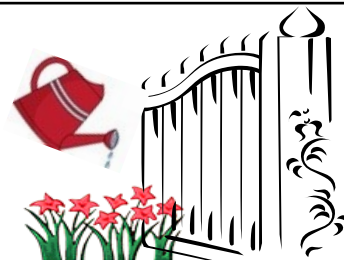


Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume XII, Issue 10

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

October, 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 Seery, 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!**

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:

Saturday, October 5 ~ Taste of Market Third Annual Chili Cook-Off. The weather has cooled down and the market sellers will cook up a variety of fiery hot, to pretty hot, to maybe mild chili. Market shoppers get to sample and be the judges. The winner gets bragging rights until next year. This is a fun day for all. There may even be some recipes and tips shared so come join the fun while enjoying the last few weeks of the market's outdoor season.

Saturday, October 12 ~ Kid's Craft Day The Ellis County Master Gardeners will be on hand with a supply of small pumpkins for the kids to decorate. They will be encouraged to get creative with natural materials, paints and all sorts of art supplies to help design a unique, one-of-a-kind pumpkin to take home and enjoy all season. Bring the kids and grandkids and enjoy a fall day at the market.

Saturday, October 19 ~ ECMGA Pop-Up Horticulture Their horticulture program will focus on "Putting the Garden to Bed for the Winter". Master Gardeners will present important steps in preparing the garden for winter: cutting back plants, cleaning up debris, planting, protecting and prepping for spring. In addition, they will have fall plants and bulbs available along with instructions for planting. Look for them under the big white pop-up tent next to their booth at the back of the market.

Saturday, October 26 ~ "Trick or Treat" day for all The farmers market still has lots of fresh produce, fall vegetables, meats, cool weather greens along with beautiful autumn decorations. Our artists have some great Christmas gift ideas for you including locally crafted jewelry, fiber art, homemade baked goods, pickles, jams, jellies and more.

Saturday, November 3 ~ Grand Opening of the Farmers Market new indoor season Yes, the market is moving into the store front with all the meats, produce, tamales, preserves, eggs, breads, pastries, pickles, salsas and of course crafts that you have been enjoying all year. The indoor market will continue through December 14, so please come and continue to support your local growers and small business owners. We truly appreciate you!



Listen to KBEC

Saturday mornings at 8:10 a.m. 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!

Scotty Rigbsby

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



Bob Erickson will be speaking at our monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 8, 2019. The program titled "The History of Vegetables" will include fascinating and perhaps little-known facts about the grains, fruit and vegetables we eat on almost a daily basis. Bob has been gardening and growing food for over sixteen years, and became a Master Gardener in 2013. Bob is involved in a number of projects and regularly writes articles and talks at a variety of meetings and to

local groups.

Social time begins at 9:30am and our program begins at 10am with the guest speaker at 11am. 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.

ATTENTION!!

Ellis County Master Gardener Events

Don't Miss Out



Ellis County Master Gardeners' *Fall Plant Sale*

October 5, 2019

*Come out to Coleman Junior High School Parking Lot,
October 5, 2019, 9 am - Noon, and pick up perennial
plants, trees and shrubs to enhance your home..*



Ellis County Master Gardener Meet and Greet

Information and Orientation Session

Monday, October 14, 2019, from 5:30pm—8:30pm

Program begins at 6:30pm

First United Methodist Church

505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie, TX 75165

No Charge for this Meet and Greet



The Ellis County Master Gardeners invite all who are interested to join us for an orientation and informational meeting about joining the Ellis County Master Gardener Association. Find out who we are, what our mission is all about and how you can be part of it. Applications for the ECMGA training will be available during this event.

Master Gardeners extend research based-horticultural education to an ever-increasing gardening audience and provides a viable way to meet the public demand for horticultural information. The Ellis County Master Gardener program follows the State of Texas Master Gardener Program, and are representatives of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. As such, Master Gardeners follow the research-based recommendations of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

- * Open to any resident of Ellis County or nearby areas 18 or older
- * Selection is based on the volunteer needs of our organization and the qualifications of the applicants
- * All applications will be kept in strict confidence and privacy is respected
- * Requirements: interest in helping people, ability and desire to learn, willingness to provide unbiased, research-based information and be a team player
- * **GARDENING EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE NOT REQUIRED**

The application period will be open from October 14, 2019, through January 1, 2020. No applications will be accepted after January 1. Classes will be held every Friday, beginning January 31, through March 20, 2020, from 8:30am—4:30pm. The training includes approximately 70 hours of research-based horticultural education and materials and is limited to 20 participants. The cost will be determined at a later date. Registration applications will be available at the Meet and Greet session.

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, Charlton, 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 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 first sign of fungus. (See Tidbit on page 4 for additional information)
- ◇ 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.



Farm To Table on the Square
presented by the
Waxahachie High School
Culinary Arts Students

With Support of the Fine Art Students
Savor the season with a fabulous
outdoor dinner on the square in Historic
Downtown Waxahachie using locally
sourced fruits, vegetables and meats!

Saturday, November 2, 2019
5:30 PM Gathering/Refreshments
6:00 PM Dinner

Tickets \$100 per person
Available at Waxahachie High School,
Ellis County Museum and
DowntownWaxahachie.com



Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian
Ellis County Master Gardener



Trailing Ratany – Ratany Family (Krameriaceae)
Krameria lanceolata Torr.

Region: 2 - 10 (Ellis Co. is Region 4)
Size: 2 feet
Blooms: April – October, Perennial

Although you may never notice this little plant unless you look underfoot at the right time, trailing ratany is easy to identify when in bloom. It has iridescent, dime-sized orchid-like flowers, with five large wine-colored sepals, surrounding five inconspicuous true petals. Its inch-long milky leaves are alternate and very narrow. The fruit, a downy round bur with delicate spines, contains only one seed. Ratany does not get very large. It has a woody base with stems trailing like a semivine. The dried root, tinctured, is an effective astringent. The ratany-root of commerce is obtained from a South American species with a thicker bark and larger root than *K. lanceolata*, although our native species was once considered a better source.

Indian Trail Master Naturalists Events



Join the Indian Trail Master Naturalists at their monthly meeting on Monday, October 28, 2019. The program for the evening is entitled **“The Beneficial Bat-Myth and Misinformation Busting!”** Rebecca Schumacher, a certified Texas Master Naturalist-Indian Trail Chapter, has been a veterinary technician with experience in wildlife rehabilitation for over thirty years. She has been permitted as a bat rehabilitator for nine years and will give a brief introduction to the anatomy and taxonomy of bats; the beneficial role of bats globally and why they are at risk; the common species found locally, and their habitats; and what to do in case of a close encounter with a bat.

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

Saturday, July 18, 9am, Wildflower & Bird Walk. Members will be leading a walk at Mockingbird Nature Park. Join in this ½ mile stroll along the trails to identify wildflowers and birds. Free to the public. Participants should bring drinking water and binoculars. The walk will be canceled if raining. Info at: <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/> or email: Information@itmnc.com

Saturday, November 2, 2019, Rhymes & Rhythms on the Prairie. A campfire, a guitar and a cowboy poet. Join the ITMN for fun, games and good food at Kachina Prairie, 1816 W. Baldrige St., Ennis, TX.

Why does my St. Augustine grass have brown spots?

With cooler temperatures and wetter weather, you may see circular areas of dying, yellowing grass known as brown patch, which is a disease caused by a fungus. While it is common in St. Augustine, bermuda grass and zoysia grass also are susceptible. Brown patch weakens or kills grass, and is made worse by nitrogen, so do not apply any fertilizer to try to revive the grass. Do spread one-half inch peat moss over the affected area to help the grass recover and use as little water as possible. The fungus is best controlled when treated early with approved fungicides containing bayleton, chlorothalonil or PCNB, applied according to label directions.



TOOLS AND WINTER ~ *Preparing for the Big Chill*

By Jane Slone, ECMG



Winter is on the way and it is time to think about storing our garden tools before the cold weather sends us shivering into our homes and out of our gardens.

Lawn Mowers

If you have a gas lawn mower, empty the gas tank by running the lawn mower until all the gas is used up. A gas stabilizer can be added to prevent the carburetor from becoming gummed instead of emptying the fuel tank. Be sure to follow the directions on the stabilizer. If you leave gas in the mower during winter, it is suggested that you should start the lawnmower several times throughout the winter period. This process will keep gas moving through the carburetor, and it also helps the battery stay charged.

Be sure the mower is disconnected from the spark plug (*you may need a pair of pliers to remove the spark plug*). Clean underneath and remove all debris that sticks to the blades and bottom of the mower. Clear out grass, sticks, twigs and mud. Sweep off debris from the top and hose it down to make sure nothing is caked on or stuck in hard to reach areas. Grass can become tangled around the blades and impede the blade.



Remove and sharpen the blade to have it ready for next spring. It is a good idea to oil the blades to prevent any rust from forming.

You have two choices; drain the oil and replace now or leave until spring and change the oil. It is a good idea to leave oil in the engine at all times. Texas has such a mild winter, the choice to change the oil in fall or spring is your option. The air filter should be checked, cleaned and replaced as needed.



Weed eaters/W.E.

It is important to know your weed eater requirements. There are 2 strokes, 4 strokes and walk behind weed eaters. So the directions could vary for the type of W.E. you own. If you have a gas-powered W.E., the directions are to drain and use a stabilizer instead of leaving fuel in the tank. This will keep the gaskets from drying out.

You should clean and inspect the weed eater for loose nuts or bolts and possible items that could prevent it from working next spring. In one article I researched the owner took his W.E. apart and cleaned it with a toothbrush. He started with the oil and inspection of all parts. Most gardeners are not into that much cleaning. Clean and check the filter, spark plug and W.E. string or wire. I did learn that it is best to store your gas W.E. horizontal rather than stand it up vertical. The W.E. could be sprayed to protect all metal parts from rusting.



Hand Garden Tools

All tools should be inspected. Wash with water and soap and allow to dry. Tools with wooden handles should be lightly sanded to remove any splinters. Apply a thin layer of Linseed oil to wooden areas to prevent cracking and drying out. The tools can't function their best if they are dull, so get them ready for spring with sharp edges. You can do it yourself or have someone with more experience perform this task.

Sharpening Your Own Tools

To sharpen the edges put a bit of oil, either WD-40 or motor oil, on the blade. Then with a handheld whetstone file the blade at a 20-degree angle. You can also use a file or a motorized sharpener, depending on the tool needing sharpening and the equipment on hand.

Storage of Tools

You will need a 5-gallon bucket, a bag of play sand and mineral oil, about 1/2 gallon.

Fill the 5-gallon bucket with a bag of play sand and then pour the 1/2 gallon of mineral oil evenly over the top. Let the oil sift through and then push your tools into the sand. The best part of this storage bucket is the coarseness of the sand, which serves as sand paper keeping debris off of the tools. And of course, the oil keeps water from damaging the metal.

Spring will arrive soon and we will be back to the garden. All your tools will be ready to use for the coming season. So all the money you would have spent on new garden tools can go into buying special plants you just have to have for the garden.

<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/care/tools-and-equipment/disinfecting-tools.html>

<http://www.marthastewart.com/264239/gardening-tool-care>

<https://www.gardentoolcompany.com/pages/garden-tool-care-and-maintenance>



Daylight Savings Time Ends Sunday, November 3

Be sure to move your clocks back 1 hour before you go to bed Saturday night!!!

Featured Recipe of the Month

Cauliflower-Topped Shepherd's Pie

From Clean Eating Magazine By Beth Lipton



INGREDIENTS

TOPPING

- 1 lb cauliflower, cut into small florets
- 1 small celery root, peeled and chopped
- 6 cloves garlic, unpeeled
- 3 tbsp avocado or extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- ¼ tsp each sea salt and ground black pepper + additional to taste
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 4–6 tbsp plain unsweetened almond milk

FILLING

- 3 tbsp avocado or extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 2 large carrots, diced
- 2 large stalks celery, diced
- 1 tsp sea salt, divided
- 3 cloves garlic, minced 1 tsp dried rosemary 1½ lb ground lamb or beef
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp cassava flour
- 2 tbsp unsalted tomato paste
- 1 cup low-sodium beef broth



Nutrition Information
Serving Size: 1/6 of recipe
Calories: 513

PREPARATION

1. Make topping: Preheat oven to 425°F. Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment. Toss cauliflower, celery root and garlic cloves with 1 tbsp oil, salt and pepper. Spread on sheets and roast until vegetables are very tender, about 30 minutes, stirring halfway. Set aside to cool slightly.
2. Squeeze garlic out of peels and place in a food processor along with roasted vegetables, parsley and 2 tbsp oil. Purée until smooth, adding milk, 1 tbsp at a time, if needed to thin. Season with additional salt and pepper.
3. Reduce oven temperature to 375°F. Place a large sheet of foil or a baking sheet on bottom rack of oven.
4. Make filling: In a large cast-iron skillet on medium, heat 1 tbsp oil. Add onion, carrots, celery and ¼ tsp salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender, about 6 minutes. Add minced garlic and rosemary and sauté until fragrant, 1 minute. Transfer mixture to a large bowl.
5. Add 1 tbsp oil and lamb to skillet; season with remaining ¾ tsp salt and black pepper. Cook, stirring, until meat is cooked through and most of liquid has absorbed, 8 to 10 minutes. Sprinkle with flour and stir until coated. Add tomato paste, broth and reserved vegetables. Bring to boil; stir, reduce heat to low and simmer for 1 to 2 minutes, until thickened.
6. Spoon topping over filling in skillet and carefully spread using a small offset spatula. Drizzle with remaining 1 tbsp oil. Bake on center rack until topping is golden and filling bubbles around edges, 20 to 25 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. (Alternatively, you can make these in individual portions. Spoon filling and topping into 6 8-oz ramekins and bake at 425°F for 10 to 15 minutes.)

Note from Editor: Susan Ellis made this and used regular white flour in place of cassava flour

A few easy swaps – such as almond milk in the mash and cassava flour as a thickener – makes this classic comfort meal Whole30 compliant.

You can make this pie in a large baking dish or in smaller, individual servings.

TAKE IT TO GO: Pack in an airtight container. Reheat in a toaster oven until heated through.

HERITAGE/HEIRLOOM SPRING-FLOWERING BULBS

*Collin County Master Gardeners
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Collin County*



Daffodils and Muscari make a great combination

Gardeners in the South have a unique dilemma when it comes to planting tulips, daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs. Unlike the gardens of our Northern friends, most of the popular spring flowers will not 'naturalize' - or return year after year - for us, as they require a longer chilling time in the ground. So, we've compiled a list of tried-and-true types which have proven to do well in Southern gardens and will come back for many years. These are called "Heritage" or "Heirloom" bulbs for the south. Of course, North Texas gardeners are free to plant *any* type of bulb in their landscape but should be prepared for the more delicate types to perform as annuals.

RECOMMENDED SPRING FLOWERING BULBS THAT NATURALIZE IN NORTH TEXAS

- **Daffodils/Narcissi:** Precocious, Narcissi Cheerfulness, Tete-a-Tete, Golden Bells, Cassata
- **Hyacinthoids:** Spanish Bluebells
- **Tulips:** Most 'Species' types including, Tulipa clusiana, Tubergens Gem and Lady Jane
- **Grape Hyacinths/Muscari:** Muscari Armeniacum
- **Leucojum aestivum:** "Snowflake"
- **Dutch Iris:** Blue Magic
- **Other Great Selections:** Ipheion uniflorum Rolf Fielder, Leucojum Aestivum Gravetye Giant, Allium cowanii

SPRING BULB Q & A**Q. WHEN SHOULD SPRING—FLOWERING BULBS BE PLANTED?**

A. Bulbs should be planted as soon after purchase as possible. Heirloom and historic bulbs recommended for southern climates can be planted from September through December.

Q. HOW CAN YOU JUDGE THE QUALITY OF BULBS?

A. In general, they should be heavy and solid. A soft bulb may indicate internal rot. They should be free of bruises and cuts - these are ready sites for disease and insect invasion. Inspect the bulbs closely for signs of disease or insects. You will avoid many problems by planting clean, high-quality bulbs.

Q. HOW MUCH LIGHT DO SPRING-FLOWERING BULBS REQUIRE?

A. Most spring-flowering bulbs do best in full sun or filtered light. Inadequate light tends to reduce the size or number of flowers and can even prevent flowering in some cases. Most spring-flowering bulbs lose their foliage by late spring or early summer, and therefore can often be grown successfully under deciduous trees. (By the time the trees leaf out, foliage on the bulbs is declining.) Light shade and cooler temperatures can prolong the length of time the plant is in flower and reduce fading.

Q. WHAT ABOUT SOIL QUALITY?

A. Most authorities recommend sandy loams for bulbs, but you also can find many examples of bulbs thriving in everything from pure sand to clay. The key to success as far as the soil is concerned is drainage. Most bulbs are highly intolerant of poor drainage. In the landscape, drainage can be improved by adding various soil amendments, installing drain lines or growing in raised beds. Clay soil is best amended with compost and expanded shale.

Q. HOW DEEP SHOULD BULBS BE PLANTED?

A. As a general rule, plant bulbs at about three times the height of the bulb in well amended soil and cover with a 2-inch layer of mulch.

Q. WHAT IS THE PROPER SPACING FOR SPRING-FLOWERING BULBS?

A. Space bulbs two to three times the width of the bulb. Smaller bulbs can be planted closer together and larger bulbs farther apart. The best landscape effect will be achieved by planting in mass groups or naturalized drifts.

Q. WHEN DO SPRING-FLOWERING BULBS BLOOM?

A. "Spring" is not a precise time and may actually extend over a period of weeks and varying somewhat from year to year and location to location. Early-, mid- and late-spring are sometimes used to more closely define the bloom time. Depending on the species, variety and micro-climate, blooming may occur from February to May.

Q. WHEN CAN THE FOLIAGE OF SPRING-FLOWERING BULBS BE REMOVED?

A. Allow the foliage to remain until it withers and dies naturally (late spring to early summer). The longer the foliage remains, the longer the plant can photosynthesize and build up its food reserves for subsequent re-flowering. Premature removal can severely weaken a bulb, resulting in poor flowering and/or death!

Q. WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO DIG AND DIVIDE SPRING-FLOWERING BULBS?

A. Heritage/Heirloom bulbs do not require digging as a rule. They should continue to naturalize (return year after year). After several years, if blooming seems to decrease due to overcrowding, bulbs can be dug and divided when foliage begins to turn yellow.

TO CHILL OR NOT TO CHILL?

Heritage/Heirloom bulbs do not require chilling.

FORCING HERITAGE/HEIRLOOM BULBS INDOORS

Paperwhites, Amaryllis, Dutch Iris, Daffodils/Narcissus and Grape Hyacinths can be forced indoors without chilling.



GARDEN CHECKLIST FOR OCTOBER

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



- * 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.
- * October through November is an excellent time to purchase bulbs while you still have a good selection in the garden center. They may be planted at any time with the exception of tulips and hyacinths.
- * 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.
- * Start collecting leaves for the compost pile. Be sure to have extra soil available so that each 6-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.
- * Check your nursery or garden center for started plants of snapdragons, pinks, sweet Williams, poppies and calendulas. They will usually provide a riot of spring color.
- * Keep Christmas cactus in a sunny spot where night temperatures can be kept below 65 degrees F. Buds will drop if you allow night temperatures to go above 70 degrees 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 a planting of 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 degrees F.
- * If twig girdlers have worked over your trees so that many twigs and branches are dropping, make sure these are collected and destroyed, as the eggs are deposited in that portion of the branch that drops to the ground.
- * There is still time to divide and reset such perennials as phlox, violets, hollyhocks, irises, day lilies and Shasta daisies.
- * 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.
- * 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.
- * Do not allow plants with green fruit or berries to suffer from lack of moisture. Hollies will frequently drop their fruit under drought conditions.
- * Prune out dead and diseased wood from trees and shrubs. Hold off on major pruning until midwinter. Pruning now may stimulate tender growth prior to frost.
- * Mulch flower and shrub plantings and vegetable gardens. Mulching now will trap soil warmth and moisture that will benefit plant roots. Mulch will also reduce winter weeds.
- * Turn off the irrigation system for the winter. In the absence of rain, you can turn on the system about once every 3 to 4 weeks through the late fall and winter.
- * Ask a certified professional at your local nursery for Texas Superstars and support local Texas producers.

October Events at EarthTones Greenery

October 5, 2019 3pm Spooky Halloween Workshop

Make a not so spooky, mini garden for Halloween! Great fun for the whole family. We will have all the supplies you need to bring home a masterpiece for your Halloween and Fall decorations this year! \$35 per creation. Fun for Families to build something together!

Register at <http://earthtonesgreenery.com>



FALL BLOOMS FOR BUTTERFLIES

By Shirley Campbell
Ellis County Master Gardener

"Happiness is like a butterfly, the more you chase it, the more it will elude you; but if you turn your attention to other things, it comes and softly sits on your shoulder."

Nathaniel Hawthorn



Mums are in the nurseries signaling the return of fall and cooler weather. Beyond mums, though, there are other great bloomers that save their best for last and not only extend the flowering season but also play an important role for another garden beauty -- butterflies. It is important to remember that they still have a very strong need for nectar sources in the fall. Monarchs, for example, migrate thousands of miles and need good nectar sources along the way to successfully arrive at their over-wintering site in Mexico.

Keep in mind that even non-migratory butterflies will also need nourishment. Other butterfly species that do not migrate will over-winter in various life stages. Some over-winter as eggs and the adults need that extra nutritional boost at the end of the season to lay large numbers of healthy eggs that can withstand the winter. By planting late-blooming species, or even a second round of summer nectar species in our gardens, we can provide this boost for these butterflies.

While many flowers produce nectar, called the drink of the Greek gods, some do a better job than others at attracting butterflies. Orange, red, purple, yellow and pink flowers readily attract nectar-seeking butterflies, especially short-tubed flowers in a cluster – like verbena or phlox – where it is an easy job to reach the nectar. Gardeners delight in large-size blooms but big is not always better when it comes to butterflies.

Equally important when planting for butterflies is the number of plants available. Butterflies prefer a healthy group of one type of flower where they can linger over a meal rather than going from one solitary plant to another scattered throughout the garden.

Fortunately, there are many choices of fall blooms that will meet the needs of butterflies.

Butterflies love the eupatoriums and if you put several in your garden, you can have blooms from summer to fall. The late-flowering boneset or white mist flower (*Eupatorium havanense*) is a prolific fall bloomer that puts on a show for four weeks or more and fairly buzzes with activity as butterflies, bees, wasps and a myriad of other tiny, nectar-seeding insects readily visit the white fuzzy flowers. Numerous ageratum-like flower clusters cover the shrub with clouds of white.

For the smaller butterflies, another excellent autumn nectar source is a perennial commonly called frostweed (*Verbesina virginica*). Frostweed blooms from August to November with white terminal clusters. While it is not the showiest flower in the world, the butterflies love it and flock to its sweet-smelling blooms. Choose a sunny to semi-shaded spot for frostweed but be forewarned that it can be invasive as it quickly spreads by runners and seeds.

Butterflies love the autumn blooming salvias and these bloom until the first hard freeze. Species include *Salvia coccinea*, Mexican bush sage (*S. leucantha*), *S. x Indigo Spires*, Black and Blue (*S. guarantica*), and Autumn sage (*S. greggii*). Only butterflies with long proboscis – like swallowtails and fritillaries – can use these tubular-shaped flowers where the nectar is deep inside the bloom. Planted in full sun, Dark Night bluebeard (*Caryopteris x clandonensis*), is a deciduous shrub with rewarding fall clusters of gorgeous, deep blue, nectar-rich flowers set off by silvery green foliage. Once established, Dark Night is drought tolerant and is visited by numerous bees and butterflies.

A big cluster of tiny flowers atop the succulent leaves of sedums (*Sedum spectabile*) lures butterflies to sit for a spell. Easy to grow, sedums prefer infertile, gravelly soil in a sunny spot with good drainage and are drought tolerant, once established. Many species are available.

Asters (*Asters.spp*) with shades of pink and purple, daisy-like blooms are a welcome color in the fall landscape and a wonderful plant for butterflies.

The butterflies, along with hummingbirds, adore Mexican oregano (*Poliomintha longiflora*), if it is blooming, which in Texas is usually to the end of October.

No matter which fall bloomers you chose for your garden, won't you agree that the sight of a crowd of monarchs hungrily nectaring on a big stand of frostweed brings joy to the heart.



White mist flower

Sedum spectabile



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