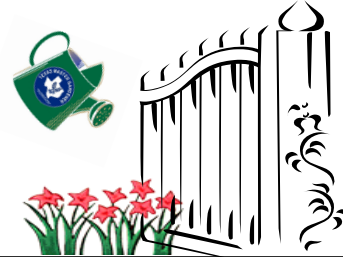




Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume IX, Issue Seven

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

July, 2016

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. Best of all; it's FREE!

Susan Clark, Editor

What's Happening in July?

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!**



Temperatures are certainly hot, but the market still has lots of fresh produce, eggs, honey, baked goods, canned goods, locally raised beef, tamales, roasted coffee and more. Make one of your grocery stops the Farmers Market and support your local growers, farmers and crafters. Remember Master Gardeners are on hand every week to answer your gardening questions.

July 16th—Today we're featuring the market J's...jams, jellies and jewels. Stop by to sample some of the many jams and jellies and take home your favorites. Plus see the pieces our talented jewelers have made. They make great gifts!

The Master Gardeners have a Pop-Up Horticulture Program. Today's topic is irrigation efficiency and rainwater harvesting. MG Jim Derstler will demonstrate equipment and techniques to improve irrigation and offers tips to conserve water. Look for Jim under the white tent.

July 23rd—It's Christmas in July today at the market. Many of the market sellers have surprises in store for shoppers wanting to get a jump start on holiday gifts! Head down to the Farmers Market, get some of your weekly grocery items checked off your list, visit with the sellers, find a few gifts and enjoy a cold aqua fresca, all the while supporting your local Farmers Market.

July 30th—Today at the Farmers Market, your market chefs are highlighting the sweet heat of peppers. Stop by for tasty samples and refreshing flavored water. You'll find a wide variety of baked goods, canned fruits and vegetables, flavored pastas, oil, vinegars, locally roasted coffee, beef, grains, produce along with essential oils, plants, specialty clothes, handmade toys and women's clutches, keychains, jewelry, trinkets and more. Shop early, shop weekly and know the money you spend is especially appreciated by your Farmers Market sellers!



Indian Trail Master Naturalists Events

Join the **Indian Trail Master Naturalists** at their monthly meeting on **Monday, July 25**. The program for the evening is entitled **"Urban Horticulture"** with **Chris Seale** and begins at **7pm**. Chris Seale is the Horticulturist for the City of Waxahachie. He received his B.S. degree in Horticulture and Landscape Management from Tarleton State University. He has been active in the horticulture industry for 22 years. Chris, along with his wife, daughter and son call Waxahachie home. 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., Waxahachie. For more info, call (972) 825-5175 or email ellis-tx@tamu.edu

(Continued on page 3)

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

Inside this issue:

<i>It's July, What Needs to be Done?</i>	2
<i>Wildflower of the Month</i>	3
<i>ECMGA June Grill Fest Highlights</i>	4
<i>July/August Garden Checklist</i>	5
<i>On Becoming a Master Gardener</i>	5
<i>When is a Lily not a Lily?</i>	6
<i>TX Superstar: Whopper Begonias</i>	8
<i>* New! Eclectic Gardening</i>	9
<i>ECMGA 4th of July Parade</i>	10



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

Planting

- ☼ Plant tomatoes and peppers from four-inch pots. For recommended varieties, visit www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable.
- ☼ Early July is the time to plant small and medium pumpkins for a Halloween harvest.
- ☼ Crape myrtles are in bloom at local nurseries so you can be sure that you get the color you want. All newly planted trees and shrubs should be kept watered until established.
- ☼ Plant heat-tolerant annuals that have been acclimated to hot, sunny conditions. This includes moss rose, purslane, trailing lantana, purple fountain grass, firebush and copper plants.
- ☼ Lawn grasses can be planted this month. You will need to water twice daily for short intervals to keep the soil surface moist until the grass has established good roots, usually in two to three weeks.

Fertilizing and Pruning

- ☼ Fertilize plants that bloom on new growth, such as crape myrtles, tropical hibiscus and roses, with a high-nitrogen fertilizer to promote late-summer growth and fall blooms. Apply the same fertilizer to give a boost to summer annuals and fall-flowering perennials.
- ☼ Light pruning of erratic spring growth may be done to maintain the natural form. Major pruning should be postponed until mid-winter. Dead and diseased wood from trees and shrubs should be removed any time the need arises.
- ☼ Deadhead all blooming plants. Remove dead leaves and spent blooms from container plants.

Garden Watch

- ☼ Be a “plant health” detective! In the middle of our North Texas summers, plants will respond in various ways to heat and drought stress. Often these symptoms are misdiagnosed as an insect or disease problem. Correctly identify the problem before turning to a pesticide.
- ☼ Galls on the leaves of live oaks, hackberries and other trees are caused by many species of gall-forming insects and are the result of the female stinging the leaf tissues as she lays her eggs. The galls are harmless to the tree since the insect doesn't feed on the plant tissues.
- ☼ Be alert for summer drought conditions which could occur at any time now, leaving normally well-hydrated plants lacking sufficient water. If plants are still wilted the next morning, watering is needed.
- ☼ Watch out for lawn pests. Dry, light-colored areas in sunny parts of St. Augustine are probably the result of chinch bugs (small black insect with white diamond on its back). Apply Merit (imidoclopyrid) or other labeled insecticides. Grub worms are the culprits if the turf turns brown and easily comes up when pulled on. Treat with a granular insecticide, especially if you had the problem last year.
- ☼ Don't forget to provide water for the birds, squirrels and other wildlife that may visit your property.

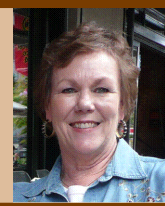
Antelope-Horn Milkweed (*Asclepias asperula*) The milkweed grows one to two feet in height with spreading stems forming a rounded mound up to three feet in width. The stems are covered with dense short hairs. The leaves are up to four inches long, narrow and irregularly grouped. The flowers are unusual in that the three to four inch flower head is an umbrella shape out of which extend five white stamens with large ball-like anthers.

All milkweeds serve as larval host plants for the monarch and other closely related butterflies. The fruit is a green pod resembling the horn sheath of a pronghorn antelope. An old time use of the milkweed was to remove warts by daily application of the milky sap. Perennial blooms April to August.



Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener



Baby Blue Eyes—Dogbane Family (Apocynaceae)
Amsonia ssp.



Region: 1 through 10 (Ellis County is Region 4)
Size: 1 to 4 feet
Blooms: April through November, Perennial

Amsonia is stiffly upright, with dark green, shiny foliage setting off the inflorescence. Blue, pale blue or white star-shaped flowers are loosely clustered at the top of each stem, often barely surpassing the alternate leaves.

Normally, blue star grows in a moist environment, often in marshes, ditches, bogs or floodplains. It is recommended for use in the garden where it thrives with a little extra water, but *A. ciliata*, a western species of this lovely plant, lives in drought-prone habitats, growing on limestone and chalky hills in Regions 4, 5, 7 and 8.

Lawn & Garden Expo



Interested in becoming a
2017 Expo Sponsor Or
Expo Exhibitor?

Contact James Kocian at
expo.ecmga@yahoo.com

Reserve the date: March 25, 2017!

What's Happening (Continued from page 1)

Master Naturalist 2016 Annual Spring Training Class. The Indian Trail Chapter (ITMN) is now accepting applications for their 2016 Fall Training Class, which will start on August 30th. The application deadline is July 20, 2016. Applicants will receive acceptance notification by July 30, 2016. ITMN will hold training classes on Tuesdays (6pm–9pm) from August 30 to November 15 at First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 505 West Marvin Avenue, Waxahachie. There will also be three Saturday field trips as part of the training. The Texas Master Naturalist Program is co-sponsored by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. For more information and to receive an application, please e-mail ellis-tx@tamu.edu, or contact the AgriLife Extension Service Office by phone: (972) 825-5175.

Saturday, July 16, 9am, Wildflower & Bird Walk. Members will be leading a walk at Mockingbird Nature Park. Join in this ½ mile stroll along the trails to identify wildflowers and birds. Free to the public. Participants should bring drinking water and binoculars. The walk will be canceled if raining. Info at: <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/> or email: Information@itmnc.com

Wednesday, July 27, 8:30pm–11pm. Moth Night at Mockingbird Nature Park. In conjunction with National Moth Week, special moths lights will be set up to attract, photograph and identify the moths in our area. It's easy, fun and free. Stay as long as you like. Bring water and insect repellent. Bring a flashlight to use on the trail and a camera for photos. For details, email information@itmnc.com.

POPULAR FARMER'S MARKET GRILL FEST WAS A REAL TREAT

Submitted by Joan Brammer, Ellis County Master Gardener

Saturday, June 18 was ECMGA Grill Festival Time at the Waxahachie Downtown Farmers Market. Bright and early Saturday morning Mark Arnold, Ellis County Ag Extension Agent, fired up his grills and with the help of chefs Mike Peters, Monte Gerner and Walt Lese, coals and the day's temperatures got hot quickly.

Ellis County Master Gardeners gathered fruits and vegetables from the market farmers and vendors and began washing, chopping and seasoning potatoes, squash, beans, tomatoes, onions and peppers with herb infused oil. Watermelon, peaches and cantaloupe were seasoned with butter, honey, cinnamon and brown sugar. If it was for sale at the market, and you could eat it, we grilled it! Grilled peaches were a real hit as usual.

Free samples began to come off the fires around 9am and were passed out by Dan Griffin, Ray Pouliot, Pat Cooper, Suzanne Walker and many others. Grilling continued until about 12:30pm. Approximately 400 plates of tasty samples were enjoyed.

In addition to the popular vegetables and fruits, a special treat this year was the offering of locally raised beef. The Yellow Farmhouse and the Texas Farm Bureau teamed up to offer grilled sliders cooked by our Master Gardener team of chefs.

The grilling festival has been an annual event since the market opened in 2003 and has always offered some unusual flavors, and a wide variety of samples. Grill Fest Chairperson Joan Brammer praised her dedicated team of Master Gardeners and Mark Arnold for a great job.

A second Grill Fest is planned for cooler weather on Saturday, September 17, 2016. If you missed this one, be sure to visit us in the fall.



July-August Garden Checklist

By Dr. William C. Welch, Landscape Horticulturist Texas A&M

- ★ Check plants for mulch. Replace or add when needed.
- ★ Keep close check on recently set out plants. Inadequate root systems and drought can be damaging. Plants injured by last winter's cold should not be allowed to suffer drought stress.
- ★ Sow seeds of the following annuals for late summer and fall flowering: marigold, zinnia, periwinkle, petunia, cosmos, portulaca and ageratum. Transplants, if available from your nursery or garden center, will usually provide faster color.
- ★ To keep hanging baskets looking attractive, soak them in a tub of water every few days in addition to the regular daily watering. This is also a good time to fertilize baskets by incorporating water-soluble fertilizer into the water every three to four weeks.
- ★ Divide spring and early summer perennials, including daffodils, daylilies, iris, etc., and replant the best clumps. Discard the diseased or damaged material and share any surplus with friends.
- ★ Don't forget to water large leaved plants like hydrangeas, coleus, caladiums and chrysanthemums. Even in shade, the hot, dry wind can soon deplete the soil of moisture where these plants are grown.
- ★ Bluebonnet seeds should be ordered this month so you will be ready to plant in August and September.



Parrot gladiolus *G. natalensis*

★ If you have planted copper plants for fall color, be sure to pinch out the tips of the branches to encourage branching and develop bushy, compact plants.

★ Gladiolus corms can be dug, cured and stored as soon as the foliage turns brown.

★ Many spring flowering shrubs will be forming flower buds in late July and August. Drought conditions can reduce both the quantity and quality of spring flowers. This is true of azaleas, camellias, peaches, pears, forsythias and other similar plants. Don't allow them to suffer drought stress at this critical time.

★ Clean up iris beds and thin out clumps if crowded. They can be transplanted and divided anytime from late July to October.

★ The care you give your rose garden in July and August will determine both the quality and the quantity of flowers you will have in late September and October. Adequate moisture and an application of nitrogen fertilizer in late July will be beneficial.

On Becoming a Master Gardener

By Diane Rose
Ellis County Master Gardener



Most who read this have had some interaction with the Master Gardeners in Ellis County, either through an educational event, at the Farmers Market or maybe at the annual Garden Expo in March. And on the chance that you would like to learn more about the Master Gardener association and getting involved, this may interest you.

Ask yourself some questions, "Why are you interested in this program? What do you think you will get from it? What can you contribute?"

Are you an avid gardener or do you enjoy watching plants come alive after a long, cold, gray winter? This program could be for you because you love plants.

Are you wanting to learn more about plants and how to grow them? Have you planted every avocado seed that has passed through your kitchen? Have you suffered the loss of a plant you worked so hard to keep alive? The Master Gardener program will give you the resources and confidence to continue on.

Have you recently retired, become a stay-at-home parent, relocated to this area, or realized you need a new social group who has your same interests? The Ellis County Master Gardener organization includes people from every walk of life, varied ages, as well as varied interests, male and female. Some members are quiet and some are outspoken, all of them welcoming and friendly. They are the greatest asset of the organization.

Recently, June 13, 2016, BBC News, Nick Trigg, in his report "Gardening and volunteering: The new wonder drugs," described how good for us these two activities are. He stated that volunteering improves self-esteem, reduces social isolation, and helps people learn new skills. Gardening has many physical benefits, as low impact exercise, improving energy, lowering risks of heart disease, obesity, and cancer. Gardening also improves balance which is extremely important as we age to prevent falls. This author believes that gardening could become a "mainstream" part of health care.

My suggestions: go to a meeting, volunteer to help work in a garden, attend a Lighthouse for Learning class, find your passion and find new friends! You can get more information about upcoming training classes by contacting the Agrilife Extension Service Office by e-mail: ellis-tx@tamu.edu, or by phone: (972) 825-5175.

When is a Lily not a Lily?...When it is a Canna Lily, Part Two

By Cheryl Ellison
Ellis County Master Gardener



In Part One of *When is a Lily Not a Lily-When it is a Canna Lily*, we established that the family, *Cannaceae Canna*, is overflowing with lavish, flamboyant, exotic, tropical-looking flowering plants. Coming in a vast diversity of color with immense paddle-shaped leaves, they are among the most colorful summer bulbs, with the flower being favored by hummingbirds. Canna are low maintenance and easy to grow, and both their flowers and foliage offer long-lasting color that make a dramatic statement in the garden. Let's take a look at how to plant and care for these audaciously stunning perennials.

Canna is a rhizomatous, (horizontal, underground stem) herbaceous (no woody tissue) perennial that can be planted in almost any good, well-worked garden soil, preferably conditioned with a heavy dressing of manure or compost. They need lots of sunshine, but will tolerate partial shade.

Canna will survive in a shady site, but they will not grow as profusely and the leaves (especially red or purple) may lose their color, defeating the purpose of growing them. They like moist conditions, but will tolerate nearly any well-draining soil that is either neutral or slightly acidic and will fit nicely into the current concept of water-wise gardening. They are easily grown and do not require large amounts of water in order to thrive.

Planting Instructions

Plant canna rhizomes in the spring after all danger of frost has passed, and the soil has warmed (about the time you plant your tomatoes). Prepare the garden bed by using a garden fork or tiller to loosen the soil to a depth of 12 to 15 inches, and then mix in a two to four inch layer of compost. Dig a hole four to six inches deep to place the rhizome.

While technically they don't have a top or bottom, most canna rhizomes can be planted horizontally with the eyes (prominent red buds) facing up. Space the rhizomes one to four feet apart, depending on the variety and firmly cover it with soil; water thoroughly. When growing canna in the garden,

placing them in mixed borders or group plantings will offer the most dramatic effect.

Plant Care

Flowering is more prolific if gardeners remove the old flowers, taking care not to damage the unopened buds still remaining in the flower spike. At least one to two inches of water per week is needed to keep canna looking their best. Canna are heavy feeders and need plenty of compost or organic fertilizer to keep plants looking their best. Without adequate fertility or moisture, Canna can look quite ugly. If your Canna looks ratty during the summer, that's a sure sign that an extra shovel of manure or additional water is required. You can cut ragged plants to the ground even in midsummer, add fertilizer, water, and they will quickly recover.



Canna Eyes

<http://awaytogarden.com/how-to-slideshow-wake-up-cannas-wake-up/>

If you're growing your canna in containers, keep in mind that canna are large plants and therefore need a large container. Any good potting soil will work fine. The plants will lose vigor as they become pot-bound. When that happens, lift the root-ball; divide the rhizomes, leaving at least three eyes per root stalk and replant. As with most container-grown plants, when the ambient temperature rises, the temperature in the pot rises, drying the soil quicker, so canna will require more frequent watering during the heat of the summer. It may even help to stand the pot in a saucer of water. Provide a slow-release granular or water soluble fertilizer, following instructions according to the label.

Propagation

Canna can easily be propagated by division. When dividing the rhizome, lift it and remove any excess soil. Cut the rhizome into sections, each containing at least three eyes. Single-eye divisions may survive, but will take longer to produce a vigorous new plant. The best time to divide is when the rhizome is actively growing so that the new buds are easily seen. As the rhizome grows, older segments become very dry and woody. If

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

these areas will not naturally detach from the healthier tissue of the rhizome, they can be cut off. Propagation by seed is possible; however, if you have several varieties of canna, you can expect a wide range of variability in the seedlings since they are both self-fertile as well as out-crossing to other nearby canna.

Pests

The primary pest is the Canna Leaf Roller (*Calpodethrius*). This caterpillar will turn into the small golden-brown Brazilian Skipper butterfly.

The tell-tale sign of the leafroller will be a fully developed leaf that has not unfurled. Additionally, you may see a horizontal line of holes in the leaf. Upon closer inspection, you will see silken threads the caterpillar spun to keep the leaves closed.



Canna leafroller, *Calpodethrius*, caterpillar. Photo by Drees.

You can unroll leaves carefully and remove the caterpillars. The leafroller may be controlled on the leaves by applying a solution of BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), insecticidal soap or other chemical control once a week. Apply the insecticide around and into the young leaves while they are still rolled up.

One mistake that canna growers make is to leave the old dead growth on the canna bed as a mulch. As canna seems to be the only host plant for this pest, it may be possible to drastically reduce the Canna Leaf Roller population just by removing dead leaves and stems in the winter after the frost has killed back the foliage.

Diseases

In hot, humid climates, canna can develop a fungal problem called Canna Rust. Symptoms of Canna Rust include spore-like orange spots on the plant's leaves and stems. In advanced stages of infection, the upper leaf surface spots will join, turn dark brown to black and become dry and cause the leaf to drop prematurely. When Canna Rust first appears, the affected foliage should be removed and discarded. Leaving the affected foliage on the plant will result in continued growth and spread of

the fungus. Sometimes in wet weather, the blooms are infected with Botrytis Blight, a type of gray fuzzy mold, or Rhizome rot. Organisms cause rhizomes to decay and stems to rot at the base and a cottony fungal growth may be present. Botrytis Blight is

controlled by removing the diseased flowers. Rhizome root rot is controlled by thinning the plants periodically and throwing away any diseased roots.

Special Care

Tall varieties should be sheltered from strong winds. High winds will tear and split the leaves and bend or break the stalk.

Winter Care

Canna is a root hardy perennial in this area and therefore really no need to dig up the rhizomes as required in colder areas. Allow the foliage to die back to the ground and then remove dead growth from bed. Apply mulch to insulate rhizomes through cold months.

Other than the annual dead foliage cut back and the occasional need to thin the growing area

to prevent overcrowding, Canna require very little care except for food and water. How else can you put so small investment into adding drama and flamboyance to your garden!

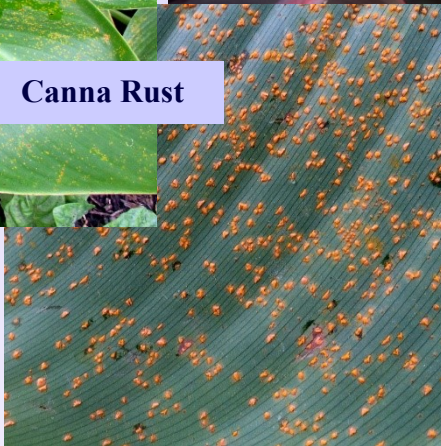
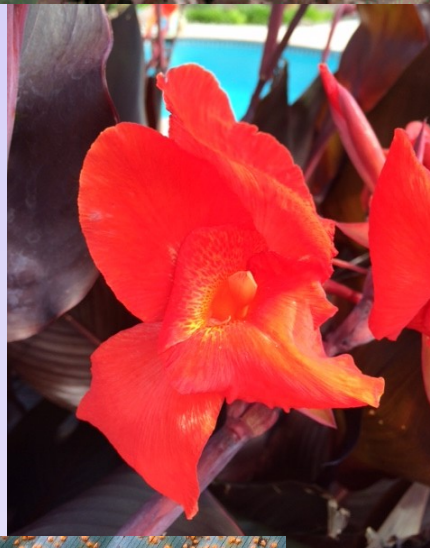
Resources:

<http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/bulbs/canna/canna-lily-care.htm>
<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden/cannas.html>
<http://www.plantdelights.com/Article/Canna-Lily>
http://agrilife.org/harrishort/2015/06/23/seeing-canna-rust/#.Vt4la_krK00

<http://www.hummingbirdhilltexas.com/30.html>



Canna Rust



Save The Date!
Saturday, March 25, 2017

Whopper Begonias: Bigger, Brighter and Heat Tolerant

By: Shirley Campbell, Ellis County Master Gardener



Wax begonias have long been a staple of Texas landscapes, but a recently introduced series has been distinguished as a bigger, brighter ornamental—Whopper begonias.

Whopper begonias have been named a 2016 Texas Superstar plant by Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service horticulturalists after three years of field trials around the state.

To be designated a Texas Superstar, a plant must not only be beautiful, but also perform well for consumers and growers throughout the state. Texas Superstars must be easy to propagate, which should ensure the plants are not only widely available throughout Texas, but also reasonably priced.

All Whopper begonias tested so far have shown vigor in all regions of the state with larger foliage and flowers and an ability to better tolerate heat and direct sun than most other begonias.

With large leaves on large plants and enormous flowers held well above the foliage for a showy display, the Whopper lives up to its name.

They are outstanding in shade and partial shade and will tolerate full sun except in extreme heat, especially regions with low relative humidity. Both green and bronze foliage types are available with red or rose flowers. Everything is bigger in Texas and Whopper begonias fit the bill.

The Whopper begonias performed very well in AgriLife Research and Extension trials as well as for selected growers and gardeners around the state. Both the bronze and green-leafed plants do well in direct sunlight in most regions, even through July and August. For the green-leafed variety, mid-afternoon shade or filtered light provides a good break from the summer sun.

Whopper begonias planted in shade can reach 24-30 inches tall with a 12-16-inch spread, but will be shorter and more compact with more sun. Small plants can be placed eight to ten inches apart for quicker fill, but up to 12-14 inches apart with larger plants in six-inch to gallon-size containers.

It is best to plant Whopper begonias in spring just after frost, but they can be planted later. Plants tolerate heat and direct sun better if they are allowed to become well established prior to summer heat. A shady location is advised if planting in mid-summer.

I also have some tricks of my own to protect those new plants

from the summer sun during this time of year. Try covering with a milk crate or laundry basket, or even a lawn chair for a few days until they become acclimated. Making a tent with old wooden shingles works well. Have an old window screen hiding in the garage? Try propping that up to provide some shade.

A well-prepared bed with organic matter and good drainage is best, but the variety is tolerant of various soil types. Whopper begonias are moderately drought tolerant and soil should be kept moist, but not too wet. In times of heat shock, a liquid seaweed-based fertilizer treatment often reduces heat stress and it help protect the plant.



Use mulch. It's always good to use a layer of organic mulch around the base of the plants. This will add insulation to the soil and help the plants retain moisture. The mulch will also counteract the effect of the strong sunlight by soaking it up before the heat gets to the ground below. Keep in mind that the layer of mulch doesn't need to be thick. Two to three inches is enough to protect your plants.

AgriLife Extension recommends using a peat-based potting mix in containers that drain well and applying generous amounts of slow-release fertilizer. They do well on patios in large planters.

It is okay for the plants to dry out a bit, as they recover from wilt quite well; still the containers need to drain well.

Plants are available from retail nurseries and garden centers across the state, and seed can be purchased by mail order.

Texas Superstar is a registered trademark owned by AgriLife Research, a state agency that is part of the Texas A&M University System. Plants are designated Texas Superstars by the Texas Superstar Executive Board,

which is made up of seven AgriLife Research and Extension horticulturalists.

More information about other Texas Superstar plants and a list of wholesalers and retailers who stock them can be found at <http://texassuperstar.com/>.

Sources: Adam Russell, adam.russell@tylerpaper.com

Dr. Brent Pemberton, brent.pemberton@ag.tamu.edu

David Rodriguez, dhrodriguez@ag.tamu.edu

(Texas A&M AgriLife Research photo by Dr. Brent Pemberton)



NEW COLUMN!

Eclectic Gardening

With Jane Slone, Ellis County Master Gardener



BUTTERFLY GARDENING

This article is being written because I had the opportunity to visit several unique butterfly gardens. What I learned is how important it is for us to conserve our natural environment. The first place I visited was a New York City butterfly garden inside the Museum of Natural History. The garden was an artificial environment located on the second floor of the building.

Question: How did they obtain live butterflies to display?

They purchased the butterflies in an immature stage. There are farms that raise butterflies and sell them. They allow the butterflies to lay eggs. When they reach a certain stage, they ship the pupae.

What happens next is the pupae hatch into a butterfly. The goals of this particular garden were not for a butterfly to lead a normal life of producing offspring, but instead focused on the public.



THE PROCESS A CATERPILLAR GOES THROUGH TO BECOME A BUTTERFLY IS CALLED METAMORPHOSIS (CHANGES). THE FOUR STAGES ARE EGG, LARVA OR CATERPILLAR (FEEDING STAGE), PUPA OR CHRYSALIS (TRANSITION STAGE) AND ADULT (REPRODUCTIVE STAGE).

The realistic needs of feeding the butterflies was not an important part of the garden. Containers for feeding were provided and some fresh fruit was placed in areas for nectar gathering, but there was not a plan for butterflies to mate.

Reproduction of the species was not a goal. Perhaps though this display would help the public understand the importance of insects in our environment and the role that they play in plant reproduction.

One fault, I found, was that the gardens did not provide information about the importance of not polluting the environment with chemicals. The topic of pollution is one of the main goals of this article. It is an important part of gardening. If we pollute, we do not have insects. And without insects, plants are at risk for pollination. It is the cycle of nature.

My next adventure was to an outside garden at the Bronx Zoo. It was designed and built for the migration of butterflies that come through each year on their journey to reproduce. The plants were chosen and planted to attract the butterflies and provide them with the basic materials needed for life: food, water and a place for reproduction.

The Bronx Zoo and the Texas Discovery Garden (*butterfly house pictured*) are two examples of gardens that have been built to both

educate and provide a natural habitat. Each of these gardens provides a natural plant species and elements that will attract, feed and allow the NATIVE butterflies to exist in a near perfect environment.

What can you do if you want your own butterfly garden?

If you are planning a new garden, make sure it provides the needed materials for all flying creatures. It should provide shelter, food and a place for reproduction for birds, butterflies, bees and other creatures. There are many questions to ask before you plant your garden. I hope the following information will help you begin your plan.

What do you need to provide for the butterflies?

Food Year-Round

Plant for an entire year of blossoms, berries, seeds and larval hosts. Observe nature's process and leave dead wood and decay for foragers and detritivores. *Def: Detritivores include microorganisms such as bacteria and protist as well as larger organisms such as fungi, insects, worms and isopod crustaceans. Protists are organisms found in the soil.*

Different species of butterflies emerge in varying months of the year. Sometimes an early warm spell can trigger butterflies to emerge from their cocoons before your usual spring or summer flowers are blooming. Have enough plants, as well as a variety of plant species, to make sure your garden becomes one of the "hotspots" for touring butterflies. If you can't supply food through plants, fresh fruit can be provided, as well as feeders with sugar water.

FOOD AND WATER SHOULD BE AVAILABLE ALL SEASON. EVEN WHEN NATURE DOES NOT PROVIDE FOOD, BUTTERFLIES NEED NECTAR.

Water

Butterflies like shallow areas of water where they can land, but won't drown. Mud, puddles, shallow stone- or sand-filled basins or fountains with a slow trickle of water are their favorites. Why do butterflies like water that runs slowly and is not clean? Butterflies get their minerals directly from the soil, which is obtained through their water supply.

Rocks

Butterflies need natural rock or other garden ornaments in and around your yard. This allows them to rest. Butterflies also need minerals that are obtained from rock or from water baths that might have rocks in them.

Good luck in your building of a butterfly garden, or merely carving out an environment that will



(Continued on page 10)

Waxahachie Fourth of July Parade 2016

The Ellis County Master Gardeners participated in the Fourth of July Parade this year. The entry into the parade was a 100 year old wagon, pulled by two state champion Belgians, from the Sugar Ridge Ranch. Here are some highlights.

(pictured left) The parties who coordinated the parade wagon are left to right, Bryce Anderson, owner of the ranch and the Belgians; Dora Franks, chief trainer, driver and director of the Texas Draft Horse Association; and ranch manager and Master Gardener, Jim Anderson.



Beautiful Belgians, decorated head to tail!



(Continued from page 9)

allow the winged-animals to find a place to visit and feed!

And if you have the opportunity to visit a butterfly garden, enjoy the specimens. The gardens will also provide you with information about the best plants to add to your garden. That's an article for another time!

Two more excellent resources are the **Earth-Kind®** and **Water-Wise** programs. These programs were developed to provide information that will help you plan, construct and enjoy your garden based on the area in which you live. For more information, visit <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/> or <http://urbanlandscapeguide.tamu.edu/waterwise.html>



WANT SOME IDEAS?

Visit the ECMGA Butterfly Garden in Waxahachie. The Butterfly Garden (pictured) is located south of the town square, one block north of Howard Road adjacent to the rodeo grounds. It is part of the Getzendaner walking trail and parking is available at the site.

Thank You All!

Thanks to the sponsors, exhibitors and visitors for making the
2016 Ellis County Master Gardener's Lawn & Garden Expo
a great success!

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