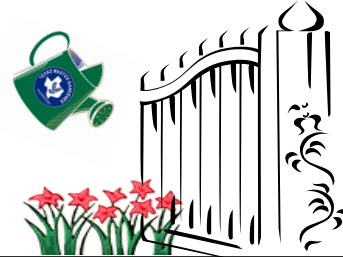




# Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume VIII, Issue Ten

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

October, 2015

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

## What's Happening in October?

**Every Saturday from April to October from 8am–1pm.**



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

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

**October 3rd**—Members of the Master Gardener group will be on hand to talk about drip irrigation as well as rainwater harvesting. This is the last day to enter to win a rain barrel. The drawing will be held at the close of the market so be sure to sign up. There are loads of fall squash, tomatoes and okra, and eggs are available again. And you'll find fall flavor at Jim's Produce with pumpkin rolls. Visit early for the best selection.

**October 10th**—This is the second Saturday so there's an activity for kids of all ages. Members of the Master Naturalist group will have a fun and educational project planned. You'll find perennial herbs for sale, and now is an ideal time to get them planted. With the cooler temperatures here, you know the holidays are just around the corner. The Farmers Market has lots of gift ideas. Come on by and do a bit of early shopping.

**October 17th**—The Market Chefs are serving up soups using in-season market produce. Stop by for a sample. They are next to the MG booth. As always, they will share their recipes and they welcome your feedback. Available at the market are baked goods, fall produce, honey and locally grown and milled flours. Now is a great opportunity to get your knives sharpened in time for carving pumpkins and turkeys!

**October 24th**—The Market Chefs are back again this week serving up a sweet treat...chai apple butter! You'll find pumpkins for sale and fun decorating ideas. There's plenty of produce, baked goods and cheeses. Have you considered giving honey, canned goods or salsa as hostess gifts or stocking stuffers? You'll also find jewelry, home décor, essential oils, hats...more great gifts. Shop the Farmers Market and support local artisans and businesses.

**October 31st**—Final market day of 2015! That means your last chance this market season for a fried pie breakfast! Be sure to visit with your favorite sellers and get their goods before it's too late. We'd like to thank all our Farmers Market vendors. Without them and their dedication, we wouldn't have a Farmers Market in Waxahachie. Come shop and visit with the sellers. Bring the kids and have them dress up! They'll find extra treats at many of the sellers' booths and there will be pumpkins to paint.

## Ellis County Master Gardener Monthly Meeting

Ray Hernandez of Bent Tree Bonsai will be speaking at our monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 13th. Ray Hernandez has been doing Bonsai for 46 years. He became interested in Bonsai as a senior in high school when a Japanese couple moved in three houses from him and

(Continued on page 3)

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## 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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### Caramelized Butternut Squash

By Sheila Cloonen

2 medium butternut squash

(4 to 5 pounds total)

6 T unsalted butter, melted

¼ cup light brown sugar

1½ tsp. kosher salt

½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400°F. Cut off ends of squash and discard. Peel, cut them in half lengthwise and remove the seeds. Cut the squash into 1¼ to 1½ inch cubes and place them on a baking sheet. Add the melted butter, brown sugar, salt and pepper. Toss all the ingredients together and spread in a single layer on the baking sheet. Roast for 45 to 55 minutes, until the squash is tender and the glaze begins to caramelize. While roasting, turn the squash a few times with a spatula, to be sure it browns evenly. Serves 6 to 8.

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

### Planting

- ☼ Plant cool-season annuals such as snapdragons, ornamental kale/cabbage and pinks early in the month but wait until temperatures have cooled to plant pansies and violas.
- ☼ Daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs such as Dutch iris and grape hyacinth can be put in the ground now. Other bulbs should be considered as annuals in our area and new bulbs planted each year. Chill tulip and Dutch hyacinth at 45°F for 60 days prior to planting.
- ☼ The time is right to plant seeds or transplants of lettuce, spinach and other cool season greens. Cole crops including broccoli, cabbage, kale, collards and kohlrabi are among our most dependable winter vegetables. Other vegetables to plant now include radishes, carrots and turnips.
- ☼ Fall is a great time to set out perennial herbs. Thyme, oregano, rosemary, parsley, lemon balm, pineapple sage and Mexican mint marigold are some of the herbs best suited to our area. Always work a few inches of compost into the soil prior to planting and mulch the plants after planting. Fertilizer will not be necessary at this time. Wait until spring to fertilize.

### Fertilizing and Pruning

- ☼ Fertilize lawns the first week of the month if it was not done in September.
- ☼ Remove annuals that have completed their life cycle. Leave seed pods of those you want to self-seed next year. Gather some of the seeds and dry a week or so on a newspaper to share.
- ☼ Continue to feed tropical plants in containers and hanging baskets with a water-soluble fertilizer. Cut back or repot overgrown houseplants and fertilize with the same water-soluble fertilizer.
- ☼ Spring and summer shrubs and vines (including climbing roses, wisteria, etc.) should not be pruned at this time because they have already established their buds for next year's bloom. Prune these plants immediately after they stop blooming next year.

### Garden Watch

- ☼ Watch for signs of brown-patch fungus on St. Augustine lawns. Water only in the mornings and apply turf fungicide at the first sign of fungus.
- ☼ To prevent potential diseases and insects next year, remove all dead vegetable plants to the compost pile with the exception of tomato vines. It is a good practice to keep them out of the compost heap.
- ☼ Watch for cutworms and looper caterpillars. Products containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* or Bt are safe to control these pests. Aphids may also present a problem on young greens. A strong spray of water or insecticidal soap will dislodge the aphids from plants.
- ☼ Gather and stockpile fallen leaves to build a compost pile. Save some leaves to use as mulch for the next growing season.



**Mexican Oregano** - Perennial: Mexican oregano is not an *origanum*, but has an oregano flavor and is preferred in Mexican dishes. It is an attractive landscape plant with long tubular lavender flowers that bloom all summer and attract hummingbirds to the garden.



## Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

*Submitted by Melinda Kocian  
Ellis County Master Gardener*



White Snakeroot—Sunflower Family (Asteraceae)  
*Eupatorium rugosum* Houtt.

Region: 1-4, 7 (Ellis County is Region 4)

Blooms: July through October, Perennial



White snakeroot flower heads form tight clusters. The stalked, alternate leaves are ovate and toothed, with prominent veins. The stems, from a small perennial root stock, die back each year. White snakeroot is found in many moist habitats, including woodlands, stream and lake banks, ditches and other poorly drained areas. It sometimes forms large colonies and can be found in sun or shade.

Named because of its supposed powers of curing snakebites, all parts of this plant are poisonous, fresh or dry. Cattle that graze it become subject to "trembles." The poison, soluble in milk, can be transmitted to persons drinking it, making it the probable cause of the "milk sickness" of early settlers.



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

hired him to water their Bonsai collection. Later when he had his own collection, he would give his friends a Bonsai on special occasions. When people came knocking on his door asking if they could purchase a Bonsai, he opened up his shop "Bent Tree Bonsai" in 1988. He has been selling Bonsai for 27 years. Ray is a member of both the Dallas and Ft. Worth Bonsai societies.

Social time begins at 9:30am and the program begins at 10am. Please be our guest! The meeting takes place in the Family Life Center of the First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie. For info, call (972) 825-5175.

### Indian Trail Master Naturalists Monthly Meeting



Join the **Indian Trail Master Naturalists** at their monthly meeting on **Monday, October 26**. The program for the evening is entitled "**iNaturalist: Technology for the Master Naturalist**" presented by **Sam Kieschnick**, Nature Education Specialist, Mansfield Parks and Recreation Department-Oliver Nature Park. iNaturalist has emerged as the top reporting electronic tool for tracking, identifying and sharing wildlife sightings. As one of the leading participants of the program, Sam Kieschnick has put together a tutorial for fellow Master Naturalists to join this Citizen Science project. For educators, iNaturalist is also a way to help get young people interested in exploring the outdoors. Bring your cellphone. 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. For more info, call (972) 825-5175 or email [ellis-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:ellis-tx@tamu.edu)



## Time to Think About Trees—A Large Investment

With Pat Cheshier  
Ellis County Master Gardener



Every year we look forward to the cooler temperatures of late September, October, and November and the changes nature brings to our area. It is a natural time to think about one of the largest investments that we make in our landscapes—trees.

It's no secret that trees bring so many benefits to us as homeowners. Any real estate agent will agree that a beautifully landscaped yard with trees brings value to the property.

They bring beauty to our homes and cities and shade during the hot summer months, which can save us money. Trees can be used to screen, act as windbreaks and to help clean the air for an improved environment.

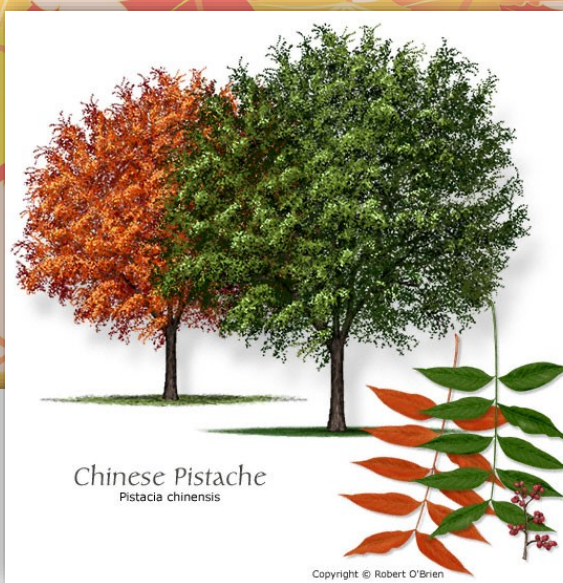
If you are contemplating adding trees to your landscape, consider carefully your objectives in doing so and how you want them to be beneficial. Consider the height of your home and what type of tree, tall or medium height, would be more appealing for your situation. Decide carefully the placement of trees in relation to your house, other trees, fences, sidewalks, power lines, foundations and driveways.

It is difficult for us to envision the size and height of trees that are planted this fall 10, 20 or 30 years from now. Many trees are deciduous (lose their leaves in the winter) while others are evergreen or lose their leaves in times other than the fall. Consider whether you would like a tree that has autumn colors or a tree that may require extra work if they are placed in close proximity to a pool or patio.

After you consider the above factors, do your homework to select the type of desired tree for your landscape. Trees may be divided into two categories concerning size and height. The largest trees are 35+ feet in height at maturity. Oak trees have long been very popular in our area, especially Shumard Red Oak and Live Oak. Other good oaks include Chinquapin, Bur and Mexican White Oak (Monterrey). Tall trees that exhibit beautiful fall color include Chinese Pistache, Red Maple and Shantung Maple.

Smaller trees usually range from 20-35 feet in height. Some of your choices include Red Bud, Golden Raintree, Little Gem Magnolia, Teddy Bear Magnolia, Mexican Plum, Aristocrat Pear and even varieties of taller Crape Myrtles can be beautiful trees. Many of these have outstanding color during the spring-time or other times of the year. Again, do some research on the

type of tree that you are considering. They all have factors concerning the amount of water needed, diseases, rate of growth, life expectancy, the type of soil required, etc. that may affect your decisions.



Trees usually come in three forms before planting: bare rooted, balled and burlapped and container. Bare rooted trees are dug usually when they are dormant in the wintertime and have had the soil shaken from their roots. Many mail order companies

use this method because it is more economical to them. Unfortunately, bare rooted plants have the least success of the three types being discussed. Roots should be kept moist and not allowed to dry out.

Balled and burlapped trees are those that have had their roots pruned when dug within a compact ball. They are dug when dormant during the winter months and may stay in the nursery for months before being sold and planted. These trees can be planted at any time and can easily reestablish themselves once in the ground.

Container grown trees are the most common ones found in nurseries. This has become largely standard practice in nurseries and trees are placed in containers of various sizes including 15, 30, 45, 65 and 95 "gallon" containers. There can be one serious issue with container grown trees. The roots have been conformed to a limited space and may be coiled around each other in the container. If this condition is allowed to remain, the roots will be girdled or strangle around each other.

When planting one of these trees, be sure to split the lower half of the root system with a straight edge shovel or sharp shooter spade. Then spread the roots horizontally to encourage the roots to grow laterally. This will help prevent girdling. Many container grown trees have died because the roots were not treated in this manner.

Planting your new tree is one of the most important steps in the process. Generally, the hole should be dug twice as large as the diameter and no deeper than the soil ball. If it is dug too deep,



Time to Think About Trees (Continued from page 4)

fill some of backfill soil back in and tamp the soil before placing the root ball in the hole. The top of the soil ball should be at a slightly higher level than the surrounding soil.

Backfill the soil and tamp at regular intervals and add water to settle the soil and remove air bubbles. Research has shown that the soil taken out of the hole should be placed back in around the tree rather than incorporating organic matter into the backfill. Studies have shown that in some cases, in amended soils, the majority of roots remained confined to the original planting hole.

Once the tree is planted, you may want to consider staking the tree. Most landscapers do this to keep the tree plumb in the frequent windy days of North Texas and this is probably essential for the larger trees. Staking is not always essential and there is some evidence to show that it does have some detrimental effects in the size of the trunk and root system.

There are some other good practices to care for your new tree. Adding a root stimulator at the time of planting will help the tree get off to a good start. It should be a liquid high in phosphate. Wait a couple of months and then apply a high quality, slow release fertilizer. If you have selected a Red Oak, Chinese Pistache or a Chinquapin Oak, wrap the tree trunk to protect it from borers and sunscald.

One of the most important parts of caring for a new tree is watering. One of the benefits of planting trees in the fall is that they will need less water and their roots can get established before the next hot Texas summer. New trees need to be watered regardless of the time of year that they are planted. Clearly, the larger the tree, the more water it needs. Consider the following: water needs to reach all the way to the roots at the bottom of the root ball. No one can tell you exactly how long and how much to water a new tree.

In the summer, when it is very hot, it will need to be watered every day for at least two weeks and then at regular intervals. In the cooler seasons, perhaps watering several times a week is sufficient for newly planted trees. One important key to watering is this: hand watering a new tree is essential. Do not rely upon an irrigation or drip irrigation system to do the watering alone. One tip is to test the soil about five inches down around the soil ball. If it is dry, it is time to water.

Planting new trees in your landscape can be a rewarding task. They bring beauty and value to your home. Now is the time, but do your homework first!



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

**Reserve the date: March 19, 2016!**



Shumard Oak  
*Quercus shumardii*

Copyright © Robert O'Brien



Goldenrain Tree  
*Koelreuteria paniculata*

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All pictures in this article from the Texas Tree Planting Guide.

Visit <http://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu/> for more information and a Tree Selector and Tree Planting & Care Guide.



Mexican Plum  
*Prunus mexicana*

Copyright © Robert O'Brien



## Parsley: A Garnish for Both the Landscape and the Dinner Plate

*By Arlene Hamilton  
Ellis County Master Gardener*



Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum* and *neapolitanum*) has the misfortune of being a token herb on plates of steak and fish as a garnish. But the resilient sprig is edible and its high chlorophyll content makes it a natural breath sweetener, which is a good reason to nibble some after a heavy meal.

There are three common varieties of this popular biennial: flat leaf (Italian), curly leaf and parsnip rooted or Hamburg. Parsley has a gentle flavor and works especially well at blending the flavors around it. Both curly leaf and flat leaf varieties are used in cooking, but the flavor of the flat leaf is preferred by chefs.

Parsley works with most foods except sweets. It is an important part of the Middle Eastern tabbouleh. The French feature parsley with ham in aspic, with garlic, butter and escargots; and as persillade, a fine mince of garlic and parsley added at the last moment of cooking to sautés, grilled meats and poultry. The Belgians and Swiss are fond of fondue with deep-fried parsley on the side. The Japanese also deep-fry parsley in tempura batter. The Mexican and Spaniards use parsley as a prime ingredient in salsa verde, and the English make parsley jelly. When making Italian pesto, try substituting some of the basil with parsley.

Parsley seeds can be sown in late winter for a spring crop or in the late summer after our Texas nights have cooled down a bit for a fall crop. Although hardy during mild winters, the plants that germinate in the fall tend to consider spring their second season and will flower and set seed early. I generally plant half of the seed packet in the fall and the rest in the spring so there are always fresh greens to enjoy with winter soups and summer salads.

Because of its deep tap root, parsley is difficult to transplant so should be sown where it is to grow. Be patient when planting seeds as they are extremely slow to germinate—up to six weeks. Parsley prefers moderately rich, moist, but well-drained soil. It will tolerate partial shade.

As an attractive bright green, compact plant, parsley has earned a place as a border or edging in both herb and ornamental garden beds. It is used as the border of a tussie-mussie. Placed in the vegetable garden, parsley is supposed to repel asparagus beetles. Parsley is susceptible to crown rot. It may be attacked by carrot weevils, parsley worms or nematodes. It is a favorite food of the black swallowtail butterfly caterpillar. So be sure to plant extra for both of you.

Although the preferred use of parsley is fresh; it can be frozen and stored in sealed freezer bags.

The following recipe is an appetizer favorite of my friends in the Webster Groves Herb Society back in Missouri.



*Curled parsley contributes fresh green color and frilly texture to a garden.*

**Parsley Spread:** Finely chop a bunch of parsley and two cloves of garlic. Add some extra virgin olive oil, just enough to make it moist, a little salt and fresh ground pepper, and some grated Romano cheese. Let rest a bit to blend flavors. Serve on crackers or thin baguette slices.



*Parsley makes a great edible edging for gardens and even flower beds.*



## 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](http://www.wisd.org/default.aspx?name=CO_LighthouseforLearning)



**Monday, October 12, 6pm–7:30pm, Perennials for All Seasons.** Learn about perennial plants that will return winter, spring, summer and fall. The class will cover soil prep, types of plants and the pros and cons of planting perennials. A slideshow presentation of perennials will be shown and live plants will be available for attendees. **Instructor: Pam Davis Young.** Cost: \$12.00

**Monday, October 19, 6pm–7:30pm, Planning Ahead for a Spring Vegetable Garden.** Do you want to start a vegetable garden with confidence? The fall is the best time to plan and prepare for your spring garden. This class will provide information on determining the location and size of your garden as well as tips on preparing the soil, digging your beds or building raised beds, best vegetables for our area and how to maintain your garden. **Instructor: Susan Knapp.** Cost: \$12.00

**Monday, October 26, 6pm–7:30pm, Good Bugs in the Garden.** It's common for gardeners to go out with chemicals and try to kill all the insects. But wait!! Not all insects are bad; in fact, most have a very important place in the food chain and can be used to your advantage. After all, when you spray, you kill the good as well as bad. This class will help you learn to identify some of the common good and bad insects. You will also get some non-chemical ideas on how to keep them from taking over your plantings. Bring insect samples if you want! **Instructor: Susan Gilliland.** Cost: \$12.00

**Monday, November 2. 6pm–7:30pm, Irrigation Efficiency.** You CAN have a green lawn without spending so much money. Come learn how to efficiently use sprinkler systems and save money. Learn about different types of sprinkler systems and what is right for your situation. We'll also discuss how to check your water pressure, learn why you need a back flow valve for your sprinkler and how to winterize your system. **Instructors: Alan Paxton and Jim Derstler.** Cost: \$12.00

**Tuesdays, October 13–November 3, 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 AgriLife Extension Office at 701 S. I-35E, Suite 3 in Waxahachie. **Instructor: Mark Arnold, County Extension Agent, Agriculture & Natural Resources.** Cost: \$22.00

## For a stunning fall show, try this combination.

Fall aster is a dependable performer in our southern climate, and hardy throughout the state. For a stunning fall show, plant aster in front of purple blooming Mexican bush sage or yellow blooming Mexican mint marigold.



Fall Aster, (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*)



Mexican Mint Marigold, (*Tagetes lucida*)



Mexican Bush Sage, (*Salvia leucantha*)



## Fall Zinnias—Colors of Fall that Gardeners Love

By: Shirley Campbell, Ellis County Master Gardener



Fall zinnias have all the colors gardeners love to see in the fall—oranges, apricots and yellows, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Research horticulturist. New and old fall zinnias have been designated Texas Superstars®.

What really got the Texas Superstar board members excited about fall zinnias were some new series, including the marylandica types that form disease-resistant mounds of color, lasting until frost when planted in late summer.

“These are very colorful plants that we’re promoting for fall use,” said Dr. Brent Pemberton, AgriLife Research ornamental horticulturist and head of the Texas Superstar board, Overton.



**Zinnias attract pollinating insects, which adds to their fun.**

Fall zinnias and chrysanthemums have similar attributes and can be used in much the same ways. But whereas chrysanthemums may only flower for several weeks, and then only if the weather is cool, fall zinnias tolerate Texas heat well and will display color until the first frost, if properly watered and fertilized.

Strictly speaking, the “marylandica type” refers to a distinct species, *Zinnia marylandica*. Marylandica types include the ‘Profusion’ and ‘Zahara’ series. They bloom prolifically and grow as tall as 12 to 18 inches. Individual flowers are as large as two and a half inches in diameter.

“Mounds of color” refers to the marylandica types, which tend to be more compact or bushier than standard zinnia varieties. This bushy characteristic makes them ideal for mixed borders, beds, cutting gardens, containers, and what are known as

“cottage gardens”—a rustic style featuring a mixture of ornamental and edible plants.

While standard zinnias can be susceptible to diseases such as powdery mildew, the marylandica types are highly resistant. Placing the plants so they get good air circulation or flow will further help prevent fungal leaf diseases. They actually bloom more proficiently in full sun. They need full sunlight for a half day or more, and will thrive as long as they have moderate water and are planted in a well-drained site or container.

Gardeners can pinch off or prune young plants of the standard older types to encourage bushiness, but this is not required for the newer types. If you like, the newer series of zinnias can be “deadheaded” (spent flowers pinched off) to promote further blooming and maintain plant appearance. Dying flowers retain some color, and there’s generally not a lot of deadheading involved, but you can safely do that if you wish.

Usually, fall zinnias of all types begin showing up in Texas garden centers in September. They are available in 4-inch and larger pots for transplanting to the landscape.



**New Marylandica type forms  
‘mounds of color’**

“You can also get them in large containers that can be used as patio plants. They’re fun to use in mixed containers with other things for fall, such as ornamental grasses or ornamental peppers such as NuMex Twilight, which was named a Texas Superstar several years ago”, Dr. Pemberton stated.

Another nice feature to all the zinnia types is they are big attractions for pollinators, such as butterflies, according to Pemberton.

Texas Superstar is a registered trademark owned by Texas A&M AgriLife Research. More information about the Texas Superstar program can be found online at <http://www.texassuperstar.com/>.

*Source: Taken from an article by Robert Burns, A&M Extension Communication Specialist*



**Save The Date!  
Saturday, March 19, 2016**



## Have you ever considered becoming a Master Gardener?



Ellis County Master Gardeners will hold training classes each Tuesday and Thursday throughout the month of February 2016. If you are interested in the Master Gardener Program and would like an application, please contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office in Ellis County at (972) 825-5175, e-mail [Ellis-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:Ellis-tx@tamu.edu) or find the application on the Master Gardener website, [www.ecmga.com](http://www.ecmga.com).

Be our guest at our monthly meetings, which are held the second Tuesday of each month starting at 10:00 at the First United Methodist Church on West Marvin in Waxahachie. Details about the October meeting and program can be found on page one.

Check the Ellis County Master Gardeners website at [www.ecmga.com](http://www.ecmga.com) 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 telephone call or email if you leave a message at (972) 825-5175.

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.



Find us on:  
**facebook®**

Ellis County Master Gardeners are on Facebook and we'd love to have you join us. Check in to find out where and when our local events will be held—events like the Downtown Waxahachie Farmer's Market or Lighthouse for Learning Classes. Drop by our page after an event to see pictures.

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! Some of the recent posts include fall container garden ideas, a Texas Tree Selector, hummingbird info and updates on some great local events that gardeners will find interesting and educational. You can also post pictures and let us know what is happening in your gardens and landscape.

You'll find us at this link, 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. If you have a QR Code reader on your smartphone, you can scan our code and be taken directly to our Facebook page.



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

Oh how we love pumpkin season. You *did* know this gourd-ish squash has its own season, right? Winter, Spring, Summer, Pumpkin....We anxiously anticipate it every year.

~Trader Joe's Fearless Flyer,

October 2010







## Landscape Gardening

From: Gail Haynes, Ellis County Master Gardener

Ellis County Master Gardeners have a website at [www.ecmga.com](http://www.ecmga.com). Check it for information on gardening in Ellis County, sign up for this monthly newsletter, or access other websites, including the Texas A&M Horticulture website. Questions for Master Gardeners will be answered with a return email or telephone call when you leave a message at (972) 825-5175.

### POMEGRANATES—Edible Landscape

Pomegranates, *punica granatum*, were brought by the Spanish to America. After Cortez conquered Mexico in 1521, Jesuit missionaries sent to work with the Indians brought pomegranates from Spain. From Mexico, they were carried northward to missions in California and possibly east to Texas. They were also thought to be in the early-Florida city of St. Augustine. Some pomegranates have naturalized in the coastal areas of the United States.

The pomegranate plant form is that of a small deciduous tree or large shrub, growing up to 25 feet tall. Pomegranates are multi-stemmed unless pruned to a single trunk.

Originally grown for their fruit, they are also known for the beautiful flowers that can occur for several months in the spring and early summer. Most commonly, they are red-orange, but white, pink and variegated flowers may also be found. Double-flowering types have blossoms that are carnation-like. Pomegranates are also useful for large hedges. Their foliage is shiny and dark green, and the stems are somewhat thorny.

Native to Arabia, Persia, Bengal, China and Japan, pomegranates are sometimes hardy as far north as Washington, D.C., but are best adapted to the Deep South, where they have escaped cultivation in the Gulf Coast states.

Pliny the elder, a Roman naturalist, considered pomegranates to be among the most valuable of ornamental and medicinal plants. Theophrastus provided an early description about 300 years before the Christian era. Many legends concerning the pomegranate have been handed down by Asian people. The many seeds are supposed to be a symbol of fertility.

Legend also says that the pomegranate was the 'tree of life' in the Garden of Eden, and from this belief it became the symbol of hope and eternal life in early Christian art. The erect calyxlobes of the fruit were the inspiration for Solomon's crown and for all future crowns.

Pomegranates were often found in nineteenth century Southern gardens and nurseries. In his *Southern Rural Almanac*, and

*Plantation and Garden Calendar for 1860*, Thomas Affleck listed them in his Washington County, Texas nursery, and said, "The pomegranate grows, thrives and bears most admirably."

Although of very easy culture, pomegranates prefer a sunny location and deep soil. They thrive in acid or alkaline soils, and tolerate heavy clay as long as there is sufficient drainage. Plants of the dwarf and large-growing forms are available.

Plants tend to be long lived, but occasionally they freeze back to the ground.

For a period in the early 1900s, pomegranates were grown in commercial quantities in the U.S., but consumers have never really developed an appreciation of the pomegranate fruit. In addition to eating fresh, the fruit may be used in the preparation of syrups (especially grenadine), alcoholic beverages and jellies.

Many forms exist, but not all fruit well. Generally, double-flowering types provide little, if any, fruit. Mature specimens withstand drought well, but fruit often splits after rainy spells following extended dryness. Dormant hardwood cuttings root well (as do softwood cuttings) under mist in the summer.

Interesting trials with pomegranates from Iran and Russia are being conducted in the Houston area by fruit specialists who believe that some of the plants may have superior fruiting, growth and hardiness characteristics. Pomegranate varieties suitable for growing in Texas are:

Al-sirin-nar—A vigorous plant; fruit is glossy red with rosy-pink arils; sweet-tart taste has produced some of the

best yields to date; ripens in late October.

Russian 18—Medium to large fruit with bright red skin; very good sweet-tart taste. Cold hardy; adapted over a wide area of Texas; bears at an early age.

Salavatski—Large red fruit with reddish arils; tastes typically sweet with a hint of tartness. Good cold hardiness; ripens in mid-October.

Spanish Sweet—Produces large red fruit and arils with hard seeds; tastes sweet, but very tart. Cold tolerant; very produc-





Landscape Gardening (Continued from page 10)

tive; ripens in mid-October.

Sumbar—Sweet fruit; soft seeds. Ripens early; has survived very cold winters in Fredericksburg area; potential cold injury problems if planted too far north.

Surh Anor—Large fruit with high sugar content; arils are usually alternately clear and red speckled. Consistently productive; ripens in mid-October

Wonderful—Vigorous plant; consistently produces many large fruit. The main commercial variety to date; fruit process well; splitting of the fruit near maturity and lack of cold hardiness have been ongoing problems in Texas.



Twig girdler and damaged twigs

## GARDEN CHECKLIST FOR OCTOBER

By Dr. William C. Welch, Professor and Landscape Horticulturist

- ✿ October through November is an excellent time to purchase bulbs while there is still a good selection. Bulbs can be planted at any time, except tulips and hyacinths.
- ✿ Refrigerate tulip and hyacinth bulbs until mid to late December before planting. The lower part of the refrigerator is best. Do not leave bulbs in airtight plastic bags during refrigerator storage.
- ✿ Plant bulbs in well-prepared beds. The base of the bulb should be at a depth that is three times the diameter of the bulb. In sandy soil, set bulbs slightly deeper; in clay soils, slightly shallower.
- ✿ Start collecting leaves for composting. Be sure to have enough soil on hand to cover each 6-inch layer of leaves with several inches of soil. Add about one pound of a complete lawn or garden fertilizer to each leaf layer to provide the necessary nitrogen for decomposition. Thoroughly wet the leaf layer before adding soil.
- ✿ Check your nursery or garden center for plants of snapdragons, pinks, Sweet Williams (pictured above), poppies and calendulas. Planted now, they will usually provide a riot of spring color.
- ✿ Keep Christmas cacti in a sunny spot with nighttime temperatures below 65°F; buds drop if nighttime temperatures rise above 70°F, or if the plants become excessively dry. To initiate flower buds, Christmas cacti should be kept in total darkness from 5p.m. until 8a.m. for about 30 days in October.



- ✿ If you have saved seed from your favorite plants, first air-dry them, and then place in an airtight container and refrigerate. Carefully label each packet. Remember, plants grown from hybrid plant seed seldom resemble the parent plant.

- ✿ Prepare planting beds for pansies as soon as they are available at garden centers, and the night temperatures are consistently cool. Pansies need well-drained soil and at least a half day of sun. It is best to use started plants, as seed is difficult to handle. Other annuals to plant now (except in the High Plains and Panhandle) include ornamental kale and cabbage, snapdragons, sweet alyssum and petunias.



- ✿ If you wish to save caladium tubers for another year, dig in late October and allow them to dry in a

well-ventilated, but shaded area. After seven to 10 days, remove the leaves and dirt; then store in dry peat moss, vermiculite or a similar material. Pack so that the tubers do not touch each other and dust with an all-purpose fungicide. Store the container in an area where temperatures won't drop below 50°F.

- ✿ If twig girdlers have infested your trees and many twigs and branches are dropping, make sure these are collected and destroyed since the eggs are deposited in that portion of the branch that drops to the ground.
- ✿ There is still time to divide and reset perennials such as phlox, violets, iris, daylilies and shasta daisies.

✿ October is a good time to reduce the potential for insects and disease in next year's garden. Clean up the garden, removing all annuals that have completed their life cycle. Remove the tops of all herbaceous perennials when they finish flowering, or as soon as frost kills the leaves.

✿ Holly plants with a heavy set of fruit often suffer from a fertilizer deficiency. Applying a complete fertilizer late in October can be helpful and will provide a head start next spring.





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