



Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume VII, Issue Six

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

June, 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, click on subscribe, and it will be sent around the 1st of every month. Best of all; it's FREE! Susan Clark, Editor

What's Happening in June

IT'S BACK! Every Saturday from March to December from 8am–1pm.

410 S. Rogers (across from City Hall in the old lumberyard building)
Visit the Master Gardeners' Booth!

- ☼ Useful gardening tips
- ☼ Plants and herbs for sale
- ☼ Free handouts...Some items for a fee
- ☼ Tell a friend to sign up for the **E-Garden Newsletter**... it's **FREE!!!**



Saturday, June 1, 10am–12pm, Texas Native Butterflies with Dale Clark at John Bunker Sands Wetland Center. Come learn about the life cycle and behaviors of some of our common Texas butterflies. See how easy it is to attract them to your own yard. **Location:** 655 Martin Lane, Seagoville. **Cost:** FREE with \$5 admission fee, **RSVP** by emailing contact@wetlandcenter.com or call (972) 474-9100. Info at: www.wetlandcenter.com

First and Third Monday of June, 9am, Wildflower and Bird Walk with the Indian Trail Master Naturalists. Members will be leading a walk at Mockingbird Nature Park. Join in this ½ mile stroll along the trails to identify wildflowers and birds. Free to the public. Participants should bring drinking water and binoculars. The walk will be canceled if raining. Info at: <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/> or email: Information@itmnc.com

Thursday, June, 6, 9am–5pm, Dogwood Canyon—Free First Thursday. Enjoy FREE admission all day. Take part in guided hikes, animal encounters, and children's arts & crafts activities. Located at 1206 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill, just south of Cedar Hill State Park entrance. For more info, go to: <http://tx.audubon.org/Dogwood.html>

Tuesday, June 11, 6pm–8pm, Environmentally Safe Gardens. Free class at Brumley Gardens. Learn how organics in the garden also help the environment. Located at 700 West Davis, Dallas. Visit the garden website at: <http://www.brumleygardens.com/home/>

Saturday, June 15, 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. Location: 7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas. www.audubondallas.org

Saturday, June 22, 9am–12pm, Dogwood Canyon—Fourth Saturday Workday. Located at 1206 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill.. For more info, contact Julie Collins at jcollins@audubon.org.

***Note earlier meeting time! Monday, June 24, 6:45 pm, Indian Trail Master Naturalists presents the film "Where Did the Horny Toad Go?"** Embark on a journey through history and across the Southwest to rediscover the endearing and unusual Texas Horned

(Continued on page 9)

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 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

Inside this issue:

It's June, What Needs to be Done?	2
Wildflower of the Month	3
Summer Gardening Tips	3
Herb of the Month	4
Texas Native Trees	5
Garden Tool Review	5
In the Vegetable Garden	6
You Might Be A Horti-Holic If...	7
Landscape Gardening	8
Book Review	10
Reminder: ECMGA Garden Tour	11



Earth-Kind® Low Volume Irrigation

Efficient irrigation is one of the key Earth-Kind® practices for conserving water in the landscape. Low volume irrigation systems (sometimes referred to as drip or trickle irrigation) are among the most effective means of achieving significant water savings. Despite the tremendous potential for water conservation, these systems are not widely used in residential landscapes.

Like conventional overhead irrigation systems, low-volume systems require proper design, installation, maintenance, and operation for optimum water savings and plant performance.

To learn more about Earth-Kind® Low Volume Irrigation, click on the Resource tab at www.ecmga.com and click on Earth-Kind® Publications.

Unlike overhead irrigation systems, the primary design goal of a low volume system is to apply water to a uniform soil depth, either directly to the plant root zone or in a limited area. Water is delivered at or below the surface of the planted area versus to the surface of the planted area. Most low volume irrigation systems are installed at or near the surface of the landscape area and covered with two to three inches of mulch. Typically, this type of installation requires less time and cost than a conventional overhead system.

An audit of the irrigation system has been shown to be the most effective tool for maximizing water use efficiency in the landscape. Irrigation audits consist of three main activities: site inspection, performance testing, and irrigation scheduling.

It's June....What Needs To Be Done?

Planting

- ✂ This is the best time to plant vinca (periwinkle), in full sun. They like the hot weather. 'Cora' is a new type of vinca that is resistant to soil-borne diseases. It comes in many colors except yellow. Water with drip irrigation or soaker hose to keep water off the foliage.
- ✂ Warm-season color or foliage plants still can be used in containers or in the ground. Use four-inch or larger nursery stock and keep them well watered. Containers may need water twice a day.
- ✂ Buy and plant crape myrtles in bloom to be certain to get the color you desire. They come in a wide range of colors and sizes. Look for ones that are resistant to powdery mildew.

Fertilizing and Pruning

- ✂ Prune back autumn sage (*Salvia greggi*) and mealy cup sage (*Salvia farinacea*) by one-third. Deadhead other salvias as well as annuals and perennials that will continue reblooming until late fall.
- ✂ Continue to prune as necessary, fall blooming plants such as Mexican bush sage (*Salvia leucantha*), mountain sage (*Salvia regal*), Mexican mint marigold, copper canyon daisies, asters and mums to keep them compact and prevent buds from forming prematurely. Don't prune after September when buds begin to form.
- ✂ Fertilize container plantings, including hanging baskets, every week with a water-soluble fertilizer.
- ✂ This is the second time to use an all-nitrogen, slow-release fertilizer on turf grasses. You can cut the amount in half to prevent excessive growth. The more fertilizer on a lawn, the more water it needs.

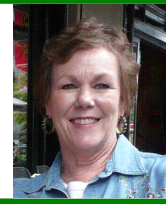
Garden Watch

- ✂ Insects and diseases will be prevalent this time of the year. Treat with an appropriate organic or chemical pesticide, if needed. Vegetable plants that cannot be salvaged should be pulled up and destroyed.
- ✂ Look for small, spindle-shaped bags hanging from trees. These are bagworms. Pull them off by hand. Insecticides are not effective once the bag has formed. They are usually found on cedars, cypress, and other cone-bearing trees. However, they can be found on other plants including oaks and barberries. They multiply, can defoliate a tree, and eventually kill it.



Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

*Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener*



Rose Palafoxia – Sunflower Family (Asteraceae)
Palafoxia rosea (Bush) Cory

Range: 2-9 (Ellis County is Region 4)
Size: Two feet
Blooms: June through November, Annual

All *Palafoxias* are pink to rose, or almost purple, with a single, branched stem bearing single or loosely clustered flower heads. Most are hairy plants, sometimes sticky to touch. Rose palafoxia has no ray flowers; the whole flower head is composed of fluffy, disk flowers. It makes its beautiful, airy display in sandy soils, in open areas, and on the edges of woods. Seeds sown in the fall can be used in wildflower meadows or in the landscape. It is most effective planted in a mass. The fragrant flowers attract butterflies and other pollinators to a plentiful supply of nectar and pollen. *P. callosa* is an almost identical relative, found across southwestern central to northeastern central parts of the state on limestone soil.

Summer Gardening Tips

*By Carolyn Foster
Ellis County Master Gardener*



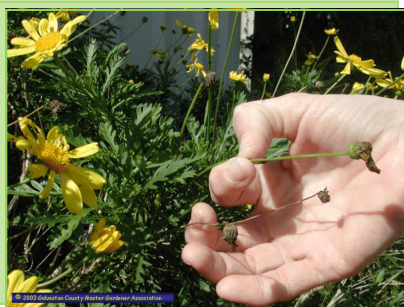
Summer is almost here and everything is growing. If you planted my favorites... perennials, things are looking good, but you may need splashes of annuals for extra color. Remember, some like it sunny and some like it shady. Sun lovers include zinnias, portulaca (moss rose), periwinkle, salvia, marigold, celosia, and purslane, to name a few. Shade lovers can tolerate either part or full shade and include impatiens, begonias, caladiums, salvia, and coleus. Many annuals self-seed and come back.

Still talking about color... think "tropical". Many tropicals, such as esparranza (yellow bells), firebush, mandevilla, hibiscus, angel's trumpet, and bougainvillea are great

choices. Lantana loves heat, is drought tolerant, and may come back. Continue to

remove faded flowers (*deadheading pictured*) before they set seed to keep plants compact, growing, and producing more flowers. Feed annuals every four to six weeks to keep them productive and pretty. Choose crape myrtles in colors you like and that will fit the location when they reach a mature size. Varieties with Indian tribe names like Hopi and Natchez resist powdery mildew best.

Plantings that are native to our area thrive better, but if you can supply the water, you still have time to plant trees, shrubs, ground covers, and establish new lawns. Watering is very important the first year and during dry spells to be worth the investment. However, do not overwater; this kills more plants than under-watering. Bare spots encourage weeds, so cover them with mulch. Mulching around



plantings also preserves moisture and gives beds a more finished look. There are many colors and choices (shredded, chips, nuggets, rubber). Each year, turn the old mulch into the soil as it biodegrades or add new if you're keeping the same color.

Watch out for Japanese beetles, bag worms, spittle bugs, chinch bugs, crickets, grubs, hornworms (*pictured left*), snails, and slugs that can destroy all your hard work in a matter of days. Look for pests daily and pick off by hand or there are organic products and chemicals that will do the job.

READ THE LABEL and FOLLOW DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY. With chemicals, MORE IS NOT BETTER! Remember, there are pests, but there are also beneficial insects that are our friends and help us. The ECMG's can help you with more detailed information. Call (972) 825-5175 with questions. Keep Growing Smart.



Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton
Ellis County Master Gardener



June Herb of the Month – Elder

Each year, the International Herb Association chooses an Herb of the Year™ to highlight. Their Horticultural Committee evaluates possible choices based on the herb being outstanding in at least two of the three major categories: culinary, medicinal, or ornamental. Herbal organizations around the world then devote the year to educate the public about the selected herb. The herb for 2013 is Elder (*Sambucus* spp.).

What I enjoy most about this exercise is that those of us who think we know a lot about herbs find that there is much more to be learned. The Herbal Forum in Round Top Texas last March featured a number of presentations on Elder. We sampled Elderflower Cordial, Elderberry Panna Cotta, and sipped Elderberry wine while watching the 1944 movie *Arsenic and Old Lace* with Cary Grant. In June, I will be in St. Louis, Missouri to study the plants of the prairie and no doubt will learn more about the many uses of elderberry and elderflower.

The American or common elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*), is a large shrub native to North America. It grows from Texas to Canada and east to the Atlantic. On the farm where I grew up in western Pennsylvania, eld-

erberry bushes grew in clusters along the damp edges of fields, next to springs and streams and along roadside ditches. The bushes are easy to identify from their fragrant creamy-white, umbel shaped flowers that bloom in early summer. By summer's end, the flowers are replaced by clusters of dark purple, edible berries. Colonists arriving in America recognized the close relative to the European elder tree (*Sambucus nigra*), called "the medicine chest of the people" in their

homelands. Elderberry has been used for food and medicine since ancient times. Both the flowers and berries are useful for making pies, wines, candies, beverages, jellies, and toilettries. Both have strong medicinal properties. The berries have more vitamin C per unit weight than either oranges or tomatoes. They also contain more phosphorus and potassium than any other temperate fruit crop, and a good amount of Vitamin A. Caution: raw elderberries are poisonous and must be cooked to be edible. Do not

eat the roots, bark, leaves, twigs or seeds.

The flowers are also edible and can be used in pancakes and muffins, or just dipped in batter and fried. They make a nice tea or a refreshing pale wine. Elderflower water is used in perfumes

and sweets. An extract of elderflower blossoms can be used to make elderflower syrup and cordials.

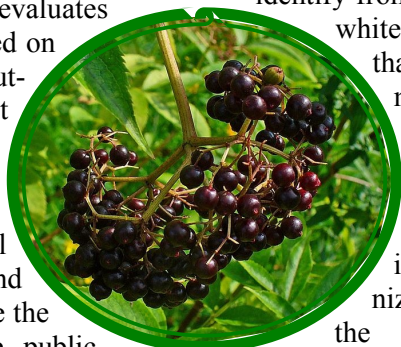
Native Americans called the elder the "tree of music" and used the new spring branches to make flutes. Large, straight shoots were used as arrow shafts. They also used the berries as a dye for cloth, skin and hair.

Throughout plant folklore, the elder is traditionally considered the mother and has been credited with having powers to protect all other herbs, allowing them to thrive. Many organic gardeners recommend planting elder along garden edges to protect plants

from garden pests. Some gardeners prepare a decoction from elder leaves for spraying to repel caterpillars or stop powdery mildew. Folklore holds that you should ask permission of

the mother guardian before cutting down or burning an elder bush. In the Harry Potter books, Harry purchases an elder wand as part of his supplies for Hogwarts Magic School. He tries out several until he finds the right one. The wandmaker foreshadows how important wands and wand lore will be to the outcome of the seven book series when he says, "The wand chooses the wizard."

Excerpts of the above were taken from the International Herb Association's Herb of the Year™ 2013. Visit their website www.iherb.org for further information on Elder (*Sambucus* spp.).



Texas Native Tree: Bur Oak

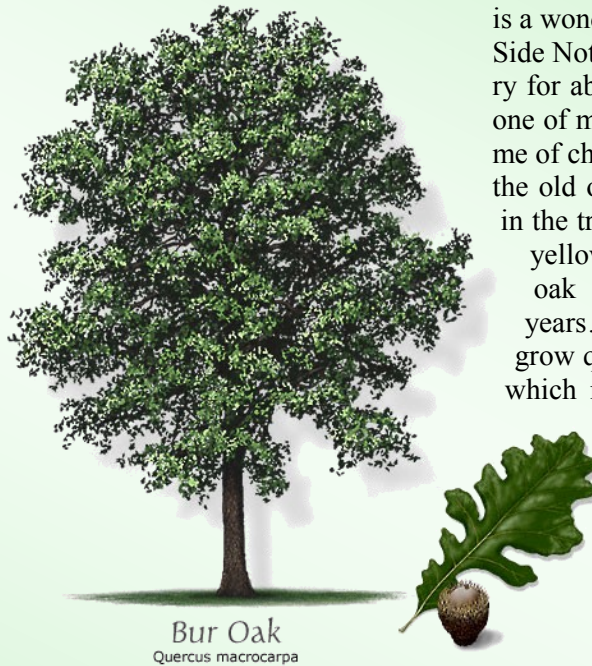
By Marilyn Simmons
Ellis County Master Gardener



The deciduous Bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) is a stately, tall tree with a beautiful display of very large leaves. The acorns that this tree produces can be as big as golf balls. It can reach to the height of 60 to 80 feet and spread can also be 60 to 80 feet.

This tree establishes well in Ellis County. The bur oak is drought tolerant and grows well in many soil types from sand to heavy clay. This hardwood has medium-textured, light to medium grey bark. It is resistant to most diseases. It is probably the fastest growing of the hardwoods.

When choosing trees for a landscape, it is wise to establish more than one variety. If a person does not mind the large acorns, and the area can accommodate a very large tree, the bur oak



Bur Oak
Quercus macrocarpa

Copyright © Robert O'Brien

is a wonderful selection.

Side Note: I sold trees at a local nursery for about 14 years. The Bur Oak is one of my favorites. The bark reminds me of children's books; you remember the old oak tree with the heart carved in the tree. Or, the song lyrics, "Tie a yellow ribbon tied around the old oak tree, it's been three long years...." Bur Oaks establish well, grow quickly and have few enemies, which makes them an excellent option for your landscape.

Reference: Howard Garrett's, [Texas Trees](#).

Garden Tool: Attracting Visitors with a Water Wiggler

With Cerelda De Heus
Ellis County Master Gardener



If you have a bird bath in your garden, consider adding a Water Wiggler to help attract more birds. Our feathered friends love the moving water, and this water agitation prevents mosquitoes from laying eggs in your bird bath—one way to help keep West Nile out of your garden waters. The Water Wiggler requires two "D" batteries; no plumbing or wiring. Mine has worked for several months before needing a new set of batteries. I've had one for over a year and have more bird visitors than ever. It has survived

both an armadillo attack and being forgotten and frozen one morning (it thawed and kept rippling). I use a large clay plant saucer for a bird bath and the birds have room to splash

around the wiggler. Your bath needs to be wide enough to accommodate both birds and the wiggler, I suggest at least 18". Robins put on quite a splashing show, other birds just want to drink and enjoy the moving water. You still have to clean and fill your bird bath, but this adds a whole new element to your birding experience, while keeping those pesky mosquito eggs away. Available from several bird supply retailers and Amazon, \$27 to \$37.



In the Vegetable Garden: Sweet Corn

With Robert Shugart
Ellis County Master Gardener



As every fifth grader knows, the Indians introduced corn to the pilgrims in the 1500's. The plant was probably a mix between field corn and maize. It was very starchy and lacking in flavor. Our field corn was produced primarily for livestock. Today's corn is used for cornstarch, corn syrup, and alcohol products (for fuel, not to drink). I digress. Sweet corn was probably brought up to us from South America.

I hope you have had the experience of eating a good sweet corn fresh from the garden. Good quality sweet corn can't be purchased from the "big box" grocers because it begins to lose its flavor within hours of harvest.

Good quality soil is always important, but corn has shallow roots so deep tillage is not as important as for other

crops. Corn is a heavy feeder, and about one pound of complete fertilizer per 100 square feet should be turned into the soil before it is planted.

One of the most important procedures is to plant corn in blocks rather than in one or two long rows. Corn is wind pollinated so good density increases the potential for good pollination and full ears.

Begin planting as soon as the soil temperature reaches 50 degrees with rows about 30 inches apart. Early

farmers used the old saying: "Plant your corn when the leaves on your oak tree are the size of a mouse's ear" (obviously not a Live Oak tree).

If the soil is dry, water two to three days before planting. Plant three to four seeds per foot and thin to one per foot. This is important to improve yield and quality.

When plants are about 12 inches tall, "dirt" them. That means to pull dirt up on to the roots to help them stand up to the wind better. Follow up by side dressing with a nitrogen (21/0/0) fertilizer at the rate of about a third of a cup per 35 foot of row. Work it into the soil about six inches on both sides of the row and water it in. Do this again when the plants are about half grown.

Make sure your plants don't suffer from moisture stress. Leaves will sometimes curl in the early part of the day if they need water. Mulching will help with moisture and weed control.

Corn Earworms (*pictured above*) are a problem and will infect most ears unless controlled. The ears can be treated with Sevin dust on the silks as soon

as the silks appear and every week till harvest. Some folks prefer a few drops of a "food quality" mineral oil

or BT (*bacillus thuringiensis*) instead of Sevin dust. That said, a fellow Master Gardener, Bob Osborne, recommended G90 sweet corn (*pictured left*) because it

seems to be resistant to earworms. I am glad to say that it worked well for me in the past. If you do have earworms, they are usually limited to the very top of the cob and it can be broken off when shucking.

Corn will be ready to harvest about three weeks after the silks appear and the silks have darkened. To test, press your thumb nail into a plump kernel. It will burst with a milky white juice if it is ready. It is best harvested in the cool of the morning.

To cook, bring water to a rolling boil, add corn, bring back to a boil and cook for three to four minutes. With or without butter and salt, it is a rare treat. I hope you decide to try sweet corn in your garden.



YOU MIGHT BE A "HORTI-HOLIC" IF...

Submitted by Shirley Campbell, Ellis County Master Gardener



1. You took a career in gardening for the free plant benefits!
2. You've crossed international lines with plants in your underwear or socks.
3. You've dug something up in a cemetery that wasn't dead (or you keep a shovel in your car).
4. Your yard is planted in drifts of one.
5. You "liberated" a cutting, seed, flower, or plant from a public garden, park, or garden center without asking or paying.
6. You've lied to your loved ones about how much you spent on a plant/plants.
7. You've seriously considered not divorcing someone, moving to a better job, or upgrading to a better house because you couldn't move all of your plants.
8. You've pushed, prodded, elbowed, kneed, blocked, or in any way been less than nice at a plant sale.
9. You're trying to grow a shade tree from a seed.
10. You save old blankets and coats to protect plants in your garden during winter that should never be considered hardy here.
11. You've broken up with someone for hating yard work or because their dog dug up one of your plants.
12. You buy plants with no idea where they are going in your garden.
13. You've moved a plant in your yard more than three times. (Gardening is just musical chairs with plants.)
14. You can't experience a garden without browsing...like a sheep, nibbling, smelling, touching, fondling.
15. You can remember plant names better than people's names.
16. Your boss, spouse, or family doesn't understand that you love the green of plants more than the green of money.
17. You have a picture of a plant in your purse or cell phone you show off to friends, or you're carrying around a picture/plant to have identified.
18. You'd rather have a truck load of compost than a bouquet of roses or a box of chocolates.
19. You walk around your yard and describe plants by the names of the people you got them from.
20. The sales people at your local nursery know you by first name.

**Gardening is
cheaper than
therapy and you
get tomatoes!**



Source: Jimmy Turner, Senior Director of the Dallas Arboretum

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





Landscape Gardening

From: Gail Haynes, Ellis County Master Gardener

Ellis County Master Gardeners have a website at 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.

Increasing Your Bounty of Summer Color

Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist TX AgriLife Extension Service

Rooting cuttings at home can transform a garden quickly with annuals such as coleus, begonias, perilla, ornamental sweet potatoes, and purple heart set-creasea. All of these are easy to start on



Make cuttings from 4 to 6 inches long, with several nodes

your own. You can put them in pots or directly into beds. The important thing is to keep them moist during the rooting period. This requires about two weeks. After that, normal watering practices will usually sustain the new plants. This is a fun project for new gardeners or children. As the season progresses, some of the plants you selected earlier in June will not be available and it is satisfying to turn some of your "trimmings into treasures".

Cuttings should be 4-6" long and have several leaf nodes. After taking the cuttings, remove the first set or two of leaves and any flowers or buds that are



Two kinds of ornamental sweet potatoes approximately 1 month after cuttings were struck

forming. Rooting hormones are not usually necessary for these types of cuttings. Use a pencil or small stick to punch holes in the media before firming the soil around the base of each cutting. The newly stuck cuttings will wilt during the day, but usually recover at night.

Garden Checklist for June 2013

- ◆ Supplemental irrigation is essential for all but the hardiest plants in times of extended drought. Water lawn and garden thoroughly, but not too frequently. As a general rule, soak to a depth of eight inches. Finish watering by early afternoon, to lessen the chance of disease.

- ◆ Check watermelons for ripeness regu-



Cuttings with lower leaves removed

larly. They are usually ready when the bottom portion is definitely yellow-green or even-yellow in color.

- ◆ Take a critical look at your landscape while at the height of summer development. Make notes of how you think it can be better arranged, plants that need replacement, overgrown plants that need to be removed, and possible activity areas that can be enjoyed by family members.

- ◆ Check for insects and diseases. Destroy badly infested plants. Spider

mites can be especially troublesome at this time. Select a chemical or organic control, or use insecticidal soap.



Coleus 'Alabama Sunset'

- ◆ Especially during dry summers, soil moisture becomes extremely important and essential for good plant production. Because continual watering is oftentimes costly and time consuming, it pays to conserve the moisture around plants. This is

best done by mulching. A good mulch will retain valuable moisture needed for plant growth, and improve overall gardening success. Mulches are usually applied two to six inches deep, depending on the material used. In general, the coarser the material, the deeper the mulch. For example, a two-inch layer of cottonseed hulls will have about the same mulching effect as six inches of oat straw or four inches of coastal Bermuda hay.

- ◆ There is still time to plant some of the colorful, heat-tolerant summer annuals. Direct-seed zinnias and portulaca, and purchase plants of periwinkle, salvia, marigold, and purslane. Be

Window box with two kinds of ornamental sweet potato and impatiens brightens the summer landscape



(Continued on page 9)

Lizard. We will discover how this lizard's decline is linked to numerous other species in peril and how we can be a part of the solution....even though we may be part of the problem. The program is free and follows the 6pm MN meeting, open to the public. Meeting location: Red Oak Public Library, 200 Lakeview Pkwy, Red Oak. For info, call (972) 825-5175 or email ellis-tx@tamu.edu

Texas Discovery Gardens

3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dallas

TexasDiscoveryGardens.org

Saturday, June 1, 9am—12pm, Gardening for Small Spaces. See how easy it is to grow a vegetable garden or add some seasonal color to your balcony or patio. Learn sustainable gardening in a small space. Bring home a finished container! \$60; \$48 for TDG Members. Register in advance.

Saturday, June 8, 11am, Garden Explorers Walk. Take a garden tour with a garden docent and search for squirrels' nests, hungry caterpillars, frogs and butterflies. The tour ends in time for you to catch the Butterfly Release talk at noon in the Rosine Smith Sammons Butterfly House and Insectarium. *Included with admission.*

Tuesday, June 18, 6:30pm—8pm, Discovery Lecture Series: Moths: Tales from the Dark Side. Delve beyond butterflies and learn about one of nature's "other pollinators" – the moth. Learn about fascinating behaviors, adaptations and diversity in the moth world from Entomologist John Watts. \$15; \$12 for TDG members.

Landscape Design (Continued from page 8)

sure to water transplants as needed until roots become established.

- ♦ Removing faded flowers from plants before they set seed will keep them growing and producing flowers. A light application of fertilizer every four to six weeks will also be helpful.
- ♦ House plants can be moved out of doors this month. Sink the pots in a cool, shaded garden bed to prevent them from drying out so quickly; water pots, container plants, and hanging baskets often. Monthly feedings with house plant fertilizer will encourage continued growth.
- ♦ Now is the time to plan for next spring. Consider digging and

dividing any crowded spring bulbs. Once the bulbs have matured and the foliage has turned brown, it is time to spade them up and thin out the stand. Crowded bulbs produce fewer and smaller blooms. They usually need thinning every three to four

- ♦ Fertilize roses every four to six weeks. Apply a high-nitrogen fertilizer immediately after a flush of bloom.

- ♦ Continue to spray susceptible roses with a black-spot control such as Funginex every seven to ten days.

- ♦ Re-blooming salvias, such as *Salvia greggii* and *S. farinacea*, should be

years.

- ♦ June is the time to select day-lily varieties as they reach their peak of bloom.

pruned back periodically during the summer. To make the job easier, use hedging shears, and remove only the spent flowers and a few inches of stem below. Fall-blooming perennials, such as Mexican marigold mint (*Tagetes lucida*), chrysanthemums, physostegia, and *Salvia leucantha*, should be pruned in the same manner during the summer to keep them compact, reducing the need for staking. This type of pruning should be completed prior to September 1, since flower buds begin forming about that time.



**Interested in becoming a
2013 Expo Sponsor Or
Expo Exhibitor?**

Contact James Kocian at
expo.ecmga@yahoo.com

Reserve the date: March 29, 2014!

Book Review with Susan Norvell, Ellis County Master Gardener

Easy Gardens for North Central Texas
by Steve Huddleston and Pamela Crawford



Most of my gardening friends and associates know me as a vegetable gardener. I do love to grow vegetables, that's true, but I also love to grow landscape and flowering plants. I would like to tell you about a gardening book that I can highly recommend. It's *Easy Gardens for North Central Texas* by Steve Huddleston and Pamela Crawford.

Steve Huddleston is the senior horticulturist at the Ft. Worth Botanical Gardens and has 14 years of experience there. All of the plants in the book have been at the garden for years, so he knows them well. Pamela Crawford has written eight gardening books and designed gardens for over 1,500 residences. Her specialty is garden color.

There are a lot of things that make this book special, but perhaps the most significant is that it is written about gardening in our specific area of the state—North Central Texas. Too often gardening books are written by gardeners in other areas of the country and just don't apply to our demanding climate and conditions.

The authors provide many tips for choosing, planting and maintaining our gardens that are less water and work intensive, and yet still deliver wonderful color and performance.

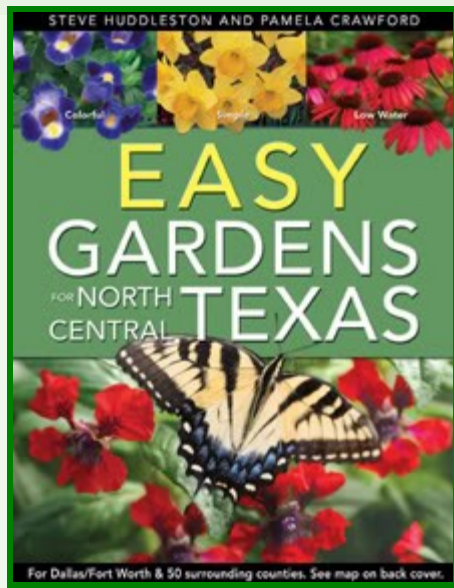
One of the best features of the book is a plant ranking system that makes it easy for us to select the hardiest and most carefree landscape perennials and annuals.

Blue Ribbon plants receive an EASY rating. The blue ribbon plants require no more than one chore from you per year, in addition to proper planting, watering, and fertilization. Although many other plants are discussed in the book, it recommends that beginners and serial plant killers stick to the blue ribbon plants until they have some successful growing experiences.

There are also Red Ribbon plants, which the author designated as ALMOST AS EASY.

Here are the characteristics of the Blue Ribbon Perennials, Shrubs, Vines, and Trees:

- ☞ Requires touching (trimming, dead-heading, etc.) no more than once a year.
- ☞ Is very well adjusted to the Texas climate (drought years as well as years with normal or above normal rain fall).



- ☞ Fares well with little susceptibility to pests.
- ☞ Needs water once or twice a week, at the most, after the establishment period. Many blue ribbon plants need no supplemental irrigation at all.

Here are the characteristics of the Blue Ribbon Annuals:

- ☞ Performs the same way every year (dependable).
- ☞ Requires little or no trimming.
- ☞ Is very well adjusted to the Texas

environment, including high heat and humidity.

- ☞ Lives a long life (at least the four to six months of your growing season).
- ☞ Fares well with little susceptibility to pests.
- ☞ Has an established record (it has been around for enough years to understand its requirements).
- ☞ Blooms continuously for a minimum of five to six months (expect for cacti, bromeliads, and plants used primarily for leaf color).
- ☞ Needs water, at the most, once or twice a week after it is established.

The author provides a similar description for the plants designated as Red Ribbon, Almost as Easy. While the majority of the plants in the book are Blue or Red Ribbon, others are included.

There are plenty of wonderful pictures to keep you inspired and enough plant material to choose from to keep you in gardening projects for years to come.

Each plant included in the book contains a double-page entry with plenty of color pictures and all the information you will require including: characteristics, color period, buying tips, companions, growing conditions, and planting and maintenance requirements.

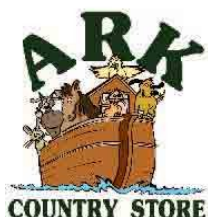
The plant listings section of the book is divided into Annuals, Perennials, Shrubs and Vines, and Trees. If you are looking for a specific plant, the book contains a complete alphabetical listing. I think it's a great book and a must-have for the North Texas Gardener. But you don't have to just take my word for it, check out the reviews on Amazon.com. There are 38 customer reviews included and 33 of them are five star designations! Gardening is tough here in our part of the world and I, for one, am grateful for all the help I can get!



Thank You to our 2013 Expo Sponsors!



Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors



Bronze Sponsors



Green Sponsors

AmeriGrafix
CNB of Texas
EarthTones Greenery
Ennis Garden Club
Holcim (Texas) LP
Renewal by Andersen
Roland's Nursery & Landscape
Tex-Scapes Greenery
Travis Equipment
Universal Portable Buildings



Please Support
These 2013 Expo
Sponsors!

Reminder!

Please join the Ellis County Master Gardeners in Waxahachie on Saturday, June 1st from 10 AM until 4 PM to see what grows in our display gardens. There is no charge for the tour, and Master Gardeners will be on hand to speak briefly and answer questions. For a map and detailed information, email Susan Clark at ps40life@gmail.com