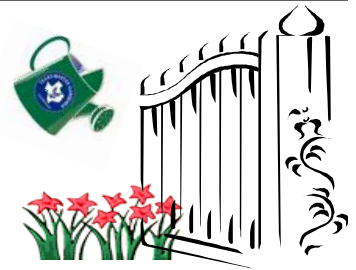




# Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume IV, Issue 7

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

August, 2010

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](http://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

### Weston Gardens.

8101 Anglin Dr., Fort Worth, 817-572-0549, [www.westongardens.com](http://www.westongardens.com).

**Saturday, July 31, 3:00pm.** "Critters in the Garden": Solving Urban Wildlife Problems. RSVP 817-572-0549. Presented by Bonnie Bradshaw, certified wildlife rehabilitator and President of 911 Wildlife.

**Saturday, July 31 @ 1:30.** "Designing Your Garden 101"

**Sunday, August 1 @ 2:00.** "Designing Your Garden 101", hosted by Susan Higgins and Nadine Dawkins.

(\***Bonus**), There will be a drawing at each Design Class for a free 1-hour, in-office design consultation (\$70.00 value).

### Garden Inspirations

**Saturday's, 8:00 a.m. - "Classes" at the Waxahachie Farmer's Market... \$10.00 each**

- August 7 "Plan Your Fall Garden"
- August 14 "Be Green" - learn to be green
- August 21 "Water Wise"
- August 28 "Garden Medley" - fresh fall vegetable recipe class

**Monday, August 16 7:00 p.m.**, Garden Inspirations' "Water Features". From water falls, to ponds, to bird baths; this class will give you fresh ideas on water features and their benefits to our environments. Marilyn Simmons, 108 Ridge Crest, Waxahachie, 972-497-3918



### 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



**Save The Date!**  
**Saturday, March 26, 2011**

Ellis County Master Gardener

## Don't forget!! Waxahachie Downtown Farmer's Market

Saturday, May 22 through October 16  
Hours: 8:00 a.m. thru 1:00 pm.



Visit the Ellis Co. Master Gardener's booth

Free handouts ♦ Help with gardening questions  
2010 Gardening Calendar ♦ Master Gardener Cookbooks  
plus many more items of interest.

### Inside this issue:

It's August	2
Vegetable Gardening	3
Herb of the Month	4
August Wildflower	4
Landscape Gardening	5
The "Living Classroom"	7
Living Screens	8
What Else?	8

## *It's August - What Needs to be Done*



### Monarch Butterfly

*Photo by Linda Moxley and Nancy Prikryl*

*The Monarch Butterfly became the Texas state insect by a 1995 resolution of the state legislature. The Monarch is unique among butterflies in that it is the only species of butterfly that does not hibernate, but migrates in changing seasons. It undergoes four changes in form (metamorphoses) during its lifetime: tiny egg, caterpillar/larva (insert photo), chrysalis or pupa and in the final state the monarch emerges!*

### Tips for August

Awareness of light pollution has increased recently. Some municipalities have introduced measures to reduce light trespass, reduced glare and promote energy efficiency. Solar lighting is typically dimmer and requires no consumable energy.

### Planting and Sowing

- Sow seeds in flats of plants that may be hard to find later in the fall such as calendulas. You can, if you like, sow seeds of fall and winter annuals like snapdragons, dianthus and pansies or purchase nursery stock when these become available.
- Plant seeds of bluebonnets and other wildflowers directly in ground about ½ inches deep. The soil should be free of weeds and grass and the surface should be lightly cultivated. Water well as these plants must germinate in the late summer or fall. Bluebonnet seed have hard coats and should be acid treated to facilitate germination.
- Fall blooming perennials such as Salvia Leucantha, Mexican marigold, mums, and asters if their buds have not already set. Fall-flowering bulbs can also be planted (spider lilies and crocus).

### Pruning and Fertilizing

- Prune most roses by cutting out dead canes and weak spindly growth. Cut back, depending on the variety, to about 30 inches. Fertilize and water well for beautiful fall blooms.
- Salvia greggi (autumn sage) can be cut back at least by one third. Do not flat top any blooming shrub always leave the tops in a rounded, natural shape. If pruned now, it should display great fall and early winter color.

### Garden Watch

- Continue to follow the "Home Owners Fruit and Nut Spray Schedule" to protect pecan trees against pecan weevils and hickory shuckworms which can destroy the crop.
- The same schedule also applies to peach and plum trees to protect from peach tree borers.

### This and That

- Select and order spring-flowering bulbs that will grow in our area.
- By the end of the month you will know the winners and losers in the landscape.
- Plan next year to plant Texas natives and adapted plants like salvias, turkscap, pink skullcap, lantana, Texas betony butterfly bush, flame acanthus, ornamental grasses and many others.

A Useful Link for your plant questions:

**TexasA&M Plant Disease Handbook**

<http://165.91.154.132/TEXLAB/Index.htm>

## Vegetable Gardening

By Pat Dockins  
Ellis County Master Gardener



### Vegetable Gardening In August

Vegetable gardening in August can be a real challenge here in Texas. Usually drought is already in action and 100 degree plus temperature is common place. It is especially important to supply water for your garden when needed. Soak the ground deeply when you do water, then give no more for several days – until the plants approach the stage where they will wilt if water is not given. If you have mulched your plants, now is the time all that labor and expense will pay off. Many plants can take the heat but not their roots. If heavily mulched, the roots will stay considerably cooler and the plant will continue to survive. A big plus is that you'll use less water too.

Tomato plants that are still alive and healthy looking will go semi-dormant. That's okay. Just keep them watered and when the weather begins to cool they will go on and produce another crop for you. Last year our **Early Girl** tomatoes did just that. When the first frost was predicted we ran out and picked every green tomato we could find. We stored them in the garage in a dark area and as they began to "pink up" we brought them to the kitchen counter to further ripen. We had tomatoes until mid-February.

Some people look for large suckers or shoots on the existing tomato plant and cut them off, put them in water and when rooted plant them in the ground. I've read and heard from others that they usually get as good a crop as from the parent plant. Jim just cut the healthy top out of a plant and potted it and it looks great. Our dog, Ruff, dug the pot out into the yard to chew on it and the plant came out and lo and behold, it had rooted within just a few days. I've stuck some cuttings just in water to see if they will root. It's best to transplant tomatoes in July but if you've got some, I'd recommend you try anyway. I'll let you know how our experiments work in a later column.

If your tomato plants or any other plants are diseased and sickly or full of bugs now is the time to pull them up. Get rid of them. Don't compost them but rather bag them and put them out with the trash.

The peppers from your spring garden will also go semi-dormant too. They will come on strong in the fall and probably give you a better yield than you had last spring. Thin the peppers on your plants, pulling the smallest ones so that the remaining ones will grow larger. Give them a fresh layer of mulch, keep them watered and when the weather cools give them a shot of foliar fertilizer. Then jump back!

Our Swiss Chard still looks good and has begun sending young tender shoots up, great for stir fry or whatever.

I've cut my broccoli plants back, mulched them and have begun watering them. Before that I had just let them go. Within the week they are looking much better. I know I won't get the big beautiful heads again but I'll be happy with the little side shoots. They are enough for Jim and I.

#### **What you can plant now:**

Cucumber, squash and beans – early August

Cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower – mid August

Cool season crops such as lettuce, spinach, kale, turnips, beets and carrots – mid to late August

Remember to keep your transplants and seedlings moistened daily and mulch!

## Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton  
Ellis County Master Gardener



### August Herb of the Month – Texas Natives

If you want to make it through August in Texas without the frustration of losing many of the plants in your herb garden you should include Texas natives. These are plants that will withstand and even thrive in our summer heat and drought.

Mexican Oregano (*Lippia graveolens*) and (*Poliomintha logiflora*) are not true oreganos but have a strong smelling oregano scent and flavor. They are two of several species native to Texas and Mexico. These small perennial shrubs with bright green leaves yield an essential oil similar to that of oregano. Their blue-pink flowers bloom all summer and are attractive to hummingbirds. When you find Mexican recipes calling for oregano the leaves of these plants would generally be used. The flowers can be used in teas.

Sweet Marigold, Mexican Mint Marigold (*Tagetes lucida*) is another perennial Texas native that should be in your herb garden. This is one of the last herbs to flower in the fall. Texas herbalist Madalene Hill often told us to expect our first freeze two weeks after Sweet Marigold blooms. When I have remembered to track this I have noted a frost in my garden within 12 to 15 days of blooming! Use the flowers in salads and as a garnish. The anise flavored leaves are used to season any kind of meat, poultry, fish and eggs. It is best used fresh. It is an excellent culinary substitute for French tarragon, which is seldom grown successfully in our southern gardens.

Epazote (*Chenopodium ambrosioides*) is a short lived perennial or annual in the North Texas garden. The leaves are used to flavor Mexican foods and to marinate meats. Add a few stems to the bean pot during the last ten minutes of cooking to take gas out of field beans. In addition to its culinary uses, dried epazote is an effective room freshener. This plant can be invasive and will take over unmanaged gardens so use caution when planting. One plant will grow to six feet high and have a spread of three feet.

## Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian  
Ellis County Master Gardener



*Ruellia humilis* Nutt.  
**Acanthus Family (Acanthaceae)**

### Wild Petunia, Low Ruellia

**Range:** 1-6, 7-9 (Ellis County is range 4)

**Size:** 8-30 inches

**Blooms:** April through October - Perennial

As the name *humilis* implies, wild petunia is usually a small plant. Conspicuously hairy, it is upright to sprawling, with several square stems forming a clump. Its flowers have five lobes and are two inches or more long. The lavender to light bluish purple trumpets have red or dark purple lines in the throat. Flowers grow singly, or a few at a time, in the axils of leaves. They open in the morning and last only one day. Opposite leaves are crowded, elliptic or ovate, and up to over two inches long. Low Ruellia grows in full sun or part shade, in dry, sandy or clayey soils. It is attractive in wildflower plantings. The many species of wild petunia in Texas are similar, but vary in color. Also similar in appearance, cultivated petunias are actually in another family, *Solanaceae*, genus *Petunia*.



## Landscape Gardening

By Gail Haynes, Ellis County Master Gardener

Ellis County Master Gardeners have a website at [www.ecmga.com](http://www.ecmga.com). Check this website for information on gardening in Ellis County, sign up for a monthly newsletter or access other websites including Texas A&M horticulture website. Questions for Master Gardeners will be answered with a return telephone call or email if you leave a message at 972.825.5175.



### **Germination of Tree Seed: Growing Trees Can Be Fun**

by Richard Jauron, Department of Horticulture, Iowa State University

**Note:** This article was published originally in 2000 by Richard Jauron, Department of Horticulture, Iowa State University, in Horticulture & Home Pest News. While some of the species mentioned are more typical of the eastern United States, there are many good tips and references that could be applied to Texas trees. - DFW, Ed.

Germination of tree seed, and growing trees from seed can be fun. However, the seed of most tree species won't germinate immediately when planted because they are in a dormant state. Dormancy must be broken before the seed can germinate. In some tree species, dormancy is the result of a thick, hard seed coat. The seed coat may be broken in a variety of ways and the process is referred to as scarification. Mechanical means, such as a metal file or coarse sandpaper, can be used to break the seed coat. Treatment with boiling water has also been successful for a number of tree species. In nature, the seed coat may be broken by microbial action, passage of the seed through the digestive tract of a bird or other animal, exposure to alternate freezing and thawing or fire.

The seed of many tree species will not germinate until they have been exposed to cool temperatures and moist conditions for several weeks or months. Winter weather in areas of the United States such as Iowa provides the necessary conditions to break dormancy. Gardeners can accomplish the same results by a process called stratification. Tree seed can be stratified by placing the seed in a moist 50:50 mixture of sand and peat moss. Suitable containers include coffee cans, plastic jars, and cottage cheese containers. (Punch holes in the lid of the container to provide air.) Seed can also be stratified in plastic bags. Stratify the seed in the refrigerator. The seed of some trees, such as redbud, have hard impermeable seed coats and dormant embryos. They require both scarification and stratification for germination. Specific information on collecting and planting seed from several tree species follows:

- **Maples** (*Acer* species) - When mature, maple fruit (samaras) turn from green to yellow or brown and fall to the ground. Collect mature fruit from the lawn, driveway, or gutters. There is no need to remove the seed from the fruit. The fruit of red (*Acer rubrum*) and silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) mature in late spring or early summer. Neither requires a pregermination treatment and should be planted immediately. The fruit of most maple species mature in the fall. Sow seed directly outdoors in the fall or plant stratified seed in the spring. Seed of the sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) should be stratified for 40 to 90 days at 33 to 41 F, while seed of the Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) require 90 to 120 days at 41 F. Plant the seed (fruit) 1/4 to 1 inch deep.
- **Horsechestnuts** and Buckeyes (*Aesculus* species) - Gather the fruit (capsules) of the horsechestnuts and buckeyes as soon as they fall to the ground. Dry the fruit at room temperature until the capsules split open, then remove the shiny, dark brown seeds. Plant the seed in the fall or stratify the seed and plant in the spring. The Ohio buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*) and common horsechestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) should be stratified for 120 days at 41 F. Seed should be planted 1 to 2 inches deep.
- **Hickories** (*Carya* species) - Collect the fruit as they fall to the ground. Remove the husks by hand. Sow the seed in the fall or plant stratified seed in the spring. Prior to stratifying, soak the nuts in water at room temperature for 2 to 4 days (change the water once or twice a day). Then stratify the nuts of the shagbark (*Carya ovata*) and bitternut (*Carya cordiformis*) hickories at 33 to 40 F for 90 to 120 days. Pecans (*Carya illinoensis*) require only 30 to 90 days of cold stratification. Plant the seeds 3/4 to 1 1/2 inches deep.
- **Redbud** (*Cercis canadensis*) - Collect the pods of redbud when they turn brown in the fall. Air dry the pods, then remove the seed. Seed of the redbud have hard, impermeable seed coats in addition to dormant embryos. Seed require both scarification and cold stratification before they will germinate. Redbud seed can be scarified by soaking seed in concentrated sulfuric acid for 30 minutes or by submerging seed in boiling water for one minute. Once scarified, the seed should be stratified at 35 to 41 F for 5 to 8 weeks. Seed should be planted promptly at a depth of 1/4 inch.
- **Kentucky Coffeetree** (*Gymnocladus dioica*) - Collect the fruit (pods) when they drop to the ground in the fall. Remove the seed by hand. The seed of Kentucky coffeetree have hard, thick seed coats. The seed coat can be broken by filing through it with a hand file. Plant the seed in the spring at a depth of 1 inch. Black Walnuts (*Juglans nigra*) - Collect walnuts after they fall to the ground. Remove the husks, then place the nuts in water. Those nuts that float on the water are not viable and can be discarded. The good, viable nuts will sink to the bottom. Sow walnuts in the fall or stratify the nuts at 34 to 41 F for 90 to 120 days and plant in the spring. Walnuts should be planted 1 to 2 inches deep.
- **Apples and Crabapples** (*Malus* species) - Most apples and crabapples will not reproduce true from seed. They are usually propagated by grafting and budding. However, the seed of most apples and crabapples are viable and can be germinated. Collect fruit from trees as they ripen. Remove the seed. Sow the seed in the fall or stratify the seed for 60 to 120 days at 37 to 41 F

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

and plant in the spring. Sow the seed 1/2 to 1 inch deep.

- **Cherry, Peach, and Plum** (*Prunus* species) - Harvest fruit when full mature. Remove the seed. Seed may be sown in the fall or stratified seed may be planted in the spring. Stratify the seeds at 33 to 41 F. The sour cherry (*Prunus cerasus*) requires 90 to 150 days, the peach (*Prunus persica*) 98 to 105 days, and European plum (*Prunus domestica*) 90 days. Seed of plums and peaches should be planted 2 inches deep. Sow the seed of sour cherry at a depth of 1/2 inch. (Like the apples and crabapples, the seed of most cultivated cherries, plums, and peaches will not reproduce true from seed.)
- **Oaks** (*Quercus* species) - Ripe acorns should be collected as soon as they fall to the ground. Sound, viable seed can be separated from damaged or unfilled acorns by placing them in water. Sound acorns will sink. Most of the floating acorns are not viable and can be discarded. The acorns of white oak (*Quercus alba*) and swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) should be planted in the fall. They will germinate immediately after sowing. Acorns of bur (*Quercus macrocarpa*), pin (*Quercus palustris*), and red (*Quercus rubra*) oaks can be planted in the fall or stratified seed can be sown in spring. Stratify the seed at a temperature of 32 to 41 F. Acorns of the bur oak require 30 to 60 days, while red and pin oaks require 30 to 45 days.

Excellent references on the propagation of trees and shrubs include **The Reference Manual of Woody Plant Propagation** by Michael Dirr and Charles Heuser Jr., **Plant Propagation: Principles and Practices** by Hudson Hartmann, Dale Kester, Fred Davies Jr., and Robert Geneve, and **Seeds of Woody Plants in North America** by James Young and Cheryl Young.

*This article originally appeared in the August 11, 2000 issue, pp. 102-103, 2000,  
Issue: IC-483(20), Horticulture & Home Pest News  
Richard Jauron, Department of Horticulture, Iowa State University.*

## Garden Checklist for August

- Prune out dead or diseased wood from trees and shrubs. Hold off on major pruning from now until mid-winter. Severe pruning at this time will only stimulate tender new growth prior to frost.
- Plant bluebonnet 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 soil, one-half inch deep, and water thoroughly.
- Picking flowers frequently encourages most annuals and perennials to flower even more abundantly.
- It is time to divide spring-flowering perennials, such as iris, Shasta daisy, oxeye daisy, gaillardia, cannas, day lilies, violets, liriopie, and ajuga.
- Make your selections and place orders for spring-flowering bulbs now so that they will arrive in time for planting in October and November.
- Don't allow plants with green fruit or berries to suffer from lack of moisture.
- A late-summer pruning of rosebushes can be beneficial. Prune out dead canes and any weak, brushy growth. Cut back tall, vigorous bushes to about 30 inches. After pruning, apply fertilizer, and water thoroughly. If a preventive disease-control program has been maintained, your rose bushes should be ready to provide an excellent crop of flowers this fall.
- Establish a new compost pile to accommodate the fall leaf accumulation.

There is no gardening without humility. Nature is constantly sending even its oldest scholars to the bottom of the class for some egregious blunder.

~ Alfred Austin

The best fertilizer is the gardener's shadow.

~Author Unknown

## **"Living Classroom"** **A Beautiful and Practical Garden for Ellis County**

*By Gail Haynes, Ellis County Master Gardeners*



This special demonstration garden created by the Ellis County Master Gardeners is a 10,000 square foot garden designed to educate school children and adults about successful plant selection and gardening techniques for the area. This "Living Classroom" is located on the campus of Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services in Waxahachie. It is open to visitors at any time, and guided tours are available.

Dora Brown, former president of the Ellis County Master Gardeners, conceived the idea for the Living Classroom in 1998, and the Master Gardeners responded enthusiastically. The soil was tilled and amended with composted materials, paths were built, hundreds of plants were added and turf grass sod laid. The vision was to:

- (a) create a semi-public place where new and long-time Ellis County residents could see and learn about plantings --- plantings that are environmentally adaptable to the North Texas ecosystem;
- (b) have a place to showcase proper and efficient nutrient management in urban landscapes;
- (c) host horticulture classes from Waxahachie ISD and provide educational tours for youth groups.

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services Executive Director Ed Knight welcomed the enhanced landscaping with an educational purpose to the campus, as well as the opportunity for the general public to visit the site. PCHS has assisted with watering and maintaining the Living Classroom.

The Waxahachie community responded with many local businesses donating materials and funds to complete the project. The garden contains more than 100 varieties of plants, from an old live oak that has graced the site for many years, to turf grasses, together with numerous ornamental trees, perennial shrubs and flowers. Among the favorites are antique roses, Texas Star hibiscus, salvia, irises and daylilies.

In 2000 the Master Gardeners received second place for "Exemplary Achievement in an Outstanding Project" from the Texas Master Gardeners Association for the Living Classroom project.

The Master Gardeners monitor the Living Classroom on a monthly basis and approximately 10 volunteers will work for 2-3 hours as needed. At the annual planning meeting volunteers are solicited to work on different projects maintained by the Master Gardeners. One person will sign up to schedule the workdays at each project and others sign up to work on the projects. New plants, mulch and organic materials are added as needed.

This project has given the Master Gardeners exposure and recognition as educators and social status as a public educational forum to focus on water quality and conservation. You are welcome to visit the site at 300 Brookside Drive, Waxahachie.







### Living Screens

By Jackie Wilhite, Ellis County Master Gardener

Summertime is a good time to evaluate your landscape to see what plants are meeting or exceeding your expectations. This year's hot temperatures coupled with high humidity and lack of regular rainfall makes it a perfect opportunity to evaluate the sun to shade ratio in the landscape, especially the areas receiving full sun all day. While most of our native plants and those that have adapted to this area like full sun, most plants can benefit from at least some afternoon shade. Evaluations should be done now and any corrective measures should be scheduled for the cooler temperatures of the month of October. This will allow the plants to become better established with the help of cooler daytime and nighttime temperatures and more plentiful rainfall.

First, notice should be given to the areas where the family spends most of their time outdoors such as patios and backyards, or unsightly areas like service areas. If a plant is simply suffering from too much hot afternoon sun, it might need to be moved to a location that is partly shaded. But, if the entire patio is too hot to use then maybe a screen planting would be beneficial.

Incorporating screens instantly transforms a space into an enclosure of privacy and security while adding a touch of charm and elegance. A fence is an instant screen but add a vine to that fence and the space becomes one of living beauty. Small decorative fences make good screens for service areas like the air conditioner or trash containers. Likewise a trellis, wooden lattice works, or pergolas are also excellent choices. A trellis or pergola with a vine trained to cover them provides shade which in turn lowers the temperatures in the covered area.

Careful forethought about these areas' use, size of the area and plant desired are relevant to the success of the planting. A living screen can be established in three years by trellising a climbing evergreen vine. The top evergreen vines that could be used in this area include cross vine (*Bignonia capreolata*) and (*Gelsemium sempervirens*) both are Texas Natives. Clematis (Deciduous to semi-evergreen) makes an ideal delicate coverage possibility for service areas like in front of the air conditioner where air-flow should not be minimized. There are several annual vines that can be planted from seed that include hyacinth bean, cypress vine and morning glory just to name a few. These annuals can even be planted in containers and trained on a trellis or along a fence. Remember, an area used for covering a picnic table or near entrances should not have a vine covering the area that produces sweet smelling flowers because bees, wasps and ants will be a constant problem. Wisteria makes beautiful coverage for large supports like pergolas but the spring flowers attract the pollinators like bees and wasp and in a short time the vein becomes so large and heavy that it could pull down a lightly framed structure. Save the heavy vines for large structures away from the heavy foot traffic and allow the pollinators to do their job.

These are just a few of the possibilities when it comes to planting living screens in the landscape.



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

By Susan Norvell  
Ellis County Master Gardener

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 gardener's, 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. 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.

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.

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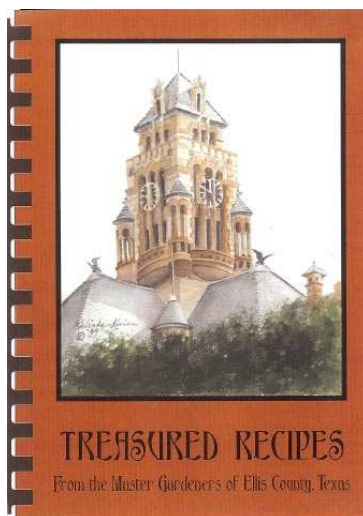
Don't forget to turn the compost pile occasionally to help aerate and speed up decomposition. Be sure the pile is wet. It needs to be the consistency of a wrung out wet sponge. Start a new compost pile to accommodate the fall leaf production.

By mid-month 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.

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. *Salvia greggi* can be cut back at least by one third. If pruned now, it should display great fall and early winter color.

By the end of August it will be time to sow seeds in flats of plants that may be hard to find later in the fall such as calendulas. You can also sow seeds of fall and winter annuals like snapdragons, dianthus, and pansies or purchase nursery stock when these become available. Plant seeds of bluebonnets and other wildflowers directly in the ground about ½ inches deep. The soil should be free from weeds and grass and the surface of the seeds should be acid treated to facilitate germination. Plant fall blooming perennials such as *Salvia*, Mexican Mint Marigold, mums and aster if their buds have not already set. Fall-flowering bulbs such as spider lilies and crocus can also be planted.

Select and order spring-flowering bulbs that will grow in our area. Plan next year to plant Texas natives and adapted plants like: salvias, turkscap, pink skullcap, lantana, Texas betony, butterfly bush, flame acanthus, ornamental grasses and many others.



**Available Now!**

**Ellis County Master Gardener's Cookbook**  
***"Treasured Recipes"***

**Only \$10.00**

(beautifully hardbound - 450 recipes)

**Until May 2010 when the Waxahachie Downtown Farmer's Market begins, the cookbooks can be purchased at:**

**The Greenery, Waxahachie**

**ARK Country Store**

**Boyce Feed & Grain**

**EarthTones Greenery, Midlothian**

**AgriLIFE Extension Office, 972-825-5175**

**S IH-35 @Brookside Rd.**



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