

# Here's the Dirt



## July Happenings



And just like that, it's JULY! I don't know about you, but I am looking forward to celebrating our country's independence this week. The Mayer family volunteered at All America Night in Richwood this past Saturday. My oldest son Wyatt helped smoke the brisket and pork butt, my daughter Morgan helped with decorations and logistics, I was in charge of food service and gave out hundreds of brisket and pulled pork tacos and my husband was the organizer of the event. It was all sponsored by the Richwood Police Department. No fireworks were popped, but it was still a blast! No matter what part of the county you live in, there is something for you to do. Whether you enjoy watching fireworks with a crowd or you and your pets hunker down and hope for a quiet evening, I hope that you all have a very Happy Fourth of July celebration.

## What's Growing On...

Happy Independence Day  
07/04/23 - Office Closed

Gardening on the Gulf Coast  
07/05/23

July Board Meeting  
07/11/23 @BEES

July General Meeting  
07/14/23 @AgriLife

Green with Envy: Lawn Care Tips  
Keep Pearland Beautiful  
06/13/23

Vegetable Container Gardening - West Pearland Library with the Aimones

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## BEE in the Know- Fireworks Safety

### Fireworks Safety Tips: If You Choose to Use Legal Fireworks

If consumer fireworks are legal to buy where you live and you choose to use them, be sure to follow the following safety tips:

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks
- Older children should use them only under close adult supervision
- Never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol
- Anyone using fireworks or standing nearby should wear protective eyewear
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands
- Never light them indoors
- Only use them away from people, houses and flammable material
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person
- Only light one device at a time and maintain a safe distance after lighting
- Never ignite devices in a container
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks
- Soak both spent and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding
- Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire
- Never use illegal fireworks

Better yet, grab a blanket and a patch of lawn, kick back and let the experts handle the fireworks show.



Source: <https://www.nsc.org/community-safety/safety-topics/seasonal-safety/summer-safety/fireworks>

# Here's the Dirt

## July's Horticulture Hero: Al Fedoruk

**CONGRATULATIONS!**



Photo Source: Joy Hargett

**NOT ALL  
Heroes  
WEAR  
CAPES**

Al Fedoruk does so many things at BEES, it is hard to single out even the highlights! Al is in charge of the row gardens and keeps them in tip-top shape all year long, by adding in compost and tilling, removing weeds, etc. This past year, there were sunflowers all over BEES and many overlook several areas in the row gardens. Vegetables planted in the row gardens weren't getting much sun, so Al and a group removed the sunflowers, which have incredibly deep roots. Also, this past year, a couple of extra rows were needed last minute and Al made sure they were ready on time for planting.

He has also helped out in the Herb Garden and planted zinnias in one unused area, which has helped attract butterflies to the area. He helped with the plant sale and tree sale as well.

Al grows so many vegetables and shares his harvest with a number of people. This year he had a bountiful harvest of beets (red, white and yellow/golden), and carrots (orange, red, purple) which were awesome, plus many potatoes.

Besides being a gardener, Al is also an artist! There was an old water feature in the Herb Garden. It was going to be very difficult to remove, so we opted to have a top built for it. At his own expense, Al built the top and also painted it. It's a lovely feature and now it can be used as a place to sit in the garden. He also helped put bricks in the Herb Garden after the concrete was installed.

This is a sampling of what he does, but Al is definitely a hero in my book and I really enjoy working with and learning from him.

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## Nominate a Horticulture Hero

We truly have an amazing group of individuals within the Brazoria County Master Gardener Association. I wanted to make sure that we recognize and fully appreciate our volunteers on more than just a yearly basis. That's where this program comes in to play. I would love for you to send me your nominations for a monthly Horticulture Hero. The requirements are simple. Just send me an email with a paragraph explaining why this individual should be nominated for this award. I will make the final decision each month and then award that person at the General Meeting. Some examples could be: above and beyond service at an outreach event, behind the scenes planning and coordinating, or even an outstanding presentation to a local group, The possibilities are endless. Get your nominations to me by July 31st. Email me : [kimberly.mayer@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:kimberly.mayer@ag.tamu.edu)



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## Upcoming Education

**TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION**

**GARDENING IN THE GULF COAST**

**2023**



Bring your gardening questions and problems to our Texas A&M AgriLife Extension horticulture agents and specialists during our online discussion.

July 5, 2023  
October 4, 2023  
December 6, 2023

All sessions begin at 10AM

[Online via Microsoft Teams](#)  
[REGISTER HERE](#)

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

# Here's the Dirt



## Upcoming Education

I'll be sharing tips for your lawn in this Facebook Live presentation for Keep Pearland Beautiful. July 13th at 7pm.



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## Upcoming Education

9am -12pm | September 29th

### Strawberry Jamboree

*Save the Date*

- Speakers
- Booths
- Recipes
- Canning Demo
- Plants for purchase
- Strawberry Shortcake
- Judging

TEXAS A&M  
AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION  
Horticulture

**\*September 14th I'll present education on strawberries as well as volunteer opportunities for the Strawberry Jamboree.**

# Here's the Dirt



## Upcoming Education

COMPOST  
ADVANCED TRAINING

*Save the date!*

**DECEMBER 6-8, 2023**  
More details coming soon!

For questions, contact  
Brandy Rader at  
[brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu)  
<https://fortbend.agrilife.org>

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MASTER GARDENER  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

[txmg.org/events](https://txmg.org/events)



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## Agent's Corner

### 2023 Hurricane Expo Brazoria County Fairgrounds

On June 17th, I spoke at the Hurricane Expo and shared information on how to prepare your lawn for a Hurricane. Special thanks to Cindy Ducros for helping me hand out publications and answer questions to the hundreds of people that showed up. It was great day! We actually ran out of all the handouts and my business cards. Busy, but meaningful experience.



# Here's the Dirt



## Agent's Corner



This past Saturday, several of us went to Harvest for the Hungry and shared with a great group of kids all about vermiculture. The children got to go on a "worm hunt" for red wigglers, learned about composting from Ellen and Paul Pedisch and even got to make an edible compost pile out of ice cream and sweet treats. They had a ball!



# Here's the Dirt



## Agent's Corner

Lately, I've been getting lots of questions on what types of plants will do well in this Texas heat.

One of my recommendations is to go Native. Texas natives are not only adapted to our soils, but once properly established, do well in our Texas heat.

An added BONUS is that several of them reseed themselves and most are pollinator friendly.

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy has a really great informational brochure on 9 Natives for the Sun. You can find that here:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/.../9+Natives+Sun+Web>.



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## Agent's Corner

**CYCLE AND SOAK**

Watering your lawn deeply and infrequently helps create a stronger root system.

**CONTACT US**

- 979-864-1558
- [www.brazoria.Agrilife.org/horticulture](http://www.brazoria.Agrilife.org/horticulture)
- [kimberly.mayer@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:kimberly.mayer@ag.tamu.edu)

**WATERING METHODS AND THE RESULTING ROOT GROWTH**

Watering Method	Resulting Root Growth
DEEP, INFREQUENT	Deep, strong roots
DEEP, FREQUENT	Deep, strong roots
SHALLOW, FREQUENT	Shallow, weak roots

It's a scorcher out there, but that's no reason to waste water when watering your lawn.

The cycle and soak method of applying water to the landscape drastically reduces and in some cases eliminates runoff. This method of applying water to the landscape is made up of multiple cycles for each station with 30 to 60 minute for the water to soak into the soil between cycles.

1. The first cycle will break the surface tension of the soil and saturate the top layer of soil.
2. The second cycle infiltrates the soil more efficiently and deeply after the first cycle.
3. A third, and sometimes a fourth cycle, is beneficial if a slope is involved or if runoff occurs after the sprinklers run for just a few minutes.

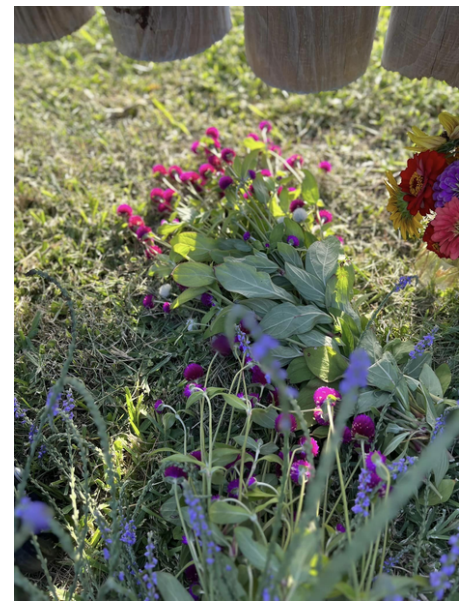
For example: if you have determined you need to run a sprinkler station 12 minutes, schedule your controller run the station 2 times for 6 minutes, or 3 cycles for 4 minute. If a slope or runoff is involved, run the station 4 cycles 3 minutes.

# Here's the Dirt



## Agent's Corner

**On behalf of the Brazoria County Master Gardeners, I was honored to provide the floral arrangements for the dedication of the Fort Velasco monument at Surfside Beach. The flowers were lain at the foot of the monument by family members of the fallen soldiers. Additional flowers provided by the Richwood Community Garden.**

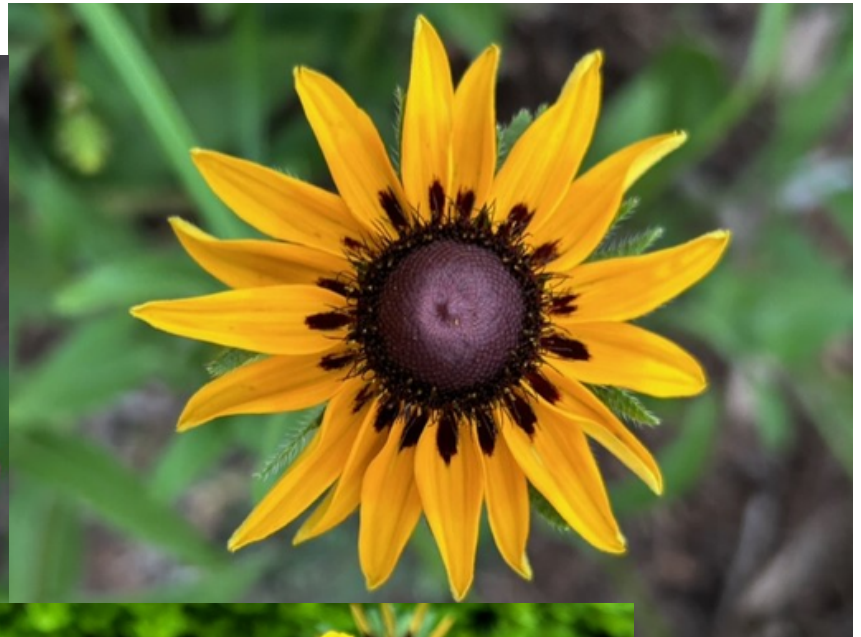


# Here's the Dirt



## Monthly Blooms

A section of the newsletter highlighting local flowers, trees, and plants in bloom.



Photos: Ann Hughes

Honestly, my yard has been therapy for me during this stressful time. I can go outside and let my brain focus on new life, beauty, creation, and relax. Touching the soil and pulling weeds seems to declutter my thoughts. Soaking in the sunshine fills me with Vitamin D, warmth and joy. I'm so thankful I got in the Master Gardening classes right before our intensive medical season hit us in the face. Even if I cannot go out to BEES, I can enjoy the plants right outside my doors. I call it "yard therapy". - Ann Hughes Class of 2023

# Here's the Dirt



## Monthly Blooms

The caterpillars in the photos below are black swallow tail caterpillars, I think. I sacrificed some of my dill for them and enjoyed daily watching as they munched away becoming fatter and fatter by the minute. They've since disappeared and are probably turning into butterflies soon. Hoping I see them fluttering back. I was able to catch one of the swallowtails laying eggs on a dill plant one day. -

Ann Hughes Class of 2023



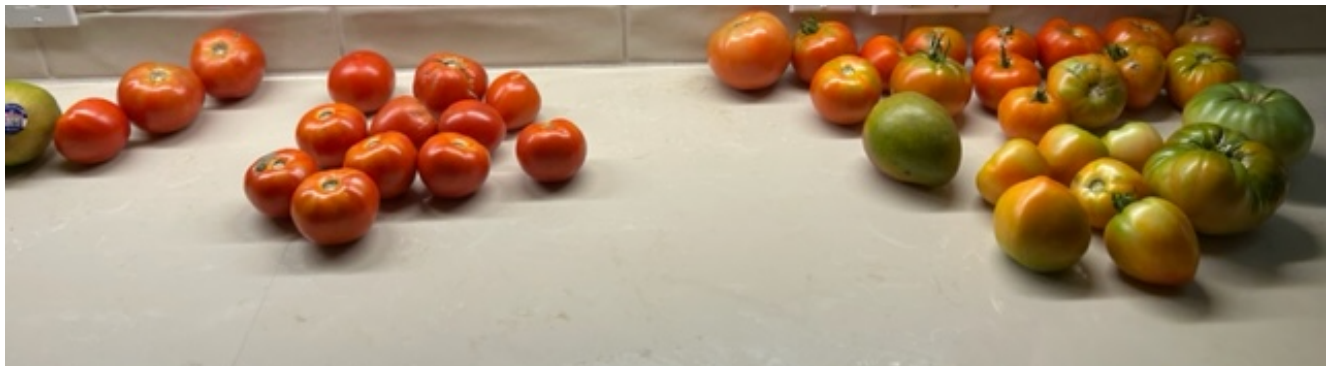
Photos: Ann Hughes

# Here's the Dirt



## Monthly Blooms

I probably got 14 pounds of tomatoes off of the 6 tomato plants I tended from our master gardening intern class we were given. Each plant is still alive and producing, although getting a bit charred with this heat. Learned a ton from Ruth as we go back and forth via e-mail when I have problems. She could write a book on tomatoes, honestly. Or you could potentially do several summer articles off of her knowledge: from insects, to fertilization techniques, to pruning, to recipes. Currently I'm dealing with leaf footed bugs sucking on my tomatoes having a tomato milkshake party. - Ann Hughes Class of 2023



Photos: Ann Hughes



# Here's the Dirt



## Monthly Blooms

These cotton plants were from seeds at the BEES gardens from a fellow Master Gardener. I decided to try to plant some to enjoy the life cycle of cotton. My grandfather was a cotton farmer back in the 1940's-1970's and I do remember seeing his cotton open ready for harvesting. Our farmer at church is growing cotton this year for his first time and he said that the cotton flowers start out white, then switch to pink and red as they progress. He said when the cotton starts to open up before harvest, you can stand out in the fields in the morning and hear the cotton bolls "pop" as they open up in the sunshine. - Ann Hughes  
Class of 2023



Photos: Ann Hughes

# Here's the Dirt

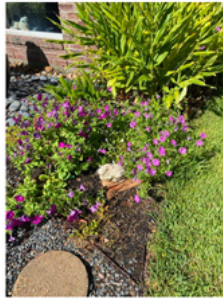


## Monthly Blooms

### by: JoAnne Knodel

#### Texas Superstars Take on the 2023 Heatwave

How are our annual and perennial landscape plants handling this summer heat wave? Texas Superstar plants have accepted the challenge and are thriving. Here is a tour of some Texas Superstars in my home garden with photos taken in the past 2 weeks of excessive heat.

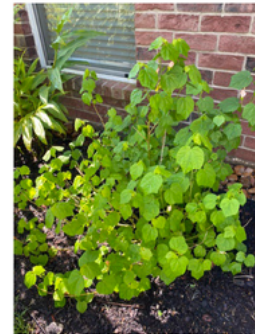


Since I'm a lazy gardener, spring and summer landscape maintenance has been minimal. A top coat of compost was applied early spring to the gardens. Since then, only weeding and once to twice a week lawn and garden watering; no fertilizer or pesticides applied.

This spring, I planted Laura Bush Petunias from seed and they have spread and bloomed continuously in June. I prefer perennial plants, but this is one annual I plan to plant every spring now!



Established Turk's Cap, *Malva viscosa*, bounced back from the winter freeze and has been growing and blooming since early May. This spring, I added a Pam's Pink Turks Cap, *Malva viscosa* 'Pam Puryear', and it established itself and began blooming early June.



Greg Grant first discovered this hardy Phlox that can handle the Texas climate. I planted a single 4x4" pot of *Phlox paniculata* 'John Fanick', years ago and it returns every spring and blooms all summer even in the scorching heat.



The love of my life, Hibiscus 'Moy Grande' was pruned back to the ground in early March and is now over 5' in height with continuous blooms. These blooms measure over 10" in width.



New to the garden this year is Cape Plumbago, *Plumbago auriculata*, planted in May from 1 gallon containers. Despite the June heat, it has grown and bloomed.

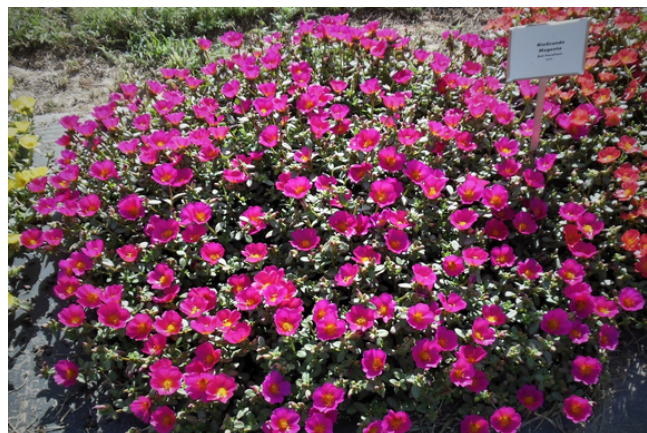
Photos: JoAnne Knodel

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## Monthly Blooms

With our hotter than usual heat so early in the season, now would be a good time to talk about plants that can take the stage and thrive in this brutal heat. We thankfully do not need to guess and try an abundance of plants out before finding one that will work because many have already done that for us with all of the testing trials and errors and guidelines they have to meet to show off what they got in the climates we have, they put the plants through we now have a beautiful list we can go to as a reference called the Texas Super Stars. The two that I picked for this article are Blue Daze and Purslane. These little show stoppers are so versatile with what you can do with them. They can be put in the ground used as bedding plants for a splash of color or as a ground cover to fill in a larger area. Just keep in mind they are lite feeders and like well drained soil because they do not like wet "feet" roots. They can reach a height of 8-10 inches and a width of 20-30 inches give or take the conditions they are in. They can be planted in planters or pots as well as hanging baskets. These little flower bloomers like the full sun to display their abundance of bloomers with such brilliant colors they produce but they can handle partial shade as well. So take the plunge and give one of these Super Stars a try. - Ann Kudlicki Class of 2021



Photos: Texas Superstars Website

# Here's the Dirt



## Monthly Blooms

A section of the newsletter highlighting local flowers, trees, and plants in bloom.



Continuing the theme of Texas superstars: Another great option for heat and drought tolerant plants are Texas Superstars.

It isn't easy to become a Texas Superstar® plant.

Only the toughest, most reliable and best-looking plants make the cut. Every plant earning the Texas Superstar® designation undergoes several years of extensive field trials by Texas A&M AgriLife Research and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, both part of the Texas A&M System. They must show superior performance under Texas' tough growing conditions. During the field trials, plants receive minimal soil preparation, reasonable levels of water and no pesticides.

What does this mean to the average homeowner? It means you will find landscape success with beautiful, proven, Texas-tough plants. Find these plants at your local nursery and be sure to look for the Texas Superstar logo on the plant tags. Find more information here: [texassuperstars.com](http://texassuperstars.com)

# Here's the Dirt

# Writers wanted!



**If you enjoy writing about gardening and would like contribute an article or two to our newsletter, please feel free to reach out and let me know. I'd love to have you participate in this newsletter. I am looking for short but informative articles that speak to a variety of interests. It can be a question that you get quite often from friends and neighbors or maybe a subject that is near and dear to your heart or we can do something like a plant or tree of the month and share some great information on that. If you are interested, email me at [kimberly.mayer@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:kimberly.mayer@ag.tamu.edu).**

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