



# Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



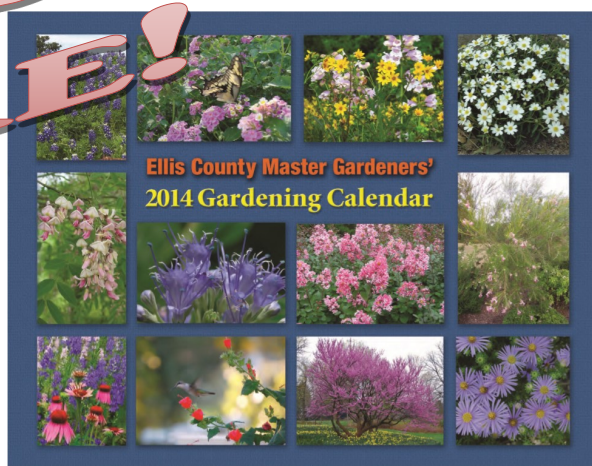
Volume VII, Issue Twelve

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

December, 2013

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 with your landscape. We will feature horticultural articles that we hope you will find interesting, and 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! Susan Clark, Editor

# IT'S HERE!



**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR 2014 CALENDAR SPONSORS! WITHOUT THEIR SUPPORT, THERE WOULD BE NO CALENDAR. YOUR FREE COPY WILL BE AVAILABLE BY DECEMBER 9TH WHEN YOU VISIT ANY OF OUR CALENDAR SPONSORS.**

TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI LIFE**  
EXTENSION



### Listen to KBEC

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

The Ellis County Master Gardeners have a five 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

## Waxahachie

Ann's Health Food Center Market  
ARK Country Store  
Boyce Feed & Grain  
Carlisle Chevrolet  
Central Kubota  
CNB of Texas – all locations  
College Street & Pub  
Ellis Co. Master Gardeners/AgriLife Ext.  
Garden Inspirations  
Gingerbread Press  
KBEC 1390 Classic Texas Music  
Larken Farms Orchard  
Living Magazine  
Roland's Nursery – both locations  
The Dove's Nest  
The Greenery  
Universal Outdoor Designs  
Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce  
Waxahachie Civic Center  
Waxahachie Daily Light

## Midlothian

Creative Quilts of Ellis County  
EarthTones Greenery  
Midlothian Conference Center  
Pam Daniel, Ebby Halliday  
The Flower Shoppe by Jane  
Travis Equipment

## Red Oak

Keith ACE Hardware

## Ennis

Ennis Chamber of Commerce  
Tex-Scapes Greenery

## Maypearl

Maypearl Insurance  
The Cowboy Bank of Texas

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### Earth-Kind® Natural Plant Nutrients

To help reduce the potential contamination of surface and groundwater resources, many landscape gardeners are now utilizing “natural” nutrient sources for landscape/garden plant materials.

These include animal manure(s), plant compost, mulch, etc. The use of these nutrient “alternatives” has several benefits, including:

- \* Promotes soil microorganisms
- \* Lowers soil pH and increases nutrient availability
- \* Slow release of nutrients
- \* Improves soil aeration/drainage and water-holding capacity

To learn more about Earth-Kind Natural Plant Nutrients, click on the Resource tab at [www.ecmga.com](http://www.ecmga.com) and click on Earth-Kind Publications.

There are numerous sources of natural plant nutrients available for landscape and garden use: animal manure and sewage sludge, composts, organic mulches, and naturally occurring sources of plant nutrients.

## It's December....What Needs To Be Done?

### Planting

- \* Plant pre-chilled tulip and hyacinth bulbs promptly after removing from the refrigerator. Plant berry-producing trees and shrubs to attract birds to your landscape and for winter color. Some good choices are possumhaw holly, yaupon holly, Carolina buckthorn, rusty blackhaw viburnum, and American beautyberry. Select plants from the nursery with the berries on them to know what you are buying.
- \* Plant fruit and pecan trees.

### Fertilizing and Pruning

- \* Do not top crape myrtles or the central leader of any shade tree.
- \* Cut back to the ground dead foliage of asparagus and add some compost.
- \* Apply a root stimulator such as liquid seaweed or a mild solution of water-soluble fertilizer to newly planted trees and shrubs.

### Garden Watch

- \* Protect tender vegetation from the cold with a lightweight freeze cloth that is available at most nurseries and garden centers.
- \* Continue to water lawns and newly planted trees, shrubs, and perennials if rainfall is insufficient.
- \* Remove hoses from faucets to avoid freeze damage inside your house.

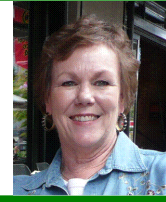


**Save The Date!**  
**Saturday, March 29, 2014**



## Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

*Submitted by Melinda Kocian  
Ellis County Master Gardener*



**Cowpen Daisy** – Sunflower Family (Asteraceae)  
*Verbesina encelioides* (Cav.) Benth. & Hook.

**Region:** 1 – 10 (Ellis County is Region 4)  
**Size:** 1 – 4 feet  
**Blooms:** February through December, Annual

Yellow, daisy-like flower heads with prominent, yellow-orange centers top the slender stems of this busy composite. A covering of hair gives the stems and foliage a blue-green or gray-green appearance. Flowers vary in size to two and one-half inches across and there are three deeply-cut teeth at the tips of each of the

twelve to sixteen petals. Thick leaves are shaped like arrowheads, coarsely toothed on the edges and prominently veined on the underside.

A Spanish name, *anil del muerto*, meaning “sunflower of the dead”, was given to this plant because of its strong, unpleasant odor when crushed. A salve made from cowpen daisy has been used as an anti-inflammatory agent; cowpen pea is said to relieve an early peptic fever by inducing sweating and relaxation. Its seed have a high oil content.

## A Gardeners Thoughts at Year End

*With Cerelda De Heus  
Ellis County Master Gardener*



As each of us get ready for the end of one year and the beginning of another, we have many things on our 'to do' list to wrap up the year. Cleaning up, raking, transplanting, planning a new garden, making those tough decisions about keeping or ripping out a plant that we're still waiting on to reach its potential, and reflecting on our past growing season.

Once again, we've been so busy, where did the year go? All gardeners have faith and hope for a new year to repeat the hard work and expectations that gardening brings to each of us. I'm not sure about each of you, but gardening continues to teach me more about hope and patience.

Hope each time I plant a seed and patience to see what is produced (or not) from that seed. Hope and patience that I will spot the pests and pull them off the new shoots and stems before they

have overtaken the new growth. Hope and patience that the sun will shine long enough each day in that corner for my flowers to bloom and grow.

Gardening offers me time for quiet uninterrupted meditation. Talking to my plants, listening to the birds, watching the gentle swaying of a butterfly meandering from bloom to bloom, and hearing the buzzing of the bees makes me smile and gives me time to truly enjoy what is around each of us. A wonderful little mini-vacation each time I take the time to enjoy what I've helped to create.

I'm excited that after a rest it won't be long until the soil will be waking up once again. What will I plant this year?

It's been a blessed year. Happy holidays to all my fellow gardeners!



## Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton  
Ellis County Master Gardener



### December Herb of the Month - Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)

Although ginger is commonly considered a spice, because of its medicinal properties, it is also classified as an herb. In Texas, ginger is considered a tender perennial with rhizome roots that will survive winter in south Texas. Here in Ellis County it

makes an excellent container plant which can be brought indoors for the winter or moved into the greenhouse. In a sheltered area of the garden I have had ginger survive several mild winters.

Fresh young rhizomes (green ginger) are eaten raw, preserved in syrup, and candied. It can also be used in curries, chutneys, pickles, meat and fish dishes, soups, and marinades.

Pickled ginger is used in Japanese cooking, especially to flavor sushi. Dried, ground ginger gives flavor to cakes, muffins, and sauces.

The rhizomes or roots are called 'hands'. These can be purchased from your grocery store's fresh food section for use in the kitchen or for planting in the garden. In selecting fresh ginger for either culinary use or planting, choose a

fat, full hand with well-defined eyes. The eyes resemble those of a potato.

Start the plant in pots by cutting the root into sections including several eyes in each piece. Lay the roots flat down on loose, rich soil and cover lightly. Once green appears, transplant to a sheltered, semi-shady area in the garden.

Ginger plants need a ten month growing season for optimum rhizome production. The rhizomes will put out a patch of angular, thin, aromatic leaves in a shady area. Older growths may be removed when new shoots appear.

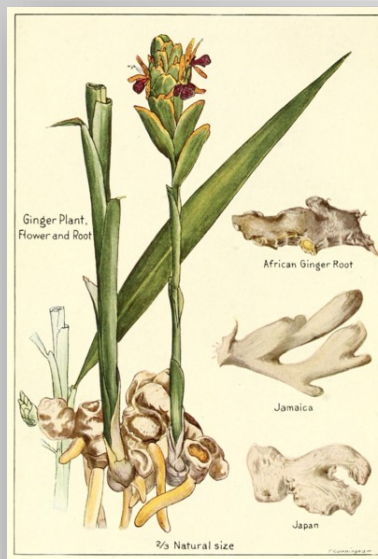
Ginger is a heavy feeder; besides a rich, humus soil, it needs regular fertilizing with a good, all-purpose formula, and regular watering. Ginger will tolerate temperatures in the low 20s. To harvest, dig down to the rhizome carefully and with a sharp knife, cut off a small section. Rinse and use.

Young, fresh rhizomes for cooking will keep for two to three months in the crisper of your refrigerator. Ginger does not freeze

well. It becomes stringy and tough. To use fresh ginger, peel the thin skin if you like, then finely chop or grate before adding to recipe.

Medicinally ginger is considered a warming herb used for motion sickness, and to calm upset stomachs. Dried, ground ginger flavors candy, soft drinks and condiments.

Our family favorite recipe using ginger comes from my husband's mother and has been passed down for many generations. Following is an updated version.



### Three Ginger Molasses Cookies

3/4 cup vegetable oil  
1 cup packed golden brown sugar  
1/4 cup light molasses  
1 egg  
2 cups flour  
2 tsp. baking soda  
2 tbs. minced crystallized ginger  
1 tsp. finely grated fresh ginger  
1/2 tsp. ground ginger  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. cloves  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/3 cup granulated sugar (for coating cookies)

Combine oil, sugar, molasses, and egg. Beat well. Sift dry ingredients and spices. Add to sugar mixture. Mix well and chill for at least one hour. Form into one-inch balls, roll in granulated sugar and place on a cookie sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for about 12 to 15 minutes. Surface of cookies will crack.







## What's Happening in December

**The Farmers Market is closed for the season. Look for its re-opening in March 2014.**

**Various December Dates, Garden Inspirations Classes.** Classes in December include Making Holiday Wreaths, Makeover Your Medicine Cabinet, Holiday Fermented Gifts, and Essential Oils Study. For complete details and to register for classes, visit [www.gardeninspirations-tx.com](http://www.gardeninspirations-tx.com).

**Saturday, December 7, 8am–5pm, Brumley Gardens Flash Mob Sale!** 50% entire store from 8-9, 30% off from 9-10, and 20% from 10-12. For more info, call (214) 942-0794 or visit <http://www.brumleygardens.com/home/>. Sign up for the newsletter and receive coupons for \$ off purchases. **Bishop Arts Location**—700 West Davis, Dallas.

**Saturday, December 7, 10am–2pm, BRIT First Saturday-Festive by Nature.** Enjoy tours, children's activities, Artisan fair, farmers market, and special programs. December events include pictures with Father Christmas, Mistletoe Discovery Station, pine cone bird feeders, and more! Bella's Story Time for children is at 10:30 and features the book, **Time to Sleep** by Denise Fleming. For more information, call (817) 332-4441 or visit <http://www.brit.org/events/more-children-families>. Located at 1700 University Drive, Fort Worth.

**Saturday, December 12, 6pm–8pm, Butterfly Wonderland at TX Discovery Gardens.** Stroll through the butterfly house, enjoy holiday music, and warm up with festive drinks. Make holiday shopping fun and relaxing in the gift shop. Create a colorful embossed metal ornament with artist Janet Reynolds. Ornament making is free; suggested donation of \$2 to cover material costs. Admission is free! Members receive 10 percent off all gift shop items. 3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dallas. Phone: (214) 428-7476 Website: [TexasDiscoveryGardens.org](http://TexasDiscoveryGardens.org)

**Saturday, December 21, 9am–12pm, Cedar Ridge Preserve—Conservation in Action Workday.** Volunteers help remove non-native plants, restore trails, and work in the butterfly garden. Water, snacks, pruning shears, shovels, and work gloves provided. Contact: [info\\_CRP@yahoo.com](mailto:info_CRP@yahoo.com). Location: 7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas. [www.audubondallas.org](http://www.audubondallas.org)

**Saturday, December 28, 9am–12pm, Dogwood Canyon—Fourth Saturday Workday.** For more info, contact Julie Collins at [jcollins@audubon.org](mailto:jcollins@audubon.org).

**Wednesday, January 1, Christmas Bird Count.** The count area includes Cedar Ridge Preserve, Cedar Hill State Park, Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center, Joe Pool Lake, and the cities of Cedar Hill, Duncanville, DeSoto, and Midlothian. Birders of all levels of expertise are welcome and needed. RSVP for a team assignment and details. Please contact Tania Homayoun at [thomayoun@audubon.org](mailto:thomayoun@audubon.org) or (469) 526-1986 to register.

## ECMGA AMATEUR PHOTO CONTEST

The Ellis County Master Gardener Association announces its annual photo contest is under way beginning September 1, 2012. **Last date for submissions is March 1, 2013.**

Grab your cameras and get out in your yard, garden, and Ellis County and take your best shot! **You can submit up to five photos**, so you may want to submit photos from different seasons, as well as, your personal favorite. Vegetables and summer garden pictures are great, but don't forget to include beautiful fall and winter photos, too. Please **do not include** people in your photos.

For contest details and submission of entries, go to **Photo Contest** at [www.ecmga.com](http://www.ecmga.com). There is **no cost to enter** the contest, and photographers can enter up to **five photographs per category**. Prizes will be awarded to first, second, and third place in each of two categories: "single specimen" and "in the garden". Each winner will receive a gift certificate from one of the following businesses: Roland's Nursery or The Greenery in Waxahachie or EarthTones Greenery in Midlothian.

## In the Vegetable Garden

With Monica Nyenhaus  
Ellis County Master Gardener



The question I get asked the most from new veggie gardeners AFTER their first try is, "what do you do to get that harvest?" First, this is going to be a long story as my husband would say.

The time to start your vegetable garden is now, in October would be best, but anytime in the winter is a good time to start preparing for your new garden because we start growing in mid-January!

Our soil here in Ellis County is clay based, but full of nutrients, you just need to amend the soil and pick out caliche for ten years, or bring in soil for raised beds. Either way be sure your soil and any amendments are of excellent quality. The better the soil, the better the harvest.

Make sure your garden has at least eight hours of sunlight a day, preferably morning to early afternoon. Our heat in the summer here is brutal on tomatoes and peppers, so if you can provide late afternoon shade, it's a wonderful reprieve from the scorching heat in July and August.

My first and best choice as an amendment is mushroom compost. It is the most common compost to put in your vegetable garden. If you have your own compost, then great use it, but most of us don't. Almost all of the local nurseries or soil suppliers will carry compost in bulk. I have a pretty large garden, which is about 30x70 feet. I bring in six yards of compost each year and till it into the existing bed.

I have heard from several of the seasoned gardeners that if you spread liquid molasses over the newly tilled compost it helps break down the com-

post faster and add nutrients to the soil at the same time. Another amendment, which helps prevent fire ants and other bad bugs, is diatomaceous earth (DE). Texas A&M has done research in tilling DE into the soil to prevent pests in farming and it has been successful.

There is nothing worse than standing over a zucchini plant harvesting your veggies then jumping all over brushing fire ants off your legs! Because the soil is now so loose, it makes for a

great haven for those little pests to habitat in. Make sure you buy feed grade DE so as not to kill or poison yourself, the plants, or your pets.

There are commercial fertilizers out there you can add in, but I use natural things like egg shells, worm castings, soft rock phosphate, even banana peels! Do some research on this when it's freezing cold and then get your mix together and get it in the ground so it can begin to break down and add the needed nutrients into the soil for your first or next planting.

It's important to test your soil first to see what it needs. You can stop by the Ellis County Extension Office to get a soil sample test kit. By doing this you can determine what amendments you need to add to your soil before embarking on a shopping spree.

Each amendment has its own properties that will change the nutrient content of the soil. But you can never

have too much compost! Just make sure it is not HOT when you plant because it will burn the roots. That's the reason to get it in before you plant so it breaks down and the nutrients are readily available to the plants when you start putting them in or sowing your seeds.

Regardless of what you plan to use in the garden, the important thing is that the soil has the proper nutrients in it to feed the plants. Most vegetables are heavy feeders so the garden is quickly depleted of the needed food for them to thrive. Once they are in the ground and going, then you can fertilize every two weeks or so during the growing season. This is an entirely different topic and as with soil amendments there are many ways to add nutrients. This is just what I have been taught and learned from seasoned vegetable gardeners.

As an honorable mention, I couldn't end without saying that watering consistently is the second most important issue when growing vegetables. Here in Texas, we either get too much or not enough. Last year for Christmas,

my husband installed a drip system in the garden. It's wonderful and well worth every cent.

Now that you have your homework, it's time to sit with a cup of hot tea, do some research on different fertilizers making sure

that you are referencing growers in our area, talk to the master gardeners, shop some seed catalogs, and dream about the abundant harvest you will be eating in the spring. Hopefully, this information will help you get off to a good start this next season.







## Become a Master Gardener

By: Shirley Campbell, Ellis County Master Gardener



Do you like the feel of the earth between your fingers, the fragrance of growing flowers, the taste of home-grown tomatoes and herbs? Do you want to share your interest in gardening with others? Become a Master Gardener! The Master Gardener Program is a volunteer development program offered by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and is designed to increase the availability of horticultural information and improve the quality of life through horticultural projects in your community.

### What is a Master Gardener?

The Texas Master Gardener program is an educational volunteer program conducted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of the Texas A&M University System. Master Gardeners are members of the local community who take an active interest in their lawns, trees, shrubs, and flower and vegetable gardens. They are enthusiastic, willing to learn and help others, and able to communicate with diverse groups of people.

What really sets Master Gardeners apart from other home gardeners is their special training in horticulture. In exchange for their training, persons who become Master Gardeners contribute time as volunteers, working through their county's Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office to provide horticultural-related information to their communities.

### Is the Master Gardener program for me?

To help you decide if you should apply to be a Master Gardener, ask yourself these questions:

- ✳ Do I want to learn more about the culture and maintenance of many types of plants?
- ✳ Am I eager to participate in a practical and intense training program?
- ✳ Do I enjoy sharing knowledge with people?
- ✳ Do I have enough time to attend

training and complete volunteer service hour requirements?

- ✳ Do I have special interests that could benefit the community or an interest in developing one (e.g., bird or butterfly knowledge, native gardens, wildflowers, etc.)?
- ✳ Do I have a sincere interest in nature or gardening?

### Training

If accepted into the Master Gardener Program, you will attend a training course which offers a minimum of 56 hours of instruction that covers topics including: lawn care, ornamental trees and shrubs, insects, disease and weed management, soil and plant nutrition, vegetable gardening, home fruit production, garden flowers and herbs, plant propagation, and water conservation. These courses are taught by specialists in their specific areas. The cost for the course is \$200, which covers the cost of speakers, study materials, and lunch each day.

The Master Gardener training course will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each Tuesday and Thursday throughout the month of February 2014, at the First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin Street, Waxahachie, Texas.

### Volunteer Commitment

In exchange for the training, participants are asked to volunteer at least 75 hours of service by November 30<sup>th</sup> to earn the title of "Texas Master Gardener". The volunteer time will take place during the normal work week with the exception of the Annual Lawn & Garden Expo, which is held on a Saturday in the spring.

The type of service done by Master Gardeners varies according to community needs and the abilities and interests of the Master Gardener. Some Master Gardeners answer telephone requests for information related to gardening. Others staff plant clinics or displays in shopping malls, farmers markets, or community centers.

Master Gardeners may speak to local groups and conduct workshops. They

may help establish school and community garden projects, work with 4-H youth, or assist their agent with news or radio releases related to gardening. The Master Gardener Coordinator in the county Extension office decides how volunteer time can best be used.

### Certification

Participants become certified Master Gardeners after they have completed the training course and fulfilled their volunteer commitment.

**Note:** Master Gardeners are representatives of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. In all volunteer work related to the program, Master Gardeners follow the research-based recommendations of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. The title "Texas Master Gardener" can be used by volunteers only when engaged in Extension-sponsored activities.

If you are interested in the Master Gardener Program and would like an application, please contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office in Ellis County at (972) 825-5175, e-mail [Ellis-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:Ellis-tx@tamu.edu), or find the application on the master gardener website, [ECMGA.com](http://ECMGA.com). Applications will be mailed upon request and must be returned no later than January 6, 2014, at which time you will be called to set up an interview.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A & M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

**Save The Date!**  
**Saturday, March 29, 2014**





## November at the Farmer's Market

*Submitted by Arlene Hamilton  
Ellis County Master Gardener*



The ECMGA Taste of Autumn was a great success and enjoyed by all. The market shoppers enjoyed sampling Pumpkin Soup and a Kale Salad with Apples and Toasted Pumpkin Seeds. We also handed out copies of our vintage (2003) Taste of Autumn recipe booklet to the delight of all. The updated booklet included the addition of a number of food safety tips and healthy recipes.

A big thank you to Cheryl Sandoval and Arlene Hamilton for preparing the soup and salad; Preston Blum, Susan Clark and Edena Hintze for helping with the set up and serving; and Maureen Nitkowski for the added treat of pomegranate seeds to top the salad. While Maureen and Paul Grindstaff manned the master gardener booth, Charlie Grindstaff invited children of all ages to create critters using beautiful autumn leaves. A great time was had by all. Pictures and recipes for the soup and salad are below and on the following pages.

The Farmers Market and the Master Gardener booth is now closed, but will reopen in the spring for the 2014 season. Thanks to all the Master Gardeners who served as advisors during the 2013 season. Your willingness to share horticulture information on Saturday mornings helped educate hundreds of Ellis County residents.





## RECIPES FROM TASTE OF FALL

### Kale Salad with Apples & Toasted Pumpkin Seeds

#### Sweet-Sour Vinaigrette

½ c lemon juice  
¼ c cider vinegar  
1 T coarse grain Dijon mustard  
3 T honey or brown sugar  
½ t salt  
¼ t pepper  
1 cup grapeseed oil or other neutral oil

#### Salad:

2 bunches kales, washed, dried and stemmed  
2 Honeycrisp apples, cored and diced  
1 medium red onion, very thinly sliced  
1 c pepitas (pumpkin seeds) toasted

1. To prepare vinaigrette, place juice, vinegar, mustard, honey, salt and pepper in a food processor fitted with the swivel blade. Begin processing, slowly pouring in oil. An immersion blender also works.
2. To prepare salad, place kale leaves in stacks and cut crosswise into ½" ribbons. Cut ribbons into bite-size pieces.
3. Place kale, apples, onion, and pumpkin seeds in a large bowl. Pour in about half the dressing and toss.

### Pumpkin or Winter Squash Soup

2 Tbsp. unsalted butter, light oil, or olive oil  
2 leeks, white and light green only, chopped  
Pinch of sea salt  
1 Tbsp. fresh ginger, peeled and minced  
3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced  
1 small handful celery leaves  
3 or 4 fresh sage leaves  
1 two-inch cinnamon stick  
3 whole cloves  
4 to 5 lbs. pie pumpkin, acorn, butternut or similar winter squash, peeled, seeded and chopped  
½ cup apple cider or apple juice  
6 cups Winter Squash, Fennel, and Leek Broth (recipe follows)  
Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste  
Minced fresh parsley or chives for garnish

1. In a heavy large stockpot, heat two Tbsp. butter, add the leeks and pinch of salt. With a wooden spoon, turn the leeks over in the butter a few times, reduce heat to low, add the ginger and garlic, cover, and cook gently for 15 minutes.
2. Make a bouquet garni by tying together, with kitchen string, or wrapping in cheesecloth the celery leaves, sage, cinnamon stick, and cloves.
3. Add the bouquet garni to the pot. Then add the squash, apple cider, and broth. Raise the heat, and bring the soup to a boil. Reduce heat to as low as possible, and simmer, covered, 30 to 45 minutes, until the squash crushes easily against the side of the pot when pressed with a wooden spoon.
4. Remove the bouquet garni, and pass the soup through a food mill, or puree using an immersion blender. Then season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve the soup garnished with a sprinkle of parsley or chives.

### Pumpkin–Winter Squash, Fennel, and Leek Broth

1 Pumpkin, butternut, or other winter squash (about 4 to 5 pounds) I used a pie pumpkin and one acorn squash.  
2 large leeks, split, and washed, green tops only, roughly chopped  
1 small fennel bulb with top, roughly chopped  
3 sprigs fresh sage  
10 cups water

1. Slice the squash in half, peel off the rind, and scoop out the seeds and pulp. Reserve the flesh for the soup.
2. Add the squash rind, seeds and pulp, leeks, fennel, and sage to a stockpot. Add the water, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, uncovered for one hour.
3. Strain the broth, discard the solids. The broth may be refrigerated in a covered container for up to three days or frozen for up to one month.

This is a wonderful way to use up some of your autumn decorations and its all vegetable! *From the Kitchen of Arlene Hamilton*



## Landscape Gardening

From: 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 the Texas A&M Horticulture website. Questions for Master Gardeners will be answered with a return email or telephone call, if you leave a message at (972) 825-5175.

### Site Preparation for Fruit Tree Planting

by Dr. Larry A. Stein, Professor & Extension Horticulturist, Texas AgriLife Extension Service

Before a fruit tree is planted, there must be adequate space. Most fruit trees require an area 25 feet by 25 feet; dwarfs need about 12 feet by 12 feet. The site must have full sun. A single peach tree can easily produce two bushels of fruit, about one hundred pounds, so don't plant too many fruit trees for your needs.

Fruit trees are best planted in mid-winter to allow time for root development prior to spring growth. During the months prior to planting, the site should have been prepared as follows: clear the site of per-

ennial weeds, and till an area at least four feet by four feet well. Any hard pan (layer) beneath the soil should be broken up. Level the site, and till again.

Seeding the site in annual rye grass.

At planting time [January is best], kill the rye grass berm area with glyphosate herbicide (the dead root channels from the rye grass allow for better water intake in the planting area). Plant the tree in the middle of the killed sod area in a hole as big as the root system, usually about 12



inches square, and at least 18 inches deep. Plant the tree and refill the soil to the same depth that the tree grew in at the nursery, being careful the tree does not settle too deep.

The best tree to plant is the variety adapted to and recommended for your area. Select mid-size trees; they are cheaper and grow better than the larger trees. And, it is far easier to cut three to four foot trees back to 18 to 24 inches, than to prune five to six foot trees. Such strong cutback is necessary to remove apical dominance, put the top in balance with a reduced root system, and force out strong vigorous shoots, which are easy to train.

The trees should have healthy white roots with no brown streaks. Also check for borer presence or damage. With proper care, it is highly possible for your fruit tree to fruit the second year after planting.



ennial weeds, and till an area at least four feet by four feet well. Any hard pan (layer) beneath the soil should be broken up. Level the site, and till again.

Organic matter may be added to the



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[expo.ecmga@yahoo.com](mailto:expo.ecmga@yahoo.com)

**Reserve the date: March 29, 2014!**

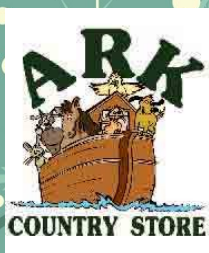




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