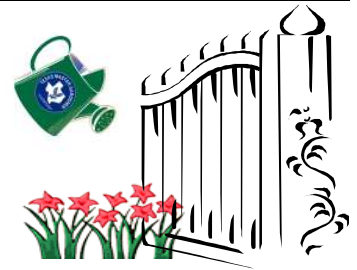




Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume III, Issue 7

Official E-letter of the Ellis County Master Gardeners Association, Waxahachie, Texas

August, 2009

Welcome to the Ellis County Master Gardener's **E-Gardening** newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to give you a month by month agenda of what you should be doing to your landscape. We will be featuring horticulture articles that we hope you will find interesting, important dates where you can find the Master Gardeners speaking, demonstrating and passing out information relative to your garden. If you would like to receive this newsletter monthly via your email address, log onto our website www.ECMGA.com, click on subscribe, and it will be sent around the 1st of every month. Best of all; it's FREE!

Melinda Kocian, editor

What's Happening in August

Thursday, August 6, 7-9 pm - Rain Barrel Class, Waxahachie Parks and Recreation Building, 401 S. Elm. \$30.00 per person. The City of Waxahachie's Parks and Recreation Dept., in conjunction with the Ellis County Master Gardeners, have planned a class to instruct residents on how to construct a rain barrel. For more information, please call 972-937-7330, ext. 284. (all materials will be provided, and at the end each participant will take home a completed rain barrel. Space is limited to 20 participants on a first come, first served basis.

Saturday, August 8, 9:30 - Petal Pushers, 813 Straus Rd., Cedar Hill. **Fall Gardening**, cutting back herbs for fall growth and Christmas Gifts from your garden; presented by Val Nolen. For more info, call 972-291-7650.

Saturday, August 15, 9 am - 11 am - Grill Fest, Downtown's Farmer's Market. See info below.

Saturday, August 15, 9:00 - noon - Cedar Ridge Preserve - **Conservation in Action Workday**. Come and join in the fun as we work in the butterfly garden and on the trails, and perform other chores. Water and snacks will be provided. Wear sturdy boots or shoes with good ankle support and bring gloves if you have them though we will also have some available. Bring a friend! Cedar Ridge Preserve, 7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas 75229. More info: volunteers@audubondallas.org or 972-709-7784.

Monday, August 17, 7:00 pm - **Garden Inspirations**, Fall Gardening, as well as Dave Phillips speaking on worm castings. 108 Cedarcrest, Waxahachie (Rockett). For more info call Marilyn @214-497-3918 or marilyn@gardeninspiration-tx.com

Tuesday, August 18th, 6-8 p.m - Rain Barrel Class, The City of Lancaster is hosting "Make-it and Take-It" class. The cost will be \$35.00; all supplies furnished. Payment is due no later than August 12. For more info, contact Deborah Willingham, at 972-218-1388 or dwillingham@lancaster-tx.com. Space is limited; first come, first served.



Listen to KBEC.....

Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m. on 1390 AM.

The Ellis County Master Gardeners have a 5-minute segment every week, offering you helpful information on what you need to be doing in your landscape, as well as "happenings" around the county. Be sure to listen in!

Melinda Kocian

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Ellis County Master Gardeners To Host Grilling Festival

The Ellis County Master Gardeners will host a grilling festival at the Waxahachie Farmers Market, in the downtown square, Saturday August 15, 2009. The grilling will be done courtesy of Mark Arnold, Ellis County AgriLife Extension Agent. The fruits and vegetables will be donated by the Farmer's Market vendors and the Master Gardeners. Grilled fruits and vegetables will be served from 9:00 am to 11:00 am, or until they are gone, free of charge to all Farmers Market attendees.

It's August - What Needs to be Done?



Planting and Sowing

- Sow seeds of snapdragons, dianthus, pansies, calendulas and other seasonal cut flowers in flats for planting outside during mid- to late fall.
- Sow seeds for bluebonnets and other spring wildflowers. They must germinate in late summer or early fall, develop good root systems, and be ready to grow in spring when the weather warms. Plant seed in well-prepared, weed- and grass-free soil, ½ inch deep, and water thoroughly.
- Plant fall bulbs such as oxblood lilies and spider lilies.
- Sow beans, squash, cucumbers, and corn early this month. Lettuce, radishes, spinach, beets, and turnips follow 2 weeks later.
- Set transplants of fall cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprout mid- to late month

Fertilizing and Pruning

- A late-summer pruning of rose bushes can be beneficial. Prune out dead canes and any weak, brushy type of growth. Cut back tall, vigorous bushes to about 30 inches. After pruning, apply a complete fertilizer and water thoroughly.
- Trim back leggy annuals such as moss rose, purslane, petunias, begonias, and impatiens by one-third to one-half to produce re-growth for fall flowers.

Garden Watch

- Refer to the "Homeowner's Fruit and Nut Spray Schedule", available from your County AgriLife Office, for the timing of this month's spray applications to control pecan weevils and hickory shuckworms on pecan trees and peach tree borers on peach and plum trees.
- Control nutsedge (often called "nutgrass") in lawns and garden beds by applying a treatment of Image or Manage this month.

This and That

- Select and order the spring-flowering bulbs that you'll want to plant in October and November.
- Establish a new compost pile to accommodate the fall leaf accumulation.

EarthKind™ Tips for August

The most common error in irrigating turf grasses is watering too much and too often. This practice also leeches nutrients from the soil. The best way to water turf is to apply one inch of water as quickly as possible with no run off. For more information visit: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/drought/table.html>.



Don't Forget the Farmer's Market!

Time for the opening of the Waxahachie Downtown Farmer's Market! Beginning Saturday, May 30, from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. Just think....fresh tomatoes (yum!)....and of course lots of fresh-grown vegetables from local farmers. Also, food-related items such as canned preserves, jellies, jams and salsas.

And as always, the Ellis County Master Gardeners will be on hand at their booth with timely, free hand-outs with info for all your landscape and garden information. They will have, for sale, landscaping manuals, bird and flower identification wheels and of course, their brand-new cookbook: "*Treasured Recipes*". This much sought-after cookbook will be available for purchase every Saturday. The cost is \$10.00. (p.s.-they make **GREAT** gifts!

Vegetable Gardeners Monthly

By Rick Daniel

Ellis County Master Gardener/Vegetable Gardening Specialist

Hello, and welcome to the August edition of the Vegetable Gardeners Monthly. If you have questions that this article doesn't address, just give us a call at 972-825-5175 or contact us via the web at www.ecmga.com and ask for one of your Master Gardener Vegetable Gardening Specialist.

Hey, I know it's hot out there, and it's difficult to think about planting seeds and transplants in this stifling heat, but it's time to get started planting for those fall gardens. It's time to sow beans, squash, cucumbers and corn in early August and you can sow lettuce, radishes, spinach, beets and turnips mid-month. Don't forget to regularly water those young seedlings and plants throughout August, as they will not survive the heat without adequate water.

Featured Vegetable of the Month

By Rick Daniel

Ellis County Master Gardener



Vegetable of the Month

BEANS: (Bush/Snap Bean)



Planting Dates: For spring, plant seeds after all danger of frost. For fall crops, plant seeds 12-14 weeks before first frost.

Planting Method: Beans have a deep root system, so be sure and prepare the soil at least 8-10 inches deep. Plant seed ½ to 1 inch deep about 1-2 inches apart. I like to plant about half the row and then wait about 10-14 days to plant the second half, to extend harvest time, which is usually 14 days. Thin to a spacing of 3-4 inches. Plant after soil is warm because seeds planted in cold soils germinate slowly and are susceptible to rotting.

Varieties: Blue Lake 274, Top Crop, Tendercrop, Contender, Tendergreen, Derby, Pinto and Roma.

Culture: Be sure and give the climbing varieties something to grow on. Beans are fairly drought tolerant, but need adequate moisture when blooming and as pods begin to grow consider mulching with about 2-3 inches of organic matter, such as compost. Beans are one of the oldest and most important food crops in the world, but nutritionally and economically.

Fertilizer: Beans produce their own nitrogen and require very little fertilizer. Excess nitrogen will delay flowering, so side dress only after heavy bloom and set of pods using a high nitrogen fertilizer. For you organic gardeners, fertilize at planting and again in early summer.

Harvest: Most mature in about 8 weeks. Green beans (snap) should be picked when the pods are young and tender and the seeds are still immature and soft. Beans for shells shouldn't be picked until they are full size and starting to change color. Dry beans should be fully ripened before harvested. Avoid picking the beans when the foliage is wet.

The steady buzzzzz of the Katydid chorus,
The bass solo of the croaking frog,
The steady woof-woof-woof of a barking dog-
A summer night's serenade.

~ Michael P. Garofalo, "Cuttings"

Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton
Ellis County Master Gardener



August Herb of the Month – Mints

By Arlene Hamilton, Ellis County Master Gardener



If you have been faithfully harvesting your culinary herbs, your mint patch should be still producing in August. Mints will be trying to flower and then die back. The bees will love the flowers so be careful while harvesting. Most mints need to be harvested often otherwise they will bloom and the leaves will be spaced farther and farther apart on the stems. Flavor is lost if flowering is allowed so get out into your mint patch, pick a bunch and brew up a tall glass of refreshing mint tea to enjoy as you take a break from our August heat.

Mints belong to the genus *Mentha* in the Lamiaceae family. They are very aromatic plants with four-sided stems, opposite leaves and small flowers in purple pink or white. Most mints do not produce seeds or the seed is not true to the mother plant. Mints spread by rhizomes and prefer loose, well-drained soil. These perennials grow beautifully and develop best flavor in morning sun and afternoon shade in the Texas garden. Mints prefer more moisture than most culinary herbs so be prepared to water faithfully during our summer droughts. A light feeding is desirable but not too much fertilizer or you will have lush growth but not much flavor. Mints make great container plants. In the garden, mints should be controlled with metal, plastic or wooden barriers, but expect some of the rhizomes to break through and spread with abandon throughout the garden.

Thanks to mints' promiscuous ways and the variability of their offspring, as many as 2000 different varieties have evolved from about 25 distinct varieties. The beloved Texas herbalist, Madalene Hill, noted her favorites for the Texas garden. Mints are divided into two broad groups according to fragrance: the spearmint family (*Mentha spicata*) and the peppermints (*M. piperita*). Following are a few to try in your herb garden.

- *Crispata* (*M. spicata*) is the one smelling most like Wrigley's Spearmint gum. With its sharp, clean aroma and dark green, curly leaves, it is excellent for lamb mint sauce.
- *Variegata* (*M. suaveolens*) is the beautiful creamy-white and soft green pineapple mint. Elegant to grow and use fresh, it loses much flavor when dried.
- Hillary's Sweet Lemon named for former First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, is a hybrid of apple and lime mint.
- Orange Mints (*M. aquatica* or *M. citrate*) are decorative in the garden, best in the early spring. Use to make a refreshing iced tea. The flavors of orange mints are too perfume-like to use in cooking but the leaves make good potpourri.
- Chocolate (*M. x piperita*) is one of my favorites. It has a slight and delicious flavor of chocolate, especially when the leaves are candied.

Here is delicious summer recipe to try with spearmint.

White Grape & Mint Salsa

4 cups seedless white grapes (green grapes)
2 T onion chives, chopped
Juice of 1/2 fresh lime
2 T spearmint, chopped
1 whole jalapeno, seeded and diced

Combine ingredients in food processor and barely pulse or chop by hand. Mix and refrigerate at least 1 hour. Serve with chips or top on grilled fish.

Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

*Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener*



Prairie Verbena

Verbena bipinnatifida Nutt.
Verbena Family (Verbenaceae)

Size: 12-18 inches

Blooms: January through December, Perennial

Usually no more than a foot high and often reclining, prairie verbena sometimes paints large areas lavender, pink, bluish, or purple. Plants are hairy, with square stems. Trumpet-shaped with five flattened lobes, the tiny flowers are clustered into half-globes. Opposite, stalked leaves are divided twice into finely cut foliage that adds a lacy background to the rounded flower clusters. Prairie verbena quickly covers barren areas, but is crowded out as other species invade. It is an important nectar plant for butterflies, blooming throughout the year. It often roots from reclining lower stem joints. Texas has thirty-six species of verbena, many essentially similar.



Highlighting the 2009 Ellis County Master Gardener Interns

Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme...

Oh, and Don't Forget the Basil!

By Cheryl Sandoval, 2009 Master Gardener Intern



Growing herbs can be loads of fun and you don't need much to get started. A few pots, window sill boxes and a small garden bed are all acceptable options. And you can grow them indoors or out. There's no need to be intimidated...herbs are easy to grow if you have a few helpful hints. Let's go through the five Ws to get you started.

Who? - You, really! If this is your first attempt, start small but do start, you'll be glad you did. It's a great project for parents or grandparents to do with your children. Watching something you plant grow, is magical.

What? - Again, if this is your first attempt, select just a few. As a suggestion, select what you'll use in the kitchen. Those in the title are versatile, they smell absolutely wonderful and are easy to grow. Or, select herbs based on aromas you like or those that look nice to you. Whatever you choose be sure to select herbs that grow in our area and there are many. Local nurseries, the Internet or the Ellis County Extension Office are all great resources for information to help you.

Where? - Decide if you are planting your herbs indoors or outside. If outside, will they be in the ground or in pots? Here are a few hints that will make your herb growing a success:

- If you're using old pots, be sure to clean them in a bleach solution first. Use one part bleach to nine parts water. Soak for at least 15 minutes. Air-dry several hours before planting.
- Herbs, as a rule, like 6 to 8 hours of sun, so placement is important. If indoors, a south window is best but east or west will work. If outside, select a nice sunny location.
- Herbs like a nice healthy soil that drains well, so purchase a good quality soil and add some compost.
- A monthly fertilizer will ensure healthy growth if your herbs are indoors. Otherwise, fertilize twice a year with a light hand... meaning they really don't need a lot of fertilization to be tasty. You can rely on the folks at nurseries or the Extension Office for a recommendation. Remember if you plan to use the herbs in cooking, you'll want to be selective about the fertilizer you use.
- Water frequently at first especially if the herbs are outside. This helps the plants get a strong healthy start. Watering can be tricky because both over watering and under watering can have the same negative result - unhappy plants. Use a pencil or similar item; stick it into the soil. If it comes out clean; water. If solid particles stick, then there's no need to water just yet.

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(Continued from page 5)

When? – Early spring is always a good time for new plants. With extra care you can plant now. You can start almost anytime if planting in containers for growing indoors.

Why? – Imagine using rosemary to flavor potatoes or using rosemary springs as skewers when barbecuing chicken. Or imagine picking fresh flavorful basil leaves to toss with pasta, olive oil and fresh tomatoes (maybe even those from the Waxahachie Farmer's Market) for a light summer dinner. The reasons are truly endless. **Happy Gardening!**

Highlighting the 2009 Interns (cont'd)

Gardening for Wildlife

By Lucinda Jones Hollier, 2009 Intern



Who better to encapsulate a balanced and respectful approach to nature than William Wordsworth when he wrote, "Come forth into the light of things...let nature be your teacher." While we are ensconced in the comfort of our artificially cooled or heated homes, outside the interaction of weather, flora, and fauna continues in spite of human interference.

As with most developments from city to suburb, even rural areas, most of our homes have been constructed on land that started out as woodland or prairie. Farmers cleared this land to raise crops and livestock, followed by developers, who in a crunch of bulldozer-borne reality replaced the open land with streets and utility grids, homogeneous houses and the basic American planting scheme. People seldom think of their ¼-½ acre lot, or even larger acreage that they tend with mowing, fertilizing, and watering as an ecosystem. Yet yards and gardens are indeed a very particular and notably impoverished ecosystem that favors weediness in both plants and animals. The landscape we acquire consists of mostly grass with some foundation plantings, and a few trees. The nesting places for birds and small mammals has been cleared away by builders, as well as the diversity of plants that provide food and cover.

Happily, the appreciation for natural habitat along with diversity of plants and animals grows daily. Perhaps you too have already discovered the advantages of creating landscapes that work with---not against---nature. If you have reduced or discontinued the use of fertilizers and harsh pesticides, produced compost, practiced water conservation, or reintroduced native plants into your garden, you have seen for yourself how beneficial these practices can be. Whether you are a novice planting your first garden, or an experienced gardener looking to create a project to enhance your immediate ecosystem, I encourage you to follow these basic steps so that your own yard attracts an abundance of wildlife.

Wildlife needs habitat diversity---that is, a variety of plants and a choice of housing sights. Within this diversity, you will need to provide four features for wildlife to become year-round residents instead of occasional visitors: water, food, shelter---and, if all is well, a place to raise their young,

It is easy for wildlife gardeners to focus on providing food and overlook an equally vital requirement of wildlife---water. Even a mud puddle will attract butterflies, and you'll draw birds and butterflies to a simple birdbath with a perching stone in the center. If you'd like to attract mammals and amphibians, try building a water garden or small pond. The more varied an aquatic habitat you provide, the more wildlife you can attract.

Your habitat should offer plenty of food sources for animals, as well. Natural sources are best---places where trees, shrubs, and plants supply the necessary nectar, seeds, and fruits. You may supplement this with bird feeders; the more varied, the better. Site several feeding stations to afford visiting animals a sense of security while they remain visible to you, either from a window in your home or from a well-concealed observation post.

In addition to water and food, wildlife needs cover or places to hide. Cover offers wildlife protection from natural forces that may endanger them, such as weather and predators, as well as from you, their observer. Shelter comes in many forms: Densely branched shrubs, evergreens both large and small, and meadow or prairie patches can all provide excellent protection and the perfect place to raise their young. Specific plants can attract butterflies and moths. The same small water garden that supplies water for many small animals will also meet the needs of toads, salamanders, and dragonflies because all of these creatures need water for breeding purposes. Carefully constructed and prudently placed nesting boxes specifically suited for different species of birds or bats can attract a wealth of wildlife to your garden, with the added bonus of ridding your habitat of the ubiquitous mosquito.

Finally, don't forget to include a spot where you can sit, watch, and enjoy the world of wildlife that you've brought to your little patch of this planet---your own yard. And if possible, plan your wildlife garden so as much of it as possible is visible from inside your house on those bitterly cold, rainy days or sweltering summer afternoons. When we've worked with nature creating an inviting habitat for wildlife, we have gifted ourselves with a new appreciation of and empathy for all living things.

Why Should you have an Organic Lawn?

By Candice Jones, 2009 Master Gardener Intern



An organic lawn care program works with nature, not against it. This gives the lawn just what it needs to be green and healthy, and more resistant to diseases and pests. This program is also safer for children, pets, and our aquifers and therefore, our drinking water. It also saves money in the long run, since it takes less fertilizer, pesticides, and fungicides overall.

When starting an organic program, fertilize your lawn two times a year; April and late September/early October. A third fertilization, in June, could be added, if wanted. This program works best when grass clippings are left on the lawn, and other organic practices are followed that protect the good activity in the soil. Although, one will not see as fast of a green-up as if using a chemical fertilizer program, you will achieve a healthier, sustainable green - with patience. There may be a transition period when going from chemical to organic lawn care programs.

It is recommended that you use compost on your lawn to help with micro-organism. One should do this early in the spring, and/or in the fall. Spread compost on your lawn, one-half inch or less and water in. This practice amends the soil, improves drainage, boosts beneficial organisms, help decrease thatch, and helps hold in moisture. According to some sources, topdressing can reduce water requirements by 50%!

Where your soil is compacted or contains heavy clay, aeration is the most successful solution, especially when preceded by top-dressing. Manual aerators are great to help those foot-worn paths, but for an entire lawn, renting a gas-powered aerator is easiest.

A good watering program is to water deep and less often than shallow and more often. Deep watering means deeper roots! Mow no more than 1/3 of the grass blades' height at a time. This avoids stress and also encourages a deeper root system. Deeper roots mean less watering! Keep mower blades sharp; ragged cuts invite more disease. Leave your grass clippings on the yard and all organic matter.

There are many different ways and methods of having an organic earth-friendly yard. Be sure that when you decide to start your yard on an organic program that you come up with a plan and stick with the plan. It is important to draw out your yard and include all plants that are there and all shaded areas. When adding plants to an area be sure that its calculated to what the plants mature size will be. If you have a question, check with your local Master Gardeners or your county AgriLife office on safe and helpful tests to have a beautiful organic lawn.



Heat Tolerant Bloomers

By Nancy Fenton
Ellis County Master Gardener



Looking for blooming, heat tolerant plants to brighten up your scorched landscape? Try a few more Crepe Myrtles. You can find them in almost every size and color.

Varieties start at about 2 feet and have assorted colors to tree sized ones over 12 feet tall. Smaller ones like *Baton Rouge-red*, *Cordon Bleu-lavender* and *New Orleans-purple* tend to weep or cascade and make great plants around patios, pools or even foundations. Dwarves reaching to almost 6 feet come in almost ever color such as *White Snow Baby*, *Red Petite Plum* and *Dwarf Purple*. Intermediates are just that; reaching from 6 feet to 12 feet with *Red Cherokee*, *Pink Pecos* and *Purple Catawba* some of the favorites of the area. The tall white weeping ones you see up and down the streets of Waxahachie are called *Natchez*. The tall varieties are the ones you see growing past the rooflines of homes and ones the roads and byways towering over the fences. As these "trees" mature, they make a show of pink, red, or white blooms. (*Watermelon- red*, *Bashams Party Pink*, *New Snow- white*)

All Crepe Myrtles need bright sun and good air circulation. Aphids are about the only bugs drawn to them and they can be thwarted with good air circulation or a regular stiff spray with a water hose. If a crepe myrtle gets black sooty stuff or mildew on it, it is a sign of poor air circulation. I use a stiff spray from my hose end sprayer of soap and water (1 Tablespoon soap to 5 gallons of spray) to battle the bugs and mildew. The spray disrupts the bugs enough that they move on. Regular spraying once ever 10 days or so will help to keep the bugs moving!

Try some of these beauties in your sunny spots. Remember water weekly the first year, mulch heavily, and choose the right size for your space. No tree sized crepe myrtles under the electric lines!! Enjoy blooms even in the heat of the summer.

Ellis County Master Gardener's Scholars Announced



Pictured from left to right: Pam Daniel, Emily Lord, Brenda Vitela, Ellis Co. Commissioner Bill Dodson, Linda Moxley and Patsy Major.

The Ellis County Master Gardeners Association presented scholarships to two Ellis County high school graduates during their meeting Tuesday 7/14/2009 at First United Methodist Church.

The scholarships are available to Ellis County students pursuing studies in Horticulture-related fields including biology, botany, entomology, chemistry, mathematics, genetics, physiology, statistics, computer science, and communications, garden design, planting design to name a few.

Scholarship committee members Pam Daniel, Patsy Major and Ron Garrett, along with the selection committee, Linda Moxley, Rita Hodges and Ellis County Pct. 2 Commissioner, Bill Dodson were all very proud to introduce the scholarship recipients.

Emily Lord, 2009 graduate of Red Oak High School, and Brenda Vitek, 2009 Waxahachie High School graduate, were each presented with a \$2,000 scholarship.

"I plan to attend Texas A&M this fall," Lord said. "I want to major in ag economics and hopefully one day work for the government on trade and import."

"I'm going to enroll in Navarro College in Corsicana and begin work toward a degree in landscape architecture," Vitek said.

"We encourage more students to apply for scholarships next year," Major said. "All they need to do is log onto the Ellis County Master Gardeners Web site and pull up the application. And we have very broad qualifications for students to receive scholarships."

The scholarships are funded by the Association's annual Lawn and Garden Expo, where local companies are invited to be sponsors, with the proceeds going directly into the scholarship fund.

The 2009 spring Lawn and Garden Expo featured gold sponsors to include The Greenery, Ark Country Store, KBEC 1390, Earth Tone Greenery, The Home Depot, Waxahachie Daily Light and Texas Master Gardeners. Bronze sponsors include Tex-Scapes Greenery, Waxahachie Civic Center. Green sponsors include Garden Scapes by Diane, Citizens National Bank of Texas, Rolands Nursery and Landscape, Structured Foundation Repair Inc., Neighborhood Credit Union, PatioScapes LLC, Ennis Garden Club and Holcim (Texas) LP.

For more information, visit the Web site at www.ECMGA.com or call 972-937-9818.



It's August - What Else Needs to be Done?

By Rick Daniel
Ellis County Master Gardener

Gardening tips for August: The best tip I can give you for August gardening is to watch out for the heat, for both you and your plants! Wear a hat and light colored clothing, work in the early morning whenever possible and drink plenty of water and stay hydrated. Remember, you need the water just as much and probably more than your plants!

For you vegetable gardeners, you can sow seeds for fall crops of black-eyed peas, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, corn, okra and squash early- to mid-month. If possible, position new plants in the shade of existing plants, to protect them from the late afternoon sun. Remember to keep the seedbeds moist until your new plants germinate.

For your perennial gardens, trim and prune dead, overgrown and leggy plants. Continue to watch for insects and pests and use the proper control methods.

Refer to the "Homeowner's Fruit and Nut Spray Schedule", available at the AgriLife Extension Office, for the timing of this month's spray applications to control pecan weevils and hickory shuckworms on pecan trees and peach tree borers on peach and plum trees.

Don't forget to turn the compost pile occasionally to help aerate and speed up decomposition. Be sure the pile is wet. It needs to be the consistency of a wrung out wet sponge. Start a new compost pile to accommodate the fall leaf production.

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Water your landscape deeply and thoroughly once a week. You need to apply **one inch** of water per week.

Buy the 3rd week, it will be time to set out broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower transplants. You can also sow kale, butterhead lettuce, spinach and turnip seeds in late August. Come on by the farmers market each and every Saturday morning and stock up on your locally grown produce. Help support your local growers who consume less energy getting their products to market, as they don't have to be shipped cross country.

Prune those rose bushes and remove dead canes and any weak, brushy type of growth. Cut back tall and vigorous bushes to about 30 inches. After pruning is completed, apply a complete fertilizer and water thoroughly. It's also time to plant new irises, or divide crowded existing irises.



The Ellis County Master Gardeners invite photographers from all levels of expertise to enter our first ever Photo Contest.

Photo Contest

CATEGORIES:
Single specimen
In the Garden
Garden Bounty

Contest runs
May 1 – September 30, 2007

For a complete copy of the rules and application form, please log on to: www.ECMGA.com

Presented by:
Ellis County Master Gardeners and
The Waxahachie Daily Light

Announcing the 2010 Ellis Co. Master Gardeners Photo Contest

The contest will begin June 1st and run thru January 31st, 2010. Winners will be announced at the 2010 Ellis County Master Gardener's Lawn and Garden Expo, E-Garden Newsletter, and the Waxahachie Daily Light and on the www.ECMGA.com website. In a break from the past, this years contest will be free and all entries will be submitted by way of the ECMGA website. Simply log on and click on photo contest.

The categories are:

1. Single specimen (i.e. one tulip or a field of bluebonnets) and
2. In the Garden (full backyards, water gardens, containers etc.).

Prizes for this years contest will be: 1st place, a \$100 gift certificates; 2nd place, a \$60 gift certificate and 3rd place, a \$40 gift certificate — in each of the two categories. The gift certificates are from The Greenery, Roland's Nursery, TexScapes Greenery in Ennis and EarthTones Greenery in Midlothian.

For full details and to enter, click on photo contest at www.ECMGA.com.

Ⓐ break in the heat away from the front, no thunder, no lightning,

Just rain, warm rain, falling near dusk; falling on eager ground,

Steaming blacktop, hungry plants thirstily turning toward the cloud's cooling, soothing ran splashing in sudden puddles, catching in open screens, that certain smell of summer rain.

~Raymond A. Foss, "Summer Rain"

A Conversation With God

- GOD: Frank, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on the planet? What happened to the dandelions, violets, thistle and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honeybees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But, all I see are these green rectangles.
- ST. FRANCIS: It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers 'weeds' and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.
- GOD: Grass? But, it's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees; only grubs and sod worms. It's sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?
- ST. FRANCIS: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.
- GOD: The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy.
- ST. FRANCIS: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it - sometimes twice a week.
- GOD: They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?
- ST. FRANCIS: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.
- GOD: They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?
- ST. FRANCIS: No, Sir, just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.
- GOD: Now, let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so it will grow. And, when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?
- ST. FRANCIS: Yes, Sir.
- GOD: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.
- ST. FRANCIS: You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.
- GOD: What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn, they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life.
- ST. FRANCIS: You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.
- GOD: No. What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?
- ST. FRANCIS: After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.
- GOD: And where do they get this mulch?
- ST. FRANCIS: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.
- GOD: Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?
- ST. CATHERINE: 'Dumb and Dumber', Lord. It's a story about....
- GOD: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St Francis.



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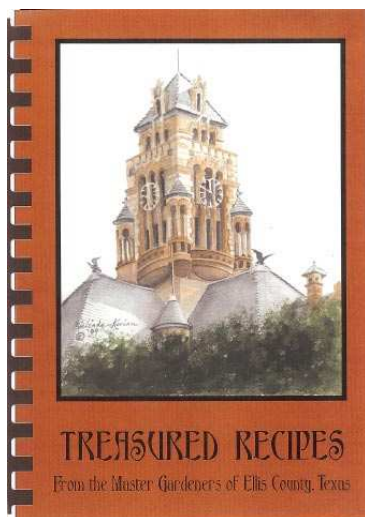
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