



Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume VIII, Issue Eleven

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

November, 2014

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 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 November



Now thru November 6, TCMGA Online Fall Plant Sale. Just in time for fall planting! Five gallon trees for \$25 and one gallon shrubs for \$8. All varieties are native to Texas. Go to <http://www.tarrantmg.org/index.html> for complete details and to order.

Now until November 26, Autumn at the Arboretum. Over 50,000 pumpkins, gourds, and squash come together to form the Pumpkin Village. Many special events are also available throughout the festival including a hay bale maze, scavenger hunts, and the Tom Thumb pumpkin patch. Fall classes include: Herbs, Succulents, Bird Habitats, and Color in Fall & Winter. For info about events and visiting the arboretum, go to: www.dallasarboretum.org/

Various Dates, Fort Worth Botanical Garden. For a list of classes and tours, visit http://www.tarrantmg.org/tcmga_new_website_045.htm.

Saturday, November 1, 8am-1pm, BRIT First Saturday-Festive by Nature. Entertainment and events include: Ask a Botanist, Plant Preservation Studio, Bella's Story Time, plant walks and talks, public tours, lectures, exhibits, demonstrations, and a Holiday Artisan Market. For complete details, visit <http://www.brit.org/events/more-children-families>.

Saturday, November 1, 7am-9am, Walk and Talk Bird Tour with Dan Harvey and Jane Ramberg at the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center. Binoculars and field guides are available for use. Cost: \$10.00, includes admission. \$5.00 for members. Visit <http://www.wetlandcenter.com/> for directions and a map. For info, call (972) 474-9100 or email contact@wetlandcenter.com.

Saturday, November 15, 8am-5pm, TX Pollinator PowWow. Birds, bats, bees, butterflies and more! Come learn about Texas plants and their pollinators, the conservation challenges they are facing, and how YOU can help! NOTE: Early Registration Ends 11/6 (\$15 with lunch); after 11/6 \$25 (and NO lunch). Mansfield ISD Performing Arts Center, 1110 W. Debbie Lane, Mansfield. For full details, go to: <http://txpollinatorpowwow.weebly.com/>

Saturday, November 15, 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.

Saturday, November 15, 9am-12pm, Conservation in Action Workday-Cedar Ridge Preserve. Work in the butterfly garden and on the trails. Water and snacks provided. For info, call Jim Varnum at (214) 543-2055 or email jevvarnum@aol.com. 7171 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas. www.audubondallas.org/cedarridge.html

Monday, November 17, 7pm, Indian Trail Master Naturalists present "Environmental Stewardship". This presentation is an overview of the sustainability practices and operations at the local Waste Management Facilities in North Texas. Greta Calvery, Public Affairs Manager, Waste Management, will explain the gas collection process and energy production; wild-life habitat projects; recycling facilities and activities; and educational programs. The program is free and follows the 6pm Master Naturalist meeting that is also open to the public. Meeting location: First United Methodist Church, Family Life Center 505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxaha-

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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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Artemisia

Artemisia x 'Powis Castle' is a Mediterranean perennial that has adapted well to Texas living. This finely-textured, silver-leafed foliage plant is best known for its aroma when touched. It grows three feet tall and about the same in width.

Artemisia likes full sun and any well-drained, amended soil. Water this plant every week during the growing season for optimum results. Wet and compacted soils may result in root rot. 'Knock Out' roses make an excellent back drop for 'Powis Castle' Artemisia. The contrast of the red roses against the silvery foliage is beautiful.

Artemisia, from the Aster family, is a semi-evergreen with tap roots. The plant may be increased by sowing seeds or dividing the rhizomes in spring or fall. Mature plants may also be divided. The plant can be frustrating to grow. Some species are overly aggressive or prone to rotting in areas with high humidity. Besides a variety of medicinal qualities, the plant provides nesting materials and structure for native bees.

ARTEMESIA

Tips and Little Known Facts

Artemisia originated in the Mediterranean. Its native distribution includes much of North America, from Canada south to Mexico. Some of its other names are Mugwort, wormwood, Tarragon, Silver wormwood, southernwood, White sage, Prairie sage, Silver sage, and Gray sage.

During the days of the early settlers, Artemisia was grown for its aroma, and used to scent linens, repel insects, and for medicinal purposes. Absinthum, known as "Common Wormwood," was formerly well known as the source of the liquor absinthe.



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

Planting

- 🔧 This is the ideal time to plant trees and shrubs; this will help them to get established before summer weather arrives. Consider the mature size of the plant, especially trees, when deciding on variety and placement.
- 🔧 Dig a hole two to four times the diameter and one-inch shallower than the root ball. Make sure the root ball and the hole are thoroughly wet before planting. Backfill with the existing soil only and water well.

Fertilizing and Pruning

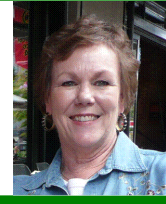
- 🔧 Keep a spray can of pruning paint in your garage to immediately paint any wound on your oak trees. We no longer say there are windows of safety because of cold weather or hot weather. Central Texas weather is too unpredictable and changeable—paint every wound all year long.
- 🔧 Feed and water vegetables that you are growing now.
- 🔧 Feed winter annuals growing in the ground and containers with a water-soluble plant food.
- 🔧 Remove the tops of herbaceous perennials after they have died.

Garden Watch

- 🔧 Caterpillars like to feast on some cool-season annuals. If they are a problem, pick them off by hand and move them to another location. A spray containing Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) can be used, but it kills all caterpillars.
- 🔧 Check potted plants growing outside for insects and spray if you plan to bring indoors overwinter.
- 🔧 Look for scale on cast-iron and other plants. Use a horticultural oil to control.

Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener



Rough Nama, Sand-Bells—Waterleaf Family (Hydrophyllaceae)
Nama hispidum Gray

Region: 2 – 10
Size: 4 to 20 inches
Blooms: March through November, Annual

Variable in form, rough nama is freely branching or sprawling from its base. It is covered with short, appressed hairs, making it rough to the touch. Bell-shaped flowers are in small clusters or solitary, from the axils of leaves, a half-inch across. They are pink to purple, with a yellow or white throat.

The leaves are especially variable, one-half to two inches long, stalked, generally linear, but sometimes divided, lobed, or toothed, with edges rolled under. They are alternate and have a pungent odor. Masses of the purple flowers are often seen as mats along the shoulders of highways or wherever gravelly, sandy, or alluvial soils are found. Rough nama is an attractive landscape choice when used in a sunny rock garden or border. Twelve species of *Nama* are found in Texas.

What's Happening in November (Continued from page 1)

chie, TX. For more info, call (972) 825-5175 or email ellis-tx@tamu.edu

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

Texas Discovery Gardens

3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dallas
TexasDiscoveryGardens.org

Friday, October 31, 3pm–4pm and Saturday, November 1, 9am–10am, Plant Sale Safaris. In this pre-sale tour, the Director of Horticulture, Roger Sanderson, shows how to incorporate native and adapted plants into your landscape. Learn about the environmental conditions they thrive in and the beneficial insects they attract. \$15, \$10 for TDG Members. Advance registration strongly encouraged.

Saturday, November 1, 10am–2 pm, Fall Plant Sale. Rare native pollinator-friendly plants are a specialty at Discovery Gardens. Enjoy native and adapted plants that are hard to find in local nurseries! Members also receive 10% off plants.

Wednesday, November 5, 6:30pm–8:30pm, Evening Chat: How to Winterize Your Garden. Planting in the fall saves money and builds a garden faster. Leaving leaf litter in your beds protects it in the winter and fertilizes it in the spring. Learn more fun fall gardening tips as you enjoy hors d'oeuvres and join the chat! \$5; \$4 for TDG Members. Register in advance.

Saturday, November 8, 11am, Garden Explorers Walk: Nuts and Seeds. Get out in the garden on this family friendly walk! See all the nuts and seeds that a garden provides for animal friends through the winter. It ends in time to catch the Butterfly Release talk at noon in the conservatory. Included with admission (\$8/adults, \$6 for ages 60+, \$4 for ages 3-11).

Saturday, November 8, 3pm–5pm, Succulent Container Gardening. Discover the wonderful world of succulents with Marilyn and Donelle Simmons from Garden Inspirations. Bring a container that has holes in the bottom. A variety of succulents will be available to choose from and trinkets for decoration. Leave with a complete container garden! \$50; \$45 for TDG Members. Register in advance.

Wednesday, November 12, 6:30pm–8:30pm, Evening Chat: Desert Ecology. Enjoy an evening 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. \$5, \$4 for TDG Members.

Saturday, November 22, 3pm–5pm, Make Your Own Holiday Wre Adorn your front door with a beautiful pine and cedar wreath. Supplies include wired holiday ribbon and matching holiday picks to decorate the wreath. Celebrate the season with Marilyn and Donelle from Garden Inspirations. Leave with a finished holiday wreath. \$50, \$45 for TDG members. Register by Thursday, 11/20.

Herb of the Month

By Arlene Hamilton
Ellis County Master Gardener



November Herb of the Month—Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)

Come November we start thinking Thanksgiving, family gatherings, and lots of good food! At the top of the food list is our traditional turkey and at the top of the turkey list is one of my favorite herbs, Garden Sage. Whatever your family dressing recipe includes (cornbread, white bread, chestnuts, oysters, etc.), you can bet sage is on the list.

The genus *Salvia* comprises more than 900 species, many of them found in the Texas landscape. Garden sage (*S. officinalis*) is the most widely known and used of the salvias. It is a woody perennial shrub growing to three or four feet in the garden. The gray-green leaves have a strong musky fragrance and a pebbly surface.

The plant produces spikes of lavender to purple flowers in mid-summer that are attractive to butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. Sage should be grown in well-drained soil in sunny raised beds or large containers, and kept on the dry side. Here in Texas it will tolerate a bit of shade and requires good air circulation.

As with most herbs, harvest no more than a third of the foliage after the

room away from heat or strong light. They will be crispy dry in several days. Stir and turn the leaves at least once daily.

I prefer to tie the sage stems in small bundles and hang from the rafters of my potting shed. After they are crispy dry, I remove the leaves from the stems and grind with a mortar and pestle, then store in spice jars in the pantry. Freezing or refrigerating is also an acceptable way to store sage. But of course, fresh harvested from the garden, chopped, and used preserves the flavor best.

Happily, there are a number of cultivars of *S. officinalis* that are easy to grow in the southern garden. Madalene Hill and Gwen Barclay

ing. We continue to use it as a digestive aid, diuretic, antiseptic, stimulant, tonic, and to cure exhaustion, depression, stress and general fatigue. Pregnant women and nursing mothers should avoid drinking strong infusions of sage tea.



introduced a new cultivar a few years ago called 'Newe Ya'ar', which seems to tolerate our hot humid summers better. I recommend you look for it at a nursery that specializes in herb plants. For added color and variety in the herb garden try golden sage, purple sage, and tricolor. All have colorful foliage and make wonderfully showy garnishes.

blooming period. Fresh or dried sage belongs in every kitchen. To dry you can remove the leaves from the stems, place them on a tray or wire rack in a cool

Sage came to America with our earliest settlers, but has been around for thousands of years. The Romans considered the plant sacred and performed special rites and ceremonies for the harvest-

Here are a few ways to put sage to work in the kitchen:

- ♦ Grilled sage and cheese sandwiches on rye bread
- ♦ Herbal butter with one tbsp. each chopped fresh sage, sweet marjoram, chives and parsley with one cup softened butter
- ♦ Halve small new potatoes and layer over sage leaves, olive oil and sea salt. Bake in a 350 ° oven until soft.
- ♦ Toss pasta with chopped sage, garlic, and olive oil.
- ♦ Tuck sage leaves, rosemary, and thyme around the turkey as it roasts. Baste to keep the leaves from drying
- ♦ Tuck sage leaves under the skin of turkey or chicken before roasting.
- ♦ Heat a jar of apple jelly with several sage leaves. Serve as a condiment with left over turkey or with cheese and crackers.

Happy Thanksgiving

Why Leaves Change

With Susan Gilliland
Ellis County Master Gardener



Every autumn we revel in the beauty of the fall colors. The mixture of red, purple, orange and yellow is the result of chemical processes that take place in the tree as the seasons change from summer to winter.

During the spring and summer the leaves have served as factories where most of the foods necessary for the tree's growth are manufactured. This food-making process takes place in the leaf in numerous cells containing chlorophyll, which gives the leaf its green color. This extraordinary chemical absorbs from sunlight the energy that is used in transforming carbon dioxide and water to carbohydrates, such as sugars and starch.

Along with the green pigment are yellow to orange pigments, carotenes and xanthophyll pigments which, for example, give the orange color to a carrot. Most of the year these colors are masked by great amounts of green coloring.

But in the fall, because of changes in the length of daylight and changes in temperature, the leaves stop their food-making process. The chlorophyll breaks down, the green color disappears, and the yellow to orange colors become visible and give the leaves part of their fall splendor.

At the same time, other chemical changes may occur, which form additional colors through the development of red anthocyanin pigments. Some mixtures give rise to the reddish and purplish fall colors of trees such as dogwoods and sumacs, while others give the sugar maple its brilliant orange.

The autumn foliage of some trees shows only yellow colors. Others, like many oaks, display mostly browns. All these

colors are due to the mixing of varying amounts of the chlorophyll residue and other pigments in the leaf during the fall season.



As the fall colors appear, other changes are taking place. At the point where the stem of the leaf is attached to the tree, a special layer of cells develops and gradually severs the tissues that support the leaf. At the same time, the tree seals the cut, so that when the leaf is finally blown off by the wind or falls from its own weight, it leaves behind a leaf scar.

Most of the broad-leaved trees in the North shed their leaves in the fall. However, the dead brown leaves of the oaks and a few other species may stay on the tree until growth starts again in the spring. In the South, where the winters are mild, some of the broad-

leaved trees are evergreen; that is, the leaves stay on the trees during winter and keep their green color.

Temperature, light, and water supply have an influence on the degree and the duration of fall color. Low temperatures above freezing will favor anthocyanin formation, producing bright reds in maples. However, early frost will weaken the brilliant red color. Rainy and/or overcast days tend to increase the intensity of fall colors. The best time to enjoy the autumn color would be on a clear, dry and cool (not freezing) day.

Enjoy the color; it only occurs for a brief period each fall.

Flip the page to see some more beautiful fall scenery from the Charles River in Medfield, MA.



Find us on:
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>





Junior Master Gardeners is an international youth gardening program of the Texas A&M University Cooperative Extension network. Currently, there are many JMG programs at several Ellis County public and private schools.

Waxahachie's Pettigrew Academy JMG program invited Master Gardener A.D. Cowser as their guest speaker and the subject was water conservation. After discussing why we should be interested in conserving our water, they made a rain barrel, which will be used at the school.



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, November 3, 6pm–7:30pm Seed Saving. Learn to harvest, clean and store seeds for successful germination. Learn how to save heirloom vegetables and perennial flowers. Determine what plants are best for seed saving and when to propagate from existing plants. **Instructor:** Monica Nyenhuis. Cost: \$12.00

Monday, November 17, 6pm–7:30pm Drip Irrigation–The Basics. We are all aware that water is one of our most precious commodities and that we need to be very careful how we use water in our gardens. Drip irrigation is the most efficient way to water gardens and trees and it is the system that makes the most sense in terms of conserving and limiting water use. In this hands-on class you will learn the types of equipment used in drip systems, how to design a drip system, and how to install and maintain the system. **Instructor:** Jim Goss. Cost: \$12.00

Monday, December 1, 6pm–7:30pm Greenhouse Management. Considering buying or building your own greenhouse? Learn the basics of green- house management, starting with choices of site, design, heating, cooling, lighting and watering needs. You will learn about propagation and will experience hands on learning in the WHS Green- house. **Instructor:** Jim Dockins. Cost: \$12.00



The Statuesque Cardoon—A Gardener's Dream

By: Shirley Campbell, Ellis County Master Gardener



Cardoon (*Cynara cardunculus*) is a giant artichoke relative that grows well during winter in the warmer two-thirds of the South and it is guaranteed to get your neighbors talking. Give this stunning beauty a try this fall.

The silvery arching foliage will form a three feet across clump during the winter so as to give the effect of a large gray fountain. The large spiky, silver leaves

than Cardoon. This stately plant is a cool season perennial frequently used as the “thriller” in your combination planting. Combined with the purples, burgundies (such as the ‘Red Bor kale’), deep pinks, and blues, it is striking.

Cardoon requires a long, cool growing season, which makes fall our ideal planting time. Plant a gallon-size or even a wimpy four inch transplant in September

or October and you'll have a stunning five foot specimen by mid-spring. Once plants begin to bloom, they can even reach six feet tall and five feet wide, so choose a location that can accommodate such a majestic plant. Their blooms attract the attention of bees and butterflies as well as garden enthusiasts.

Originating in the climate of the Mediterranean they thrive in full sun, good, well-drained soil, and consistent moisture. Are they perennial here in North Texas? It

all depends on the weather.

Cardoons can survive at temperatures in the high 20's so they are frost-sensitive and should be covered with frost cloth in a hard freeze. To give them their best chance for survival, plant them on the south side of the house. Planted close to the home gives them the best chance for survival.

As summer rolls around and if plants are in a hot, dry spot such as near concrete, summer temperatures take a toll and push them into dormancy or wipe them out completely.

This edible ornamental was popular in colonial vegetable gardens but fell out of favor in the nineteenth century. The tender leaves and stalks can be cooked or eaten fresh in salads while the blanched portions are used like celery in stews and soups.

Cardoons are much larger and hardier than artichokes. The edible part of cardoon is the fleshy, thick leaf stalks, not the flower receptacle, like artichokes.

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Silvery arching foliage of Cardoon

will bring a stunning contrast to most everything in your sunny garden. The huge purple, thistle-like blooms appear in early summer and will definitely be the star of your garden.

Cardoon can be used in mass plantings and as container accent plants. Cardoon is an excellent companion to roses, ornamental grasses, and rosemary. Used in a container planting, nothing draws more attention



A winter combination of Cardoon with giant mustard and pansies

ECMGA Amateur Photo Contest

The Ellis County Master Gardener Association announces its annual photo contest is underway beginning October 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. Please **do not include** people in your photos.

For contest details and submission of entries, go to **Photo Contest** at 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.

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Ample watering and thorough weeding are important for growing a healthy plant with succulent stalks.

Harvesting cardoon leaf stalks requires a unique trick. The stalks need to be blanched before harvesting. This is done by tying each plant into a bundle, wrapping the bundles with straw, and mounding the soil around the plant for about one month. Cardoons are usually harvested during winter months and often treated as annuals if they are grown for culinary purposes. In areas with mild winters, you can harvest cardoons from November to February.

Cardoon is one of those plants that will stop you in your tracks when you come upon one in the landscape. A healthy specimen in your garden will draw "ooohs", "aaahs", and "what on earth is that?" from your neighbors.

Consider incorporating a few cardoons into the mix this fall and winter. It will certainly help jazz up the garden!



Cardoon in bloom

Fuyu Persimmons

By Sheila Cloonen, Ellis County Master Gardener

In Texas, we tend to think of persimmons as that small orange fruit that the kid next door tricked us into eating when it wasn't ripe. One bite and your mouth felt as if it was going to close permanently. After that you thought it best to leave them to the possums. They love them!

There is a non-astringent variety of persimmon, however, called Fuyu. (*Diospyros* aka "Fuyu") This Japanese variety thrives in zone 7 through 10 and will grow in all types of soil. It is a medium size tree, growing 25 to 30 feet tall with an open, spreading and rounded canopy. It can be sensitive to fertilizers so only a light application or none at all is best. Fuyu trees are free of serious pest and disease problems and do not need to be sprayed the way apple and peach trees do. Plenty of sunlight and good air circulation will keep away any fungal leaf diseases that sometime occur with persimmons. They are drought tolerant once established but should still be mulched to keep the soil cool and moist.

The fruit is harvested in the fall, usually from October to the end of November.

They are ready to pick when the fruit has turned deep orange. You don't have to wait for the fruit to "soften" like the common Texas persimmon. Fuyu's will have the texture of a crisp apple. If you prefer, you can wait until they soften for an even sweeter persimmon but it's certainly not necessary. They are an excellent source of vitamin A, C and potassium. If you are lucky enough to find the fruit in the supermarket, they will run you about \$1.00 each.

An added benefit of the tree is that the fruit stays on the tree after the leaves have fallen making it a striking fall display. These trees are a little harder to find at your local nursery but worth the effort.





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, or find the application on the Master Gardener website, ECM-GA.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.



Landscape Gardening

From: Gail Haynes, Ellis County Master Gardener

Ellis County Master Gardeners have a website at 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.

Trees for Texas

by Dr. William C. Welch, Extension Horticulturist, Texas A&M University

Trees may be our biggest bargain for environmental improvement. No matter what the condition of a home or building, well-placed and carefully selected trees can make the entire environment more attractive. Few structures are acceptable in the landscape without trees. Furthermore, an environment that is good for the culture of trees has also proved to be good for people.

Communities where many good trees have been established and more are being planted demonstrate a feeling of continuity with the past and an anticipation for the future. Properly selected, placed, and cared for trees indicate a community or homeowner's pride in environment. We are all quick to point out to visitors and tourists the better residential districts, parks, campuses and other areas where established trees have survived as the most beautiful parts of our communities.

In addition to these aesthetic reasons for having trees, some very practical ones include their climatic influences. Trees sometimes are referred to as nature's air conditioners. They moderate the climate by protecting from extremes in wind, heat, cold, and drought. Trees also help to purify the air. Adequate numbers of them can considerably reduce smog, noise and other air-pollution problems that are damaging large areas of our country.

Many birds and animals also depend upon trees for food and shelter. With the current power costs and possible future shortages, renewed interest will be developing in tree placement in the landscape for maximum contribution to the reduction of heat and glare inside the home.

If these reasons are not enough to encourage you to purchase some trees, keep in mind that real estate professionals testify to the considerable increases

in property value brought about by well-selected and attractively placed trees.

The diversity in soil and climate conditions in Texas makes it difficult to recommend a general list of trees for the state. Your local county Extension agent or nurseryman can provide information about which species to plant in your area.



One of the objectives of the Extension educational program in landscape horticulture in Texas is the identification and promotion of the more effective tree species.

In addition to work with native Texas plants, Texas home gardeners are showing a renewed interest in well-adapted plants from foreign lands, such as the Crape Myrtle and Chinese Pistache. Texas homeowners are also looking for trees that will grow well in spite of temperature extremes, insect and disease attacks, and widely varying moisture conditions. Resistance to damage caused by high winds is also an important factor in choosing tree species.

A common mistake made by many homeowners is planting the fastest-

growing tree available. Most of these so-called "fast growers" have long-term serious faults such as being weak-wooded, surface-rooted, short-lived, or unusually disease- and insect-susceptible. Most species of trees will respond to good care by growing at a relatively fast rate.

The initial cost of a tree is so small in proportion to the value received over the years that a few extra dollars at purchase time for an improved variety or better species are well spent. For this reason, it is usually better to select a tree that will grow at a moderate rate and produce a stronger and longer-lived specimen.

The selection of trees for the home landscape deserves careful consideration in terms of the soil, availability of irrigation water, and extremes in temperature. After analyzing the growing conditions, the homeowner should select trees that will be long-lived, strong-wooded, and as insect and disease-resistant as possible, as well as of an ultimate size that will be appropriate in the overall landscape development.

Developing along with the surge of interest in ecology has been a renewed interest in native plants. It is logical to assume that the plants which are native to an area probably would require less maintenance since they have been growing there unattended for centuries.

For example, our extensive native plant population provides many of our most highly regarded landscape trees, such as live oaks, shumard oaks, dogwood, redbud, and pecans. However, with this abundance of native specimens, some people believe that they can dig trees themselves. But all too often, they may have only destroyed the trees or shrubs they have attempted to transplant because moving native trees from their natural environment requires special skills and equipment that the average homeowner does not have available. Before attempting to move an established tree or

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Landscape Gardening (Continued from page 11)

shrub, check with a local nursery, garden center, or an arborist. Many of these personnel are now equipped to move large trees.

Transplanting trees has been radically simplified in recent years, primarily because of the trend toward containerized nursery stock. Most container-grown trees available in nurseries may be transplanted with ease 12 months out of the year if given proper care. Even large balled and burlapped trees frequently are moved with insignificant losses during the growing season by professional nurserymen.

Trees are an environmental improvement bargain Texas citizens cannot afford to miss. The list of trees cited below, though not intended to be the only ones recommended for Texas, contains a good representative selection. This listing is also designed to provide general information concerning growth rate, adaptability and some outstanding characteristics of the species included.

Proper transplanting and post planting care usually make a significant difference in the growth rate of a tree. For factual information on these topics, contact your county Extension agent or local nurseryman.

Website for list of recommended trees: <http://texastreeid.tamu.edu/content/listOfTrees/>

Garden Checklist for November-December

- ✦ Roses often put on some of their best displays in the November-December period of cooler weather. Encourage them at this time with plenty of water during dry spells and good cultivation, finishing with a topping of fresh mulch to save moisture and ameliorate temperature changes.
- ✦ Place orders for seeds this month so you will have them available when you are ready to plant. By ordering early, you will be more certain of getting the varieties you want. In addition to ordering seeds that you are already familiar with, try a few new kinds each year to broaden your garden contents.
- ✦ Don't get in a hurry to prune woody plants. Late December through Febru-

ary is usually the best time to prune them.

- ✦ Reduce the fertilization of indoor plants from late October to mid-March. An exception would be plants in an atrium or a well lighted window.
- ✦ Drain gasoline from power tools and run the engine until fuel in the carburetor is used up.
- ✦ Drain and store garden hoses and watering equipment in a readily accessible location. The lawn and plants may need water during a prolonged dry spell.
- ✦ November through February is a good time to plant trees and shrubs. In the Panhandle, planting is often delayed until February or early March.
- ✦ Continue to set out cool-season bedding plants, such as pansies, violas, stock, snapdragons, and dianthus.
- ✦ Use good pruning practices when selecting Christmas greenery from landscape plants. Don't destroy the natural form and beauty of the plant.
- ✦ Protect your lawn from excessive winter damage by providing irrigation during dry periods.
- ✦ Plant spring-flowering bulbs if you



haven't already done so. Be sure to refrigerate tulips and hyacinths for six to eight weeks prior to planting. They can be planted any time in December if they have received 60 or more days of chilling.

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- ✦ Prolong the life of holiday-season gift plants by providing proper care. Check to see if the pot wrap has plugged up the bottom drainage. Don't overwater. Keep out of drafts from heating vents and opening doorways. Fertilizer is seldom needed the first few months.
- ✦ Take advantage of good weather to prepare garden beds for spring planting. Work in any needed organic matter, and have beds ready to plant when needed.
- ✦ Want to start cuttings of your favorite Christmas cactus? As soon as it has finished blooming, select a cutting with four or five joints. Break or cut it off, and insert the basal end into a pot of moderately moist soil. Place it on a windowsill or other brightly lit area. The cuttings should be rooted within three to four weeks.
- ✦ Don't spare the pruning shears when transplanting bare-rooted woody plants. Cut the tops back at least one-third to one-half, to compensate for the roots lost when digging the plant.
- ✦ Take advantage of bad weather and holiday time to study seed and nursery catalogs as well as good gardening books.
- ✦ Berrying plants, such as holly and yaupon, may be pruned now while they can be enjoyed as cut material inside the house.

Thank You All!!

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