



# What's Growin' On . . .

The BCMGA Newsletter

January 2005

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## ***HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!***

### **At the Meeting:**

**Speaker** - Our speaker for January was our own Ann McLain who spoke on "Alien Invaders" or "What Gardeners Should Know about Biological Invasions." Unfortunately, I missed the meeting, so I missed Ann's presentation, but I understand that it was very good. Thanks, Ann

**Logo Design Contest** - According to Dorothy, we ended up with 6 great entries! While there were many votes cast for each one, the winner was Gil Livenac's with about twice the #1 votes as any of the others, along with the most points. His design was an outline of Texas with the words "Brazoria County, where Texas began." When the design is finalized, we'll put a copy of it in the newsletter. Congratulations, Gil!!!

**State Conference** - The dates for the conference are May 5-8. Pam Peltier urged everyone to attend. I know the group who went last year had a great time. As you make plans or check out hotels, etc., let me know and we can put the info in the newsletter, which may be helpful for others.

**Library** - Larry Lewis asked for help for the Friends of the Library to improve the front of the library. If you are interested, contact Larry.

**Flower Fund** - Donations were taken for the Flower Fund. It is now in good shape, but if you missed the meeting and would like to donate, you can get your contribution to Barbara Ross.

**Mulch** - Don Bush has some good mulch. If you are interested in getting some you can contact Don at 281-658-4010.

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

**News from the Greenhouse** - Ray Michalik has email now, so I can nag him electronically for info on what's going on! Poor Ray! Despite it being winter, there are lots of things happening:

- ☼ John Alcorn and Ray went to Pearland and picked up the great bar-b-que pit that Dick Merrifield donated to BCMGA. Thanks Dick! Hey - are y'all really going to let John near that?
- ☼ Last Friday the JMGs were out and did some planting in small containers.
- ☼ Smitty and company planted tomato seeds.
- ☼ We have all the rock spread in and around the herb garden, and it looks good.
- ☼ Ray found us a chipper/shredder, used but in excellent shape. It was decided to go ahead and purchase it. There was a slight carburetor problem which Ray was able to fix, so now it's running. Ray said he used it at his home before bringing it to the greenhouse and now wishes he would have kept it as it does a fine job on shredding up leaves. It's an 8 H.P. engine and will take up to 3" limbs. For the price of \$244 it was a steal.
- ☼ Plastic has been put up around the shed east of the greenhouse and north of the shade house and started putting some plants out there so we could have some room in the greenhouse.
- ☼ We have started digging a trench for a water line going to the front flower beds. This will keep Barbara from having to drag the water hoses around in the middle of the summertime heat. She'll be happy when we get it done.
- ☼ We are having a new sign made to put out in front where the A&M sign now hangs. It will be ready to pick up soon. It is supposed to look very good. \$500 was allotted for this in the budget. We should have it up in a week or two.

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

**Mark your calendars for these  
February work days:**

|             |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| February 1  | February 4  | February 8  |
| February 11 | February 15 | February 18 |
| February 22 | February 25 |             |

## **Calendar of Events:**

*\*see below for details*

*new items in bold*

### **2005 Dates:**

**Feb 3:** Gulf Coast Vegetable Conference  
Feb 5: Backyard Orchard VI: Berries, Figs & Grapes  
**Feb 5:** Galveston County MG Fruit Tree Sale\*  
Feb 8: February Meeting  
Feb 8: Spring Training Classes Begin  
Feb 9: Lunch Bunch: Snakes  
**Feb 12:** Fort Bend MG Fruit Tree Sale\*  
**Feb 12:** San Antonio Rose Pruning Seminar\*  
**Feb 12:** Landscape Design Plus\*  
**Feb 13:** Independence Rose Pruning Workshop\*  
Feb 19: Preparing Your Garden for Summer  
**Feb 21-22:** Landscape Design Study Course IV\*  
**Feb 22-23:** Junior Master Gardener Specialist Training\*  
**Feb 26:** 3rd Annual Nature Celebration

Mar 8: March Meeting  
**Mar 8:** Butterfly Habitat Certification Class\*  
**Mar 16:** Floral Design\*  
Mar 19: Heritage Gardens Seminar  
**Mar 19:** Fort Bend MG Perennial Sale\*  
**Apr 2:** Basics of Residential Horticulture – Part I\*  
Apr 12: April Meeting  
April 20: Spring Plant Sale  
May 5-7: State MG Conference, Denton  
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

**Galveston County Master Gardeners Annual Fruit Tree Sale** - Date: February 5; Time: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.; Location: Carbide Park, 4102 FR 519, La Marque, TX; Phone: 281-534-3413. Specializing in low chill varieties for the Gulf Coast.

**Fort Bend Master Gardeners Fruit Tree Sale** - Date: February 12; Time: 8:00 a.m.-Lecture and 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Sale; Location: Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, Hwy 59 & Texas 36, Rosenberg. The 8:00 a.m. lecture is by Heidi Sheesley of Treeseach Farms. Sale will highlight fruits for the Fort Bend/Gulf Coast Area.

**San Antonio Rose Pruning Seminar** - Date: February 12; Time: 1:00 p.m.; Location: Antique Rose Emporium San Antonio Display Gardens; Contact: Robbi Will 210-651-4565. Come celebrate our 7th anniversary with us. We will have hourly drawings for door prizes as well as free refreshments.

1:00 Pruning Seminar/Demonstration - Join Mike Shoup, owner of The Antique Rose Emporium, and Simon Delgado (Head Gardener) as the show you how to tame your roses that have overtaken your garden. They will take you through the procedures of properly pruning roses of all varieties and show you how to add vertical interest with climbers. This seminar/demonstration is FREE of charge.

**Landscape Design Plus** - Date: February 12; Time: 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Location: Bear Creek Extension Facility, 3033 Bear Creek Dr., Houston; Registration Contact: 281-855-5600. This all-day hands-on workshop will have a morning of lectures on the Principles of Landscape Design. Topics will include WaterSmart concepts, Plant Selection, Recommended Plants for Harris County, etc. The afternoon will have breakout sessions on Establishing a Drip Irrigation System and a practice landscape design. Class Limited to 40. Lunch Included. Fee: \$50.00.

**Independence Rose Pruning Workshop** - Date: February 13; Time: 1:00 p.m.; Location: Antique Rose Emporium Independence Display Gardens; Contact: Lynn Smith 979-836-5548. 1:00 - Pruning Seminar/

Demonstration. Join Mike Shoup, owner of The Antique Rose Emporium, and Simon Delgado (Head Gardener) as they show you how to tame your roses that have overtaken your garden. They will take you through the procedures of properly pruning roses of all varieties and show you how to add vertical interest with climbers. This seminar/demonstration is FREE of charge.

**Landscape Design Study Course IV, Series XIX** - Date: February 21-22; Location: Christ United Methodist Church, 4201 State Hwy 6, College Station, TX 77845; Sponsor: Presented by the Texas Garden Clubs, Incorporated & Texas Cooperative Extension; Cost: \$85.00;

Registration: Registration materials may also be requested from Lenora Sebesta, Department of Extension Horticulture, 2134 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-2134, by telephone (979) 845-7342 or online at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden/Feb05flyer.html>. Registration deadline is February 15.

This is the fourth in the Landscape Design Study Course series which is offered in four separate schools, approximately six months apart, in the Bryan-College Station area. Participants may take the four courses in any sequence. Garden Club members, Master Gardeners, nurserymen and others who are interested in furthering their knowledge of landscape design are welcome to attend.

Registration for the course will be \$85 (two lunches included). The text, good for all four courses, is *Stewards of the Land*. It may be purchased for an additional \$40. The book will be reserved for participants to pick up the first morning of the course. This text replaces in large part the syllabus that accompanied the course in previous years.

After the completion of the course a special independent bus trip to Tyler and adjoining areas will be offered. The group will tour the HGTV-Idea House and gardens as well as several local gardens, nurseries, and the home and garden of Greg Grant. This will be the height of the bulb flowering season in East Texas. To view details on this trip, go to <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>, then Southern garden/tours.

**Junior Master Gardener Specialist Training** - Date: February 22-23. A 2005 Junior Master Gardener Specialist training will be held at Texas A&M University, College Station. This is a nationally offered training for Extension professionals, Master Gardeners, and teachers. Space is limited so early registration is encouraged.

The National Junior Master Gardener® Program is growing good kids by igniting a passion for learning, success, and service through a unique gardening education. This dynamic and intensive 2-day training conference is designed for those coordinating or supporting JMG programs at the local, regional and state level.

All attendees completing JMG Specialist Training Conference will receive certification as a JMG Specialist by the National Junior Master Gardener Program office and a host of invaluable resources to grow JMG and youth gardening programs in the local, regional or state level. Texas Master Gardeners will also be designated as a Master Gardener Specialist in Junior Master Gardener and receive a certificate and lapel pin at the 2005 Texas Master Gardener Conference.

**Butterfly Habitat Certification Class** - Date: March 8, 2005; Time: 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Location: Fort Worth Botanic Garden Center, 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard (during their March Butterfly Exhibit); FWBG Phone: (817) 871-7686. Rarely does this opportunity present itself! Tina Dombrowski, Director of Horticulture - Texas Discovery Gardens, will be conducting a Butterfly Habitat Certification Class. Her introduction to butterflies will include history, life cycle, food and nectar plants, commonly seen butterflies and how to create an environment that will fill your yard with these beautiful creatures. Ms. Dombrowski developed and maintains the seasonal butterfly exhibit at the Discovery Garden.

Upon completion of the class you will receive butterfly attractant plants and a Butterfly Habitat Certification Certificate. You will get a unique behind the scenes view of the Butterfly Exhibit and an opportunity to receive a beautiful color metal sign that will designate your property as an official butterfly habitat. The class will be held at the. Space is limited, so sign up quickly. Registration fee is \$30.00. Contact Mimi Lyles at [mimilyles@aol.com](mailto:mimilyles@aol.com) or JoAnn Hahn at [johahn@charter.net](mailto:johahn@charter.net) for reservations and additional information. This event is sponsored by the Garden Club Council of Fort Worth.

**Floral Design** - Date: 16; Time: 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.; Location: Bear Creek Extension Facility, 3033 Bear Creek Dr., Houston; Registration Contact: 281-855-5600. Class instruction and hands-on assistance. Flowers and container provided for a take-home St. Patrick's Day and an Easter arrangement. Each session Limited to 25. Refreshments. Fee: \$50.00.

**Fort Bend Master Gardeners Perennial Sale** - Date: March 19; Time: 9:00 a.m.- Lecture; 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Sale; Location: Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, Hwy 59 & Texas 36, Rosenberg. The 8:00 a.m. lecture is by Heidi Sheesley of Treeseach Farms. Sale will highlight natives and perennials for the Fort Bend/Gulf Coast area.

**Basics of Residential Horticulture – Part I** - Date: April 2; Time: 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.; Location: Bear Creek Extension Facility, 3033 Bear Creek Dr., Houston; Registration Contact: 281-855-5600. An introduction to the science of gardening with seasonal appropriate information. Subject to change, the topics will include Botany, Plant Diseases, Insects, Lawn Care, Vegetable Gardening, Recommended Plants & Trees for Harris County and Internet Resources. Class Limited to 60. Lunch Included. Fee: \$50.00.

### **News to Know:**

**Condolences to Paula** - It saddens me to share with you that Paula lost her mother in December. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

**Another MG Loss** - Former MG intern Tony Mize passed away on January 29 at his home. Tony was in the Spring 2001 class. Please keep Tony and his family in your prayers.

**A Note From Don About Volunteer Hours** - Anyone who has not turned in hours for the past two years and has not paid 2005 dues by Feb 15 will be dropped from the roster. If you have outstanding hours, get them into Don. He accepts them by email, mail and drop off at the MG office.

**Citrus Grafting and Plant Propagation Seminar** - It was decided to purchase some citrus trees at wholesale prices to sell at the seminar today. A total of 65 trees were bought at \$15 each. We had a very good turnout at the seminar - around 45 or so participants. The two Barbara's, Brown and Ray, did a great job on their part, and Gil did like wise on the grafting. We sold 24 trees and some of the MGs will come pick some up at the GH next week. Between the seminar fee and the trees we sold we nearly recouped our outlay for the trees which was \$1000. The varieties that were available were: Owari and Brown Select Satsumas, Meyer Lemon, Rio Red Grapefruit, Navel Orange and Page Mandarin Orange. A good all around selection for our area we thought.

If you were unable to make it to the seminar and are interested in purchasing some trees, there are plenty of trees left and available at \$25 for the MGs. Can you believe John isn't keeping them for the fruit orchard????

### **News and Notes from the Coordinator:**

Hi Y'all. Hope the new year has started out well for everyone. Despite the snow – which was Christmas magic - most plants seem to have survived. The tropicals garden (otherwise dubbed "Barbara's Folly") hasn't yet decided what it will do, but the rest of the demo gardens look to be in pretty good shape.

The calendar is nearly complete for the upcoming Master Gardener training. The class will conclude on March 10th with a visit to Caldwell Nursery. Cay Dee Caldwell will give a tour and a talk on woody ornamentals. We'll have party for the newly educated interns. Anyone wishing to come along is more than welcome.

Volunteers are needed to host the training classes. Current interns who missed a class last spring should attend sessions this spring and should host as well. Please contact Pat Gerard to sign up.

The 3rd Annual Nature Celebration will be held at Sea Center Texas in Lake Jackson on February 26 from 10 am to 3 pm. Master Gardeners are needed to assist the kiddos with a nature craft project and to pass out literature to parents. This year we would like a minimum of six volunteers to assist for a couple of hours each. A sign-up form will be passed around at the February meeting.

FYI – the Gulf Coast Vegetable Conference will be held at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds on February 3rd from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Speakers will include Bill Adams – Fruits and Vegetables for the Gulf Coast; Dr. Noel Troxclair – Pest Management for Fruits and Vegetables; Dr. Frank Dainello – Fertilizations and Weed Management for Vegetables; and Don Renchie – Pesticide Laws and Regulations. Cost is \$10 if received before January 31st, \$15 at the door. Checks should be made payable to the Gulf Coast Vegetable Committee and mailed to Texas Cooperative Extension, 1402 Band Rd, Ste 100, Rosenberg, TX 77471.

Thanks to everyone who helped with the Garden Series for the City of Clute and to those who helped with the Plant Propagation seminar. It looks like a great year ahead for a stellar organization.

\*\*\***REMINDER**\*\*\* GET YOUR 2004 HOURS IN ASAP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

### **What's Up With the JMGs:**

*From Viki Brushwood*

The "Groovy Gardeners" are busy! This month we planted tomato seeds for the vegetable garden. We are trying different varieties and experimenting to see which one will grow the best. Our participants were Sydney, Madison, Michael, Danika, and Hanna. Our thanks to Jesse who has taken us under his wing and is teaching us all sorts of wonderful hints for our vegetable garden. Next month we will be transplanting our patio tomatoes for the kids to take home, planning our vegetable garden and building bird houses. We are still working on our JMG Wildlife Gardener pins and building the bird houses will help us on our way. It is really great having the Demonstration Gardens, Greenhouse, and the expertise of the Master Gardeners to teach the JMG's. We really appreciate everyone out there. THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

### **On the Herbal Side - Chocolate Fondue Facial Mask:**

*from DiAnna Munson*

Since Valentine's Day is just around the corner I thought this might help a lot of women who want chocolate for Valentine's Day, but not the calories.

An article from **Natural Health** states this is the perfect gift to give yourself or someone else. It is a pick-me-up treat that feels indulgent but by requires no splurging. Take a half-hour breather to delight in this at-home beauty treatment formulated by Jillian Wright, owner of New York City's Glow Skin spa. Packed with natural skin-soothers, moisturizing honey and avocado, and anti-aging oat flour, this mask can save your face for all sorts of winter stress.

#### **Glow Skin Spa's recipe for a Chocolate Fondue Facial Mask**

1/2 cup cocoa  
1/4 cup honey  
4 Tablespoons heavy cream  
3 teaspoons oat flour (oatmeal processed in a blender until ground into a fine powder)  
3 teaspoons cottage cheese  
3 teaspoons avocado

Mix all the ingredients together and apply to the face, neck, and chest.

Leave on for 15 minutes, then rinse off.

I can add that the cocoa is very high in tannins which would decrease wrinkles; honey has been used for centuries to moisturize skin; heavy cream, cottage cheese and avocado are all natural fats that sooth and medicate dry skin; and oatmeal is an excellent exfolient. My Herbal PDR also states that cocoa is a muscle relaxant so this mask could help ease headaches and muscle tension in the neck and shoulders. It may be well worth trying, if you can get it past the mouth!

### **Give it a Grow - Snow Peas – A Winter Garden Delight:**

*from Suzanne Jerabeck*

It's time to plant snow peas! But don't wait. For welcome winter greenery -- and a delicious, easy-to-grow treat -- get them in the ground NOW.

In expectation of a glorious spring, I've spent the last couple of weekends planting seeds in covered flats. They are my 2005 experiments – flowers, vines, and even fruit seeds gathered from a variety of sources, including Ebay. But, I also make time in late January to plant snow pea seeds in pots, between plants in my raised beds, or wherever there is space to put them.

Why? The pods taste heavenly. But there's more...they produce quickly. They thrive in cool, moist weather. And, while all my other plants are "sleeping," these plants are growing like crazy.

I prefer the Mammoth Melting Sugar variety over Dwarf Gray Sugar and Oregon Sugar Pod. My own observation tells me the pods from Mammoth Melting Sugar seem to be longer (about 4-5" long), more flat (about 3/4" wide), and less stringy. But any of the three will give you bright green, edible pods that are sweet and mild.

Snow peas grow best in cool, moderate climates – unlike that of our very warm Gulf Coast. Since they produce about 70 days from sowing, it's imperative that you plant sometime between mid-January and the first of February. Otherwise, the heat of late April/early May will overwhelm the plants and stifle pod production.

Plant seeds in full sun 1 to 1 1/2" deep and 1 inch apart in single or double rows. The optimum soil temperature for planting snow peas is at least 45 degrees. The soil must be dry enough that when you dig, the dirt doesn't stick to your trowel. You'll need to also provide string, wire, or wooden supports. The plants will climb quickly up to 6 feet and over. Strong tendrils will twine around whatever support you provide.

If you notice yellow leaves or stunted growth, it may be a symptom of fusarium wilt or root-rot disease. Well-drained soil can easily prevent either of these potential problems.

The delicate, flat pods are ready for picking (and eating!) 5-7 days after flowering. Using both hands, gently pull the young pods off the stems at least every other day to keep them sweet and fiber-free. Keep the plants blooming and producing longer by removing any overgrown pods that you may have missed.

Stir fry, steam, mix these crispy snow peas with other oriental vegetables and meat dishes. My family loves them raw, too – alone, with dips, and in salads. Simply wash each pod, trim both ends, and eat. Snow peas are an excellent source of iron and Vitamin C and can be stored in the refrigerator in zip-lock bags for up to two weeks. But, watch out when cooking. Snow peas have high sugar content and can brown or burn quickly.

I think of growing snow peas like this: you get so much for so little effort. And, while other veggie gardeners are just planting their seeds, you'll be gathering your harvest (smile). What bliss!

## **In The Garden - Agricultural Tips from 1905:**

*from Ann McLain*

Recently I was rooting around in some packing boxes, and I discovered a minor treasure – the USDA Yearbook for 1905. Have you looked through any of the Ag Yearbooks? In recent years they often have been devoted to a single topic; for instance, at one time I had a yearbook entitled Water; in that one all the articles dealt with some wet topic, such as irrigation, flood control, or water quality. In other years they are random collections, with pieces about any and all aspects of agriculture. This 1905 Yearbook, which once belonged to my great-grandfather, is one of the anything-goes variety.

The table of contents listed some very interesting topics, although I was hard-pressed to discover what might have attracted my great-grandpa's attention. His passion in life was raising Standardbred racehorses, and there's nothing related to that topic in the book. There certainly is a wide range of everything else remotely agricultural, from preserving the life of telephone poles to the use of illustrations in ag education in schools.

I did find quite a few things of interest to me, including a piece about ostrich farming in Arizona - did you realize people were trying to get rich quick with ostriches that long ago? This one includes a great photo of a farmer trying to pluck an ostrich. There's also an article about "sirup" production, that tells me quite a bit about the main sources of sweet stuff (maple sap, sorghum, and sugar cane), as well as a lot more than I want to know about getting molasses out of the "modern" cane processing plant.

Another interesting piece makes suggestions for agricultural diversification in the old Cotton Belt – 1905 was evidently about the time that King Cotton really went downhill. It suggests that in Brazoria County farmers should

continue with rice and sugar cane, as well as getting into truck farming; strawberries, cucumbers, potatoes, cabbage, and melons are listed as being particularly suitable.

But among the articles on insect pests and “renovated” butter (you don’t want to know what that is), I found several gems that really caught my fancy: three articles about new fruits. The color plates are wonderful – I’d frame them up if I didn’t have a horror of defacing a book. From these long-ago experts I learned how to eat a mango (detailed directions complete with a picture) as well as how to market one. (Mulgoba was the recommended variety.) I learned that a loquat variety called Eulalia was a vigorous grower with sweet, juicy fruits, suitable for commercial production. And did you know that limes didn’t become a commercial fruit until the 1890’s? What popularized the lime was its use at the newly popular soda fountains for limeade. In 1905 growers were still looking for a good lime variety to meet the need, and the USDA horticulturists were doing their best to find one.

But the most interesting bit described the attempt to develop a pineapple variety that could be commercially grown in Florida. Have you ever seen a pineapple seed? The USDA guys (Webber and Swingle, to give them proper credit) involved in this research hadn’t either. Generally pineapples are propagated vegetatively from slips or pups, but that doesn’t create new and improved forms. So this pair undertook to cross pollinate the existing varieties, trusting that when seeds did result, they would be able to see them. Although many of the crosses did not produce viable seed (or even any seed), some did, and the intrepid researchers grew them out to see what would result. What they had in 1905 were five possible winners. Pictures of these were included (although not of the pineapple seed, which I would like to have seen), along with descriptions. The differences among the new varieties were surprising to someone who has never seen any but the standard grocery-store pineapple. One fruit was quite conical, shaped rather like a Christmas tree. The fruit color ranged from pale yellow to nearly orange, and flavors were said to vary as well.

By the time I had absorbed all the cultural information in this article, my mind was up and away. I remember once growing a pineapple crown into a rather ugly plant that nearly put my eye out when I was insufficiently wary. For the many years since, I have pretty much rejected all bromeliads. But reading all those fruit descriptions was tickling my fancy, and it sent me off to one of my all-time favorite garden books: *Growing Unusual Fruit*, by Alan Simmons. This book was published many years ago in Great Britain, which means its cultural recommendations are not always very helpful. But I have yearned over its descriptions of weird fruits many times. And now here it comes again. It seems to me that with some kind of enclosed structure to keep the plants warm in winter, I could produce pineapples in the privacy of my own back yard! How about it – have any of you ever been down this particular garden path? Please, someone, stop me before it’s too late!

## **In the News:**

### **Guidelines for Granting Texas Master Gardener Emeritus/a Status**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish eligibility criteria for Texas Master Gardener Emeritus/a status and to define the rights and privileges associated with such status.

#### **Definition**

“Texas Master Gardener Emeritus/a” is an honorary title awarded to a Master Gardener volunteer for distinguished service to Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE). County Extension Agents, serving as County Master Gardener Coordinators, may bestow the title on a Master Gardener who is permanently retiring as an active Master Gardener and who has served TCE with distinction. The decision to bestow this exclusive title is serious and should be made after consultation with the State Master Gardener Coordinator, County Extension Agents, and/or Master Gardeners.

The bestowal of emeritus/a status is a distinctive honor, not a right. The terms, emeritus and emerita, are singular, masculine form and feminine form, respectively.

#### **Eligibility**

Nominations for emeritus/a status are limited to certified Texas Master Gardeners, preferably with 7 to 10 years of service to TCE as a Master Gardener. Recognizing that some Master Gardeners may make a significant

contribution to TCE in a much shorter time period prior to retirement. Discretion regarding time of service is given to the local County Extension Agent.

A Texas Master Gardener may be nominated for emeritus/a status while still an active volunteer, but the status will not be conferred until the individual ceases service as a Master Gardener. The awarding of emeritus/a status is made once yearly, in December, and conferred at an appropriate county event.

Emeritus/a status may be bestowed posthumously.

### **Nomination**

Each nomination for Texas Master Gardener Emeritus/a status shall be addressed to the local County Master Gardener Coordinator/County Extension Agent. Nominations can be made by County Extension Agents and Texas Master Gardeners. Nomination letters should provide a succinct recommendation and highlight evidence of the nominee's meritorious service to TCE and the Texas Master Gardener program.

Upon receipt of a nomination, the local County Master Gardener Coordinator is may seek additional evidence, input and recommendations from fellow Extension faculty members and Master Gardeners.

The County Master Gardener Coordinator/County Extension Agent shall make the final decision regarding emeritus/a status and notify the nominated Master Gardener in writing of the final decision. The Texas Master Gardener Coordinator should also be sent a copy of the notification letter.

### **Recognition and Privileges**

A Texas Master Gardener Emeritus/a is considered an important and integral part of the Master Gardener community. Emeritus/a Master Gardeners shall be recognized by:

- Presentation of a certificate of emeritus/a status at an appropriate event/ceremony;
- Other recognition items may include an ID card, name badge or plaque indicating status as an emeritus/a Master Gardener; and
- Listing of name, county, and title in a permanent Texas Master Gardener Emeritus/a roster located at the State office of the Texas Master Gardener program, Texas A&M University.

Emeritus/a Master Gardeners shall be accorded the following privileges:

- Freedom from recertification requirements to maintain Texas Master Gardener certification;
- Access to Extension facilities and educational resources;
- Invitation to participate in Master Gardener educational and social events;
- Right to serve as an invited advisor to County Master Gardener programs;
- Other rights and privileges as approved by the local County Master Gardener Coordinator/County Extension Agent.

Submitted December 15, 2004  
Douglas F. Welsh  
Texas Master Gardener Coordinator

### **Citrus Shows Promise for Certain Childhood Cancer**

Nov. 30, 2004

Writer: Kathleen Phillips (979) 845-2872,ka-phillips@tam.u.edu  
Contact: Dr. Ed Harris, (979) 845-3642 eharris@tam.u.edu  
Dr. Bhimu Patil, (956) 968-2132,b-patil@tam.u.edu

COLLEGE STATION - Orange juice and cancer don't mix. In fact, the popular citrus drink could become a cocktail to prevent or stop the deadly disease in humans.

Research by Texas Agricultural Experiment Station scientists has shown that citrus compounds called limonoids targeted and stopped neuroblastoma cells in the lab. They now hope to learn the reasons for the stop-action behavior and eventually try the citrus concoction in humans.



"Neuroblastomas account for about 10 percent of all cancer in children," Dr. Ed Harris, Experiment Station biochemist, said. They are usually solid tumors in the neck, chest, spinal cord or adrenal gland. The finding in citrus is promising not only for its potential to arrest cancer, but because limonoids induce no side effects, according to Harris, who collaborated on the study with Dr. Bhimu Patil, a plant physiologist at the Texas A&M University-Kingsville Citrus Center in Weslaco.

"Limonoids are naturally occurring compounds," Harris said. "Unlike other anti-cancer drugs that are toxic, limonoids apparently do not hurt a person. That's the beautiful potential."

Patil calls citrus fruit "a vast reservoir of anti-carcinogens." As a plant physiologist, he has succeeded in isolating and purifying a number of limonoids from citrus so that the biochemists could evaluate and compare their anti-cancer abilities at the molecular level.

"Limonoids are unique to citrus," Patil said. "They are not present in any other fruits or vegetables. My goal is to find the direct benefits of citrus on human health. "

He said a challenging task is to isolate the limonoid compounds, "because some are present in very small concentrations."

In fact, citrus breeders seeking to improve the fruit's tastiness for consumers and yield for producers led researchers to discover limonoids eight of which have been characterized from extractions at the Weslaco facility, according to the researchers.

"If I ask why one should drink orange juice every day," Harris noted, "almost everyone would say for vitamin C. That's true, but we also need to learn two new words "flavonoids and limonoids."

Harris explained that flavonoids and limonoids "nutrient-packed pigments that give color and taste to fruit" may work against cancer in any of three ways: prevent it from forming, slow the growth of existing cancer, or kill cancer cells.

"The limonoids, which differ structurally from flavonoids, seem to do all three," he said of tests in his lab by one of Patil's graduate students, Shibu Poulouse, who also worked in Harris' College Station lab. Their work emphasized the compounds' ability to kill existing the neuroblastoma cells with the rationale that if the method and time limonoids take to obliterate the cancer could be found, perhaps scientists could exploit it to help cure the disease.

What Poulouse found with the extracted limonoid was that the neuroblastoma cells died with relatively small amounts of concentrated limonoids and all in 48 hours or less.

They tested this in several ways. First, the limonoids were put through a test to see whether they would quench the oxygen radicals - cancer-causing substances that are destructive to normal cells. The limonoids appeared to be as effective as vitamin C in some of the tests.

Test of cell viability were more impressive, however. The neuroblastoma cells were all dead within two days with just 5, 10 and 50 micromoles of limonoids. A micromole is about the equivalent of a tiny skin flake. Some limonoids were more effective than others, but all had killing potential. These amounts of limonoids could easily be obtained from a glass of orange or grapefruit juice.

Next, cell viability tests aimed at whether the cell death was caused by apoptosis -- a programmed cell death that spirals in an unstoppable fashion once the vulnerable spot on the cell is hit.

"Suppose we have cancer and the cancer cell mutates repeatedly until it takes over our organs," he said. "So, a compound comes in and spots those cells with the unusual metabolism and kills them by degrading the cells' protein and fragmenting their DNA until the cells succumb.

"Apoptosis is beneficial. It's the immunity system in the body that causes the white cells to recognize things that are not supposed to be there and attack them," Harris explained. Apoptosis early in life removes those white cells that would attack the body's own protein, for example.

To test this, the researchers applied 1, 5, 10 and 50 micromolar amounts of limonoids to neuroblastoma cells, then put an apoptosis-blocking chemical on an identical comparison set. Neuroblastoma cells with the blocker did not die, indicating that the limonoids trigger apoptosis which in turn results in the cell death. In their tests, the cancer cells treated with limonoids \* but not the apoptosis blocker \* all died within 36 hours.

The researchers also looked at caspases, destructive enzymes that are activated to cause chain reactions that lead to cell death.

"A question was whether limonoids turn on apoptosis which then turn on the caspases and if so, whether that means there is caspases resting in our cells (that could be activated to help fight cancer in us)," he said.

This part of the research revealed that with only 5 micromoles of a limonoid known as LG, the cancer cells were dying in as little as 12 hours.

"The last phase in killing cancer is to make sure the DNA is destroyed because that is the death knell for the cell," Harris said. "It's intriguing that this amount appeared to have no effect on normal cells and only certain types of cancer cells are vulnerable. Fortunately, breast cancer cells are on the list of vulnerable cells. This makes it all the more imperative to learn how the process works.

"We don't have the answer to that yet," he said, "but we have observed that those limonoids with the greatest potency have a closed ring in their chemical structure and that is different from other compounds."

Limonoids with a sugar unit attached, the so-called limonoid glucosides, are water soluble and tasteless; those without the sugar, the aglycons, are responsible for bitterness of some citrus. It was the limonoid glucosides, in this study that had "a dramatic effect" on cancer cell death.

"Now that we have seen the cancer cells die and in such a short time," Harris said, "we need to find out why they are so vulnerable and exploit it. It could be that ultimately we are able to give patients an oral cocktail of limonoids in such concentration as to stop their cancer."

Patil said the researchers also will be studying limonoids to find the limits for adding to food. One of the limonoids, glucoside, is tasteless, he noted, so it might become a food additive for its health benefits, but food engineers would need to know how much to add for human consumption.

His lab also is examining whether the compounds vary among citrus species and at different times of the year.

## **Garden Checklist:**

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

- ✿ 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.
- ✿ Prune bush roses during 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.
- ✿ Plant dahlia tubers in late February and early March.
- ✿ In Central and South Texas, the following flower seeds may be sown directly without protection in well prepared flower beds in February or March: nasturtiums, annual phlox, California poppies, coneflowers, and larkspur. Petunia plants may be set out in sunny, well drained locations, with little chance of cold damage except in far North Texas.
- ✿ 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/nov03/gdncklst.html>  
 Date: January 25, 2005

## **Humor Section:**

*from Viki Brushwood*

This is a diary entry of a California MG who was about to weed her garden:

Dear Diary, after a short stroll through the garden it was off to work on the never ending weeds. In need of a trash can I walked back to the house. Deciding to take my beloved electric golf cart to lug the trash can in, I was off on my mission of weeding. Driving to the "top" of the drive way, I parked and stepped off of the cart, swinging around to collect the trash can. Sometime between that moment and the next I knew I was in trouble. Like a person having an out of body experience I see my beloved golf cart begin to move down the hill. I reached out and grabbed the back of the cart thinking I could stop the runaway cart.

Lesson number one: a middle age woman cannot stop a runaway cart moving down a steep hill.

Lesson number two: a middle age woman cannot run as fast as a cart moving downhill.

Like a pit pull holding onto its favorite ball I just couldn't seem to let go. After being dragged for what seemed to be miles (really only a few feet) the cart tossed me free of it. With a final bounce on my head I looked up to see my beloved golf cart racing down the hill as though it was free at last.

In the next split second I knew I was REALLY in trouble. My beloved cart, going full speed now, hit the bottom of the driveway and bounced over the brim of my neighbor's yard and sailed into the air. The cart having now converted itself into a flying machine I realized I was now into even bigger trouble. In what seemed like slow motion my beloved cart sailed through the air and hit my neighbor's propane tank knocking it off its blocks and pushing it down the side of their yard.

Sitting there blinking, I think, well how much worst could it get? Then I realized I was REALLY in trouble. When a tank is separated from the house lines, the gas is no longer going into the lines leading into the house. So, there I am, seeing my neighbor's now relocated gas tank and the never before seen under side of my beloved golf cart in what can only be described as a weird contortion of a dance and HISSING GAS.

I managed to get myself back to the house, where my husband totally freaked over the blood. I'm trying to tell him to drop the stupid first-aid kit and check out what I consider the more pressing issue of HISSING GAS instead. When it ALL finally registered with him he called the fire department. Just like the movies they really come with lights and sirens. Not sure if it's a blessing but my neighbors were not home.

The fire department was able to shut off the HISSING GAS. The propane company was able to bring a crane and reset the tank back to its original place. We have a plumber on the way to reconnect the lines to the tank and house. All the pilots in my neighbor's home will have to be relit when they get home. So, Dear Diary, would you tell them what happened or let them think they just ran out of gas and that's why they don't have any hot water?

*Happy Birthday!*

**Happy February Birthday Wishes...**

Gwen Collins - February 22

Thanks - Anna Gawlik, Editor

**Happy Gardening!!!**

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