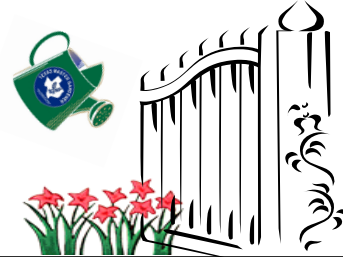




Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume XII, Issue 1

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

January, 2019

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

2019 Master Gardener Calendar

The Ellis County Master Gardeners are proud to present our 13th annual gardening calendar. Our theme this year is **"Gardening in the Extreme"**.

As always, this beautiful and informative calendar includes month-by-month gardening information, soil preparation, fertilization, moon signs, average temperature and rainfall each month, holidays, as well as sponsors' events.

Your **FREE** copy is now available at all of the following calendar sponsors' locations. While you are there to pick up your calendar, please shop at their business. You might find just the Christmas gift you are looking for. Also thank them for sponsoring this year's gardening calendar! Without them there would not be a calendar.



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



The calendars are now available at all sponsor locations.

Waxahachie

Ann's Health Food Center
ARK Country Store
Boyce Feed & Grain
Carlisle Chevrolet GMC
Central Kubota
Citizen's National Bank Texas
College Street Pub
Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis CO
Ellis CO Master Gardeners
Gingerbread Press
Larken Farms Orchard
Lawn Master Pools

Living Magazine

Pam Daniel, Ebby Halliday Realtors
Railport Brewing Company
Texas Tree Farms
The Dove's Nest
The Greenery
The Waxahachie Sun
Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce
Waxahachie Civic Center
Waxahachie CVB
Waxahachie Daily Light
Waxahachie Farmer's Market
Ennis

Ennis Chamber of Commerce

Tex-Scapes Greenery
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Maypearl
Maypearl Insurance Company
Midlothian
ARK County Store
Citizen's National Bank
Earthtones Greenery
Rigsby Garden Center
Silverado Lawn & Landscaping
Travis Equipment

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

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

Jacob Calvin is a Certified Professional Soil Scientist and a Certified Professional Forester. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Texas Tech University in Soil Science and a Master's of Science Degree from Stephen F. Austin State University in Forestry. He worked for International Paper Corporation for 15 years as a Consulting Forester and Wetland Scientist. Since leaving International Paper, he has become a private consultant providing ecological assessments, timber inventories, soil mapping, and wetland delineations for various clients. He has lived in Waxahachie, Texas for the past three years. Mr. Calvin will present "Getting the Dirt on Soil" at our monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 8, 2019.

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



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



Planting

- ♦ Plant trees, shrubs and woody ornamentals from nursery containers. Plant slightly above ground line to allow root flare to be exposed.
- ♦ Transplant small trees and shrubs while they are dormant. Water the plant well before digging it.
- ♦ Plant cold-tolerant herbs such as chives, cilantro, garlic and parsley: onion transplants late month.
- ♦ Seed for warm-weather annuals can be planted in flats in a temperature-controlled environment. Tomatoes and peppers can be started from seed mid-month. All require bright light and warm temperatures (60-70°F). Use grow lights for best results.
- ♦ Plant blackberries, fruit and nut trees. Contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service – Ellis County at 972-825-5175 or visit <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/fruit-nut> for recommended varieties. Cultivar or variety selection is critical.

Fertilizing and Pruning

- ♦ Prune trees, including live oaks and red oaks, to remove dead, broken and unwanted branches. Apply pruning paint to any cut/wound on your oak trees to prevent oak wilt.
- ♦ Water newly planted trees and shrubs as needed and apply a liquid root stimulator monthly.
- ♦ Peach and plum trees should be pruned to stimulate lateral branches and keep their “bowl” shape. Thin out branches to open the center to allow more sunlight, resulting in fruit production over the entire tree.
- ♦ Apply blood meal or a slow-release fertilizer to pansies and other cool-season annuals.
- ♦ Maintain free-form crape myrtles by removing “sprouts” growing from the base, but never cut the tops out. It produces unsightly knots and delays blooming. Removing spent seed pods is OK.

Garden Watch

- ♦ Remove by hand, broadleaf weeds such as clover, dandelions, henbit and chickweed in lawns and beds. If necessary, spray turf with broadleaf herbicide when temperatures are above 70°. Be careful when using herbicides to prevent the drift from harming desirable plants.
- ♦ Don't Guess. Soil Test! The best way to determine your soil's fertility needs is to have it tested. Contact the local AgriLife Extension office at 972-825-5175 for a Soil Sample Information Form or go to <http://soiltesting.tamu.edu>.



2019
Happy New Year



Indian Trail Master Naturalists Events



Join the Indian Trail Master Naturalists at their monthly meeting on Monday, January 28, 2019. Prior to the meeting, from 5-6 pm, the Master Naturalists will be making bird treats with suet balls, peanut butter pinecones and fruit garlands. (Then, if you can, join them on Saturday, February 2, 2019, as they put out the bird treats in various parks in Ennis, Waxahachie and Midlothian. Schedule and maps will be provided on January 28.) All materials will be provided. Make some treats for your birds and some for the park birds.

The program following their meeting is titled “Vision North Texas” and will be presented by a North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) representative. Vision North Texas is an award-winning partnership of private, public, and academic organizations making an important contribution to the future quality of life, economic desirability and long-term sustainability of the 16-county North Central Texas region. It is increasing public awareness about important regional land use issues that affect mobility, air quality, water supply and other economic and environmental resources. Through Vision North Texas, leaders and experts around the region have worked together to imagine a future that is better than ‘business as usual’. North Texas 2050 is a major new ‘gamebook’ for our region that has been shaped by research and the experience of experts in transportation, land use and development, housing, the environment, health and all the other issues that will determine how livable and successful North Texas will be in the coming decades.

The program is free and follows the 6 p.m. Master Naturalist meeting that is also open to the public. Meeting location: First United Methodist Church, Family Life Center 505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie. For more info, call (972) 825-5175 or email ellis-tx@tamu.edu.

Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener



Prairie Verbena – Verbena Family (Verbenaceae) *Verbena bipinnatifida* Nutt.

Range: 1 through 10 (Ellis County is in Region 4)
Size: 12 – 18 inches
Blooms: January through December, Perennial



Usually no more than a foot high and often reclining, prairie verbena sometimes paints large areas lavender, pink, bluish or purple. Plants are hairy, with square stems Trumpet-shaped with five flattened lobes, the tiny flowers are clustered into half-globes. Opposite, stalked leaves are divided twice into finely cut foliage that adds a lacy background to the rounded flower clusters. Prairie verbena quickly covers barren areas, but is crowded out as other species invade. It is an important nectar plant for butterflies, blooming throughout the year. It often roots from reclining lower stem joints. Texas has thirty-six species of verbena, many essentially similar.



Ellis County Master Gardener Scholarship 2019

In 2003, Ellis County Master Gardener Association (ECMGA) decided to make scholarships available to graduating high school seniors residing in Ellis County. We wanted to provide opportunities to these students that chose college studies in horticulture and/or life sciences disciplines. Since then, we have awarded 41 graduating high school students with college scholarships totaling \$78,600.

One of the objectives of the ECMGA is to build partnerships with the Ellis County community to expand horticultural education and opportunities. In keeping with this objective, the ECMGA will again make scholarship funds available in 2019 to deserving high school seniors pursuing studies in horticulture/life sciences – related fields. To qualify, the applicant must be a 2019 graduating high school senior residing in Ellis County from an Ellis County High School, Ellis County Charter High School or Ellis County Home School Program. The applicant must have an elected academic major in a horticulture/life sciences – related field that includes, but is not limited to horticulture, agriculture, environmental science, forestry, botany, biology (e.g.: plant genetics, plant physiology), landscape design or entomology. Other horticulture/life sciences – related fields of studies are delineated in the scholarship application package available on the ECMGA website. Applicants must be able to provide proof of acceptance at an accredited institution of higher education. In addition, this year the ECMGA has decided to allow former ECMGA College Scholarship Awardees currently enrolled in horticulture programs/life sciences degree plans to also apply for an ECMGA 2019 College Scholarship to continue their college/university studies.

ECMGA college scholarships awarded to qualifying students in 2019 will be up to \$3,000. Students applying for the ECMGA College Scholarship are invited to visit <http://www.ecmga.com> to download the application package found under the “What’s Happening” tab. The completed application may be submitted by registered mail (return receipt requested) or in person to the Texas AgriLife Extension Service office located at 701 South I-35, Suite 3, Waxahachie, TX 75165. If additional information is needed regarding the ECMGA Scholarship, please call (972) 825-5175 (Ellis County AgriLife Extension Office) or George Cole, Chairman, ECMGA 2019 College Scholarship Program at 972/937-2440 or <mailto:georgedciii@att.net>. All scholarship applications must be received no later than 4:00 P.M. on March 15, 2019.

For more information go to the ECMGA Website <http://ecmga.com/>. Click on the Scholarships tab for the ECMGA 2019 Scholarship Application and ECMGA Acad Discip 2019.

An Intern's Perspective

By Jackie Nelson

It's been about seven months since I've finished the classroom phase of the 2018 Master Gardener Training Program. I've had several "seasoned" Master Gardeners ask me what I've thought about the whole experience. So, here are my thoughts....

I remember being told that I would probably be overwhelmed with the amount of new information the class would offer. Well, that was an understatement! I thought I couldn't possibly retain all that information, and sure enough, I couldn't. But, since the class, I've had so much exposure from working in gardens and talking to experienced gardeners that I've actually learned some things in spite of myself!



I remember the day in class they told us the "Bug Guy" (Michael Merchant, PhD) was coming to give us an introduction to insects. I'm not really a fan of bugs. I honestly thought of skipping that class, but I hung in there and tried not to be too creeped out. Since then, guess what I've had to deal with in my home garden? Insects! Scale bugs on my crepe myrtles, hornworms on my parsley and grub worms everywhere! Did you know grubs mature into June bugs? Well, that explains why my back yard was loaded with those pesky beetles. With the help of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system, and some very helpful lady bugs, I was able to control the scale bugs and my crepe myrtles look great! My son-in-law "relocated" the hornworms from my parsley. I used Neem Oil on the grubs so hopefully next year I will not have quite as many June bugs.



Most of my previous gardening experience had been with flowers and not so much with vegetables. This year, though, I decided to give some veggies a try. The tomatoes did pretty well, but I will be more careful to choose native plants next time. I had some beans, but the rabbits ate them faster than I could get out there to pick them. The squash did great! I've planted some cucumbers and beans (in a different location) for my fall garden, so we'll see how they do.

I've taken a leap with a few herbs I've never tried before. I have a good deal of basil and rosemary that I pick mostly for the fragrance! My thyme and oregano did okay for a while but have now dried up. I learned that dill needs to be planted in the ground and does not grow well in containers. The herbs we planted in the Learning Garden at Getzendaner Park look fabulous! I think the prep work they did in the soil before we planted made the difference.

I guess the best part of this whole experience for me has been working with the Class of 2018 interns on our project at the Waxahachie Care Center. They are all so smart and dedicated to making the Center a success and I'm so proud of all of them. I've also enjoyed "working" at Farmers Market. The best day was making Kokedama with my mentor, Susan Gilliland. What is a Kokedama? It is a form of Japanese garden art that is centuries old and tied into the practice of bonsai. It is an accent to that mode of plant display where a moss ball is the focal and supporting point for a sculpted tree or plant. The moss ball is fixed to a platform or suspended from string with the plant growing out from the sphere. Susan had some plants already made and brought everything so we could make some with the folks there. It was the most fun I've had playing with mud in a long time!

The Master Gardener Program has been such a wonderful, worthwhile experience for me. And, what's even better, is knowing that it doesn't end with my internship. I will be able to continue "growing" (pun intended) and learning for many years to come. Not only in my garden but with my circle of friends.



Featured Recipe of the Month

Homemade Energy Bars

'The Power of Superfoods' book



Ingredients

- 1 cup raw nuts
- 2 T raw seeds
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ cup dark chocolate
- (or ¼ cup raw cacao powder or cacao nibs)
- ¼ cup pitted dates



Makes about 6 bars

- * Cover nuts and seeds completely with water; stir in salt and soak overnight at room temperature.
- * Strain and rinse in the morning.
- * In a food processor or blender, combine soaked nuts and seeds with chocolate and date. Purée.
- * Press mixture into an oiled baking dish.
- * Cut into bars or chunks.
- * Store bars at room temperature for a few days. They freeze well too.

Soaking nuts and seeds make them easier to digest, essentially making a superfood even more super.

Texas Superstar - 'Balsamic Blooms' Basil (*Ocimum hybrid 'Balsamic Blooms'*)

By Gayle Johnston, ECMG

Now that the Holidays are over, and winter is truly upon us, this may be a good time to let your thoughts stray to spring garden planning and the joys and comforts of warmer weather. If you are looking to add more variety and interest to your herb garden or simply to incorporate a few edible plants into your landscape, the addition of the 2017 Texas Superstar **'Balsamic Blooms' Basil** may be an ideal addition.

Ordinary basil, of course, is an herb with a very long history and a rich international culinary tradition. According to *Texas Gardener* magazine, there are at least 64 varieties of basil within the genus *Ocimum*, with most of the culinary basil falling within the designation *Ocimum basilicum*. It is believed to have been brought to Greece by Alexander the Great, and is used by the Greek Orthodox Church to make holy water even to the present day. The ancient Romans, who called it the herb of love, also initiated the somewhat amusing practice of hurling insults and curses at basil during planting to assure it would flourish. The French call it the *l'herbe royale* (the royal herb) and feature it prominently in *soupe au pistou*, a Provincial specialty in which *pistou* is added to white beans, carrots, squash, green beans and garlicky chicken stock to fashion a hearty stew showcasing basil at its best. Holy basil is particularly sacred in Hindu tradition, and the Chinese have long used it for both medicinal as well as culinary purposes. Finally, basil is virtually synonymous with Italian cooking in the modern-day kitchens of Italy and the United States.

The new Texas Superstar, Balsamic Blooms Basil, is an exceptionally edible plant with ornamental qualities that make it a great addition to any garden. The plant has attractive green foliage and deep purple blooms. Unlike most basil, the entire plant is edible and while the foliage may be used for traditional culinary purposes, the long-lasting purple blooms make it an excellent ornamental addition to a garden.

According to horticultural experts at Texas A&M Agrilife, 'Balsamic Blooms' Basil does best under the following circumstances and has the following characteristics:



- ≈ **Exposure:** Best in full sun to maintain the colorful flowers; space plants 18 to 24' apart.
- ≈ **Size:** Height: Has a mounding growth habit reaching 18 to 24"
- ≈ **Plant Type:** Annual with the ability to continue to grow soft new foliage while it continues to carry purple flowers; blooms and foliage are long lasting.
- ≈ **Planting Time:** Transplants are available in spring in several pot sizes from 4" to 1 gallon containers.
- ≈ **Soil Type:** Most any well drained soil; keep the soil slightly damp while establishing the plants and then slow the supplemental irrigation.
- ≈ **Suggested Uses:** 'Balsamic Blooms' is a lovely herb with multiple flavors on the same plant. Use the minty blooms to add color to a salad. Foliage has a sweeter basil flavor which may be used for pesto or other traditional culinary uses.
- ≈ **Special Note:** 'Balsamic Blooms' does not require pinching or other special care, though removing older flowers will keep the plant actively growing with fresh new growth and flowers.

Similar to other basil, 'Balsamic Blooms' has another notable attribute that may make it a "must add" to your landscape or herb garden this spring. According to *Texas Gardener* contributor, Vicki Blachman, "basil may be the best bee attractant you've ever grown. All of my Texas bees completely ignore the nodding sunflowers in favor of any variety of blooming basil".

Dr. Brent Pemberton, Texas A&M Agrilife Research ornamental horticulturist in Overton, recommends gardeners harvest young flowers for taste because bloom stems turn woody with age. Removing young flowers also encourages branching and reblooming, thereby promoting more leaves and flowers. "'Balsamic Blooms' perform very well around the state and with very little maintenance," Pemberton said. "It's a plant that is a beautiful ornamental and a great choice for culinary creations."

Dr. Cynthia McKenney, ornamental horticulturist at Texas Tech University in Lubbock and a member of the Texas Superstar Executive Board, adds that the edibility of the entire plant means that "you can chop the blooms and sprinkle them on your salad to add some purple and provide a nice color contrast".

EXTREME ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE – Since the mid 1990's, city dwellers have been encouraged to adopt management practices to reduce fertilizer runoff and conserve water. Research has shown that large amounts of phosphorus and nitrates are washed from recently fertilized grass sod, regardless of the type of fertilizer and is contributing to the potential of deficient oxygen levels and algae blooms. As the algae begins to die, other organisms consume them using even more oxygen resulting in possible fish kills and "stinky water". Using a soil test to determine what nutrients are needed and only applying them at the right time will help keep these fertilizers out of our water systems. Contact your local AgriLife Extension office for more details on soil testing.

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 participant 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.





Cyclamen

Holiday Living Plants

By Cerelda de Heus

Flowering and foliage plants can make welcome gifts, however taking proper care of them determines how long they remain attractive and enjoyable.

Proper watering is critical. A large plant in a small container will dry out fast. Indoor humidity is low during the winter season. Check your plants daily and do not over water, over watering is just as unhealthy for a plant as under watering. When the plant's soil is dry to the touch, water until some drains from the bottom of the pot, discard drained water. Misting holiday plants is not recommended as this could create an environment for foliar disease. Improper watering can result in root or crown rot in some plants so make sure they need water before watering.

All plants must have proper **lighting** to extend their life through the indoor holiday season. Placing your plants where they will receive high levels of indirect light or under a lamp. Low light levels will shorten their life and your enjoyment of these seasonal beauties.

Cooler **temperatures** (60-65°F) lengthen the life of flowering plants, while extremely high temperatures (75-80°F) will usually shorten their display life. This is particularly true of forced bulbs, which decline rapidly in the heat. Some foliage plants are subject to chilling injury below 55°F. Avoid abrupt temperature changes by placing plants away from doors, vents, and drafts.

Not all, but many holiday plants, even under ideal conditions, last only a few weeks and do not need fertilizers. Plants that can be kept indoors for many months will benefit from a light application of a water soluble or a slow release fertilizer. Plants kept for a long time eventually outgrow their containers and might need to be repotted. Prepared soil mixes are readily available. Choose a container, preferably one with good drainage holes, proportional in size to the plant.

African violets

African violets are excellent indoor flowering plants. Available in many flower colors, they produce flowers year-round under the proper growing conditions. Individual flower clusters may last three to six weeks under good conditions. East and west facing windows are some of the best locations for violets to promote continuous blooming.



Amaryllis

Amaryllis come in a variety of colors (orange, red, white, and pink) and bloom four to six weeks after the bulbs are planted. Individual blooms may last three to four days with a single flower stalk usually producing three or four large, trumpet-shaped blooms; larger bulbs may produce more than one flower stalk. Place these plants outdoors in bright light (not direct) once temperatures are warm enough allowing the foliage to grow and develop. Throughout the summer months water and fertilize until fall. Come fall water less and cut back the leaves. When the leaves have died completely, let the soil dry and place the bulb in a cool, dry place for four to eight weeks before resuming watering.

Holiday Cactus

Holiday cactus are three related plant species that look like Christmas cacti. The three types bloom at different times of the year and can be found in flower at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. All three types require bright sunlight and moderate moisture levels. South facing windows are excellent places for a holiday cactus. After the six weeks of holiday blooming, remove spent flowers and apply a houseplant fertilizer. Plants can be grown outdoors in semi-shady places, and stem pieces of three segments or more are easily propagated. Holiday cacti should bloom about the same time every year.

Gloxinia

Gloxinias are very similar to African violets and may be available year-round. Individual blooms will last four to six days, and gloxinias will usually flower over a two to four-week period. Bright, indirect light is necessary to keep the plant in flower. Unlike African violets, they need to rest before re-flowering.



Cyclamen

Cyclamen are excellent holiday plants that are usually available from October through March.

White, pink, lavender, purple, red and bicolor varieties are usually available. The plant produces many flowers, remaining in flower two to four months with proper care. Cool indoor temperatures (50-60°F) will make the flowers last longer. Like other holiday plants, cyclamen are easily damaged from improper watering.

Kalanchoes

Kalanchoes are available year-round in many colors. Flowers will last three to six weeks in mild temperatures (65-80°F) with medium light, and if the plants are kept properly watered.

Poinsettias

Poinsettias were introduced to the US from Mexico by Joel Roberts Poinsett, a botanist, physician and the first US Ambassador to Mexico. Poinsettias are part of the *Euphorbiaceae* or spurge family. The showy colored parts of the poinsettias are not flowers but are colorful bracts of poinsettias, which may stay bright for months if you care for them properly. Bright, indirect light and frequent watering are essential. Do not allow the plants to wilt, but watering too often can damage roots.



GARDEN CHECKLIST FOR JANUARY

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



- ◆ Now is an excellent time to transplant mature or established trees and shrubs while they are dormant.
- ◆ Make flower and vegetable garden plans now before the rush of spring planting. Time spent in arm chair gardening before the fireplace will pay off in improved plant selection. Besides, it is fun to page through the garden catalogs.
- ◆ Sow seeds in flats or containers to get a jump on plant growth before hot weather arrives. Petunias, begonias and impatiens should be sown in early January. Warm temperature plants, such as tomatoes, peppers, marigolds and periwinkles should be sown in late January or early February.
- ◆ Apply a light application of fertilizer to established pansy plantings. Use one-half pound of ammonium sulfate per 100 square feet of bed area. Repeat the application every four to six weeks, depending on rainfall. Dried blood meal is also an excellent source of fertilizer for pansies.
- ◆ Prepare beds and garden area for spring planting.
- ◆ Select and order gladiolus corms for February/March planting. Plant at two-week intervals to prolong flowering period.
- ◆ Check junipers and other narrow-leaf evergreens for bagworm pouches. The insect eggs overwinter in the pouch and start the cycle again by emerging in the spring to begin feeding on the foliage. Hand removal and burning of the pouches are ways of reducing the potential damage next spring.
- ◆ The life of the plant received as a Christmas gift can be prolonged with proper care. Keep the soil moist but provide drainage so that excess moisture can flow from the pot. Keep the plant out of range of heating ducts and away from heating units. Keep in a cool room at night, preferably at 60° to 65° F.
- ◆ Don't fertilize newly set out trees or shrubs until after they have started to grow, and then only very lightly the first year.
- ◆ When buying plants, the biggest is not always the best, especially when dealing with bare-root plants. The medium to small sizes (four to six feet) are usually faster to become established and more effective in the landscape than the large sizes.
- ◆ Hold off on pruning bush roses until February or early March. Use good shears that will make clean cuts. Remove dead, dying and weak canes. Leave four to eight healthy canes and remove approximately one-half of the top growth and height of the plant.
- ◆ Now is an excellent time to select and plant container-grown roses to fill in those bare spots in your rose garden.
- ◆ When pruning shrubs, first prune out any dead or damaged branches; then thin out by removing about one-third of the canes or stems at ground level, removing the oldest canes only. Last, shape the rest of the plant, but do not cut everything back to the same height.
- ◆ Water foliage plants as well as other containerized plants only when needed and not by the calendar.
- ◆ Climbing roses should be trained, but not pruned. Weave long canes through openings in trellises or arbors and tie them with jute twine or plastic/wire plant ties. Securing canes now prevents damage from winter winds and contributes toward a more refined look to the garden when roses are blooming. Wait to prune climbing or once-blooming roses after the spring flowers have faded.

Ellis County Master Gardeners EXPO

Coming Saturday, March 30, 2019

Save
the date



Interested in becoming a
2019 Expo Sponsor Or
Expo Exhibitor?

Contact James Kocian at
expo.ecmga@yahoo.com

Announcing the Amateur Photo Contest
Sponsored by the Ellis County Master Gardener Association
Details coming next month

Returning
The Children's
Workshop Room



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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Central Kubota
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Creative Quilters Guild, Ellis Co.
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Flamingo Food & Beverage
Garden Charms
Garden Variety Organics
Gardenscapes by Diane
Girl Scouts NETX
Goss, Karl & Jim
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Real Time Pain Relief
Renewal by Andersen

Rigsby's Garden Center
RiverMist Pools & Spas
Rolen's Honey Bee's
Silverado Lawn & Landscape
Skinkle Tools
Synthetic Turf of North Texas
Texas Rustic Works
Texas Toffee
Texas Tree Farms
Tex-Scapes Greenery
Tommy's Bird Houses
Tommy's Hot Dog
Travis Equipment
Waxahachie Equipment Co.
Wimbish Tree Farm

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