



# Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume IX, Issue One

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

January, 2015

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) and click on subscribe. It will be sent around the first of every month. Best of all; it's FREE! Susan Clark, Editor

## What's Happening in January

**Saturday, January 17, 10am, John Bunker Sands Wetland Center Pond Trail Hike.** This 1.8 mile trail is great for families and those interested in native plants and animals. Cost: \$5.00, includes admission. Visit <http://www.wetlandcenter.com/> for directions and a map. For info, call (972) 474-9100 or email [contact@wetlandcenter.com](mailto:contact@wetlandcenter.com).

**Saturday, January 24, 8:30am-3pm, Growing Green Naturally Symposium: Planning Your Next Growing Season presented by The Green Garden Club.** Topics Include: Proper Plant Selection, Design Consideration, Soil Health & Biology, Efficient Irrigation Techniques, Aquaponics, and Herbs for Their Healing Qualities. Presented by the Following Speakers: Steven Chamblee, Judith Griffin, Ph.D., Lori Haynes, Randy Johnson, Marilyn Simmons, and Dina and Scott Rolen. A boxed lunch from Ann's Health Foods will be served. A full day of gardening classes, lunch, and unique shopping at the marketplace for \$45. Location: Farley Street Baptist Church, 1116 Brown St., Waxahachie. To purchase tickets, visit [http://green-garden-club.com/?page\\_id=69](http://green-garden-club.com/?page_id=69)

**Saturday, January 24, 9am-12pm, Dogwood Canyon—Fourth Saturday Workday.** Help with trail-building, habitat management, and much more. Located at 1206 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill. For info, contact Julie Collins at [jcollins@audubon.org](mailto:jcollins@audubon.org).

**Monday, January 26, 7pm, Indian Trail Master Naturalists present "Bluebirds" by Keith Kridler.** The program is free and follows the 6 p.m. Master Naturalist meeting that is also open to the public. Meeting location: First United Methodist Church, Family Life Center 505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie, TX. For more info, call (972) 825-5175 or email [ellis-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:ellis-tx@tamu.edu)

### Texas Discovery Gardens

3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dallas

Phone: (214) 428-7476 \* [TexasDiscoveryGardens.org](http://TexasDiscoveryGardens.org)

**Thursday, January 8, 11am, Stories and More! Title: Bug Safari by Bob Barner.** Join the butterflies for story time! Make crafts, read a book, meet special friends, and enjoy themed snacks! The programs end with the daily noon butterfly release and are geared for the under-five/stroller crowd. Adults pay regular admission. Advance: \$8/Child 3-11, \$6/Member; \$3/Child 1-2, \$2/Member. At door: add \$2/child.

**Saturday, January 10, 10am-12pm, Texas Discovery Gardens Butterflies: An In-depth look at our winged friends.** Join a lively discussion on the butterflies kept year-round in the butterfly house. Entomologist John Watts talks about the origin, behavior, and characteristics of different species, as well as the family farms where butterflies are bought. \$25; \$20 for TDG Members. Register in advance.

**Saturday, January 24, 2pm-4pm, Plant Propagation Workshop..** Grow your own plants from cuttings and seeds and save money! Learn easy-to-implement techniques from an expert

(Continued on page 3)

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION



### Listen to KBEC

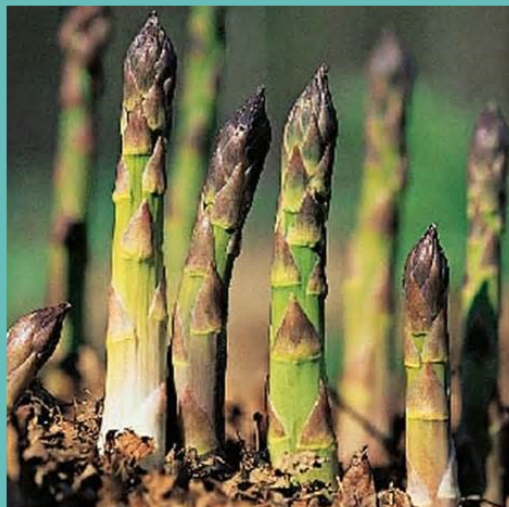
Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m. on 1390 AM.

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

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**Asparagus** is a fern-like perennial with edible shoots that emerge in early summer. It is usually planted from roots or crowns, but can also be planted from seed. Patience is needed after planting since you may not be able to harvest for a couple of years, but once established, your bed can produce for up to twenty years. Plant crowns February 15–March 1. Recommended varieties for Ellis County are: Jersey Giant, Jersey Knight, and UC 157.



**Chives, garlic**—Perennial: (12"–18") Use is similar to onion chives, but has flat leaves and a mild garlic flavor. Plants produce white flowers in late summer, which are attractive to bees. Plant stays green and flavorful all winter in Texas, so plan to use it fresh year round.

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

### Planting

- \* Plant cilantro, parsley, chives, garlic and onions.
- \* Plant onions from seeds in rows  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches deep in well prepared soil. They can be planted in flats along with tomatoes and peppers. Plants in flats need bright light and warm temperatures (60-70° F). Use grow lights for best results.
- \* Another alternative is to plant onion sets in a container that is 3-4 inches deep with lava sand. Lava Sand allows them to grow nice roots and turn beautifully green, giving lots of nutrients before planting in the garden. After a week or two, plant the onion sets in well prepared soil two to three inches deep.
- \* Sow sugar snap peas between February 1 and March 15. Plant them one to two inches deep about six inches apart. (They can also be planted August 1 through September 15 for a fall harvest). Harvest when seeds are fairly flat; if they're too full, they will be tough. Fertilizing is not necessary, but will enhance production. They need something to climb on such as chicken wire or cattle paneling, approximately one and a half feet high.
- \* Tomatoes, especially those hard to find varieties in the spring, can be planted from seed by mid-month. Peppers and warm weather annual seeds can also be started in flats at this time. They need bright light and warm temperatures (60-70°F). Grow lights work best.
- \* Transplant small trees and shrubs while they are dormant. It is best if they are root pruned in the fall so that roots will be established before the heat and drought of the summer. Water the plant well before digging.

### Fertilizing and Pruning

- \* Keep a spray can of pruning paint handy to immediately paint any wound on your oak trees. To help prevent oak wilt, we no longer say there are windows of safety because of cold weather or hot weather. Central Texas weather is too unpredictable and changeable—paint every wound all year long.
- \* Prune trees, including live oaks and red oaks, to remove dead, broken, and unwanted branches, or to "limb up" (raise the canopy to allow more light underneath).

\* Water, as needed, newly planted trees and shrubs and apply a liquid root stimulator monthly.

\* Peach and plum trees should be pruned to stimulate lateral branches and keep their "bowl" shape. Thin the trees to open the center to allow more sunlight resulting in fruit production over the entire tree.

\* Apply a balanced fertilizer to iris and asparagus. Feed pansies with blood meal.

\* Maintain your free-form crape myrtles by removing "root sprouts" growing from the base. Please, never cut the tops out of crape myrtles. It produces unsightly knots. Don't be a Crape Murderer! However, removing spent seed pods is okay.

\* This is a good time to have the soil tested in the lawn, vegetable, and flower gardens. Contact the Ellis County Master Gardeners or the Texas AgriLife Extension Service—Ellis County at (972) 825-5175 for a soil sample test kit and mailing instructions.

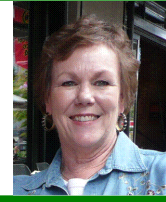
### Garden Watch

\* Remove by hand, broadleaf weeds such as clover, dandelions, henbit, and chickweed in lawns and beds. If necessary, spot spray turf with a broadleaf weed killer when temperatures are above 70 degrees. Be careful when using weed killers in flower beds to prevent the drift from harming desirable plants. The application of a pre-emergent in September or early October on lawn grasses will help prevent winter and spring weeds.



## Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

*Submitted by Melinda Kocian  
Ellis County Master Gardener*



### Puccoon—Borage Family (Boraginaceae)

*Lithospermum insicuum* Lehm.

**Region:** 1-10 (Ellis County is Region 4)

**Size:** 1 foot

**Blooms:** November–June, Perennial

This little plant is distinctive because of the ruffled edges on the lobes of its bright yellow, trumpet-shaped flowers. The trumpets are sometimes more than an inch long and up to three-fourths of an inch across in terminal clusters. They produce no seed. Later in the spring or summer, three or four large, white, stone-like seeds are produced by small, self-pollinating flowers hidden in the bracts. A rosette of

linear leaves that give rise to the stem usually withers by bloom time, but smaller leaves farther up the stem may be three inches long and are fuzzy, as is the stem.

Puccoon root yields a red dye. A tea brewed from this plant was used as birth control in the past and several hormone-like molecules have been identified from its juices. Puccoon is one of many native herbs being studied for potential medicinal value.

## Asparagus and Artichoke Salad

*By Betty and Jon Reuscher*



- 3 (8-oz.) cans artichoke hearts, quartered
- 3 lbs. asparagus, cooked until barely tender, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 (8-oz.) can hearts of palm, cut in slices, optional
- ½ onion, minced
- ⅓ c. olive oil
- ⅓ c. salad oil
- 1½ tsp. salt
- 1 T. Dijon mustard
- Seasoned pepper, to taste, optional

Combine all ingredients and marinate overnight.  
Serves 12.

*Reprinted from the 2015  
ECMGA Gardening Calendar*



### *What's Happening (Continued from page 1)*

in plant propagation, Dallas County Master Gardener Roseann Ferguson. Bring home plant starts to get your garden going! \$25; \$20 for TDG Members.

**Saturday, January 31, 10am–12pm, Desert Ecology.** Enjoy an in-depth talk on the vibrant world of desert ecology with Director of Horticulture Roger Sanderson. See a slide presentation on the flora and fauna that make up the Texas desert and take home a succulent plant. \$25, \$20/Members. Register in advance.

**Saturday, January 31, 1pm–3pm, Native and Adapted Shade Gardens.** Gardening in the shade can be difficult. In addition to low light levels, soils are often too dry or too moist. You can ban those boring groundcovers; there are plenty of beautiful, drought tolerant shade plants out there! \$25, \$20 for TDG Members. Register in advance.

#### **Cedar Ridge Preserve**

7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas  
[www.audubondallas.org/cedarridge.html](http://www.audubondallas.org/cedarridge.html)

**Saturday, January 17, 9am–12pm, Conservation in Action Workday.** Work in the butterfly garden and on the trails. Water and snacks provided. For info, call Jim Varnum at (214) 543-2055 or email [jvarnum@aol.com](mailto:jvarnum@aol.com).

**Saturday, January 10, 8am, "The Color of Winter" Nature Walk at Cedar Ridge Preserve with Jim Varnum.** Here's an opportunity to get out of the house for a couple of hours to observe winter color: birds (black and white chickadees, yellow-rumped warblers, etc.), leaves (red and yellow), berries (red and blue), and maybe even some butterflies. Fun for adults and children. Meet at the CRP Educational Building. Bring binoculars and bird guides. Dress for the weather of the day. Walk will last about two hours max. RSVP if you wish in case of weather issues. RSVP: 214-543-2055. Audubon Dallas website—[www.audubondallas.org](http://www.audubondallas.org)

## Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton  
Ellis County Master Gardener



### January 2015 Herb of the Month – Chocolate

Did you know chocolate is considered an herb? The definition of an herb is a useful plant that provides culinary flavor, medicine, aroma, dyes, cosmetic ingredients, as well as ceremonial uses. *Theobroma cacao* or cocoa produces a seed, which is fermented, dried and roasted then used medicinally, in the preparation of beverages and chocolate as well as religious ceremonies.

The earliest evidence of use traces chocolate to Mexico and Guatemala, with evidence of chocolate beverages dating back to 1900 BC. The majority of Mesoamerican people made chocolate beverages, including the Mayans and Aztecs who made it into a beverage known as xocolāt, a word meaning "bitter water". The seeds of the cacao tree have an intense bitter taste and must be fermented to develop the flavor.

Columbus took cacao beans with him back to Spain, but chocolate made no impact until Spanish friars introduced it to the Spanish court. After the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs, chocolate was imported to Europe. There, it quickly became a court favorite. It was still served as a beverage, but the Spanish added sugar, as well as honey, to counteract the natural bitterness.

By 1602, chocolate had made its way from Spain to Austria. By 1662, the pope had declared that religious fasts were not broken by consuming chocolate drinks. Within about a hundred years, chocolate established a foothold throughout Europe. Although cocoa originated in the Americas, today Western Africa produces almost two-thirds of the world's cocoa.

After fermentation, the beans are dried, cleaned, and roasted, then ground to chocolate in rough form. Unsweetened baking chocolate (bitter chocolate) contains primarily cocoa solids and cocoa butter in varying proportions. Much of the chocolate consumed today is in the form of sweet chocolate,

a combination of cocoa solids, cocoa butter or other fat, and sugar. Milk chocolate is sweet chocolate that additionally contains milk powder or condensed milk. White chocolate contains cocoa butter, sugar, and milk, but no cocoa solids.

Culinary uses of the herb include flavoring of game, sauces, and milk drinks. Mole, a complicated sauce flavored with chocolate and chilies is an important ingredient in many Mexican dishes. Chocolate is also used to flavor liqueurs.

Medicinally, cocoa powder is used to treat angina and high blood pressure. Externally cocoa butter is used in cosmetics, cream for relief of chapped skin and burns, and as a suppository base. Chocolate may cause allergies or migraines.

Cocoa solids are one of the richest sources of

flavanol antioxidants. They also contain alkaloids such as theobromine, phenethylamine, and caffeine. These have physiological effects on the body and are linked to serotonin levels in the brain. Some research has found that chocolate, eaten in moderation, can lower blood pressure. The presence of theobromine renders chocolate toxic to some animals, especially dogs and cats.

So on these cold January days, enjoy a hot chocolate drink. It's good for you and come February, remember that a gift of chocolate treats on Valentine Day is a healthy way to say "I love you!".





## Fruit and Nut Trees

By: Shirley Campbell, Ellis County Master Gardener



Fruit and nut trees have arrived in the nurseries and garden centers. January is the ideal time to plant to allow time for root development prior to spring growth. Fruit and nut trees can be purchased as container grown or bare-root. If cost is an issue, the bare-root is your better buy.

Clear the site of perennial weeds, and till an area four feet by four feet. Any hardpan layer beneath the soil should be broken up. Level the site and till again. Organic matter may be

added to the planting area, but it is not necessary, and never add fertilizer. When planting bare-root trees, to allow for soil water drainage, the site should be built up so that the tree will be sitting on a small berm. Plant the tree in the middle of the tilled area in a hole as big as the root system, usually about 12 inches square, and at least 18 inches deep.

For container grown trees, dig the hole twice as wide as the soil in the container, but only as deep as the soil ball. Plant the tree at the same depth at which it was growing in the nursery, using the old soil line on the trunk as your guide.

When you refill the soil, the bud union should remain above ground by several inches. As the grass greens up in the spring, continue to keep the four feet by four feet area free of weeds and grass by spraying with a glyphosate herbicide, such as Round-up. It is critical that this be done if the tree is to perform well.

Consider spreading two to three inches of mulch over the entire area to help control the weeds and grass.

If purchasing bare-rooted trees, select mid-size fruit trees;

they are cheaper and grow better than the larger trees. 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 put the top in balance with a reduced root system. Bare-rooted pecans usually come in the four to six foot range. Rule of thumb for bare-root plants is to cut them back by 50%. The trees should have healthy white roots with no brown streaks.

A container-grown fruit tree won't suffer any root loss during transplanting, but should be shaped at the time of planting to help it develop the scaffold branching it will need to hold its full load of fruit. In other words,

the center should be opened up to allow the sun to reach all the branches. With proper care, it is highly possible for your fruit tree to fruit the second year after planting.

Looking for the best fruit trees adapted to the Ellis County area?

For **apples**, try Gala, Imperial Gala, Royal Gala, Mollie's Delicious, Fu-

ji, Pink Lady, or Mutsu (Crispin). Apples are susceptible to cotton root rot so if you have experienced it in your soil, you will have difficulty growing apples.

For **peaches**, try (starting from early to late ripening) Sentinel, Ranger, Harvester, Redglobe, Majestic, Denman, Loring, Dixiland, or Redskin.

For **pears**, try European Hybrids- Kieffer, Orient, Moonglow, Magness; Asian Varieties-Shinko, or Shin Li.

For **plums**, try Morris, Methley, Ozark Premiere, Bruce, or Santa Rosa.

For **pecans**, try Sioux, Pawnee, Desirable, Choctaw, Kiowa,



(Continued on page 6)

*Fruit and Nut Trees (Continued from page 5)*

Caddo, Lakota, Nacono, or Wichita.

Select and plant your fruit and nut trees now while the nurseries have a good selection. Complete the bare-root planting of trees this month for best results. An excellent source for bare-rooted trees and other woody stock is Womack Nursery in DeLeon, TX. Phone: (254) 893-6497). Their email is [womacknursery.com](mailto:womacknursery.com). Container grown stock can easily be found at your local nurseries.

For more information on the proper pruning and the care of fruit and nut trees, check <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/fruit-nut> for a wealth of information with helpful pictures.

**Save The Date!**  
**Saturday, March 28, 2015**



*The 2015 Ellis County Master Gardeners' Gardening Calendar is available!*



We are proud to present our 9<sup>th</sup> annual gardening calendar. The featured articles are: "Culinary Herbs for North Texas", "Soil Preparation", "Useful Websites", "How to Start a Successful Vegetable Garden", and "Preserving Your Harvest: Now what?". As always, the calendar will include month-by-month gardening information, soil preparation, fertilizing timeliness and events happening in Ellis County. Also this year we have included some of our favorite recipes!

Pick up your **FREE** copy at one of the sponsors listed below. And please thank them for supporting this year's gardening calendar. Without their sponsorship, there would not be a calendar.

**Waxahachie**

Ann's Health Food Center Market  
ARK Country Store  
Boyce Feed & Grain  
Carlisle Chevrolet  
Central Kubota  
CNB of Texas – all locations  
Coal City Cob  
College Street Restaurant & Pub  
Creative Quilts of Ellis County  
Divine Flowers  
Ellis Co. Master Gardeners/AgriLife Extension  
Gingerbread Press  
KBEC 1390 Classic Texas Music  
Larken Farms Orchard  
Living Magazine  
Roland's Nursery  
The Dove's Nest  
The Greenery  
Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce  
Waxahachie Civic Center  
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Maypearl Insurance  
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**Dallas**

Pam Daniel, Ebby Haliday Realtors  
Brumley Gardens, Oak Cliff, Bishops Arts



## A Personal Perspective on My Intern Year

*With Mary Lee Nelson  
Ellis County Master Gardener*



My family established themselves on the East Side of Fort Worth in the late 1800's. They did indeed have a garden, like most other families in those days. By the time I was born in 1943, the Meadowbrook area had become like typical neighborhoods...without gardens. Only one family, the Reardons, had a garden. Their property was about three times the size of the others and was located on the southeast corner of the block. I often played there with their grandsons. Any time our playing took us through their garden, we very carefully crossed along the neat paths between rows. In my memory, it was an idyllic time.

Flash forward to 1979. My husband, Larry, and I moved with our daughter, Joanna, to the small strip of southwest Dallas that is just west of Duncanville and north of the Cedar Hill line.

My earliest thoughts of gardening were of having container tomatoes in our backyard. It's a small yard, occupied mainly by a deck that Larry and a friend built sometime in the 80's.

A good part of the yard is shaded most of the day by a large Arizona Ash. And we've always had dogs, mostly Labrador Retrievers. As Larry has always been the keeper of the yard, our landscaping has been shrubs and hedges, mainly Rose of Sharon and Red Tip Photinia.

I first began to hear about Ellis County Master Gardeners from Robert Shugart in our Sunday class at Duncanville First United Methodist Church. Robert invites everyone to the Ellis County Master Gardener Lawn and Garden Expo each year and often shares extra produce from his garden with the class.

I went online and researched Master Gardeners and discovered that Waxahachie is much more practical a location for me to attend classes than the Dallas group's headquarters up north. Robert convinced me that it would be great

and encouraged me to join. I applied, interviewed, and was accepted into the 2014 intern class. Expo came along immediately and I joined the Junior Master Gardener program presenters.

Such a rewarding year! So much to learn, so many opportunities to get involved, and so many terrific folks in the membership! I have wished many times that I had begun gardening at least 20 years ago! I want to encourage everyone I meet to get involved in gardening, to get their children and grandchildren involved, to spread the knowledge wherever they meet others.

Having been a school teacher, I'd like to see a vegetable garden at every elementary school. As a science teacher, I'd like to see the state's curriculum expand its education about plants, vegetables and fruits in our diets, and the sustainability of our planet.

Personally, gardening has benefitted me physically, emotionally, and socially. While I knew that I would be limited in my physical abilities to garden, I felt the activities would get me moving. And I was right! I have had to go slow-

ly this first year, but I look forward to increasing my activity in 2015.

I plan to continue my vegetable plot at our church's community garden and to get more involved in its operation. I will continue in the Junior Master Gardener program in Waxahachie, partnering with Annette Brown, and complete my hours for JMG Specialist. Another goal is to become a speaker on behalf of ECMGA, for which I already have a February engagement. C'mon Spring! It's going to be a wonderful second year!

If you have an interest in becoming a Master Gardener, think about being part of the Class of 2015. Training begins in February. See page eight for complete details.



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**facebook®**

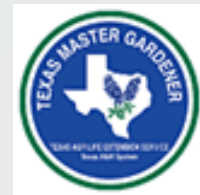
Are you a Facebooker? Ellis County Master Gardeners are on Facebook and we'd love to have you join us. Use our page as your point of contact to ask us gardening questions or get information about flowers, vegetables and herbs...we cover it all! You'll find us at the link below, and all you have to do is click the "Like" button to see our daily posts! We look forward to hearing from you with questions and comments.

<https://www.facebook.com/ECMGA>



## Become a Master Gardener

**Do you like the feel of the earth between your fingers,  
the fragrance of growing flowers, the taste of  
homegrown 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 my 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 2015, 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, 2015 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. Applications will be mailed upon request and must be returned no later than January 9, 2015, 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.



## Tree Selection Basics

By Jackie Wilhite  
Ellis County Master Gardener



Purchasing a tree can be a bit intimidating if you haven't done a bit of research prior to the nursery visit. Make a few basic considerations and the shopping process will go a lot faster. Like the reason for the tree (shade, privacy or maybe both) and where it will be located. What is the proximity of the closest building, roads, sidewalks or utilities? Are any power lines overhead? Are regulations in place that would prevent the addition of a tree to this property? What is the mature size—height and canopy of the tree that is under consideration?

Most full size trees will spread 40 feet in diameter. Keep this number in mind when making the tree selection. Trees come in a wide range of sizes, so choose the best variety for the location.

Landscape of the area where the tree will be placed should be fairly level with little or no slope. Once the ideal location has been determined for planting a tree, a perk test should be done.



Dig a hole 18" deep and fill it with water. Leave the site for an hour to allow the water to drain from the hole. If most of the water drains, this is considered to be a good locale. If half or less of the water has drained out, the site is considered fair. If hardly any water drains from the hole after an hour, the drainage in this area will be poor and anything planted here could fail due to suffocated roots

The best quality trees will have a dominant central trunk up to the canopy. (Not all trees develop one single trunk naturally; they must be trained) Check the trunk for old injuries or broken branches. Old pruning cuts that have not healed properly could indicate a weakened plant. While shopping for the best looking tree, don't be afraid to

lift the tree from its container.

If the roots are circling inside the container, move on to the next plant. Sometimes these circling roots (if not too severe)

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Ellis County Master Gardener Scholarship 2015

In 2003, ECMGA decided to make scholarships available to graduating high school seniors residing in Ellis County. We wanted to provide opportunities to students that chose college studies in horticulture and/or life sciences disciplines. Since then, we have awarded 29 high school students with college scholarships totaling \$42,500.

One of the objectives of the ECMGA is to build partnerships with the Ellis County community to expand horticultural education and opportunities. In keeping with this objective, the ECMGA will again make scholarship funds available in 2015 to deserving high school seniors pursuing studies in horticulture-related fields. To qualify, the applicant must be a graduating high school senior residing in Ellis County from an Ellis County High School, Ellis County Charter High School, Venus ISD, Cedar Hill ISD, or Ellis County Home School Program. Additionally, the applicant must have an elected academic major in a horticulture-related field that includes, but is not limited to horticulture, agriculture, environmental science, forestry, botany, or entomology. Other horticulture-related fields of studies are defined in the scholarship application package available on our website. Applicants must be able to provide proof of acceptance at an accredited institution of higher education.

ECMGA college scholarships awarded to qualifying students in 2015 will be up to \$3,000. Students applying for the ECMGA Scholarship are invited to visit <http://www.ecmga.com> to download the application package found under the "What's Happening" tab. The completed application may be submitted by registered mail (return receipt requested) or in person to the Texas AgriLife Extension Service office located at 701 South I-35, Suite 3, Waxahachie, TX 75165. If additional information is needed regarding the ECMGA Scholarship, please call (972) 825-5175. All scholarship applications must be received no later than April 1, 2015, by 4pm.





## 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 it for information on gardening in Ellis County, sign up for this 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 when you leave a message at (972) 825-5175.

### 'Cecile Brunner', "The Sweetheart Rose"

*Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist, TX A&M AgriLife Ext*

'Cecile Brunner' is one of the most beloved and recognizable roses ever created. It was introduced in France by Joseph Pernet-Ducher in 1881. The original plant is a compact shrub three to four feet tall, but the climbing form, which was introduced in 1891 is even more vigorous and found more frequently in old cemeteries and home sites.

The exquisitely-formed, soft, silvery pink buds make perfect boutonnieres and have a pleasantly sweet fragrance. They resemble miniature hybrid tea flowers. 'Cecile Brunner' is affectionately known as "The Sweetheart Rose" and is a great gift for Valentine's Day.



The climbing form is vigorous and naturally forms an umbrella shape ten or more feet tall and wide. It blooms profusely in the spring and fall, but just sporadically in the summer months. The bush form blooms more consistently and is a good container specimen as

well as hedge plant.

Like most of the other popular old roses, 'Cecile Brunner' can be grown on its own roots and is easily propagated from cuttings. It is also widely availa-



ble in containers at this time of year.

Roses thrive in sunny areas with well-drained soils. Established bush forms should be pruned in mid-February, but it is best to wait until after the spring bloom to shape and prune the climbing selection. Roses grow well in sandy or clay soils, but do especially well when it is amended with organic material such as composted pine bark or your own compost.

Although able to survive with little additional fertilizer, roses produce better when materials such as cotton seed or alfalfa meal, slow release commercial fertilizer, or rotted manures are applied. Roses are relatively water efficient plants, but bloom and perform better with occasional deep watering during extended dry spells.

For more information on the 'Cecile Brunner' rose and other well-researched Earth-Kind Roses, visit <http://earthkindroses.tamu.edu>

### Garden Checklist for January/February

✧ Now is an excellent time to transplant mature or established trees and shrubs while they are dormant.

✧ Make flower and vegetable garden plans now before the rush of spring planting. Time spent in armchair gardening in front of the fireplace will pay off in improved plant selection. Besides, it is fun to page through the garden catalogs.

✧ Sow seeds in flats or containers to get a jump on plant growth before hot weather arrives. Petunias, begonias, and impatiens should be sown in early January. Warm temperature plants, such as tomatoes, peppers, marigolds, and periwinkles, should be sown in late January or early February.

✧ Apply a light application of fertilizer to established pansy plantings. Use one-half pound of ammonium sulfate per 100 square feet of bed area. Repeat the application every four to six weeks, depending on rainfall. Dried blood meal is also an excellent source of fertilizer for pansies.

✧ Prepare beds and garden area for spring planting.

✧ Select and order gladiolus corms for February/March planting. Plant at two-week intervals to prolong flowering period.

✧ Check junipers and other narrow-leaf evergreens for bagworm pouches. The insect eggs overwinter in the pouch, and start the cycle again by emerging in the spring to begin feeding on the foliage. Hand

(Continued on page 11)



Landscape Gardening (Continued from page 10)

removal and burning of the pouches are ways of reducing the potential damage next spring.

- ✱ The life of a plant received as a Christmas gift can be prolonged with proper care. Keep the soil moist, but provide drainage so that excess moisture can flow from the pot. Keep the plant out of range of heating ducts and away from heating units. Keep in a cool room at night, preferably at 60 to 65 degrees F.



**Interested in becoming a  
2015 Expo Sponsor Or  
Expo Exhibitor?**

Contact James Kocian at  
[expo.ecmga@yahoo.com](mailto:expo.ecmga@yahoo.com)

**Reserve the date: March 28, 2015!**

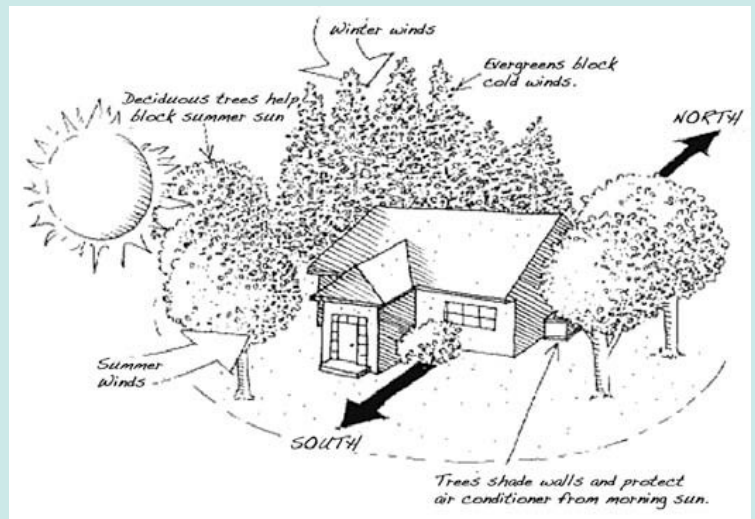
Tree Selection Basics (Continued from page 9)

can be pruned away when planting. This takes some time and knowledge for the best possible outcome. The ideal plant will not be root bound.

Plant the tree in a hole no deeper than it was in the pot at time of purchase. The trunk should begin to flare at the top of the soil when it has been planted correctly.

Maintenance for the tree species should also be considered prior to purchase. Be willing to keep the tree watered for the first year while it is developing a root system. Mulch the top of the tree without touching the trunk.

Some things cannot be controlled like the rate of growth, root system development, fire, wind, hail, or how long the tree will live. But if a few steps are taken prior to putting the tree in the ground, successfully growing a strong, healthy tree will be accomplished.



## ECMGA Amateur Photo Contest

The Ellis County Master Gardener Association announces its annual photo contest is underway as of September 1, 2014. **Last date for submissions is March 1, 2015.**

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.

# Thank You All!!

**Thanks to the sponsors, exhibitors, and visitors for making the  
2014 - 14th Annual  
Ellis County Master Gardeners' Lawn & Garden Expo  
such a success!**

## Gold



## Bronze

**EarthTones Greenery  
Renewal by Anderson  
Vintage Bank  
Waxahachie Civic  
Center**

## Green

**AmeriGrafix  
CNB of Texas  
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