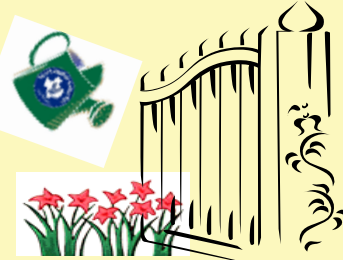




Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume VIII, Issue Three

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

March, 2015

Welcome to the Ellis County Master Gardener's **E-Gardening** Newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to give you a month-by-month agenda of what you should be doing with your landscape. We will feature horticultural articles that we hope you will find interesting, and important dates where you can find the Master Gardeners speaking, demonstrating, and passing out information relative to your garden. If you would like to receive this newsletter monthly via your email address, log onto our website www.ECMGA.com and click on subscribe. It will be sent around the first of every month. Best of all; it's FREE! Susan Clark, Editor

The Ellis County Master Gardeners
15th Annual Lawn & Garden Expo
Saturday, March 28, 2015 ♦ 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Waxahachie Civic Center

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CNB of Texas ♦ Tex-Scapes Greenery



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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Visit any sponsor for free tickets!
For complete details,
please visit www.ecmga.com



Ellis County Master Gardener's Lawn and Garden Expo—March 28th

The Waxahachie Civic Center will open its doors to the 15th annual Ellis County Master Gardener's Lawn and Garden Expo Saturday, March 28th. Exhibitors will pack the center with all outdoor living necessities, plants, machinery, yard art, and landscape project materials.

Workshops for adults and children will be taught by Master Gardeners and guest speakers. The kids will learn how to grow their own plants and make a variety of take-home projects. Adults can attend sessions on gardening topics, new techniques, or ask the experts questions about specific gardening challenges.

One of the most popular attractions continues to be the Master Gardener plant sale with a big variety of plants suited for the landscapes of North Central Texas.

Get your tickets now!

Enjoy a day at the Ellis County Master Gardener's Lawn and Garden Expo with your family. Support the Ellis County 4-H by visiting their concession stand for lunch and snacks. Register for the many great door prizes donated by the exhibitors. Pick up FREE tickets by visiting an Expo sponsor. Check the front page for a list of sponsors or visit www.ecmga.com.

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

Planting

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Plant 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.
- ◆ Install a drip irrigation system in your vegetable garden and mulch areas of the landscape.
- ◆ Plant herbs in raised beds with soil that has been amended with organic matter.
- ◆ Vines (including hyacinth bean, Cyprus vine, black-eyed Susan vine, morning glories, and Malabar spinach) can be planted from seeds sown directly into well-prepared soil.
- ◆ Annual flowers and herbs started from seed in January can be planted in late March. They should be hardened off before putting in the ground. Cover if frost or freeze is predicted.
- ◆ For sunny areas, plant zinnias, fire bush, pentas, petunias, moss rose, purslane, cleome, butterfly weed, and Dahlberg daisy. Cosmos and four o'clocks are self-seeding and will usually return each year. For shade, try begonias, parilla, coleus, impatiens, and ferns.
- ◆ Plant perennial flowers in amended, well-drained soil. Spread compost around perennials and add mulch. See the planting guide, which shows the best native and adapted perennials for Ellis County at www.ecmga.com.

Fertilizing and Pruning

- ◆ Remove dead top growth; Bermuda grass only, by lowering the blades one to two notches so the grass can spread faster and thicker which helps to choke out weeds. Bag clippings and use in the compost pile or as mulch.
- ◆ Apply a high-nitrogen fertilizer to pecans and again in April and May. Apply around the tree's drip line at the rate of one pound per inch of trunk diameter.
- ◆ Begin fertilizing roses with a balanced fertilizer or a specialty rose food.
- ◆ Prune spring-flowering shrubs and vines such as quince, azaleas, forsythia, bridal wreath (*Spiraea*), Lady Banks Rose, Carolina jessamine, and coral honeysuckle immediately after they finish blooming.
- ◆ All trees, shrubs, vines, and groundcovers can be fed with high-nitrogen fertilizer or compost.
- ◆ A pre-emergent can be applied on lawns to help control spring and summer broadleaf and grassy weeds if necessary. A weed and feed fertilizer is not recommended because it is too early to fertilize lawns.

Garden Watch

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ 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.



Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener



Blue Curls—Waterleaf Family (Hydrophyllaceae)
Phacelia congesta Hook

Region: 2, 4–10 (Ellis County is Region 4)
Size: 1–3 feet
Blooms: March through June, Annual/Biennial



Phacelia, an American genus of more than two hundred species, is represented in Texas by only twelve species. Like the one pictured, all have coiled, false racemes that uncurl as the flowers open. *Phacelia congesta* is a sticky, hairy plant with an erect, brittle stem. Alternate leaves may be as much as four inches long, deeply cut and divided and irregularly toothed or lobed.

Flowers may be blue, purplish or white. The flowers are cupped, deeply five-lobed and only one-fourth of an inch across. Five conspicuous, yellow-tipped stamens protrude from the flower, giving it a whiskered look. Blue curls can be found on all soil types. It is especially adapted to relatively moist habitats such as edges of woods and along streams.



The Waxahachie Farmers Market is looking for new vendors this season. The market runs from April 11th through October and is located at 410 S. Rogers Street. It's a great way to share your goods with the community, meet new friends, share ideas, and educate those wanting to get started growing or raising their own produce.

For more information, visit <http://www.waxahachie.com/Departments/DowntownDevelopment/DowntownFarmersMarket>

LAWN & GARDEN EXPO



MARCH 28TH 2015

9 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Waxahachie Civic Center

Over 100 Exhibit Booths • Children's Workshops • Keynote Speakers
Ask The Experts • Door Prizes • Plant Sales • 4-H Food Concessions

Admission at the door \$5
(Children under 12 free)

FREE Advance Tickets
Available From Our Sponsors

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

MONICA NYENHUIS
Seed Saving

STEVE SMITH & JAMES JEFFERS
Eat the Yard

RANDY JOHNSON
*Pollinators and Natives:
An Ancient Marriage*

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Steve Smith & James Jeffers, Eat the Yard 12 Noon

Eat the Yard is a brand new, **Veteran owned**, urban farming business in Oak Cliff! We grow a diverse selection of produce and herbs, using equally diverse methods. We strive to have as close to a zero footprint as possible. Whether it's using biodiesel in all our equipment, picking up compost while simultaneously dropping off veggies to the restaurants we cater to, or rainwater harvesting along with other evaporation prevention systems which are not only good practices but also extremely useful during times of drought here in Texas. We self-evaluate every day to see where we can reuse, repurpose, recycle, and reduce impact. Some garden samples will be available during the program.



Randy Johnson, 2:00 p.m.

Pollinators and Natives – An Ancient Marriage

Randy Johnson is currently the Horticulture Manager at the Dallas Zoo, and past Director of Horticulture at Texas Discovery Gardens in Fair Park. His program offers insight into the ancient relationship between pollinators and native plants. The role that pollinators play in ecosystems and the flora will be explored. The challenges facing native flora and fauna are at a critical level and we are fast losing native habitat and the associated faunal biodiversity. Diversity is the key to a healthy ecosystem. Understanding the role of native plants, what they are and how to incorporate them into your landscape will make you a part of the solution to many of the environmental issues facing all of us today.



Monica Nyenhuis, Seed Saving, 10: 00 a.m.

Learn to harvest, clean and store seeds for successful germination. Learn how to save seeds from heirloom vegetables and perennial flowers. Determine what plants are best for seed saving and when to propagate from existing plants.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

Speakers will be presenting in the
Crape Myrtle Room of the Waxahachie Civic Center

2015 Expo Plant Sale

By Pat Dockins
Ellis County Master Gardener



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

Shop Early for Best Selection

At this year's Lawn and Garden Expo, the Ellis County Master Gardeners will be selling many of our old favorites, including selections of perennials, tomatoes, peppers, and roses.

Among the perennials will be Turks Cap Big Mama red, Turks Cap pink, and a good variety of Salvia Greggii in red, raspberry, coral, apricot, white, and one called Sierra San Antonio, which is a bi-color peachy-yellow. We will have Blue Mist, Russian Sage, Monarda, and Dianthus Pink Bath. You'll find a couple of Buddleia varieties, some Orange Cestrum, and a Lantana in a gorgeous color called Confetti. These are just a few among many more plants that will be available. Most of these plants attract butterflies, hummingbirds, and bees and once established are drought tolerant.

Among the tomatoes are Celebrity, Early Girl, BHN 444, and Juliet. Heirloom varieties will include Kentucky Beefsteak, Black Krim, Brandywine, and Cherokee Purple. We will be featuring a Texas Superstar called Tycoon. Texas Superstar plants undergo extensive tests throughout the state by Texas A&M AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension horticulturists. To earn the title Superstar, the plant must be disease-resistant and able to tolerate Texas heat well. Tycoon has proven itself exceptional in this regard. It produces fruit about the size of the Celebrity, but has been known to produce very large fruit with good management.

For herbs, we are offering Catmint, Pineapple Sage, Texas Tarragon, and Basil.

Peppers include Big Bertha Bell, Habanero Orange, Mucho Nacho, and a banana called Golden Treasure. We also have Ghost and Scorpion peppers if you like the really hot ones!

Roses are again from Chamblee's in Tyler. We'll have many varieties, but we are featuring a beautiful blue rose called "Blue for You", plus a variety of drift roses.

The plant sale is one of the most popular parts of the Expo, so be sure to arrive early for the best selection! If you would like a complete list of plants with cultivation information, please send an email request to ecm-ganewsletter@gmail.com

If you have ever wondered how we grow all these plants you are invited to our Open House Saturday, March 14 from 9am–12pm at the Waxahachie High School Greenhouse. It's located on the side of the school across from Walmart. We will be glad to walk you through and show you our operation. There will be some plants for sale at this time.



Open House

The Master Gardeners' will host an open house at the greenhouse on Saturday, March 14 from 9am until 12pm.

Come and tour our greenhouse. Learn about all the plants we propagate and managing the greenhouse.

There will be a small selection of plants available for sale.

The greenhouse is located at the Waxahachie High School. Enter the greenhouse from the side of the school across the street from Walmart.



You're Invited!



CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP 15th ANNUAL LAWN & Garden Expo

By J.R. McMahan
Ellis County Master Gardener

The Children's Workshop Room has become a favorite area at the annual Ellis County Master Gardener Lawn & Garden Expo. Children and adults all enjoy the educational exhibits, hands-on activities and lively atmosphere.

Texas Discovery Gardens will be joining us with their exciting nature themed displays. Smokey Bear will be making appearances for pictures with your children after each reading of the Smokey Bear story. A representative from the Junior Master Gardener program will be on hand to talk with teachers and parents of homeschool students.

The Children's Workshop Room is always a buzz of activity around the demonstration honey beehive and there will be educational craft activities children can participate in.



Master Gardener volunteers will be available to assist children with activities and answer parent's questions about gardening with children. Plan to visit the Children's Workshop Room for a fun time and always a surprise or two!

The Logic of Raised-Bed Gardening

With Mary Lee Nelson
Ellis County Master Gardener



This time last year, I was finishing the classes required to become a Master Gardener. We had an entire month of wonderful presentations and field trips, and a very large notebook that we studied throughout the course. The first section of the notebook is about plant structure and growth. Of the sixteen essential elements that plants need, three are found in air and water. They are carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen. All other essential elements must be found in the soil in which a plant grows. So, here's an example of where algebra really *can* be used in everyday life: 13 of 16 nutrients, which is 81% of a plant's nutrients, are found in the soil. In other words, soil is of MAJOR importance when you get ready to plant a garden.

Herein lies one of the main reasons for using raised-bed gardens. You are building a place in which to deposit soil that has been "made" into a specifically prepared medium for growing. You have mixed, or have had mixed for you, soil components that are designed to provide your plants with the complete nutrition they need. There is no guessing about nor measuring what the soil on your property is like. Even though the plant roots may penetrate the native soil, the majority of the nutrients the plants will take in are to be found in the prepared soil you have brought in.

Meagan Francis, writing for hgtvgardens.com, says the following about raised beds: "I love being able to start fresh with high-quality soil, instead of testing and amending and re-testing and re-amending (or just planting and hoping for the best!)" She adds that she loves the aesthetics of the neat wooden rows that "speak to the part of my heart that loves to make order out of chaos." This makes me think about being able to separate crops in different beds. Last year I was constantly snipping off those sticky little tendrils from my cucumbers that reached out from their trellis and latched tightly onto their tomato and pepper neighbors!

The beds can be made out of a number of materials, wood planks of various kinds and cinder blocks being two favorites. One of the pros of raised beds is the ability to work them from the pathways around them. You want your beds to be narrow enough for you to be able to access all areas easily from a path. When you don't have to walk in the soil, it doesn't get compacted. A mulched pathway offers a cleaner kneeling place as well. Raised beds are generally four feet wide and of varying lengths, according to your space constraints and planting needs.

Here are a few more pros of raised-bed gardens:

- Promote more efficient drainage
- Easier on backs and knees due to less bending and stooping
- Easier weed control
- More efficient allotment of space for different crops
- Specific design and construction for handicapped gardeners

To that list I would add that it is convenient to use small nails or push-pins in wooden sides to put up strings – as for square-foot markers or for lining up planting rows for crops such as onions.



Once you have decided on the number of raised beds you want and the sizes, you can take that information to a professional nursery that supplies garden soil. Be prepared to discuss the crops you want to put in so that a nurseryman can determine the amendments and the total amount of soil you will need to fill your beds.

As a beginning vegetable gardener myself, I would advise another newbie to start by planting just a few crops. For example, each vegetable has its own requirements for fertilizer. Last spring, my daughter, Joanna, and I planted Candy Apple and sweet white onion sets. I followed the instructions for fertilizer at the initial planting, and noted that there would be two more times to fertilize with a "side dressing". Here's where some plants are "forgiving" when you flub a bit with their care.

An unusual rainy spell kept me from making the second fertilizing, then I simply forgot it. We still had delicious onions, but they weren't as big as they would have been. And I didn't fertilize the tomatoes at all! But

thanks to our prepared raised-bed soil mix, we didn't have to buy tomatoes all summer! This year, I'm looking forward to more onions and tomatoes, fertilized properly, of course. And, since we enjoyed the pickles I made last year, we may try a separate plot for those "huggy" cucumbers.

For its neatness, organization, convenience, and likelihood of success, raised-bed gardening is surely here to stay. Community gardens are springing up everywhere. That is where Joanna and I garden and the camaraderie and sharing of chores can't be beat, not to mention many happy results and enough bounty to supply fresh produce to our local outreach program. Whether you join a group or garden in your own backyard, the rewards go far beyond the plants you will grow and raised beds are a great place to start.

Rose Rosette Disease

With Pat Cheshier
Ellis County Master Gardener



Insects and disease are constant challenges to those of us who enjoy gardening. A serious risk to roses in our landscape has developed in recent years and threatens to seriously do major damage to all types of roses.

Rose Rosette Disease was first discovered in California and Wyoming in 1941. It began to spread to the Midwest and was found in the flower farms of Tyler in the 1990s. In 1998, it presented itself in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. It appears that it is mostly confined to DFW and surrounding counties in Texas.

Observation of symptoms on rose specimen is important to prevent the spread of the disease to our roses. Some of the symptoms include a red pigmentation or discoloration of the leaves, excessive thorn production which often resembles prickles, and excessive cane size. There may also be leaf pigmentation and malformation.

One of the most significant symptoms may be what is called a "witches broom", a stem with bunched growth or



elongated stems with flowers that do not open. Not all infected roses will necessarily exhibit all of these symptoms. It is important to avoid confusing the normal reddening of new leaves or excessive branching caused by heavy pruning.

The disease is spread by eriophyid mites that enter the tissue of the plants.

The mites themselves do not harm the plant but they carry the disease to the roses. The mites are easily transferred by the wind, on clothing, infected pruning instruments, insects, and by crawling from rose bushes that touch each other. The mite that carries the disease injects a toxin that attacks the DNA of roses and thus causes the symptoms.

The virus will spread to the entire plant and eventually the

plant will die. It may take up to three years for that to occur. The mite will die if it cannot feed on live roses within a week.

Researchers at Texas A&M University are busy looking for ways to control the disease, but it is still fairly new in this process. It appears that there is no one variety of roses that are immune to the disease and there is no research to show that a miticide or dormant oil will control RRD. For now, one of the best things we can do is to attempt to prevent the spread of the disease.

When RRD has been diagnosed, complete removal is suggested. Bag the rose bush first, if possible, and dig out the roots from the ground as they can be infected as well. Do not put the diseased plant in compost piles. Bagged plants should be fine in landfills. When the plant dies, the virus and mites will die as well.

Since the soil is not contaminated from the mite, the empty hole can be replanted quickly. If roses are replanted, it is suggested that there be adequate spacing between plants so that they do not touch once they have matured to avoid spreading of mites. Prune heavily in the winter (February).

Pruning diseased plants does not help "cure" it of the disease. It should be replaced. Some cities, churches, and colleges in the DFW area have opted to remove all of their roses with the belief that all may be infected. That will be a decision you need to make in your own garden.

It is unlikely we will ever eliminate RRD, but we need to attempt to reduce the number of infected plants and use the best management techniques available for now. Unfortunately, researchers will not have a quick solution to this very disturbing problem. It does not mean that we should stop planting roses. However, let's remember there are other great colorful options to use in our landscapes along with roses.



**Average last frost date
for Ellis County is
March 15th**



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.

White Cemetery Iris (*Iris albicans*)

Cynthia W. Mueller, Galveston County Master Gardener

From late February to April is a good time to look for one of Texas' most prevalent heirloom iris, a tough survivor known as the 'White Cemetery Iris', or *Iris albicans*. It is a plant that has had a long journey getting to us, first used in North Africa as a decoration on gravesites, from there to Spain, and finally to the New World.

It's a species cross that is unable to make seeds on its own, but spreads by being passed from hand to hand. You will often see it blooming where once a house stood, and it's able to survive unaided in pastures along the roadside, often half-buried in tall grasses and other wildflowers. The flash of blue-tinged white blooms give the plant's location away in the spring.

Although the usual time for digging and relocating bearded iris is during the dry time of late summer when they are less liable to resent transplanting, the White Cemetery iris recovers well if dug during flowering. Trim off old portions of the rhizomes and cut the leaves back to one third their length. Iris should be planted with the tops of the rhizomes almost out on the surface of the ground. They do not need coddling with extra water and fertilizer once established.



is the only way to obtain rare or heirloom varieties. But because this has been a winter with erratic weather patterns, 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.

♦ 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.



Garden Checklist for March 2015

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

♦ 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

♦ 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 the danger of frost is past.

(Continued on page 11)

Ellis County Master Gardener Scholarship 2015



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

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

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

Landscape Gardening (Continued from page 10)



- ◆ 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.



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>



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 16, 6pm-7:30pm, Firewise Landscaping. Learn how to increase the chances of your structure surviving a nearby wildfire. This presentation will take only an hour or so. You will leave with a list of resources and written materials that will help you evaluate your surroundings and take responsibility for reducing the available fuel around your home. Instructor: Lee Dann. Cost: \$12.00

Monday, March 23 6pm-7:30pm, From the Garden to the Salad Bowl. This class covers growing lettuces, spinach, and other greens along with tomatoes that like Texas, onions and other salad vegetables. Also covers growing and using fresh herbs for salad dressings. Class members will help put together a salad and make an herbal vinaigrette for sampling. Go home with growing instructions and recipes. This is a perfect beginner class or for a container gardener. Instructor: Arlene Hamilton, Cost: \$12.00

Monday, April 6, 6pm-7:30pm, Drought Tolerant Plants for Texas. Because of the likelihood that water will not be as affordable or plentiful in the future, now is the time to consider growing drought-tolerant plants and selecting plants for your landscape with an eye toward reducing the supplemental watering that many plants require. The class will cover varieties of Texas adapted plants, characteristics that make drought tolerant plants, how to recognize plants that use less water, and how to grow them. Instructor: Ted Ryder. Cost: \$12.00

Monday, April 13, 6pm-7:30pm, Herbal Vinegars, Butters, and Spreads. Dried or fresh, herbs lend a wonderful flavor, aroma, and even healthful factor to foods we enjoy on a regular basis. In this class, you will learn how to prepare and use herbs to create tasty herbal vinegars, butters, and spreads. This is a hands-on class where you will come away with recipes and your own herbal vinegar to take home. Instructor: Susan Clark. Cost: \$12.00 + \$5.00 supply fee.

Monday, April 20, 6pm-7:30pm, Backyard Chickens. Before you start your backyard flock, come learn some tips on how to successfully manage backyard chickens. We'll discuss city ordinances, neighborhood associations and neighbors as well as housing, predators, sanitation, and raising or obtaining laying hens. Instructors: Ginger Cole and Khalin Zadwick. Cost: \$12.00

Tuesdays, April 21-May 12, four classes 6pm-8pm, "Ag 101"-Beginning Farmer/Rancher. Join this experienced instructor as you cover topics: soils and soil fertility, soil testing, pasture management, basic livestock productions and pond management. This class will be held at the Ellis County Texas A&M Agri Life Extension Office at 701 S. I-35E, Suite 3 in Waxahachie. Instructor: Mark Arnold, County Extension Agent, Agriculture & Natural Resources. Cost: \$22.00



ECMGA Amateur Photo Contest

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

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

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

What's Happening in March

Now through Sunday, April 12, Dallas Blooms: Deep in the Heart of Texas at the Dallas Arboretum. This year's Texas-sized extravaganza features more than 500,000 spring blooming bulbs along with life-size, Texas-themed topiaries, entertainment, food and special activities celebrating the state. Dallas Blooms features tulips, daffodils, Dutch Iris and hyacinths, pansies, violas and thousands of other springtime annuals and perennials that bloom throughout the entire festival, so the garden changes all the time. The finale of this celebration is the mass flowering of the garden's collection of 3,000 azaleas that bloom through the end of April. For more info about events and visiting the arboretum, go to: www.dallasarboretum.org/

Saturday, March 7, 9am–11am, Vegetable Gardening Class with the Tarrant County Master Gardeners. Learn how to prepare beds, select plants, and how to tend and harvest vegetables. Also learn about square foot gardening. Cost: \$10, includes lecture and tour of TCMGA Garden. Visit <http://tarrantmg.org/> for complete details.

Saturday, March 7, 9am–12pm, BRIT First Saturday: Underground World of Mushrooms. Taught by BRIT research associate Denis Benjamin. Enjoy tours, children's activities, vendors, and booths! Events include: plant walks, Bella's Story Time for children and more! For complete details, visit <http://brit.org/prairieday>.

Saturday, March 7, 9am–3pm, Volunteer Training at Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center. Training for reception docents, education docents, habitat, and animal care. Location: 1205 W FM 1382, Cedar Hill. Contact Julie Collins at jcollins@audubon.org. Website: dogwoodcanyon.audubon.org/ Telephone: (469) 526-1991.

Saturday, March 21, 9am–12pm, Conservation in Action Workday at 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 jvarnum@aol.com.

Monday, March 23, 7pm, Indian Trail Master Naturalists present "Butterflies of North Texas" by Dale Clark. The program is free and follows the 6 p.m. Master Naturalist meeting that is also open to the public. Meeting location: First United Methodist Church, Family Life Center 505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie, TX. For more info, call (972) 825-5175 or email ellis-tx@tamu.edu

Saturday, March 28, 9am–12pm, Dogwood Canyon—Fourth Saturday Workday. Located at 1206 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill. For info, contact Julie Collins at jcollins@audubon.org.

John Bunker Sands Wetland Center

655 Martin Lane, Seagoville

☎(972) 474-9100 📧 <http://www.wetlandcenter.com/>

Saturday, March 7, 9:30am–120pm, Heavenly Hummingbirds. Interested in learning more about Hummingbirds? Mark Klym with Texas Parks and Wildlife will present information on hummingbird species, gardening, and migration factors. Mark will also presenting recent developments in hummingbird research. Mark is the coordinator of the Texas Hummingbird Roundup and Texas Wildscapes programs at the Texas Parks and Wildlife department. RSVP required. Cost: \$10.00; \$5.00 members.

Saturday, March 7, 7am–9am, Walk and Talk Bird Tour. Binoculars and field guides are available for use. Cost varies. Beginner/Intermediate and Advanced options.

Saturday, March 21, 10am, 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.

Texas Discovery Gardens

3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dallas

TexasDiscoveryGardens.org

Saturday, March 28, 10am–12pm, Save the Rain (Rainwater Collection Class). Patrick Dickinson, Program Coordinator-Urban Water, will share basic water harvesting strategies, how to calculate the amount of water that you can capture and then help you construct your own rain barrel. \$75, \$60 for TDG Members. Register in advance.

Saturday, March 28, 2014 from 1pm–3pm, Native Plants for Dallas Landscapes. New to Big D gardening? Discover Metroplex-worthy plants for your garden and learn about the special ecosystem requirements. Take home one of Director of Horticulture Roger Sanderson's favorite native plants. \$25; \$20 for TDG Members. Register in advance.

Saturday, March 21 and Sunday, March 22, 9am–6pm, Brumley Gardens Spring Kick-Off Weekend. Color your spring at Brumley Gardens. Bishop Arts Location, 700 West Davis, Dallas, (214) 942-0794. Visit <http://www.brumleygardens.com/home/> for details.

There's
still time!



Interested in becoming a
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Contact James Kocian at
expo.ecmga@yahoo.com

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