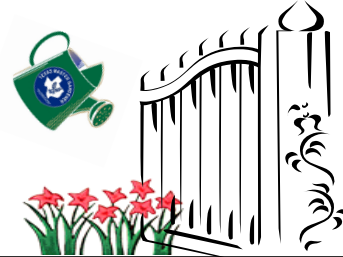




# Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume XI, Issue 10

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

October, 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](http://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 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!**

TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI LIFE**  
EXTENSION



*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 October:*

**October 6** Second Annual Chili Cook Off. Back by popular demand. The weather has cooled down and the cooks have fired up their crock pots. Come sample a variety of fiery hot to pretty hot to maybe mild chili cooked up by the market sellers. You get to sample and be the judge. The winner gets bragging rights until next year. This is a fun day for all. There may even be some recipes or tips shared so come join the fun while enjoying the last few weeks of the market season.

**October 13** The Kid's Activity ends their season with a wonderful treat for the whole family. The Agape Chain Ministries will bring a corral full of farm animals for all to enjoy. All the animals, including miniature cows and horses, goats, sheep, chickens, and other farm animals are kid friendly and used to being petted and hugged. This is a free activity but the ministry accepts contributions and will be happy to share their mission with anyone interested. Also, our pumpkins have arrived so look for some creative ideas using natural materials for decorating your jack-o-lantern.

**October 20** Pop up Horticulture presented by Ellis County Master Gardener Maureen Nitkowski will feature native plants in your Texas landscape. Fall is an ideal time to plant perennials, and Texas natives are a smart choice. These plants help conserve water and reduce the use of pesticides in addition to adding beauty and diversity to the garden.

**October 27** The market is open but the Master Gardener Booth is closed for the season. Be sure to check out the autumn and Christmas decorations by the local artists.

**November 3** "Farm To Table Dinner On The Square" (See poster on page 3) The Waxahachie Downtown Farmers Market will be partnering with other local businesses and organizations to bring an amazing outdoor dinner to the courthouse square. The dinner will feature Waxahachie High School culinary students preparing a four-course meal with locally sourced produce and ingredients, much of it produced by WDFM sellers. All proceeds go to support the WHS Culinary Arts, Fine Arts and Agriculture Departments. Tickets are \$100 and can be purchased at [www.downtownwaxahachie.com](http://www.downtownwaxahachie.com).

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

The Master Gardeners will be visiting the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center in Seagoville for their general meeting., therefore, there will no meeting on Tuesday, October 9.



### Listen to KBEC

Saturday mornings at 8:10 a.m. on 1390 AM.

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 October—What Needs To Be Done?



### Planting

- Plant cool-season annuals such as pinks, snapdragons, and ornamental cabbages and kale early in the month. Wait until temperatures have cooled to plant pansies and violas.
- Complete planting these fall vegetables early in the month: radishes, spinach, and turnips.
- Last chance to sow wildflowers in order to have blooms next spring. Always purchase “fresh” seed.
- Purchase spring-flowering bulbs while selection is good. Chill tulip and Dutch hyacinth at 45°F for 60 days prior to planting. Daffodil and grape hyacinth require no special handling but should be stored in a cool location until planting (soil temperature below 55°F.) Recommended daffodil varieties include Ice Follies, Fortune, Carlton, Cheerfulness, and Tahiti.
- Fall is a great time to set out perennial herbs, including thyme, oregano, rosemary, parsley, lemon balm, pineapple sage, and Mexican mint marigold. Work a few inches of compost into soil prior to planting and mulch the plants after planting.

### Fertilizing and Pruning

- Remove annuals that have completed their life cycle. Leave seed pods to self-seed next year (cleome, cosmos, four o'clock).
- Continue to feed tropical plants in containers and hanging baskets with a water-soluble fertilizer. Cut back or repot overgrown houseplants and fertilize with same fertilizer.
- Spring and summer-flowering 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 brown-patch fungus on St. Augustine lawns. Water only in the mornings and apply turf fungicide at the first sign of fungus.
- Watch for cutworms and looper caterpillars on young leafy vegetables. Products containing Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) are safe to control these pests. Control aphids with a strong spray of water or insecticidal soap.
- Attention, Christmas cactus owners! To initiate flower buds, give the plants bright light each day followed by 12-14 hours of total darkness at night, for 30 days starting mid-month. And keep night temperatures under 65°F.

### Conservation Wise

- Make landscape changes starting this month. Be sure to select native and adapted trees, shrubs and perennials to complement or renovate our landscape. Fall planting will allow these plants to establish roots before hot, dry weather arrives next year.
- Grouping plants in the landscape with like watering requirements (hydro zoning) can result in significant water savings.
- Implement an *Integrated Pest Management (IPM)* program to reduce the amount of pesticides used in your landscape. IPM is a common sense, science-based strategy used to manage pests (insects, plant diseases, weeds) by applying economically and environmentally sustainable practices. Learn more about this holistic system of pest control at <http://landscapeipm.tamu.edu>.



## Family Fun Pumpkin Smash!

October 13 10am–3pm

Family Friendly Fall Festival with Face Painting, Pumpkin Painting, Kids Activities, Family Photo Booth and Free Hay Rides. There will be live music, and Rock N Ricks Food Truck. Plus, SMASH PUMPKINS! There will be four smash stations with different themes and smashing tools: Mad Farmer, Medieval Warrior, Crazy Sportsman, and Primitive Caveman. Tickets start at \$20. For more information call 972.723.0702.





## Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian  
Ellis County Master Gardener



**Broomweed** – Sunflower Family (Asteraceae)  
*Amphiachyris dracunculoides* (D.C.) Nutt.

**Region:** 1 through 10  
**Size:** 6 – 36 inches  
**Blooms:** June – November, annual

Broomweed grows from a single slender stem, branching to form a loose mass in the upper part. Its tiny yellow, daisy-like flowers measure about a half-inch across and are scattered over the plant. From seven to fifteen ray flowers surround the yellow disk flowers. Very narrow, linear leaves alternate up the stem, becoming fewer and shorter toward the top. Often an indicator of over-grazed pastures, broomweed can cover hundreds of acres. It is toxic to livestock, remaining where more palatable plants are no longer seen.

### Farm To Table On The Square

presented by the

Waxahachie High School  
Culinary Arts Students

WITH SUPPORT OF THE FINE ART & AGRICULTURE STUDENTS

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2018**

5:30 PM, GATHERING REFRESHMENTS

6:00 PM, DINNER

SAVOR THE SEASON WITH A FABULOUS OUTDOOR DINNER ON  
THE SQUARE IN HISTORIC DOWNTOWN WAXAHACHIE USING  
LOCALLY SOURCED FRUITS, VEGETABLES AND MEATS!

**TICKETS \$100 PER PERSON**

Available at Waxahachie High School,  
Ellis County Museum, Fresh Market & [DowntownWaxahachie.com](http://DowntownWaxahachie.com)



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## IS THIS A WEED?

### Differentiating Cottage Garden Seedlings From Surrounding Weeds

Submitted by Gail Haynes

Written by William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist



The much-needed rains of fall have arrived and along with cooler nights, we are in the middle of a great fall growing season. Ever blooming roses are in full color along with summer annuals like zinnias and marigolds. These “ideal” growing conditions are also encouraging a host of weeds and cool season annuals. It isn’t always easy to tell the difference. Let’s take a look at some of the “good guys” like larkspur, poppies, French hollyhocks, flowering tobacco (nicotiana), coreopsis, bluebonnets, sweet peas, old fashioned petunias and violas. By identifying these, dividing them, and providing some cultivation and care, they can be a great source of color for your late winter and spring garden.

Reseeding annuals are like old friends that come back to see you each year. They like your garden so much that they keep coming back. Petunias are among the most useful. Hybrids can be spectacular but the old, single flowering types are more heat resistant and have a wonderful fragrance. Colors include white, pink, purple, lavender, and stripes. They all seem to blend together and make individual masses about 18-24” tall and wide. Petunias prefer at least a half day of direct sunlight and well-drained soils. Larkspur are spike flowers that come in double and single flowering form. Pink, rose, white, purple, and variegated flowers are available. Usually once planted, larkspur will reliably return each year. Ornamental poppies are old time favorites in both single and double flowering forms. Some are so showy that they almost take the place of tulips in warm climates. French hollyhocks (*Malva zebrina*) have spikes of purple and white striped flowers amid masses of dark green foliage. Flowering tobacco (*Nicotiana* sp.) come in cool white forms as well as greenish, dark rose, purple, and lavender. Some are highly fragrant, especially at night. Bluebonnets have expanded their color range from blue to pink, white, and almost red. They require a sunny, well-drained location and prefer alkaline soils. Coreopsis (*C. grandiflora*) is often sowed along Texas highways. It is a tough and flashy yellow-flowered spring wildflower that usually makes a rounded plant about 2’ tall.

Old fashioned sweet peas such as ‘Cupani’ and ‘Painted Lady’ are tough enough to come back on their own and have a wonderful fragrance. They need support from a fence, trellis or similar structure. They also like a sunny location and well-prepared soil. Violas such as the old fashioned “Johnny-jump-ups” with their charming faces and small blooms are also fragrant. Unlike their later cousins, the pansies, these little violas reseed readily.

The accompanying illustrations may help you differentiate returning desirable annuals from weeds. A frequent mistake is to leave the seedlings too crowded which reduces their vigor and effectiveness in the garden. Single seedlings may be dipped out with the tip of a trowel and placed in a well-prepared bed. Work several inches of organic material, such as composted pine bark or your own leaf mold, into the soil along with about 5 pounds of cotton seed meal or alfalfa meal for every 100 square feet of bed area.

Arrange the plants in drifts (elongated mass) of at least 8 or 10 individuals. Larkspur, poppies, violas, and bluebonnets should be spaced about 6” apart while flowering tobacco, coreopsis, petunias, and French hollyhocks do better with about a foot between individual plants. Be sure to water the transplanted seedlings every day or two for the first week or ten days. Apply water soluble fertilizer about every three weeks.

If you don’t see any likely transplants coming up, now is a great time to purchase and plant seeds. They should germinate quickly producing seedlings for leaving in place or transplanting within a few weeks.



Bluebonnet seedling



Coreopsis seedling



Larkspur seedling



Nicotiana seedling



Petunia seedling



Viola seedling



Sweet Peas



Larkspur



Painted Lady

## VEGETABLE GARDENING IN OCTOBER

By Pat Dockins, Ellis County Master Gardener

I love reading articles by the renowned vegetable specialist, *H.S. Stevens*. His articles are so practical and informative. One I read recently gave tips on getting the optimum results from your fall vegetable garden. I'll give you the short version of that article.

### Feed their needs

Slow-release fertilizers are *not* best for fall feeding; make light applications of high-nitrogen products such as 21-0-0 (ammonium sulfate) or a 3-1-2 formula lawn fertilizer that is *not* in slow-release form.

### Keep watering

It is still critical to maintain an even supply of soil moisture. Most vegetables need about an inch of water each week.

### Pick, pick, pick

Harvest all produce as soon as it is ready to eat. The more you pick, the more the plants will produce.

### Watch out for bugs

Don't let aphids, squash bugs, caterpillars or cucumber beetles get the upper hand. Check your plants often. If you are uncertain about the safest, most effective control for the insect you've identified, consult your county extension office or a professional at your local garden center.

### Give prompt first aid

Healthy, well-fed plants are less susceptible to fungal diseases than those that are weak and undernourished. When any of the below symptoms appear; treat plants promptly with an approved fungicide. Check the label to be certain that the type of plant you're treating is listed on it, and follow all label directions.

### Late blight

Lesions produced on the leaves are at first irregular, rather large, greenish-black, and appear water-soaked. The areas enlarge rapidly and become brown. Under humid conditions they develop a white moldy growth near the margins of the diseased areas on lower surfaces of the leaves. The disease can also spread to the fruit.

**Rust** on green beans is characterized by light, indistinct yellow spots on the upper sides of the leaves and raised, ruptured, reddish-brown lesions on the lower surfaces. A severe infestation can defoliate plants. To avoid spreading the disease, never harvest beans when the foliage is wet.

**Powdery mildew**, a common problem on vine crops, is even more prevalent in fall gardens. It's caused by a fungus that grows on the upper leaf surface, giving it a white, powdery appearance. The disease is most prevalent on cucumbers, squash and cantaloupe.

**Downy mildew** can affect cucumbers, squash, broccoli, cabbage and greens. This disease thrives under cool, moist conditions and causes small yellow spots to appear on the upper surfaces of the leaves. A grayish, downy growth develops on the undersides of leaves.

### Preventing frost damage

Pay close attention to weather forecasts and don't take chances. Remember cold air is heavier than warm air and will settle into low-lying areas. Dry plants can suffer more damage than those with an ample supply of moisture. When frost or a light freeze is forecast, be sure your garden's soil is thoroughly moist. Be ready to cover tender plants. You can use commercial type of covers or old sheets, quilts, or blankets. Never use only plastic; it will conduct the cold and will damage any leaves it touches. Remove the protective coverings as soon as possible in the morning. Heat buildup from direct sunshine can do serious damage.

### Keep it clean

As soon as your plants have stopped producing, remove them entirely from the garden. Destructive insects winter over in plant debris, lying in wait for you to set the table for them again next spring.

### FYI

According to Drs. Jerry Parsons, Roland Roberts and Larry Stein, Texas Agricultural Extension Horticultural Specialists, it's not too late to plant from seed: carrots, collards, garlic (cloves), kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard greens, parsley, radishes, spinach, or turnips. You can still plant from transplants: brussels sprouts, kale, and spinach.



Powdery mildew



Downy mildew



Late blight



Cucumber beetle



Squash bug



Cucumber beetle

## The Life & Times of a Master Gardener Intern

*Agnes G. Douglas, Master Garden Intern*

*Article written April, 2018*

After two years of wanting to take the Master Gardener training, this year I was finally able to clear my schedule and set aside the time for the class. I completed the training with the Ellis County Master Gardener Association in Waxahachie in February, every Tuesday and Thursday. It was a wonderful experience, very well organized, and taught by extremely knowledgeable and well-educated instructors. I have met some lifelong friends through this experience.

Although I have been involved in gardening for years, growing up in a family of gardeners, I didn't realize how much I did not know, and how much there is to learn. This will be a lifelong learning experience for me. Coming from a family of seven children, my parents gardened year-round, and my siblings and I helped take care of the garden. My 92 year old parents are still gardening to this day. Dad does mostly container gardening now, but back then, everything was in-ground.

Through the class, many things that I already knew were reinforced, and others I learned for the first time. Here are a few examples:

- Water plants individually and thoroughly soak them,. It is not necessary to water every day.
- Water in the morning, not evenings. My dad always did this, but I never knew why. It's because the moisture overnight can cause mildew, rot, etc.
- Test the soil prior to planting. Properly prepare the soil by using organic soil, mulch, and compost.
- Plant native and adapted plants conducive to the area (zone) you live in. Everything doesn't grow in our area.
- Perennials & Annuals—Plant annuals between perennials.
- Pay attention to height, width, color, etc.
- Importance of identifying full/part sun, full/part shade, etc., to determine placement of plants.
- Plant the same depth of the container.
- The importance of rain harvesting.
- Sheet mulching and the important role of mulching.

Last year I planted mostly annuals in my front yard, but this year will be mostly perennials, accented by annuals. After clearing away all the debris and weeds from last year's flower beds, I prepared my beds for planting, adding organic soil, and compost. I was now ready to go shopping for plants. I took the deck of cards from the Texas A & M AgriLife "Top 100 Plants for North Texas". These are wonderful! I pulled out all the perennial, shrub, and groundcover cards, decided what I wanted, and went shopping. For the first time I felt confident in what I was buying. I was not buying something just because it was pretty, but plants I knew would grow in my area. I purchased: Dallas red lantana, new gold lantana, Texas sage, coreopsis, autumn sage, rudbeckia, impatiens, lamb's ear, garden phlox, dianthus, turk's cap, yaupon holly, petunia/verbena, and will purchase others. After getting the plants home, I read the card for each plant and planted them accordingly. I love those cards!!

### VEGETABLE GARDEN

Using the techniques and knowledge from my class, I prepared my vegetable garden. I cleared and cleaned the beds, added organic soil, organic compost, and did "sheet mulching", using cardboard and newspaper. My garden is a combination of containers and in-ground. I started cucumbers and chives indoors and transplanted them into the garden. So far, I have planted the following vegetables: corn, okra, cucumbers, tomatoes, onions, peppers (jalapeno, bell, cayenne and Thai;) spinach, collard greens, kale, green beans, carrots, herbs (basil, thyme, rosemary, dill and cilantro). These are my family's favorites. I only plant what we like rather than just growing something to be growing it. Last year I planted lots of squash but ended up giving most of it away because we couldn't eat it all. This year I am not growing squash. From my garden last year, I learned that I need to space out the planting of certain vegetables (during planting dates) so that we have a continuous harvest. I planted all the corn at one time, and after we ate it, my family was asking, "Is there any more corn?". The same thing happened with green beans. I planted twice as much of everything as I did last year. Since I preserve some of my vegetables, I wanted to make sure that I had enough. I still have some planting to do, but my garden is coming along beautifully!

### COMPOSTING

I learned some additional things about composting, and it has made a huge difference in my results. One, I did not have the right amount of moisture. Also, I have lots of trees on my property, so I use the leaves for composting and mulching.

### EXPO

The Ellis County Master Gardener Lawn & Garden Expo was wonderful. This was my first time attending the Expo. The interns and Master Gardeners all worked together to make this year's event a success, and I had so much fun while earning volunteer hours. I was really impressed with the children's area and the activities that were provided. I was also able to purchase several plants that I wanted.

I am so excited about becoming a Master Gardener and look forward to learning even more!







## Featured Recipe of the Month

### Sweet Potato and Avocado Breakfast Skillet

Author Tammy Blankenship

#### Ingredients

- ◆ 2 medium sweet potatoes or yams
- ◆ 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ◆ Salt and pepper to taste
- ◆ 3 large eggs
- ◆ 1 avocado

#### Instructions

- ◆ Preheat oven to 425 F.
- ◆ Peel and cube potatoes.
- ◆ Toss in olive oil, salt and pepper.
- ◆ Bake in an oven-safe skillet (10 or 12 inch is best) for 25 minutes, flipping once during cooking to promote even browning.
- ◆ Push sweet potatoes aside to clear out three 2 inch diameter circles. Crack eggs into the circles.
- ◆ Place skillet back in oven and bake for 5 more minutes, or until eggs are set to your desired level (if you leave them in the pan after removing from oven, they will continue to cook.)
- ◆ Top skillet with diced avocado, salt, and pepper. Serve immediately.



#### Recipe Notes

*For an alternate method of cooking the potatoes, place on a separate baking sheet for the initial cook (we love the Williams-Sonoma Gold Touch). Transfer to a preheated skillet when time to add the eggs. This can help give the potatoes a little bit nicer exterior "crunch".*

Serves 2

## FALL ARMYWORM

Taken from Texas A&M University System



Fall armyworms can cause rapid, significant loss of leaf tissue in turfgrass. They feed primarily on bermudagrass, ryegrass, fescue, and bluegrass, but can also damage agricultural crops. The name armyworm originates from agriculture, where infestations sometimes resemble an army as they move across large agriculture fields. The same devastation can occur in turf, where armyworms can consume areas as large as a football field in as few as 2 to 3 days. (Pictured Left: Mature fall armyworm caterpillar feeding on bermudagrass)

#### LIFESTAGES OF THE FALL ARMYWORM

Armyworms belong to the insect order Lepidoptera and family Noctuidae. Common species of armyworms present in Texas include: the fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) the yellow striped armyworm (*Spodoptera ornithogalli*) the beet armyworm (*Spodoptera exigua*) and the true armyworm (*Mythimna unipuncta*). Of these four species, the fall armyworm is the most common cause of damaged turfgrass on golf courses, athletic fields, and home landscapes. The fall armyworm has four life stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. Adult moths are generally gray, with a 1½ inch wingspan and white underwings. The forewings are mottled with flecks of white, and males may have a triangular white spot in the middle of the wing and another spot near the wingtip.

Fall armyworms are unusually susceptible to cold, and populations are thought to die out each winter except in South Texas. Fall armyworm infestations often occur during "outbreak years", when exceptionally high populations of the insects survive the winter and make their way north.

Armyworms fly and mate at night, after which the female will lay up to 1,000 eggs in masses on suitable host plants or other surfaces including the undersides of tree leaves or on structures near turfgrasses. These structures can include bleachers, fences, light posts, golf flags, and even water coolers. The presence of lights around athletic fields, parks, and golf courses can increase the likelihood of moths being present near these turfgrass settings, so consider this when scouting for these pests.

After hatching, newly emerged larvae may spin a silken thread to lower themselves to the turf to feed. The earliest instars, one to four, eat relatively little leaf material, while the fifth and sixth larval stages eat over 90 percent of the total foliage the armyworm will consume over its life span. This usually means that early damage is often overlooked, and most defoliation takes place over a relatively short period during the later development stages. Caterpillars feed

(continued on page 9)

## GARDEN CHECKLIST FOR OCTOBER

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

- \* Careful covering of tender plants on nights when light frost threatens, early in the season, is a way to stretch out the season for a few more days or weeks. Good candidates for protection include late season crinum blooms, brugmansia and datura shrubs, Lantana trifolia with its lavender, verbena-like flowers in clusters, "Halloween-blooming" *Gladiolus dalenii* and many others. Especially tender herbs such as basil should be cut for use as pesto sauce ingredients or pizza toppings as soon as possible at this time.
- \* Fall is often one of the best times to enjoy rose blooms in Texas. Lightly prune hybrid teas, floribundas and modern garden roses and fertilize them in early fall for an abundant display until hard frost.
- \* October is a good time to reduce the insect and disease potential 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 that have finished flowering or as soon as frost has killed the leaves.
- \* October through November is also an excellent time to purchase bulbs while there is still have a good selection in the garden center.
- \* Chill tulip and hyacinth bulbs in the refrigerator until mid or late December before planting. The lower part of the refrigerator is best. Do not leave bulbs in airtight plastic bags during refrigerated storage.
- \* Plant bulbs in well prepared beds so the base of the bulb is at a depth that is three times the diameter of the bulb. In sandy soil, set slightly deeper and in clay soils less deeply.
- \* Holly plants with a heavy set of fruit often suffer a fertilizer deficiency. An application of complete fertilizer late this month can be helpful and provide a head start next spring.
- \* Start collecting leaves for the compost pile. Be sure to have extra soil available so that each 6½ inch layer of leaves may be covered with several inches of soil. Always wet the layer of leaves thoroughly before adding the soil. Add about one pound of a complete lawn or garden fertilizer to each layer of leaves to provide the necessary nitrogen for decomposition.
- \* In addition to bulbs, check your nursery or garden center for started plants of snapdragons, pinks, sweet william, poppies, and calendulas. Planted now in south and east Texas, they will usually provide a riot of spring color. Wait until late winter or early spring to plant in north Texas.
- \* Keep Christmas cactus in a sunny spot where night temperatures can be kept below 65° F. Buds will drop if you allow night temperatures to go above 70° F, or if you allow the plant to become excessively dry. They should also be kept in total darkness from 5:00 pm until 8:00 am for about 30 days in October to initiate flower buds.
- \* If you have saved seeds of your favorite plants, allow them to become air dry, then place them in an airtight container and store in the refrigerator. Be sure to label each packet carefully. Remember, seed from hybrid plants will seldom resemble the parent plant.
- \* Prepare beds for planting pansies when they become available at the garden centers. They need a well-drained soil and exposure to at least a half-day of sun. It is best to use started plants, as seeds are difficult to handle.
- \* If you are planning to save caladium tubers for another year, dig them in late October, and allow to dry in a well ventilated but shady area. After 7 to 10 days remove leaves and dirt, then pack in dry peat moss, vermiculite or similar material for storage. Pack tubers so they do not touch each other. Dust with all-purpose fungicide as you pack. Place container in an area where temperature won't drop below 50° F.
- \* There is still time to divide and reset such perennials as phlox, violets, hollyhocks, irises, day lilies, and shasta daisies.
- \* Carefully harvest material for dried arrangements at this time. Choose cockscomb, flowering artemisia, already mature okra pods, flowering oregano stalks, and others to enhance fall and winter bouquets.

### Calendar factoid

*The latest date of a 100° day recorded in a year occurred on October 3, 1956. when the temperatures reached 106°*

### Indian Trail Master Naturalists Events



Join the Indian Trail Master Naturalists at their monthly meeting on Monday, October 22, 2018. The program for the evening is entitled **"Mastering Compost"**. Larry Norris, Master Composter, is an avid member of many area organizations, who has received awards in this field, from Master Composter of the Year in 2007, and 2016, to Volunteer of the Year for the State of Texas Alliance for Recycling. Mr. Norris will discuss backyard composting. The program is free and follows the 6 pm 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 information, call (972) 825-5175 or email [ellis-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:ellis-tx@tamu.edu), [Information@itmnc.com](mailto:Information@itmnc.com) or Info at: <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/>



## Eclectic Gardening

With Jane Slone, Ellis County Master Gardener

### WISTERIA



When we talk about plants that return each year and have beautiful blooms, we can use the term wisteria. There are many vines that grow in Texas, and many choices, but wisteria is a unique vine.

Wisteria is a genus of flowering plants in the legume family, *Fabaceae* (*Leguminosae*).

There are at least ten species of woody climbing vines that are native to China, Korea, and Japan, and as an introduced species to the Eastern United States.

Wisteria is a member of the pea family. The genus was named in honor of an anatomy professor, Caspar Wistar, at the University of Pennsylvania. Wisteria is a vigorous, twining vine with wide landscape usage, where space permits, and gardeners are committed to keeping them in bounds. They are greatly valued for their large pendulous flower clusters that occur in the spring. Flowers are pea like and may be white, pink, lilac-blue, bluish-purple, or purple in color. The fruit is a long, green flattened pod that is not particularly ornamental.

The plant climbs by means of twining stems and has alternate, pinnately compound leaves. Older, established plants may have a twisted, woody trunk several inches in diameter. Plants that have been grown from seed remain in a long juvenile stage and often do not bloom for 10 to 15 years or longer. Plants that are grafted, and plants grown from cuttings, or layered from a flowering plant, will usually begin flowering earlier than seedlings.

Two species of wisteria are typically grown in home gardens: Chinese wisteria and Japanese wisteria. The Chinese wisteria is the more popular plant due to its flowering habit. It grows to a height of 25 feet or more and has flower clusters six inches to a foot in length, which open before the foliage has expanded. Individual flowers in the clusters open all at once for a very showy display. Flowers are violet-blue and slightly fragrant. There is also a white flowering form of Chinese wisteria which is very fragrant.

Chinese wisteria may bloom within three to four years after planting; however, the juvenile period may be much longer. In order to bloom well, wisteria requires full sun and a deep, moderately fertile, moist soil that does not dry out excessively. They will adapt to most soils, though they prefer a neutral to slightly acidic soil for best results.

Some type of support will be necessary as mature plants can be quite heavy. Wisterias climb best on trellises, arbors, and pergolas. Wisteria can also be grown as a single trunk standard or a tree-form. To accomplish this, the plant must be staked in an upright position. When it has reached four to five feet in height, its top is cut off. Side shoots can develop on the upper part but are continually removed from the lower stem. Side shoots are pruned each winter six inches to a foot in length until the top is as large as desired. Future pruning consists of cutting summer shoots to the sixth or seventh leaf as it expands, and of cutting off secondary shoots that develop just beyond the first or second leaf. In winter, these secondary shoots are cut back to within an inch of their base. Some annual pruning is required to maintain plant quality. It is not advisable to allow the vine to grow randomly and take over surrounding plants and structures. Pruning will help reduce the vigor of the vine and promote flowering.



(Fall Armyworm—continued from page 7)



throughout the day but are typically most active early in the morning and late in the evening. They can often be observed easily at these times. (Pictured left: a true armyworm adult hiding in thatch layer of lawn)

Fall armyworm caterpillars range from shades of brown to gray, green, or yellow-green. Their most distinguishing characteristic is a whitish inverted Y between the eyes and three whitish stripes on the pronotal shield behind the head. Development from eggs to full-grown larvae often takes 2 to 3 weeks, at which point the larvae will burrow into the soil to pupate and emerge as adults 10 to 14 days later whereupon the life cycle begins again.

Multiple generations occur each year, particularly in south Texas where the warmer climate can allow development to take place year round. Damage by fall armyworm caterpillars (larvae) initially appears at the tips of the grass blades. The tips look transparent due to the plant cells being eaten. If left uncontrolled, caterpillars may continue feeding, stripping tissue from turfgrass leaves, and leaving brown areas adjacent to green turf.

Initial damage can resemble drought stress but will progress to complete loss of foliage if there are enough armyworms and the turfgrass is left untreated. There may also be a distinct line between damaged and undamaged areas. Healthy bermudagrass typically recovers after defoliation because its rhizomes and stolons grow so aggressively. However, newly established bunch-type grasses, such as ryegrass or fescue, may be stunted more severely or even killed by armyworm feeding.

#### FALL ARMYWORM CONTROL

While scouting for damage is important for all insects, careful, frequent inspection is especially important for this pest because it feeds rapidly and is very destructive. If many armyworms are present in turfgrasses, it is important to treat as soon as possible to avoid further damage. There are several active ingredients that control fall armyworms effectively, but formulations, sites for use, and applicator requirements vary widely. Always consult the product label for specific instructions on application rates, methods, and timing. For a complete list of products labeled for fall armyworm control, consult the Texas Turfgrass Pest Control Recommendations Guide.

## 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



### (October) Pumpkins

The origin of pumpkin pie is thought to have occurred when the American colonists sliced off the pumpkin top, removed the seeds, and then filled it with milk, spices, and honey. The pumpkin was then baked in the hot ashes of a dying fire. Pumpkins are a very good source of dietary fiber, vitamins A and C, riboflavin, potassium, copper, and manganese.



## 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:Ellis-tx@tamu.edu) or find the application on the master gardener website, [ECMGA.com](http://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!

### Gold



### Bronze



### Green

AmeriGrafix, Boyce Feed & Grain, CNB of Texas, Gerdau, Holcim, Living Earth Technologies, Renewal by Andersen Roland's, Nursery & Landscape, Tex-Scapes Greenery, Texas Tree Farm, Waxahachie Civic Center

## Exhibitors

360 Painting of South DFW  
Adam Rope State Farm  
Angie & Teresa's Garden Store  
Artisan Outdoor Lighting  
Barris Pottery & Ceramics  
Beldon Dallas  
Best Bug Bait  
Bertha's Best  
Blue Moon Soaps  
Bluebonnet Worm Farm  
Boyce Feed & Grain  
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Wimbish Tree Farm

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