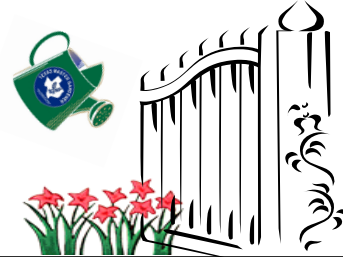




Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume XI, Issue 9

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

September, 2018

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! Editors and Newsletter Team: Susan Ellis, Donna Hubbard, Bree Shaw

What's Happening in September?

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!**

Every week at the Market, there is a unique theme designed to highlight vendor products, in-season produce, children's activities, or interesting garden subjects. Following are the upcoming themes for September and October

September 1 Come meet our trio of local beekeepers, Rolen's Honey, Cole's Hachie Honey and Lee, the Bee Ninja. Learn all about beekeeping, sample local raw honey and buy some to take home. There will be an observation hive on hand so visitors can watch the bees working up close without having to don a bee suit.

September 8 Kid's Activity— The Ellis County Master naturalists will be at the craft booth to share learning and an activity with the kids about identifying animals by their footprints.

September 15 Pop-Up Horticulture— Master Gardener Vegetable Specialists will be available to discuss which vegetables can be planted in Ellis County after September 1, and how to get the most from your garden. There will also be tips on how winter garden preparation can yield big results in the spring.

September 22 Taste of Market—Sweet Potatoes are in season and plentiful at the market so join market chefs, Cheryl and Arlene, as they bring you some savory samples of sweet potatoes. These creative chefs always have a few surprises cooked up, and love introducing market shoppers to some new flavors and new ideas. As always, there will be plenty of recipes to share.

September 29 Decked Out for Fall and Christmas—The market crafters and artists invite you to shop early for those unique, one-of-a-kind gifts for the holidays. Our sellers are all local small business people who take pride in offering their customers gift items not found anywhere else. You can find native American jewelry, handmade toys, hand sewn fiber art, purses, tote bags, key chains, custom fall and winter wreaths, beaded jewelry, custom tee shirts, homemade pickles, jams, jellies, herbal vinegars, and salts.

October 6 Chili Cook Off— Back by popular demand is our Second Annual Chili Cook Off.

Ellis County Master Gardener Monthly Meeting—You are invited! Second Tuesday of the month



There will not be a guest speaker at our September monthly meeting on Tuesday, September 11, 2018.

TEXAS A&M
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EXTENSION



Listen to KBEC

Saturday mornings at 8:10am on 1390 AM and 99.1 FM.

The Ellis County Master Gardeners have a fifteen 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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It's September—What Needs To Be Done?

Planting

- ~ Plant these fall vegetables now: beets, carrots, “greens” (mustard, collard, turnip), kale, lettuce, radishes, and spinach.
- ~ Lawn establishment using warm-season grasses such as Bermudagrass, St. Augustine, zoysia, and buffalo grass should be completed early in the month.
- ~ Overseed established Bermudagrass lawns with perennial ryegrass this month, if desired.
- ~ Plant these fall-blooming annuals from bedding plants before buds have opened: marigolds, petunias, asters, pinks, snapdragons, and mums. Wait until cooler weather to plant pansies, violas, and ornamental cabbages and kale.
- ~ Complete sowing bluebonnets to ensure spring flowers. For season-long color, purchase a wild-flower mix that contains annuals and perennials, as well as cool-season and warm-season plants such as bluebonnets, black-eyed Susan, Indian blanket, Indian paintbrush, Mexican hat, plains coreopsis, purple coneflower, and evening primrose. Sow seeds in areas that are free of grasses and lightly tilled. Lightly rake area to get good seed-soil contact before watering.



Fertilizing and Pruning

- ~ Apply high-nitrogen fertilizer (4-1-2 ratio) on lawns and shrubs to prepare plants for fall and winter. Container plants will benefit from using high-nitrogen, water soluble fertilizers.
- ~ Tidy up summer perennials by removing dead and faded flower stems and seed stalks. Continue through fall.
- ~ Root-prune trees and shrubs to be transplanted this winter. Cutting the roots around the plant with a spade will stimulate new root growth in what will become the soil ball when plant is moved.

Garden Watch

- ~ Apply a pre-emergent herbicide to lawns early in the month to control winter weeds. Depending on the type of weed targeted, it may be necessary to apply two products – one for grassy weeds (annual bluegrass, ryegrass, etc.), and another for broad leafed weeds (chickweed, clover, dandelions, henbit, etc.).
- ~ Make final application of Image® or Sedge Hammer® before mid-month to control nutsedge in warm-season lawns.
- ~ Remove webworms from pecan trees. Cut off the ends of the branches as soon as the webs appear. Tear open large webs to expose worms for the birds. Spraying is not practical.
- ~ Spray roses suffering from black spot and powdery mildew with labeled fungicide.
- ~ Prepare beds for spring-flowering bulbs. Add organic matter to improve water drainage.

Conservation-Wise

- ~ Harvest the rain! Install a rainwater catchment system on your property to reduce demand on public water supply. Rainwater is low pH, minerals and salt, and contains no chlorine. To learn more, contact a Master Gardener rainwater harvesting specialist by calling the local AgriLife Extension office at 972-825-5175.
- ~ Why mow it (lawn) when you can grow it! Incorporate edible plants into your landscape. To learn more about transitioning a part of your landscape into vegetable, fruit, or nut production, go to <https://wateruniversity.tamu.edu/about/publications> and click on “the Edible Landscape.”

Indian Trail Master Naturalists Events



Join the Indian Trail Master Naturalists at their monthly meeting on Monday, September 24, 2018. The program for the evening is entitled “**Foraging—It Is In Your DNA**”. David and Melodee Eishen, Texas Master Naturalists, will discuss the world of foraged food that is free, local, nutrient dense, and ecologically responsible. David and Melodee live on a small farm in the East Texas countryside where they raise cattle and ducks, and grow a wide variety of fruits and vegetables for their personal use. Together they teach a variety of classes related to forgotten skills on food foraging, preparation, and preserving. 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 Gathering Room, 505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie. For more info, call (972) 825-5175 or email ellis-tx@tamu.edu

Saturday, September 15, 8am, Wildflower Walk. Members will be leading the last walk for 2018 at Mockingbird Nature Park, 1361 Onward Road, Midlothian. Join in this ½ mile stroll along the trails to identify wildflowers. Free to the public. Participants should bring drinking water and wear comfortable shoes. The walk will be canceled if raining. Info at: <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/> or email: Information@itmnc.com

Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener



Manystem False Dandelion – Sunflower Family (Asteraceae)

Pyrhopappus multicaulis D.C.

Region: 1 through 8 (Ellis County Is Region 4)
Size: 6-20 inches
Blooms: February – September, Annual

The three species of false dandelions generally found in Texas are *P. multicaulis* (pictured) and *P. carolinianus*, both annuals, and *P. grandifloris*, a perennial. Terminal flowers have layers of many yellow petals around a center sprinkled with dark anther tubes. Flowers open in the morning and usually close around noon. The seed heads form the familiar poof-balls of silvery hairs that children love to blow to the wind. The very small leaves of early spring are sometimes used in salads. They also can be cooked as a potherb, parboiled to take away the bitter taste. While homeowners may think the favored habitat of false dandelion is the family lawn, one species or another can be found on roadsides or prairies and in pastures and fields, throughout the state. True dandelion, *Taraxacum*, is not a Texas native, but was introduced in the state, and is usually seen in disturbed areas in town or around human habitation.



Earthworms in the Garden

By Jane Slone, Ellis County Master Gardener



Most individuals think of fishing when you say worms. Gardeners normally think of soil pH, basic nutrients, sunlight, and water as the primary needs for a good garden environment. Worms are not usually the first thing to come to mind when planning the perfect garden soil. But, the gardener should think of worms as a necessity for the garden.

Worms have several major functions in soil improvement. It has been stated that if you dig up one square foot of garden soil, there should be at least ten worms visible. If you see ten worms, that means that the soil is full of worms. What can worms do to help the garden soil? Composting, aeration, and devouring nematodes are just a few of the benefits.

The word for using worms to help the garden is vermiculture. If you practice worm composting or vermiculture, you are using a natural way of improving the soil. Vermiculture as defined by the Mer-

riam-Webster is “the cultivation of annelid worms (such as earthworms or bloodworms) especially for use as bait or in composting.” The earthworm species (or composting worms) most often used are Red Wigglers or Red Worms (scientific name *Eisenia fetida* or *Eisenia andreaia*), though European nightcrawlers, also called Redworms (scientific name *Eisenia hortensis* or *Dendrobaena veneta*) can also be used.

Earthworms are very efficient, and can compost large amount of kitchen waste. Do be careful when adding kitchen waste. Some items should be avoided such as oil, grease and possibly coffee grounds. The pH of coffee grounds can be hazardous to the worms digestion. The worms that you find in your soil are garden worms. They may not be efficient in composting. They are beneficial for aeration of the soil.

Fisherman often use European nightcrawlers which makes them available at bait stores. If you want to save money, the best way to start your worm community is to order them online. If you order online be sure to have them delivered on a day other than Friday or Saturday. They may not survive over the weekend at the post office.

You’ve gone to great lengths to attract earthworms by adding compost and other organic matter to your soil or maybe you purchased worms to add. If you do have a source of garden worms, make sure your soil is “worm-ready” with plenty of organic material and moisture, or you will lose them. If you practice worm composting or vermiculture, you will have an even larger supply of compost for your garden as well as a potent compost tea for plants, not to mention keeping your kitchen waste from the landfill. (Vermiculture bins make a great science project for kids.) And if you don’t have worms in your compost piles to speed the process and strengthen the final product, well, then what are you waiting for?

Everyone knows how great worms are for the garden. They increase your soil’s porous qualities by tunneling, they cluster around decaying matter consuming fungi, bacteria, and nematodes and excreting them as vermicompost or worm castings, one of the most potent soil amendments there is.

Light House for Learning
(With the Ellis County Master Gardeners)

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

Join Ellis County Master Gardeners and Ellis County Extension Agency in a variety of classes to prepare your gardens and yards for fall.

All Classes are \$14.00 each and will be taught from 6:00-7:30 pm at the new Waxahachie High School Career & Technology Department, 3001 US Hwy 287 Bypass, Waxahachie, TX 75167 unless otherwise indicated.



Monday, October 1—Growing & Using Culinary Herbs Herbs are some of the easiest plants to grow. They will grow almost anywhere, don't like a lot of fertilizer, and generally prefer minimal watering. But, they reward you with an abundance of flavor year-round. What more could the casual gardener want! Learn which herbs grow best in north Texas, which love our hot summers, and those that prefer the cooler seasons. We will discuss harvesting tips, preserving, and many flavorful uses of herbs in the kitchen. There will be lots to smell and sample, and perhaps some plants to share. Instructor Arlene Hamilton

Monday October 8—Hobby Greenhouse Growing is Fun & Easy This class is taught by an Ellis County Master Gardener, and will cover the basics to get you started on your own greenhouse. Learn about site preparation, types, materials, growing, temperature control, common pests, and solutions. Instructor Debbie Lane

Thursday, October 11—Cut Your Water Bill in Half; Home Irrigation If you have a home irrigation system, chances are you could be wasting over 50% of your water usage due to an inefficient system. Learn the basics of designing an efficient irrigation system. Gain the knowledge to install a system yourself, or have the tools to ask the smart questions of an irrigation contractor. Information will be provided to help you maintain an existing system, and test procedures to determine if any adjustments are required to keep your system in top condition. No matter if you intend to install a new system, maintain an existing system, or just want to know more about one of the most ignored systems in the home, this class is for you. Instructor Jim Derstler

Tuesdays, October 16—November 6 (four classes) Beginning Farmer/Rancher If you are a land owner or have newly acquired a farm or ranchland and are seeking information for the best way to utilize your property, join this experienced instructor for advice. Topics covered: 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 6:00 – 8:00 pm Cost \$22.00

Thursday, October 18—Propagation for Fall & Winter Want to save some of your plants before winter? Want to learn ways to start plants when it's too cold to plant outside in the ground? This class will show you how. Instructor Gay Doyle

Monday, October 22—Holiday Decorating with Pumpkins & Sedums Fall pumpkin holiday decorations using succulents. Use as decorations at your front door entrance, your holiday dinner table, or just around the house. Long lasting decorations everyone will enjoy!! Instructor Mary Brower

Thursday, October 25—Winterizing Your Lawn & Preparing for Spring Learn what needs to be done with your turf to finish up the growing season, prepare for winter dormant period, and anticipate the coming of spring. Instructor Mike Peters

Monday, October 29—Reliable Texas Plants & Heirloom Gardening This course will be an overview of landscaping with reliable Texas plants. Native and adapted trees, flowers, and shrubs will be presented along with some interesting heirloom gardening information. Instructor Lynn Halowec

Thursday, November 1—Best Trees for Ellis County; Selecting, Planting & Care We will discuss what species of trees thrive in Ellis County, and how to select trees for a specific location. Learn what to look for when selecting a tree, planting technique and care. This class is just in time for Arbor Day and learning about adopt a tree program. Instructor Ginger Cole



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Contact James Kocian at
expo.ecmga@yahoo.com

Reserve the date: March 30, 2019!





Featured Recipe of the Month

Creamy Hatch Chile Chicken

Recipe By: Yoly (from All Recipes)

"Hatch chilis are in season for only 8 weeks a year, 10 weeks if the weather is extra warm. Our local markets roast and sell them in 25-lb boxes. We buy 50 lbs. every year, package them, and freeze them. This flavorful recipe can be served in tortillas, over rice, or by itself."



Ingredients

- 5 Hatch Chile peppers
- 1 1/2 tablespoons butter
- 1 onion cut into strips
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 3/4 tablespoon chicken bouillon granules
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
- 1 cup Mexican crema

Directions

1. Place Hatch chilis directly on the grates of a gas stove. Cook over medium heat, flipping with tongs occasionally, until blackened and charred, about 5 minutes. Place in a sealed plastic bag and allow to cool, 7 to 8 minutes. Peel off charred skins, remove seeds, and cut flesh into 1-inch squares.
2. Melt butter in a pan and sauté onion until translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in corn. Add chilis and sprinkle with chicken bouillon granules and pepper. Stir until well combined. Add chicken and crema; simmer until heated through, about 5 minutes.

Lemongrass

Citronella. Although there are many lemon aroma plants in garden centers and nurseries labeled as citronella, the one thought to be the most effective as a mosquito control is Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*). Lemongrass grows well in North Texas and will winter over down to 10 degrees with heavy mulch. It grows best in full sun with good drainage and requires little water after established. Plant around sitting areas or harvest the long grass stems, chop into pieces and scatter in areas where pets and people like to rest. Exercise caution when handling as the long blades of grass are sharp and can cause cuts.

(excerpt from an Arlene Hamilton article on Herbal Pet and Pest Control)

Lemongrass Tea

- 2-3 stalks Lemongrass plus some trimmed leaves, washed
- Bring 2-3 quarts water to a boil.
- Drop stalks and leaves into boiling water
- Let boil, covered, for 10 minutes.
- Remove stalks and leaves
- Let tea cool enough to pour into container
- Chill and enjoy



Chile Peppers

By Arlene Hamilton, Ellis County Master Gardener



You are probably as tired of talking about the weather as I am. So let's talk about a wonderful little plant that loves the long hot summers of the southwest, and inspires a passion around the world. Chile Peppers (*Capsicum* spp.) are favored in our gardens, on our plates, and even in our medicine cabinets.

Like beans, corn, and avocados, chile peppers are a New World plant. Found in South America by Christopher Columbus as he searched for a route to India, home of the black pepper (*Piper nigrum*), the most expensive spice in the world at that time. Columbus returned to Europe with the holds of his ships filled with plants, seeds, and peppers. Within a very short time chile peppers had spread throughout the world as their flavor and heat contributed to bland tasting diets. Even the poorest could easily cultivate this inexpensive

flavor enhancer.

There are hundreds of varieties of chile peppers in many shapes, sizes, colors, and flavors; from sweet to searingly pungent, hot and sweet at the same time, green and vegetal, earthy, and fruity. Some favorites for the Texas garden are habanero, Anaheim, Hungarian banana, cayenne, Tabasco, Thai, and of course jalapeño. The tiny piquin has been brought to my garden by the birds that frequent the tender perennial plant in the fall then deposit the seeds throughout the area. It is a very fiery hot pepper that makes a wonderful condiment when the ripe peppers are added to a bottle of vinegar, aged, and then enjoyed splashed over salads, eggs, and vegetables.

September and October are peak times for harvesting chiles from your garden or shopping the local farmers' market. My very favorite chile is the Hatch, grown in Hatch, New Mexico. We first came across this large, mild to hot pepper as we crossed south-eastern Colorado several years ago. The markets, roadside stands, and parking lots lining highway 50 boasted large tumble roasters grilling up bushels of Hatch chiles. You could catch the aroma long before you saw the grill.

Once you get past the pain of cleaning and seeding chiles, you are rewarded with not only the wonderful flavor but also the healthful benefits of chiles. They contain large amounts of vitamins A and C. By weight, fresh peppers have about three times as much vitamin C as oranges and as much vitamin A as carrots. The capsaicin oil that causes your fingers to burn while cleaning them is being studied as a medicine. Capsaicin is the active ingredient of creams for painful skin and nerve conditions including shingles and neuralgia. It is being tested in cream form for diabetic neuropathy, osteoarthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Pepper plants should be planted in the early summer after the soil has become warm. They grow best in loamy soil with organic matter and a little greensand added. Good drainage is important. Water frequently and feed once or twice during the season. My favorite way to preserve peppers is to blacken the skin on the grill, remove the black and seeds, then layer flat between sheets of waxed paper. Place in zip topped freezer bags and freeze. These packets lay flat, taking up very little room. A few pieces make the base for Chile Rellenos casserole, chopped in salsas and chili, or added to all foods needing a bit of a kick.

Iris Giveaway—August 18, 2018



Lilies

Spider Lilies (*Lycoris radiata*), Oxblood Lilies (*Rhodophiala bifida*) and Rain Lilies (*Zephyranthes* spp)

Submitted by Gail Haynes, Ellis County Master Gardener

Taken from an article written by Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist, Texas A&M University



Oxblood Lily

One indication of an eventual end to our long, hot summers is the emergence of several bulbous perennials. Spider lilies (*Lycoris radiata*), oxblood lilies (*Rhodophiala bifida*) and certain rain lilies (*Zephyranthes* species) suddenly appear and add color and interest to our tired, heat-weary gardens. These plants are not natives, but they appear to be, since they often come back year after year and slowly increase in numbers and flower production.

All three plants have in common that they produce most of their foliage during the winter and spring, go dormant during the heat of summer, then flower in early fall. They actually require a dormant period during the heat of summer when little or no water is needed. Artificial watering during this period may be harmful to these plants. Spider lilies and oxblood lilies are especially sensitive to over watering during their "baking period"; therefore, it is best to plant these tough and hardy bulbs

where they are out of reach of normal sprinkler systems or artificial watering.

Spider lilies are a novelty in the world of ornamental plants. Each spring the strap-shaped foliage appears, ripens, then dies down with the heat of summer. In September, usually after a soaking rain, clusters of red, pink, white, or yellow flowers suddenly spring forth from the ground. Stems may reach 18 to 24 inches, and they are topped with spidery-like flowers with wavy-edged segments and long stamens. They are very easily grown, especially in the eastern third of the state. The red form (*Lycoris radiata*) is much more common than the others and is the easiest to grow.



Spider Lily

Oxblood lilies are another introduction from Argentina. They were introduced by a German-Texas plantsman named Heinrich Oberwetter, an early colonist in central Texas. Oxblood lilies appear to be equally well adapted to heavy clay or deep, sandy soils. The flowers resemble small red amaryllises and are borne several to a stem. Foliage is strap-like and emerges after flowering to flourish through the winter, and then it yellows and disappears by summer.

Among the large and diverse group of plants known as rain lilies, the most common cultivated form is *Zephyranthes candida*, the white rain lily, which is sometimes called "Autumn Crocus" because of its tendency to bloom profusely in the fall. It somewhat resembles monkey grass, and is useful as an edging plant in the garden during the fall, winter, and spring when its foliage is most abundant and attractive. White rain lilies are native to the shores of Rio de la Plata, the River of Silver, in Argentina. Flowers appear mostly in late summer and fall, usually beginning with the first autumn showers.

Rain lilies, oxblood lilies, and spider lilies are all propagated by dividing mature clumps of bulbs. This can be done successfully at any season. Transplanting just after the foliage starts dying down in late spring or early summer is less likely to interrupt their bloom cycle. Commercial availability is limited on all three of these plants although it appears to be improving.



White Rain Lily

September Workshops



September 8—10am

Build a perfect spot for your dragon to train in this fun themed gardening workshop! Pick your dragon, then use plants and materials to build a fantastical, miniature garden creation to take home. We provide everything you need, including your very own dragon. \$35 per creation. Fun for families. Limited to 20 spots. Sign up now.



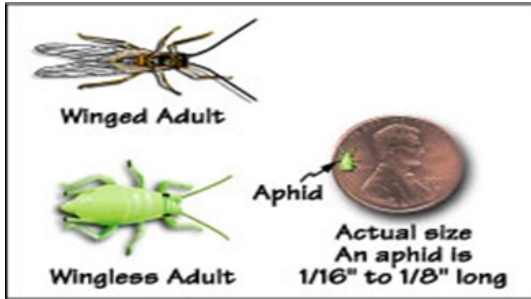
September 22—10am

Pick your magical creature and create a whimsical miniature garden for them to live! Choose from Unicorns, Pegasus, Rabbits, Frogs, and more! Use beautiful materials to build the perfect magical scene to take home. We will provide everything you need! \$35 per creation, limited to 20 spots. Working together is accepted and encouraged. Perfect for families of all ages! Sign up Now!

Eclectic Gardening

With Jane Slone, Ellis County Master Gardener

A Gardener's Nightmare "Aphids"



Aphids (scientific name *Aphidoidea*), also called plant lice, are insects. Gardeners do not consider this species as a beneficial insect. They are small soft-bodied insects ranging from 1/16 to 1/8 inch long, and vary in shape and color. Aphids can be invasive on indoor plants, outdoor plants, as well as trees and shrubs. Aphids have sucking mouthparts which allow them to suck on the plants and damage the leaves. There are over 4,000 species of aphids, which means they can appear in almost any environment, in any condition. Aphids feast on fruits, vegetables, flowers, ornamentals, and shade trees. Consider this factoid from entomologist Stephen A. Marshall, "in optimal environmental conditions and lacking any predators, parasites, or disease, a single aphid could produce 600 billion descendants in one season."

What are the First Sign of Aphids?

Aphid damage may appear as pale yellow spots on leaves, leaves that are curled, puckered, or stunted, and/or distorted blossoms. Look for aphids at the beginning of the growing season. If not treated sooner or later, the plant's leaves begin to turn yellow.

First Signs of Infestation

One of the first signs that the aphids are present is a honey like or sticky substance. The aphids attach to the underside of the leaf and are not always visible. Females lay eggs toward the end of the growing season in the bark or bud scales of their favorite plant. When the eggs hatch the following spring, the nymphs are all female and called "stem mothers". These females will give live birth to daughters without mating. They will reach adult life and begin to reproduce in about ten days or less. The females can produce over fifty young each. Within weeks the plants have so many aphids the plant becomes stressed. With little or no food left, the young nymphs develop wings and fly off to start the cycle on a new plant. If left untreated, the plant or shrub could die. Toward the end of the growing season males are produced, mating occurs, and the eggs will again overwinter in the plant material.



Crops Damaged

In particular aphids prefer beans, peas, melons, cucumbers, pumpkins, squash, tomatoes, potatoes, and cabbage, but can damage all garden crops. Aphids can also transmit diseases to many of these crops.

Prevention

Through good horticultural practices aphids can be minimized. One step is to control the amount of nitrogen added to the garden. By using slow release fertilizers such as ammonium or urea-based fertilizers, compost, decomposed manure, fish emulsion, or liquid seaweed, you slow the rate at which the aphids can reproduce. Another step is to prune moderately in winter and early spring, saving the heavy pruning for mid-growing season. This prevents the aphids from destroying fresh growth in early spring.

The Best Choice is Predation



Gardeners can encourage a continuous production of flowers that will attract the aphids' natural predators: ladybugs, praying mantis, and the Syrphid fly. Beneficial predators will begin to appear on plants with moderate to heavy aphid infestations. They may eat large numbers of aphids but the reproductive capability of aphids is so great that the impact of the natural enemies may not be enough to keep these insects at or below acceptable levels.

"The Syrphid fly is one of the best insects to use against aphids. Syrphid flies often wear bright markings of yellow-orange and black and can be mistaken for bees. Like all flies, though, the Syrphids have just two wings, so take a closer look if you see a new "bee" in your garden. Syrphid maggots crawl on garden foliage, searching for aphids to eat. They are quite good at squeezing in the curled up leaves where aphids hide. As an added bonus the adults will pollinate your flowers. Syrphid flies are also called hover flies because they tend to hover over flowers." Taken from the *Top 10 beneficial Garden Insects* by Debby Hadley

Treatment

Reduce nitrogen and release beneficial insects.

Another choice may be a strong water spray to remove the aphids from the plants. Hose-end sprayers can be used on 15 to 20 foot trees but they need to produce a stream rather than an even pattern to reach these heights.

Oils

There is a less caustic choice of oils as an alternative. Summer oils can be used against aphids on some types of trees and ornamental plantings. They kill by suffocating the insects and/or disrupting their membranes. Check the label for cautions on sensitive plants. Oils can injure the foliage of some plants. Weather conditions, especially high temperatures, can increase the potential for foliage burn. Do not spray dormant oils during the growing season. There is no residual effect so additional applications may be necessary.

GARDEN CHECKLIST FOR SEPTEMBER

by Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist, TX A&M



- Continue to give established crinums plenty of water and organic fertilizer at this time to encourage repeat flowering.
- Rejuvenate heat-stressed geraniums and begonias for the fall season by lightly pruning, fertilizing, and watering.
- Don't allow plants with green fruit or berries to suffer from lack of moisture. Hollies will frequently drop their fruit under drought conditions.
- Prepare the beds for spring-flowering bulbs as soon as possible. It is important to cultivate the soil and add generous amounts of organic matter to improve the water drainage. Bulbs will rot without proper drainage.
- Plantings at this time can provide landscape color for three seasons in central, east, and south Texas. Annuals set out early enough will bloom as soon as Thanksgiving, and frequently last until Memorial Day. Annuals that should soon be available in nurseries and garden shops include petunias, calendulas, pansies, snapdragons, stock, sweet peas, and violas (from seed).
- Continue a disease-spray schedule on roses, as blackspot and mildew can be extremely damaging in September and October. Funginex, used every 7 to 14 days, will usually give excellent control.
- Christmas cactus (picture below) can be made to flower by supplying 12 hours of uninterrupted darkness and cool nights (55 degrees F.) for a month, starting in mid-October. Keep plants on the dry side for a month prior to treatment.
- Replenish mulches around trees and shrubs, and water every 3 to 5 days.
- Start cool-season vegetables, such as mustard, lettuce, arugula, broccoli, carrots, and turnips, from seed in well prepared beds.
- Harvest okra, peppers, squash, and other vegetables often to encourage production.

Eclectic Gardening, Continued from Page 8

Soaps

Fatty acid salts or insecticidal soaps are very good against aphids. As with summer oils, they apparently work to disrupt insect cell membranes. They require direct contact with the insects and leave no residual effect. This may be impossible if it is a large tree or shrub.

Best Practice

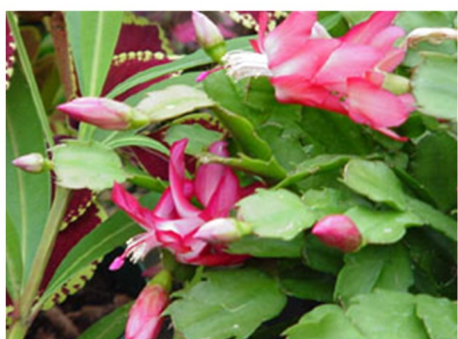
The best practice is to prevent the aphids from infecting plants. Thorough inspections will provide you with the information and prevent the need for any type of eradication process. While it may be impossible to totally avoid aphids, early detection can save you from having to utilize any type of chemicals. So check the underside of leaves on your plants frequently.

If All Else Fails

If the plants or shrubs are heavily infected, the treatment may involve an insecticide. For most gardeners this would be the last choice. Most products used for aphid control work as contact insecticides. This means that the aphids must be hit directly with spray droplets so that the chemicals can be absorbed into the insect's body. Since the aphids tend to remain on the lower leaf surface, they are protected by plant foliage from the harsh chemicals.

CHEMICAL WARNING: NEVER USE AN INSECTICIDE WITHOUT READING ALL THE DIRECTIONS. FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS AND NEVER USE MORE THAN RECOMMENDED.

As Gardeners, we should plan, plant and take care of the gardens with the least amount of injury to the environment. Any time we use chemicals we are changing the balance of nature. Bees, wasps, and birds are just some of the important animals that are needed for pollination. So less is best when it comes to any kind of chemical that is used. For the most part nature has a way of taking care of itself.



Find us on:
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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>



FALL AND WINTER TURF GRASS CARE

By: Jim Tachias, Ellis County Master Gardener

A beautiful lawn is the most important feature for a well landscaped home. A homeowner's investment in a lawn and other landscaping is as good as any home improvement in increasing the value of a residence. To enhance your investment, lawn care and maintenance should not stop in the fall.

Under normal conditions these steps should be taken to protect and improve your lawn during the fall and winter months.

September 1 – September 15

Fertilize grass lawns with a light coverage of a high nitrogen such as 23-0-0 with at least 40% slow release nitrogen. Follow label recommendations.

September 1 – September 10

If winter weeds such as henbit have been a problem, apply a pre-emergent herbicide for the control of annual winter weeds in the lawn. Water the herbicide application in thoroughly as soon as possible.

September 15 – September 30

Monitor St. Augustine, Bermuda, and Zoysia grass lawns for brown patch activity. If brown patch becomes active, treat with a current fungicide, and follow the label recommendations.

Rye grasses, both perennial and annual, are suited for temporary, cool season turf grasses. These grasses are used for temporary grass cover during the fall and winter months, protecting against erosion or newly prepared sites in the fall. They can also be used to provide temporary green color during the winter months by overseeding Bermuda grass lawns. Rye grasses should be planted around September 15.

October – February

During the dormant stage, water the lawn every 4 to 5 weeks if adequate rainfall does not occur. Roots need water even in the winter.

Conduct soil analysis for fertilizer needs if you have not done so, or if major soil changes have occurred.

Measure the lawn so that fertilizers and pesticides may be applied at the recommended rates per 1,000 sq. ft.


Always calibrate granular applicators and sprayers prior to the application of fertilizers and pesticides.

March 1 – March 15

If summer weeds have been a problem, apply a pre-emergent herbicide for the control of annual summer weeds in the lawn. Water the herbicide application in thoroughly as soon as possible.

March 25 – April 10

In late March to early April scalp Bermuda grass, St. Augustine, and Zoysia lawns. Make sure you are past the last freeze date before scalping. Once the lawn has been scalped, then start mowing the lawn at the recommended height as soon as the grass starts actively growing. All clippings should be removed when scalping. Do not send this material to the dumping ground. Either compost this yard waste in your own compost pile, or send it to another site that has a composting facility.



Note: Under extreme drought conditions, you should reduce your fertility program. Also, if your turf grass is stressed, you should consider not using a pre-emergent herbicide for control of weeds, especially in St. Augustine lawns.

Become A Texas Master Gardener

Do you like the feel of the earth between your fingers, the fragrance of growing flowers, the taste of homegrown tomatoes and herbs? Do you want to share your interest in gardening with others? Become a Master Gardener! The Master Gardener Program is a volunteer development program offered by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and is designed to increase the availability of horticultural information and improve the quality of life through horticultural projects in your community.

What is a Master Gardener?

The Texas Master Gardener program is an educational volunteer program conducted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of the Texas A&M University System. Master Gardeners are members of the local community who take an active interest in their lawns, trees, shrubs, flower and vegetable gardens. They are enthusiastic, willing to learn and help others, and able to communicate with diverse groups of people. What really sets Master Gardeners apart from other home gardeners is their special training in horticulture. In exchange for their training, persons who become Master Gardeners contribute time as volunteers, working through their county's Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office to provide horticultural-related information to their communities.

Is the Master Gardener program for me?

To help you decide if you should apply to be a Master Gardener, ask yourself these questions:

- ~ Do I want to learn more about the culture and maintenance of many types of plants?
- ~ Am I eager to participate in a practical and intense training program?
- ~ Do I enjoy sharing your knowledge with people?
- ~ Do I have enough time to attend training and complete volunteer service hour requirements?
- ~ Do I have special interests that could benefit the community or an interest in developing one? (e.g., bird or butterfly knowledge, native gardens, wildflowers, etc.)
- ~ Do I have a sincere interest in nature or gardening?

Training

If accepted into the Master Gardener Program you will attend a training course which offers a minimum of 56 hours of instruction that covers topics including: lawn care, ornamental trees and shrubs, insects, disease and weed management, soil and plant nutrition, vegetable gardening, home fruit production, garden flowers and herbs, plant propagation, and water conservation. These courses are taught by specialists in their specific areas.

The Master Gardener training course will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each Tuesday and Thursday throughout the month of February 2019, at the First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin Street, Waxahachie, Texas.

Volunteer Commitment

In exchange for the training, participants are asked to volunteer at least 75 hours of service by November 30th to earn the title of "Texas Master Gardener". The volunteer time will take place during the normal work week with the exception of the Annual Lawn & Garden Expo which is held on a Saturday in the spring. The type of service done by Master Gardeners varies according to community needs and the abilities and interests of the Master Gardener. Some Master Gardeners answer telephone requests for information related to gardening. Others staff plant clinics or displays in shopping malls, farmers' markets, or community centers. Master Gardeners may speak to local groups and conduct workshops. They may help establish school and community garden projects, work with 4-H youth, or assist their agent with news or radio releases related to gardening. The Master Gardener Coordinator in the county Extension office decides how volunteer time can best be used.

Certification

Participants become certified Master Gardeners after they have completed the training course and fulfilled their volunteer commitment.

If you are interested in the Master Gardener Program and would like an application, please contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office in Ellis County at 972-825-5175, e-mail Ellis-tx@tamu.edu or find the application on the master gardener website, ECMGA.com. Applications will be mailed upon request and must be returned no later than January 11, 2019, at which time you will be called to schedule an interview.

Note: Master Gardeners are representatives of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. In all volunteer work related to the program, Master Gardeners follow the research-based recommendations of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. The title "Texas Master Gardener" can be used by volunteers only when engaged in Extension-sponsored activities.

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.

Thank You All!

Thanks to the sponsors, exhibitors and visitors for making the 2018 Ellis County Master Gardener's Lawn & Garden Expo a great success!

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