relics of the Past; Gayle Engels, American Botanical Center, Austin, TX: Updates in Herbal Medicine: Safety and Efficacy; and Debbie Woltman, Brenham Floral, Texas Master Florist: Floral Designs of the Dutch Masters, Texas Style.

**Lunch Bunch: Plant Now for a Beautiful Spring** - Date: November 10; Time: 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.; Location: Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble; Phone: 281-443-8731. Bring a sack lunch and join Mercer Horticulturist Suzanne Chapman to learn which plants should be planted in the fall for a beautiful spring garden. Call for reservations.

**Gardening Basics VI: Irrigation for Gardeners** - Date: November 16; 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). Grow a beautiful garden while protecting the watershed and reducing the load on our natural resources. Vacation in July without losing your landscape investment. Summer is the perfect time for using a water-conserving irrigation system, but winter is the perfect time for planning it and installing it. This class compares several types of irrigation systems, helps you learn how to select the proper system, design the layout, install, and maintain an economical and practical home irrigation system. Howard Starr is a mechanical engineer, high school teacher, and a certified Organic Vegetable Specialist who has installed several irrigation systems including Leaky Pipe. Angela Chandler is a certified Master Gardener who has taught micro-irrigation since 2000. She is the owner of a local drafting company, providing piping services to industry since 1975. \$20, \$10 for members, free for community gardeners.

## **News to Know:**

**Building Keys** - If you have keys to the Extension Office building, please turn them in to Paula due to new security requirements in place.

**New Column** - Yea! to Ann McClain who has volunteered to do a monthly column for the newsletter. The newsletter just keeps getting better thanks to member contributions.

**Voting Time Approaching** - At the October meeting the slate of nominees will be presented. We will vote for new officers at the November meeting.

**Looking for More Contributions** - Not monetary but literary ones. Is there anyone interested in doing a column on bugs????? Let me know if you are!

**Volunteer Hours** - Don Gerard has a lot of blank spaces in his spreadsheet when it comes to hours. Please turn in your time to him. You can mail it, bring it to the meeting or bring it to the MG office. Don't wait until the end of the year. He won't have time to input everything if you do!

## **On the Herbal Side - Rose Seedpods Are Not Just for the Birds:**

*from DiAnna Munson*

Rose seedpods, otherwise known as Rosehips, aren't just for the birds. They're deliciously nutritious for humans, too. They can be used to make a variety of teas, jellies, syrups and marmalades.

From the literature, planting roses correctly is critical to plants that produce lots of hips. It states that roses require at least 6 hours of sunshine and have a "good root growing " hole that is 18 to 20 inches wide and deep. I will leave that fact to the experts.

Surprisingly enough, rose hips are related to apples, and like their larger cousins, are seen in lots of colors, from soft green to rich orange-red. Also, like their cousins, they contain pectins and fruit acids which are responsible for the diuretic and laxative effects. They also contain vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, C, and K. The levels of carotenoids and flavonoids they contain equals that of carrots. Hips are also good for anemia because they increase the ability of the body to absorb and use iron. Down side is they also increase the absorption of aluminum, such as that found in antacids.

Rose hips are used for the treatment of diarrhea and respiratory disorders such as colds and flu. They decrease gastric spasms (reflux) and inflammations due to intestinal diseases, edema, gout arthritis, sciatica, diabetes, lower urinary tract and gallbladder ailments. Reported adverse reaction contact to the hair and seeds found in the hips consist of an itching, prickly sensation. So wear gloves to prevent this irritation.

General guidelines for harvesting hips are:

- ✿ Make sure the hips come from plants free of pesticides and herbicides.
- ✿ Stop deadheading blossoms so the hips will form.
- ✿ Leave the hips on the bush until they are bright in color and soft in texture.
- ✿ Before using in recipes, rim off the blossom and stem ends with a pair of scissor.

Cut the hips lengthwise, remove the small hairs and seeds and thoroughly rinse under tap water.

Dry hips by spreading in a single layer on a cookie sheet and place in a low oven. Once dry they can be stored in a glass jar in a cool dark place.

### **Berry Good for You Herbal Jam**

2 parts berries ( any variety or combination)

1 part seedless rose hips

Freshly grated ginger

Honey to taste

Mix all but the honey in a pan. Cover with water then add another 2 cups of water to the pan. Bring the mixture to a boil, then turn the heat to low and simmer until the water level again just covers the fruit. Place the mixture in a blender and puree. Add the honey while blending. Pour into glass jars and store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for up to 2 weeks. The mixture can be frozen in freezer bags for up to 6 months.

## **Reflections from the Garden Goddess:**

*from Lee Withers*

After working hard at the plant sale, the class I taught at the college and the beginnings of the HERB-EN Paradise herb garden, I am a pooped Garden Goddess. I hope you will be patient and forgive me until next month when you get the real McCoy. This is an edited article I used in my Landscaping with Natives presentation at the college. It came off an EPA website.

### **What is a Native Plant?**

Native plants (also called indigenous plants) are plants that have evolved over thousands of years in a particular region. They have adapted to the geography, hydrology (rainfall and water distribution, basically), and climate of that region. Native plants occur in communities, that is, they have evolved together with other plants. As a result, a community of native plants provides habitat for a variety of native wildlife species such as songbirds and butterflies.

Another way to phrase this question is "how native is native"? Though a particular species of plant may exist in prairies in both Iowa and Illinois, over time that species adapted in slightly different ways, adjusting to the different conditions in each of those areas. Utilizing plants which originated in a local area builds upon this unique adaptation, and is geared toward maintaining the integrity of the local gene-pool.

"How native is native", or how far away can a plant or seed come from and still be considered native to a local area, is a tough question. There is a range of opinions about what the answer should be.

Some believe that it is important to look at how each particular plant species naturally spreads their seeds. Following this reasoning, if a plant's seeds are naturally disbursed through the wind, plant/seed sources from a relatively wide geographic range are acceptable. If the plant's seeds are eaten and then deposited by animals with a limited range, sources for the plants/seeds would need to originate from a closer geographic area.

Still others believe that as long as the native variation species originated in a specific type of ecosystem (e.g. prairie), the genetic variation is inconsequential. In their opinion, it is appropriate to use the plant/seeds in other similar ecosystems no matter where the geographic location.

Some groups plant natives in an effort to promote restoring ecosystems, while others are planting wild gardens. Each is certainly different but, there are many similarities. Both are improving the environment. For a gardening setting, you need to decide, as steward of your land, where you lie along this spectrum of opinions. As a practical matter, you may find that there are not enough local seed sources to fill the demand from gardeners looking for native seeds (at the time this article was written that might have been true but with the internet many sources are available). Whatever you decide, it is important to note that by planting native plants you will be providing a variety of vegetation for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects to find food and shelter in. As a rule of thumb, buy plants or seeds from garden centers or nurseries with seed sources that originated as close as possible to the area where you want to plant them.

## **Give it a Grow - Fall is for Planting:**

*from Suzanne Jerabeck*

Summer may be over, but the time is just right for planting lion's ear, Mexican Turk's cap, and a myriad of other colorful, fall-blooming perennials here on the Texas Gulf Coast.

Most gardeners don't realize that like spring, fall is a prime planting time – not only for autumn bloomers, but for all types of shrubs, trees, and ground covers. That's because these plants get a head start on growth when planted in warm climates October through November. You see, a tree planted in the spring grows slowly in cool soil and its small root system constricts top growth. But a tree planted in fall (a time of cooler weather and seasonal rains) will already be firmly rooted and bursting with growth by late spring.

Returning from Waco last weekend, my husband and I detoured to visit the Antique Rose Emporium near Independence. While the roses hadn't started their fall bloom yet, many of the other perennials had – in particular, the lion's ear (*Leonotis leonurus*) was spectacular. I promptly bought a one gallon plant along with the Mexican Turk's cap (*Malvaviscus arboreus*) I have been admiring for so long in my neighbor's yard. Both are rich in texture and offer dazzling color at least until the first heavy frost.

When you see a blossoming lion's ear, you won't soon forget it. This native subshrub of Africa is covered in whorls of velvety tubular orange flowers along upright growing stems. The orange-turning-to-yellow bloom color contrasts beautifully with the narrow, tapering green foliage. It looks like a miniature fireworks display. The plant, a member of the mint family, is fast-growing (up to 6 feet), drought-resistant, and very attractive to bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. And, if you find you can't live with just one, you can propagate from seed, cuttings, or by division of the clumps.

The Mexican Turk's cap is another fabulous plant for fall. This mallow is called the "sleeping hibiscus" because its bright red flower hangs down and looks like a hibiscus bud that never completely opened. A native from Mexico through Central America and South America, it is resistant to drought. This Turk's cap – not to be confused with our native, less showy Turk's cap – sports dark green foliage and large oval leaves. It can easily grow up to 6 feet in just about any soil with full sun exposure or sun to partial shade in the afternoon. While this plant blooms off and on throughout the year, the real show is in fall and early winter when the bush is literally covered in red. You – and the birds, bees, and butterflies – will love it.

While there are many perennials that offer an extended bloom time, a short list of other fall showstoppers for this area include azure sage, mums, cigar plant, confederate rose, dahlias, fall cyclamen, goldenrods, hardy ageratum, Joe-Pye weed, Mexican bush sage, showy sedum, spider lily, swamp sunflower, and many species of ornamental grasses.

So, find your spade and start planting. From now on, think of October as your garden's last hurrah before its winter hiatus. Also, be sure to take advantage of 50% and more off the price of remaining plants and trees at your favorite nursery's end-of-season sale. By getting your purchases in the ground now, they'll get the head start they need to look absolutely sensational next spring.

### **In The Garden - Ambrosia:**

*from Ann McClain*

The word ambrosia brings to mind thoughts of cooking more than of gardening. I remember a fruit salad by that name that my grandma used to make: a mixture of fruit bits in a creamy sweet sauce, finished off with shredded coconut. But Ambrosia, with the capital A, turns out to be a garden topic after all. Ambrosia is the genus name for a group of plants better known as ragweed.

This spring in our new yard, we discovered several vigorously growing plants. They weren't woody yet, but certainly looked as though they were meant to be trees. The lower leaves were simple ovals, but further up the stem they were lobed, exactly like sassafras. When rubbed, the foliage had a wonderful spicy smell. Sassafras trees would be great, I thought. I checked a few tree books, and that ID didn't seem quite right, but neither did anything else.

Fast forward to August. The cute little "trees" had now become very large, which would be good if they really were trees, but there was still no sign of woodiness, which certainly should have been developing, considering their size. More striking, the top-most leaves, above the ones lobed like mittens, had five lobes and were over six inches across. My babies didn't look much like sassafras anymore. Finally I checked a book called Weeds of the West, where I should have looked in the first place, and made the ID. I didn't have sassafras – I had giant ragweed, aka horseweed. They can get up to 10 feet tall in their single growing season, and some of mine were rapidly closing in on that size. Fortunately, I finally made the correct ID before the giants flowered; ragweed pollen is one of the main contributors to late summer allergies. It took my heavy duty loppers to cut them down.

So how about that name. The giant ragweed is properly Ambrosia trifida. Trifida (three-part) must refer to those three lobed leaves that fooled me into thinking it was a sassafras. The dictionary says that one meaning of ambrosia is "food or perfume of the gods," so that probably refers to the pleasant spicy scent of ragweed leaves. But why is the giant ragweed called horseweed? Maybe it's because horses like to eat it, which one weed guide claims. I didn't offer my supply to the neighbor horses to check that out, so I can't say. Or maybe it's that it grows as big as a horse? Like horseradish and horse mint and other botanical horses, it certainly does illustrate what the garden books often call "rank growth habits."

Note to neighbors (anyone within several miles of our place). I got this stuff out of the mowed half of our yard, but I have a bad feeling there is lots more back in the woods. I'll try to do better next year. Maybe I'll borrow some horses.

### **Meet a Master Gardener - Jesse Knight-Master Gardener Intern:**

*From Viki Brushwood*

If you have been out to the Greenhouse you have undoubtedly met Jesse! He is a blast! He is a lot of fun and likes to tell his stories.

He was born and raised in Bainbridge, Georgia. He came to Freeport via the U.S. Coast Guard in October of 1961 after Hurricane Carla had landed. He served aboard a Coast Guard Cutter until 1964. He married a local girl "Charlet," whom he had met at the Brazosvue Drive-in. They lived in Freeport. They have two sons who are now married with a total of five grandchildren. Jesse surveyed for a year after being honorably discharged from the Guard in 1963 and then went to work for Dow as an Operator. He worked there for 32 years and retired in 1997. He took care of his wife until she passed away in 2000 and then helped out with one of his closest friends while he was in a rest home. Jesse is very compassionate and basically a neat person.





Jesse is taking the MG classes because he finally had the time and he likes helping others. You will find him at the Greenhouse every Tuesday and Friday. Jesse has brought his tractor out to spread dirt, he has dug ditches and put in post holes, and he helped Smitty, Ted and Louis build a bridge in the Tropical Garden. He is not afraid to pitch in and get his hands dirty! He has always been interested in growing veggies, especially tomatoes and hot peppers. He likes to eat them prepared any way. He also likes to grow and eat squash which he mashes puts sugar on like they do in Georgia.

Jesse has 28 acres off of FM 521 and has lived there since 1968. Other than gardening, he enjoys fishing, and country music – like; George Jones, Merle Haggard, Hank Williams, Granpa Jones, Mini Pearl and more! He also likes to pull gags on his friends. One time he had Barbara Ross convinced that he had eaten a rabbit that had been foraging out in the greenhouse veggie garden! However, Barbara got back by putting a chicken egg in his rabbit trap!

All in all, it is a good time for all at the Greenhouse and Jesse adds some spice to the mix. So come on out (Tuesday and Friday mornings) and see what is going on and meet Jesse too! You will be glad you did!

### **Garden Checklist:**

*by Dr. William C. Welch, Landscape Horticulturist, Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A&M University*

- ❁ October is a good time to reduce the insect and disease potential in next year's garden. Clean up the garden, removing all annuals that have completed their life cycle. Remove the tops of all herbaceous perennials that have finished flowering or as soon as frost has killed the leaves.
- ❁ October through November is also an excellent time to purchase bulbs while you still have a good selection in the garden center.
- ❁ Chill tulip and hyacinth bulbs in the refrigerator until mid or late December before planting. The lower part of the refrigerator is best. Do not leave bulbs in airtight plastic bags during refrigerated storage.
- ❁ Plant bulbs in well prepared beds so the base of the bulb is at a depth that is three times the diameter of the bulb. In sandy soil, set slightly deeper and in clay soils less deeply.
- ❁ Holly plants with a heavy set of fruit often suffer a fertilizer deficiency. An application of complete fertilizer late this month can be helpful and provide a head start next spring.
- ❁ Start collecting leaves for the compost pile. Be sure to have extra soil available so that each 6 inch layer of leaves may be covered with several inches of soil. Always wet the layer of leaves thoroughly before adding the soil. Add about one pound of a complete lawn or garden fertilizer to each layer of leaves to provide the necessary nitrogen for decomposition.
- ❁ In addition to bulbs, check your nursery or garden center for started plants of snapdragons, pinks, sweet williams, poppies, and calendulas. Planted now in south and east Texas, they will usually provide a riot of spring color; wait until late winter or early spring to plant in north Texas.
- ❁ Keep Christmas cactus in a sunny spot where night temperatures can be kept below 65 degrees F. Buds will drop if you allow night temperatures to go above 70 degrees F or if you allow the plant to become excessively dry. They should also be kept in total darkness from 5:00 pm until 8:00 am for about 30 days in October to initiate flower buds.
- ❁ If you have saved seeds of your favorite plants, allow them to become air dry, then place them in an airtight container and store in the refrigerator. Be sure to label each packet carefully. Remember, seed from hybrid plants will seldom resemble the parent plant.
- ❁ Prepare beds for planting pansies when they become available at the garden centers. They need a well-drained soil and exposure to at least a half-day of sun. It is best to use started plants, as seeds are difficult to handle.

- ✿ If you are planning to save caladium tubers for another year, dig them in late October, and allow to dry in a well ventilated but shady area. After 7 to 10 days remove leaves and dirt, then pack in dry peat moss, vermiculite or similar material for storage. Pack tubers so they do not touch each other. Dust with all-purpose fungicide as you pack. Place container in an area where temperature won't drop below 50 degrees F.

Source: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/newsletters/hortupdate/oct03/gdcheck10.html>

Date: September 29, 2004

## *Happy Birthday!*

### ***Happy October Birthday Wishes...***

Pat Cayer – October 1

**Evelyn Moon – October 22**

Marti Graves – October 25

### ***Happy Belated September Birthday Wishes...***

Barbara Ross - September 12

Thanks - Anna Gawlik, Editor

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

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