



Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume VI, Issue 2

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

March, 2012

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! Melinda Kocian, editor/Susan Clark, co-editor

The Ellis County Master Gardeners
12th Annual Lawn & Garden Expo
Saturday, March 31, 2012 ♦ 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Waxahachie Civic Center



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Listen to KBEC.....

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

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

Melinda Kocian

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Visit any sponsor for free tickets!
For further information,
please visit www.ecmga.com

2012 Lawn & Garden Expo Speakers

Speaker presentations will be in the Crape Myrtle Room
at the Waxahachie Civic Center



10:00 a.m. Steve Woodward: Discover a Better Backyard Bird-Feeding Experience

Steve has been a backyard birder for nearly 20 years. For the past five years he has been the owner of the Wild Bird Centers in Fort Worth, TX. The business, which opened in 1999, supplies bird seed, feeders and other supplies to the Fort Worth Zoo and the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge. As part of the company's community outreach program, Mr. Woodward travels the Metroplex speaking at nature centers, garden clubs and other organizations about the joys of birding.



1:00 p.m. Steven Chamblee: Texas Tough Top 50

Steven Chamblee is the Chief Horticulturist for Chandor Gardens in Weatherford. He serves as Consulting Editor and Author for Neil Sperry's GARDENS magazine, writes a monthly e-newsletter column entitled "Native Son," and is an Adjunct Instructor for Tarrant County College and Texas Christian University's Extended Education.



2:30 p.m. Steve Houser Trees and their maintenance in the North Texas Area

Call him a tree hugger (he probably won't mind); Mr. Houser, the owner and president of Arborological Services, Inc. a tree-care service in Dallas and Fort Worth, has been recognized as one of the area's most accomplished arborists.

After more than 20 years in the business, he has become expert at planting and feeding trees, consulting about trees' health and appraising their value, as well as pruning them to eliminate disease, weak limbs, and mitigate wind resistance.

Demonstrations & Tastings

Presented by Master Gardeners Arlene Hamilton & Susan Clark

11:15 a.m. & 12:00 p.m. Outside the Crape Myrtle Room



Susan Clark

11:15 a.m. Herbs in the Kitchen (Or, I've Grown Them, Now What?)

Most of us have a few herbs growing in our yard, whether it's the hardy rosemary about to take over the sidewalk, or some dainty thyme creeping along the garden border. We enjoy the fragrance as we brush against the aromatic leaves. So let's take some favorite culinary herbs into the kitchen and get creative. Learn how to use them fresh or dry, how to create unique blends, make herbal butters and cheeses, and how to make wonderful gifts to share with friends and family. There will be lots of sampling.



Arlene Hamilton

12:00 p.m. Roses and Other Edible Flowers

Have you ever tasted a flower? Learn the basics of growing edible flowers and how to harvest and prepare them. Not all flowers are edible, some are even poisonous so learn the "Dos and Don'ts" of using flowers in food. We will sample tasty flowers, combine them with herbs and vegetables; use them in desserts, sorbets and drinks. A number of delicious recipes will be included.

2012 Expo Plant Sale

Roses♦Native♦Adaptive♦Perennials♦Annuals♦Herbs♦Vegetables♦Hanging baskets

Shop Early for Best Selection

Master Gardeners use the Waxahachie High School greenhouse to propagate and grow plants for the annual Lawn and Garden Expo. Plants begin their lives in the greenhouse in September. At that time roses are propagated. It takes about six weeks for roses to grow roots. Once rooted, volunteer Master Gardeners transplant those into larger pots.



Other plants are either propagated from cuttings or seeds. The timing of those efforts is dependent on the plant. Tomato seeds are planted in late January; peppers a week or so later. Coleus cuttings are rooted in October. Hardwood cuttings of other plants are done in September.

Some plants are purchased in plugs. These are baby plants that need nurturing and are transplanted into the final sale pots during December. Every work session has a variety of things to do. Watering plants, identifying bugs, pinching

back new growth and pruning wayward branches are just a few things that keep plants healthy.

Right now, just weeks before expo, master gardeners are still repotting, watering, watching for diseases and insect damage and pruning the plants.



The final week before Expo, there will be last minute trimming and removal of damaged foliage. Finally, all those wonderful plants are transported to the Civic Center and made available to you for purchase. See the list below for plants available this year at the Expo Plant Sale. Remember to arrive early!



Tomatoes

Celebrity, Better Boy, Solar Fire, Early Girl, Yellow Giant, Golden Girl

Heirloom: Brandy Wine, Italian Marcellino, Italian Revello

Small: cherry, Juliet, grapette, red cherry, large red cherry

Peppers

Big Bertha Bell, pimento and jalapenos

Herbs

dill, parsley, bronze fennel, lemon grass

Trees

Vitex (blue), Buddleia (Royal Red and pink), Fig, Althea (white, purple and pink), Plumeria

Featured Rose

Red Cascade Climber

Other Roses

Almost Wild, Ballerina, Climbing Aloha, Dublin Day, Flower girl, Iceberg shrub rose, Marie Pavie, Marie von Haute, Maytime rose, Peggy Martin, Perle d ore, Picolo Pete, Pink Fragrant, Seven Sisters (pink)

Perennials

Wine cup, Texas Primrose, Damianita, Gaillardia Red Arizona, Turk's Cap Big Mamma, Cedar Sage Salvia roemeriana, Salvia Leucantha Bi-color, Thunbergia Grandiflora, German-der, Pineapple Sage, Canna (white), Scabiosa Butterfly Blue lantana, verbena, sedums, pipe vine

Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

*Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener*



Baby-Blue-Eyes

Nemophila phacelivides Nutt.

Waterleaf Family (Hydrophyllaceae)

Size: 28 inches
Blooms: March through May, Annual
Region: 1-4, 6-7 (Ellis Co. is Region 4)

Baby blue-eyes is a hairy plant that may be upright or straggling. Its stout stems have many branches. Blue or light purple flowers are one-half to one inch across, with a splash of white in the center. All five petals are notched at the tip and may be either slightly cupped or wide-open and flat. Its deeply cut leaves are divided into five to eleven irregularly lobed segments. Typically, baby blue-eyes is found in moist, shady places such as woodlands or bottomlands, at the edges of thickets, or in brushland. It is often found in masses, carpeting a large area with solid blue.



Children's Workshop

12th Annual Lawn & Garden Expo

By J.R. McMahan
Ellis County Master Gardener



The Ellis County Annual Home and Garden Expo offers something for the whole family. One hundred booths from local businesses and non-profits are assembled together in the Waxahachie Civic Center on Saturday, March 31. Master Gardeners and several local plant professionals will be speaking about tree, plants, birds, and using plants in your kitchen.



The Children's Workshop Room gives the elementary age family members a chance to learn about composting, soils, plants, insects, and nature. There will be a composting demonstration where children can observe worms in action, recycling household waste. Kids will have an opportunity to view exciting nature exhibits. Master Gardeners are on hand to assist children in planting a flower to take home. A special area in the Children's Workshop Room gives preschool age children a chance to do some handiwork of their own. The Children's Workshop Room will be open from 9am to 4pm. Children need to be accompanied by an adult.





MG Expo Children's Workshop
by Pam Daniels

Ellis County Master Gardener Lawn & Garden Expo

March in Ellis County brings green trees, flowers and one of the most popular events in the County. The Waxahachie Civic Center comes alive with the Ellis County Master Gardeners' Lawn and Garden Expo. This is the 12th year for the Expo. Once again approximately 4,000 visitors will experience the plant sale, adult and children's workshops, featured speakers and more than 100 exhibitor booths.

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

Planting

- ⊗ Annuals started from seed in January can be planted in late March.
- ⊗ Plant tomatoes, peppers and eggplants from pots after March 15th. They should be hardened off (gradually exposed to outside temperatures) before putting them in the ground. Cover if a freeze or frost is predicted.
- ⊗ Sow seeds of warm-season vegetables such as beans, corn, squash, melons and cucumbers in mid-to-late March. Wait until the soil warms in April to plant okra.
- ⊗ Plant herbs and perennials in raised beds with soil that has been amended with organic matter.
- ⊗ Vines (including hyacinth bean, Cyprus vine, black-eyed Susan vine, potato vine, and Malabar spinach) can be grown from seeds to climb a trellis or arbor.
- ⊗ Establish perennials in amended well-drained soil.

Fertilizing and Pruning

- ⊗ Prune spring-flowering shrubs and vines such as quince, azaleas, forsythia, bridal wreath (*Spiraea*) and Lady Banks Rose, Carolina Jessamine and coral honeysuckle immediately, after they finish blooming.
- ⊗ Remove dead top growth (Bermuda grass only) by lowering mower blades one or two notches. Collect clippings and use in the compost pile or as mulch.
- ⊗ Apply a high nitrogen fertilizer to pecans and again in April and May.
- ⊗ Begin fertilizing roses with a specialty rose food or balanced fertilizer.
- ⊗ All trees, shrubs, vines, and groundcovers can be fed with high nitrogen fertilizer or compost.

Garden Watch

- ⊗ As needed, control black spot, powdery mildew and thrips on roses with an appropriate fungicide or systemic insecticide. Use a stream of water or an insecticidal soap on aphids.
- ⊗ When a pesticide is needed, always use the least toxic one first.
- ⊗ If needed, apply a pre-emergent on lawns to prevent spring and summer broadleaf and grassy weeds. A weed and feed fertilizer is not recommended because it is too early to fertilize lawns.

Odds and Ends

- ⊗ Inspect the irrigation system to make sure it is operating properly. Look for leaks, replace or repair sprinkler heads and adjust spray patterns as needed to reduce run off.
- ⊗ Install a drip irrigation system in your vegetable garden and planted areas of the landscape.
- ⊗ Spread compost around perennials and add mulch.

MG Expo Plant Sales
by Pam Daniels



Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton
Ellis County Master Gardener



Roses and Other Edible Flowers

Have you ever walked through your garden, inhaled the wonderful aroma of all the beautiful flowers and herbs and thought “I’d love to taste that flavor”? Well, you can. Many of the common flowers in your garden are edible. The trick is knowing those that are and those that are not. People

have been eating flowers for thousands of years. You probably have eaten flowers before, too. Do you like artichokes? Have you had Chinese hot and sour soup or tempura? Have you enjoyed a cup of herbal tea this winter? Take a look at the ingredients; they may include rose petals, hibiscus, mint, chamomile or other familiar flowers.



Edible flowers can be used in butter, and then spread on sandwiches, over eggs, and in cooked vegetables. Sweet flowers such as rose and lavender can

be incorporated in icing and desserts. Savory flowers such as dill, chives, nasturtium and rocket add interest to dips, soups and salads. Flowers can be delicious and add a special treat not just to the palette, but to the eye as well.

Herbs in the Kitchen

Most of us have a few herbs growing in our yard, whether it’s the hardy rosemary about to take over the sidewalk, or some dainty thyme creeping

along the garden border. We enjoy the fragrance as we brush against the aromatic leaves. These plants are easy to grow, attractive, and often beneficial to our landscape. But fresh herbs are a wonderful addition to our culinary practices. Herbs are often medicinal and valuable to our welfare.

Did you know cinnamon can assist in the treatment of diabetes? Peppermint and ginger are both very soothing to the stomach. Aloe vera will help smooth out wrinkles and that’s just one of its uses, among many. From acne to yeast infections, herbs have been called on for thousands of years to aid in healing and general well-being.

If you haven’t incorporated herbs into your diet, this gardening season, commit to trying a few. Herbs can be used

fresh or dried. They can be mixed into butters and cheeses to make delectable spreads and dips for breads, crackers, vegetable platters, and many other dishes. Herbs add a pop of flavor to rice and pasta dishes. Any good cook can tell you, a well-stocked pantry includes a myriad of interesting herbs.

If you’re saying, “well, that all sounds great, but where do I start?” Plan to visit the Master Gardener Lawn and Garden Expo on Saturday, March 31. Beginning at 11:15 a.m., learn how to



take some favorite culinary herbs into the kitchen and get creative with Susan Clark and Arlene Hamilton. Learn how to create unique blends to mix into your recipes, how to create herbal vinegars

and butters, and how to make wonderful gifts to share with friends and family. There will be lots of sampling. At 12:00 p.m., Arlene and Susan will be demonstrating how to grow, harvest, and use edible flowers. You will learn the “Dos and Don’ts” of using flowers in food. There will be flower dishes to taste and many recipes to share. Hope to see you there!



Master Gardener Scholarships



One of the primary missions of the Ellis County Master Gardeners is to build partnerships with the Ellis County community to expand horticultural education and opportunities.

In keeping with this mission, the Ellis County Master Gardeners Association will again make scholarship funds available in 2012 to deserving Ellis County high school seniors pursuing studies in horticulture-related fields.

To qualify, the applicant must be a current resident of Ellis County, 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, and be able to provide proof of acceptance at an accredited institution of higher learning.

The organization will offer two \$2,000 scholarships to qualifying students this year. Completed applications must be received by April 1, 2012 to be considered for the scholarship award.

Additional information on these scholarships, the application and award process can be obtained by contacting the Texas AgriLife Extension Office, 701 S. I-35, Suite 3, Waxahachie, TX., 75165 or by calling (972) 825-5175. The website is www.ecmga.com.

Light House for Learning

(With the Ellis County Master Gardeners)

For reservations, call Melissa Cobb at (972) 923-4631.

Register online at http://www.wisd.org/default.aspx?name=CO_LighthouseforLearning



Monday, March 5, 6:00—7:30 Vermi-Composting 101 Vermicomposting, or worm composting, is an easy way to recycle your kitchen waste and produce rich compost to use in your garden and house plants. This class will teach you the basics of vermicomposting. You will assemble your own worm bin to take home. Instructor: Susan Clark, Cost: \$12.00 + \$10 materials fee.

Monday, March 26, 6:00—7:30 Rainwater Harvesting Efficient water use is increasingly important to Texas. Learn how to capture, divert, store, and distribute rainwater for later use. This can be as simple as using a rain barrel or creating a rain garden. Instructor: Pam Daniel, Cost: \$12.00

Monday, April 2, 6:00—7:30 Turf Grasses for Ellis County This class will cover the following topics: turf grass selections for Ellis Co., preparing soil for planting, spring and summer lawn care, proper watering in dry times, disease control, and weed control. There will be a question and answer session and handouts. Instructor: Jim Tachias, Cost: \$12.00

Monday, April 9, 5:30—8:00 Plant Propagation Students will learn the basics of plant propagation, increasing and multiplying plants for the house, landscape, and garden. After a short presentation, students will have hands-on experience in the WISD High School greenhouse. Instructor: Walt Friis & Maureen Nitkowski, Cost: \$12.00

April 16 6:00—7:30 Earth-Kind® Gardening Earth-Kind® urban landscape practices are based on proven research techniques which protect the environment. This class will focus on plant selection and best planting methods. Instructors: Maureen Nitkowski & Jackie Wilhite, Cost: \$12.00

Monday, April 23 6:00—7:30 Tough Texas Plants Come see a presentation on selected ornamental plants that have been designated "flameproof" and have made the North Texas Winners Circle in the trial gardens at the Dallas Arboretum. Instructor: Shirley Campbell, Cost: \$12.00

In the Vegetable Garden

With Monica Nyenhuis

Ellis County Master Gardener



Heirloom Tomatoes

These tomatoes are fast becoming my favorite vegetable to plant in the garden. The heirloom tomato and other heirloom plants are gaining a lot of popularity these days across the country for a few reasons.

1. These varieties are non GMO (genetically modified organisms). They are neither hybrid nor grafted and so are not disease resistant bred or high yield bred.
2. They come in many shapes, colors, and sizes. Heirlooms harken back to the pioneer days when the original seeds were brought here from Europe and other continents.
3. You can "save" your own seeds providing you use some precautions. Use them to replant in your garden the following year. Thomas Jefferson saved his own seeds!

Now, I'm not going into the debate about GMO's versus non GMO's, and that is not why I personally

started planting these beauties. I grow heirlooms for many reasons.

Heirloom tomatoes taste wonderful. There are so many varieties to choose from, its amazing. The names alone

put a smile on my face. Just to give you an idea: Boxcar Willy, Green Zebra, Giraffe, Mortgage Lifter, Millionaire, Royal Hillbilly, Black Elephant, Cherokee Purple, Chocolate, Dr. Walter, Big Rainbow, Egg Yolk,

and Lollipop are just a few of the varieties available.

When the seedlings are in the greenhouse trays with the names all in a row, it makes me smile when I visit every morning waiting patiently for them to sprout!

The history of each variety is fascinating to learn and the fact that you are growing something that has been passed down by other generations of gardeners is pretty cool. Heirlooms come in so many colors too, yellow, green, pink, red, white, orange, purple, striped, and many are multicolored.

They range in size from the very small, varieties like Reinhardt's Goldkirsche German yellow cherry tomato to the giant pink Brandywine (one of my favorites). Heirlooms come in all sorts of funny and odd shapes, too.

Now anyone who vegetable gardens in Ellis County knows each year it is a challenge to produce a healthy plentiful crop of tomatoes. Even though you may do everything right, Mother Na-

ture may have other plans. So, with that in mind I understand the preference and reasoning behind growing the tried and true varieties of tomatoes here, but I would encourage you to try one of these heirloom varieties just for fun.

The care and growing guidelines for these beauties are no different than for standard tomatoes. Their yield may be as good or not; it's a risk you will have to take should you decide to accept the challenge.



In any case, there is nothing better than a tomato hybrid or heirloom, warm off the vine and a sliced avocado to make the best summer sandwich in the world. Okay...in my world. I am dreaming of this summer's harvest of funny, playfully named varieties sitting on my plate!





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.

Rose Culture

by Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M

Soil Prep and Planting

Soil preparation can be done just prior to planting, but is more effective if completed several weeks or months before planting. Mix about one-third organic material (pine bark or compost) with some of the soil from the hole, along with a gallon or two of well-rotted cow manure, if available. A half-cup of bone meal or superphosphate, thoroughly mixed with the soil, is a good addition. A similar amount of agricultural gypsum is beneficial for heavy clay soils.

Spacing of the plants will vary with varieties. Most Polyanthas can be planted as close as 18 to 24 inches, while Chinas, Bourbons, Teas, Hybrid Perpetuals, Hybrid Teas, and Hybrid Musks are best at a three to five foot spacing, depending on the variety. Climbers and ramblers need more space to develop their potential. Eight to 10 feet is appropriate for most, but under good growing conditions, Banksias, Cherokee, and certain others could be spaced at 15-foot intervals.

Bare-root plants should be set out as soon after receiving them as weather and time allow. If a delay of more than a few days is necessary, remove the plants from the shipping bag and 'heel them in' by covering the roots and part of the tops with loose soil. Container-grown plants may be set out at any time, but most rose growers avoid the hot summer months, when extra irrigation and care may be necessary to insure success. Prune tops back an inch or two to just above a live and healthy bud on each

cane. Cut back canes or roots damaged in shipping or handling to healthy tissue. Dig the hole large enough to accommodate the natural spread of the roots, and fill with the soil mixture described earlier. Firm the soil well around the roots, and water thoroughly to remove air pockets and settle the soil firmly around the root system. Set plants at approximately the same level at which they had been growing, or slightly deeper.

Fertility

Roses are heavy users of nutrients and require frequent application of fertilizers. To determine fertility of existing soil, contact your county Extension agent for instructions on submitting a soil sample.

Do not apply fertilizers until the first set of flowers begins to fade for everblooming types, or in the case of once-blooming roses, eight to ten weeks after planting. A heaping tablespoon per plant of a complete fertilizer, such as 6-10-4 or 8-8-8, may be applied every four to six weeks until about September 1. Application after that time can promote soft fall growth that may result in freeze damage. The time-honored fertilizer for roses is well-rotted cow manure.

Since manure may not be available, commercial fertilizers have become popular. Phosphorus is the material that helps plants develop strong, healthy roots and prolific flowering. Superphosphate is usually available, and can be applied at

the rate of three to four pounds per 100 square feet. Since phosphorus is not very mobile in the soil, it should be well mixed during preparation.

Nitrogen is easily and quickly depleted from the soil, and needs to be applied periodically during the growing season. It is necessary for more and bigger canes, stems, and leaves. Slow-release commercial fertilizer or natural materials, such as cottonseed meal, last longer and require fewer applications through the growing season.

Potassium is needed for promotion of new growth, disease resistance, and cold tolerance. All three nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium) are included

in balanced fertilizers. Many rose growers apply a balanced fertilizer every 4 to 6 weeks during the growing season. For more information on well-adapted, well-researched EarthKind Roses, visit the website <http://earthkindroses.tamu.edu>

Garden Checklist for March

- ♦ Often, tomato and pepper plants started outdoors from seed will grow so quickly they will catch up with commercial plants in size within a few weeks. For many gardeners, this is the only way to obtain rare or heirloom varieties. It's best to keep an eye on young tomato transplants so that they may be covered if the threat of a late frost occurs.
- ♦ Don't be in a hurry to set out young pepper plants. Wait until the temperatures seem to be settled.
- ♦ Pruning of evergreens and summer flowering trees and shrubs should be completed in early March. Prune spring flowering trees and shrubs as soon as they finish blooming.

(Continued on page 10)



Cecile Brunner
climber



Mrs. Dudley Cross
tea rose

What's Happening in March

Saturday, March 3, 9am—4pm Lifestyles Home & Family Expo, Largest expo of its kind in Ellis County, over 130 retail exhibitors, and "A Taste of Waxahachie" includes delicious samples from local restaurants. Located at the Waxahachie Civic Center. Admission: Adults \$3, Children under 10 Free. More info at: <http://waxahachiechamber.com/calendar/expo.php> or call (972) 937-2390.

Saturday, March 3 and Sunday, March 4, 2pm, Plant This, Not That Seminar at Weston Gardens In Bloom. Located at 8101 Anglin Drive, Fort Worth. Call (817) 572-0549 or visit <http://westongardens.com/>

Saturday, March 3, and Saturday, March 10, 10am, Trout Lily Walk at Dogwood Canyon. The walk will last approximately one hour. Bring your camera. Wear sturdy boots or shoes with good ankle support. Located at 1206 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill. For more info, go to <http://tx.audubon.org/Dogwood.html>

Friday, March 16—Sunday, March 18 Tex-Scapes Greenery Spring Open House EVERYTHING will be on Sale! Great prices on new spring shipments. Refreshments served all day and drawings will be held! Located at 2705 S. Kaufman in Ennis. Visit <http://texscapesgreenery.com/> or call (972) 875-1716.

Saturday, March 17, 9am—12pm, Conservation in Action Workday at Cedar Ridge Preserve. Work in the butterfly garden and on the trails. Water and snacks provided. The preserve is located at 7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas. Visit www.audubondallas.org. For more info, call Jim Varnum at (214) 543-2055 or email jvarnum@aol.com.

Saturday, March 17, The Greenery Grand Opening. Howard Garrett will be in attendance. Located at 3708 North Highway 77, Waxahachie. More details to follow on their site: <http://www.thegreenerytx.com/> or call (972) 617-5459.

Saturday, March 17, 9am—12pm, Modern Victory Gardens. Learn how to create a bountiful organic community or backyard vegetable garden. Admission: \$25; \$20 for TDG Members. Register in advance. Texas Discovery Gardens, 3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dallas, TexasDiscoveryGardens.org

Friday, March 23, 9am—11am, ECMGA Public Workday at the Circle Garden, Midlothian Conference Center. Get your hands dirty as master gardeners replant the garden and teach on design and planting principles. Event is free. Call Susan at (214) 680-0686 for more info and RSVP.

Saturday, March 24, 9am—2pm, "Experience Midlothian" Community Expo, Midlothian Conference Center. More info: <http://www.midlothianchamber.org/> or call (972) 723-8600.

Saturday, March 24 9am—12pm, ECMGA Open House at the Greenhouse. Bring your family, friends and neighbors to the greenhouse at Waxahachie High School to learn how to propagate and how to plant from seeds. No plant sales during open house.

Saturday, March 24, 9am—12pm, Plant Propagation Workshop. Learn easy to implement techniques from an expert in plant propagation. Admission: \$25; \$20 for TDG Members. Register in advance. Texas Discovery Gardens, 3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dallas, TexasDiscoveryGardens.org

Saturday, March 24, 8am—5pm, Travis Equipment Open House. Located on US Highway 287 between Midlothian and Waxahachie, just west of Walnut Grove Rd. Call (972) 723-2339 or visit <http://www.travisequipment.com/> for info.

Monday, March 26, 7pm, Indian Trail Master Naturalists Program: "Ellis and Navarro Counties Amphibians & Reptiles" presented by Carl J Franklin, Biological Curator, Amphibian and Reptile Diversity Research Center. Meeting takes place in the banquet hall of the First United Methodist Church, 505 West Marvin Ave, Waxahachie. Program is free.

March-April, Various Dates Available, Garden Inspirations is offering Eight-Week Vegetable Course Programs and a two-hour Intro to Vegetable Gardening in North Texas class. Go to <http://gardeninspirations-tx.com/classes.html> for details.

March 3 through April 8, Dallas Blooms at the Dallas Arboretum Visit <http://www.dallasarboretum.org/> for details.

Landscape Gardening (Continued from page 9)

- ◆ Start hanging baskets of petunias, ferns and others for another dimension in landscape color. One attractive begonia plant can yield a number of others through careful rooting of stem cuttings.



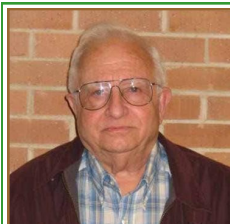
- ◆ Plant dahlia tubers in fertile, well-drained soil.
- ◆ In North Texas, there is still time to

plant seeds of your favorite annuals in flats to be transplanted out-of-doors when danger of frost is past.

- ◆ Select and order caladium tubers as well as coleus plants for late April and early May planting. Do not plant caladiums until soil temperature reaches 70° F.
- ◆ As camellia and azalea plants finish blooming, fertilize them with three

pounds of azalea-camellia fertilizer per 100 square feet of bed area. Check mulch on azalea and camellia beds and add where needed.

- ◆ Fertilize roses every four to six weeks from now until September.
- ◆ Beware of close-out sales on bare-root trees and shrubs. The chance of survival is rather low on bare-root plants this late in the season. Your best bet at this time of year is to depend on container-grown or balled-and-burlapped plants for landscape use.



Weed Control in Turf in Ellis County

By Jim Tachias
Ellis County
Master Gardener

Weeds are often the result of poor quality turf, rather than the cause of poor turf. The aggressive nature of weeds and their prolific reproductive capacity enable them to invade thin, weak turf areas. Cultural practices should always be viewed as the first step to effective weed control. Always determine why weeds established a foothold and correct those deficiencies. If the basic problem is not corrected, weeds will continue to occur. An effective weed control program also requires identification of the undesirable species as to its classification as a grassy weed, a broadleaf weed, an annual, or a perennial. Most turf weeds belong to two principal categories—grasses and broadleaf plants. Chemical controls for these two categories of plants frequently differ.

Grassy weeds have jointed, hollow stems; leaf blades have veins parallel to leaf margins, and are several times longer than they are wide; roots are fibrous and multi-branching; and flowers are usually inconspicuous. In contrast, broadleaf weeds often have showy flowers; leaves have a network of veins at diverse angles to one another; stems are often pithy; and a taproot is usually present. Another group of turf weeds, sedges, have grass like characteristics, but require a different group of chemicals for control. Sedges are characterized by three-sided stems (triangular cross-section), which bear leaves in three directions (in contrast to the two-ranked arrangement of grass leaves).

Weeds can be further grouped according to their life span—annual or perennial. From the standpoint of chemical control, the grouping is most important, because pre-emergent herbicides (herbicides that prevent weeds from germinating) are only effective for control of annual weeds. Annual weeds germinate from seed each year, mature in one growing

season, and die in less than 12 months. Crabgrass and henbit are examples of annual weeds --- crabgrass being a summer annual and henbit being a winter annual. Pre-emergent herbicides must be applied according to the expected date of emergence for each targeted species.

Perennial weeds live more than one year and recover, or re-grow, from dormant stolons, rhizomes, or tubers, as well as from seed. Control of perennial weeds requires a post-emergent herbicide (an herbicide that kills the weed after it has emerged from the ground) during its season of active growth.

Effective chemical weed control requires identification of the weeds as to their classification, life span, and season of active growth (cool season or warm season). Effective chemical control also requires accurate timing of applications, proper rate of application, and uniformity of application. Always follow label directions for a product, and observe all warnings and precautions relative to safety of the application. Herbicide labels should be carefully reviewed for additional details on specific uses of each product, soil, and sunny locations.

Weeds Found All Over Ellis County

Broadleaf Weeds: Roadside

Aster, Henbit (pictured left), White Clover, Virginia Buttonweed, Com-

mon Chickweed, Dandelion, and Spotted Spurge.

Grassy Weeds: Rescuegrass (pictured right), K.R. Bluestem, Dallisgrass, Annual Bluegrass, Field Sandburs, and Crabgrass.

Pre-Emergent Weed Control

Timing of Application: Spring—early to mid March; second application June 15 to prevent late summer crabgrass if needed; Winter application—early to mid September.

Some commonly available pre-emergent herbicides for weed control:

Green Light Crabgrass Preventer (grassy weeds), Hi-Yield Turf & Ornamental with Dimension (grassy weeds), Scotts Halts Crabgrass Preventer (grassy weeds), Lescro Crabgrass Pre Plus Potash (0-0-7 (grassy weeds), Portrait Broadleaf Weed Preventer (broadleaf weeds), Green Light Amaze Grass & Weed Preventer (grassy weeds and broadleaf), Hi-Yield Crabgrass Control with Balan (grassy weeds).

Some commonly available post-emergent herbicides for grassy weed control:

Bayer Advances Lawn Weed & Crabgrass Killer, Fertilome Weed Out with Q, Ortho Weed-B-Gon Max Plus Crabgrass Killer, and Image Kills Crabgrass.

Some of the commonly available post-emergent herbicides for broadleaf

weed control: Green Light Wipe Out Broadleaf Weed Killer, Ortho Weed-B-Gon Max, Spectracide Weed Stop for Lawns, Fertilome Weed Free Zone,

Product typically available for the treatment of sedge is: Image kills nutsedge.

***Note:** Many chemicals can damage your lawn grasses. Read all labels before using any product. *Do not* use herbicides on St. Augustine grass in the spring, *or* on new lawns until the second growing season, or at least 12 months, or on new areas to be sodded or seeded.

***Note:** Always read herbicide labels before purchasing or applying any product. Labels do change and it is important to make sure the product is still labeled for use in the type of turfgrass growing in your lawn.

Products listed are not a complete list of all herbicides sold for use in home lawns. It does

provide an example of some of the more common herbicides sold in garden and retail stores. The purpose of this list is not to promote a particular product, but to provide some examples. Read complete label before using.



2012 Lawn & Garden Expo



Presented by the Ellis County Master Gardeners Association
972-825-5175 www.ECMGA.com



9 a.m. - 5 p.m. March 31, 2012

Waxahachie Civic Center

2000 Civic Center Lane, Waxahachie, TX

Guest Speakers

10:00 a.m. Steve Woodward, Wild Bird Center

11:15 a.m. Susan Clark, Cooking With Herbs

12:00 p.m. Arlene Hamilton, Roses & Other Edible Flowers

1:00 p.m. Steven Chamblee, Chandor Gardens

2:30 p.m. Steve Houser, Arborilogical Services, Inc.

Over 100 Exhibit Booths

Children's Workshop

Free tickets will be available from our Expo sponsors after March 1st.

Hurry to get free tickets while they last!

Check our website www.ECMGA.com for a list of Expo Sponsors or
to sign up for our e-gardening newsletter.