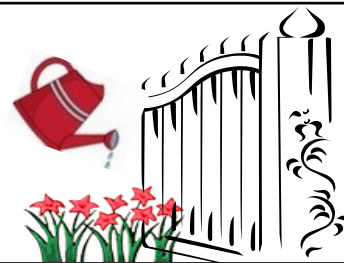


# Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume XII, Issue 11

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

November, 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](http://www.ECMGA.com) and click on subscribe. Best of all; it's FREE! Editors and Newsletter Team: Susan Ellis, Donna Seery, Bree Shaw



## Listen to KBEC

Saturday mornings at 8:10am on 1390 AM or 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

## Inside this issue:

It's Nov ~ What Needs to be Done?	2
Indian Trail Master Naturalists	2
Wildflower of the Month	3
Lawn Care in Winter	3
Taking Care of Birds in Winter	4
ECMGA Plant Sale Pictures	5
Tidbits	5
Herb of the Month	6
Can It Be Fall Already?	6
Recipe of the Month	7
Garden Checklist for November	8
Autumn Ideas	8
Eclectic Gardening-Goldenrod	9

## Ellis County Master Gardener Monthly Meeting—You are invited!

### Second Tuesday of the month



Terri Brim of Brim Seed Company will be speaking at our monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 12, 2019. Terri will discuss the importance of good seed, adaptability of seed, varieties that thrive and the basic seed saving that every gardener can do. Brim Seed Company is a Texas based seed company offering open pollinated and heirloom seeds.

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.

## IT'S NOVEMBER.....WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

### Planting

- ◆ Now through February is the perfect time to plant container-grown trees and shrubs. Dig a hole two times the diameter and one inch shallower than the root ball. Make sure the root ball and the hole are thoroughly wet before planting. Backfill with existing soil and water well.
- ◆ Use the "Custom Tree Selector" at <http://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu> for help in selecting the right tree for the right location. Also, see "Native and Adapted Plants for North Texas" at <https://wateruniversity.tamu.edu/about/publications>.
- ◆ Plant pansies and violas now. Bluebonnets can still be planted from transplants.
- ◆ Daffodils and grape hyacinth may be planted once soil temperature drops below 55°F. Plant 2-3 times as deep as the bulb is tall.

### Fertilizing and Pruning

- ◆ Feed winter annuals growing in the ground and in outdoor containers with a high-nitrogen, water-soluble plant food every two to three weeks. Also, feed and water cool-season vegetables that you are growing now.
- ◆ Trim Patio plants and hanging baskets before moving indoors for the winter. Locate them near bright windows.
- ◆ Refrain from pruning freeze-damaged woody plants at this time. This pruning is best done in late winter.

### Garden Watch

- ◆ It's time to winterize! Disconnect hoses from faucets and drain all hose-end sprinklers. Drain fuel from gasoline-powered engines and run the carburetor dry. Greenhouse owners should check the heating and ventilation systems to ensure proper operation.
- ◆ Check outdoor potted plants for insects (mealybugs, whiteflies, spider mites, aphids, roaches, ants) before moving inside for the winter. Apply a labeled insecticide if needed.
- ◆ When planning new landscapes, select trees, shrubs and perennials that are winter hardy in your area. According to the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone map, Ellis County is located in Zone 8 (average lowest annual temperature is 10°F to 20°F). Therefore, it is best to choose plants listed for Zone 8, or the one or two zones to the north (Zone 6 or 7).

### Indian Trail Master Naturalists Events



Join the Indian Trail Master Naturalists at their monthly meeting on Monday, November 18, 2019. The program for the evening is entitled **"Ecology in your Backyard: Bardwell Lake"**. Stephanie Hebert, Natural Resource Specialist with the US Army Corps of Engineers at Bardwell Lake, will discuss how quite often in many suburban areas our natural habitats and systems get lost in the hustle and bustle. Our plants go unnoticed, animals underappreciated and the uniqueness of the natural history neglected and unexplored. Bardwell Lake is located in Ennis, TX and provides a refuge for many of the local flora and fauna of the area. Stephanie Hebert's discussion aims to bring the natural landscape of Bardwell to light, and the possibilities it has moving into the future as a natural history hot spot in the suburban landscape. 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](mailto:ellis-tx@tamu.edu).

**Saturday, November 9, 2019, 6-8pm, Rhymes and Rhythms on the Prairie.** A campfire, a guitar and a cowboy poet. Join the ITMN for fun, games and food at Kachina Prairie, 1816 W. Baldrige St., Ennis, TX. Info at: <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/> or email: [Information@itmnc.com](mailto:Information@itmnc.com)



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Contact James Kocian at  
[expo.ecmga@yahoo.com](mailto:expo.ecmga@yahoo.com)

**Reserve the date: March 28, 2020!**



## Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

*Submitted by Melinda Kocian  
Ellis County Master Gardener*



**Rough Nama, Sand-Bells – Waterleaf Family (Hydrophyllaceae)**  
*Nama hispidum* Gray

**Region:** 2 – 10 (Ellis Co. in Region 4)  
**Size:** 4 – 20 inches  
**Blooms:** March – November, Annual

Variable in form, Rough Nama is freely branching or sprawling from its base. It is covered with short, appressed hairs making it rough to the touch. Bell-shaped flowers are in small clusters or solitary, from the axils of leaves, a half-inch across. They are pink to purple with a yellow or white throat. The leaves are especially variable, one-half to two inches long, stalked, generally linear, but sometimes divided, lobed or toothed with edges rolled under. They are alternate and have a pungent odor. Masses of the purple flowers are often seen as mats along the shoulders of highways or wherever gravelly, sandy or alluvial soils are found. Rough Nama is an attractive landscape choice when used in a sunny rock garden or border. Twelve species of *Nama* are found in Texas.



## LAWN CARE IN WINTER

*By Dr. Gene R. Taylor  
Department of Soil & Crop Sciences, Texas A&M University*



### Lawn Fertilization for Winter Hardiness

Fall is the time when Texans should consider fertilizing their warm season lawns for the winter. The ability of a lawn to survive a bitterly cold or long winter, or one that fluctuates between cold and warm, can be directly impacted by early fall and winter fertilization practices.

A sound fall fertility program can help ensure a smooth spring green-up and reduce the chance of winter kill. Proper fall fertilization may also reduce the impact of diseases, such as brown patch on St. Augustine and spring dead spot on intensively managed Bermuda grass lawns.

To help warm season grasses prepare for the winter it is recommended that a low nitrogen, high potassium fertilizer be applied in early fall while the grass is still actively growing. During the fall months, when day lengths are shortening, the growth habits of warm season grasses change from primarily leaf production to the production and storage of carbohydrates. These carbohydrates are stored in the rhizomes, stolons and roots until spring green-up when they are utilized to produce new growth. Excessive nitrogen in the fall may encourage leaf production at the expense of carbohydrate storage.

Potassium plays an important role in protecting plant cells from freeze injury and is therefore required in higher quantities. To meet the demands for low nitrogen and high potassium use fertilizers with a 1-1-2 (N-P-K) ratio. An example of a fertilizer with this ratio is 5-5-10. Ten pounds of 5-5-10 per 1,000 square feet of turf is sufficient to meet the early fall needs of the turfgrass.

In late fall and early winter when growth has stopped an application of one pound of readily available nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of turf, in the form of a 3-1-2 ratio, aids in early spring green-up of St. Augustine grass lawns. Also, early winter fertilization may help maintain green color, especially for St. Augustine grass in south Texas where winter temperatures are not usually low enough to induce dormancy.

Application of potassium during the winter on St. Augustine grass has not been proven to increase freeze resistance, while too much phosphorous may increase the susceptibility of St. Augustine grass to winter kill. Research at North Carolina State and Texas A&M University found that freeze resistance in Bermuda grass lawns was highest with a late fall/early winter application of a fertilizer with a 4-1-6 ratio at a rate of one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of turf.



## TAKING CARE OF BIRDS IN WINTER

*Written by Phil Craighead, Parker County Master Gardener*



What can be more cheerful than seeing a bare tree full of bright Cardinals in your backyard after a heavy snow in January? Even though this scene might make a perfect picture postcard, the birds themselves may be struggling to survive. A loss of native habitat poses a challenge for our native birds, but there are some simple things you can do to increase their chances this winter.

As you know, winter in North Central Texas can be harsh, with freezing temperatures, high winds, bare trees, dormant vegetation and often dry conditions. Although nature has equipped the wild critters in your yard with survival skills to help them get through winter, most of them could use your help.

Basically, birds need four things to survive: food, water, warmth and protection from predators. They need an almost constant supply of calories to maintain their body heat due to high metabolism. They need clean water, which can be difficult when temperatures drop below freezing. Even though their feathers are a very effective insulator when fluffed up, they still experience a high rate of heat loss due to the cold, windy conditions of winter. Because of this, they need protected roosting and nesting places.

There are several things you can do to help make their struggle a bit easier. Some of these are quite simple while others will require some planning and effort. Landscape your yard with plants that provide native food sources such as seeds, nuts and berries. Provide a dependable source of clean water such as a bird bath, a fountain or a pond. And provide natural roosting and nesting areas that will protect birds from both the weather and predators.

There are many native and adaptive plants that provide a natural source of food for wildlife. By planting a variety of these in your yard you can provide adequate food for birds during warm weather. During winter when natural food sources are scarce, put out bird feeders to provide additional nutrition. During warmer months bird feeders are not necessary, and may even be harmful, making them dependent on the free handout.

Some birds that primarily prefer a diet of insects will resort to seeds and berries in the winter. A good example of this is the Northern Mockingbird. In summer it feeds primarily on insects, but in winter when most insects are dormant, it dines on yaupon, possumhaw, polk weed and juniper berries. Most seed-eating birds love black sunflower seed. This can easily be provided using a platform feeder. Unless you want to feed all the squirrels in the neighborhood, you will need to equip it with a squirrel guard. Also, often the larger birds, like white-winged doves and crows, will swarm the feeder and drive away the smaller birds. This can be prevented by installing a "bully cage," which allows the smaller birds in but keeps the larger birds out.

Place your feeders so you can enjoy the bird activity from your windows, but not too close. It is estimated that millions of birds are killed each year by flying into windows. Please don't attract them to your windows by the location of your feeders. Also, place the feeders away from cover where cats or other predators can lie in wait for them.



Even though it's obvious that water is critical for survival during the hot, dry, scorching days of summer, it is easy to overlook the need during winter. Our winters can be dry, and natural water sources often dry up. During freezing weather the water may freeze over preventing the birds from getting a drink. A bird bath or other water feature can provide a constant source of water. Flowing water or a drip in the bath can keep the water moving and may prevent freezing up during a mild freeze, but it may be necessary to install a heater to keep the water moving during a hard freeze.

Birds need places to perch, roost and find respite from high winds and rainstorms. This can be provided by evergreen shrubs and trees. If possible, let the underbrush grow in certain parts of your yard. This will provide a place for roosting and nesting that is safe from predators and sheltered from the weather. In urban areas you may not be able to do this if you have restrictions, but do so if you can. Birds and other wildlife will reward you for your efforts.

Another great source of shelter is a brush pile. This is especially attractive to our winter sparrows. There are about thirteen species of sparrows that come to North Texas to spend the winter. Do not confuse these with House Sparrows, which are not native to North America, and are harmful to some of our highly desirable species like Eastern Bluebird and Purple Martin. Find a spot in your landscape where you can pile old tree limbs, clippings, weeds and other organic stuff and let it accumulate. The brush will provide refuge from predators and shelter during winter weather. Eventually it will decompose and make a nice compost.

Dead and standing trees are very important in the wildlife landscape. If you have a dead tree, unless it is threatening people or structures, let it stand. It provides great perches for birds to rest, preen and look for prey. It also will provide a great source of food for woodpeckers as they scavenge for borers and other insects.

You may have noticed that most birds are very jumpy and erratic with movement that is quite unpredictable. There's a very good reason for this. An incautious bird is soon a dead bird. In fact, many birds do not survive their first year.

There's always something trying to eat them. Domestic cats may be their worst enemy. If you have cats, please take precautions to ensure that they are not a threat to the birds. Then, of course, there are bird's natural enemies such as hawks, foxes and snakes. These are all a part of the natural environment and must have their food too. Nature must maintain a balance.

Habitat loss is no doubt the biggest threat to our wildlife. Unnatural hazards in our neighborhoods create unique challenges including windows, domestic cats, automobiles and artificial lighting. These hazards can upset the natural balance that our birds depend upon. That's why the birds need our help. Fortunately, there are simple landscape changes we can make in our own yards to improve their chances. You can significantly help our wild friends survive while enjoying the beauty and antics of nature.





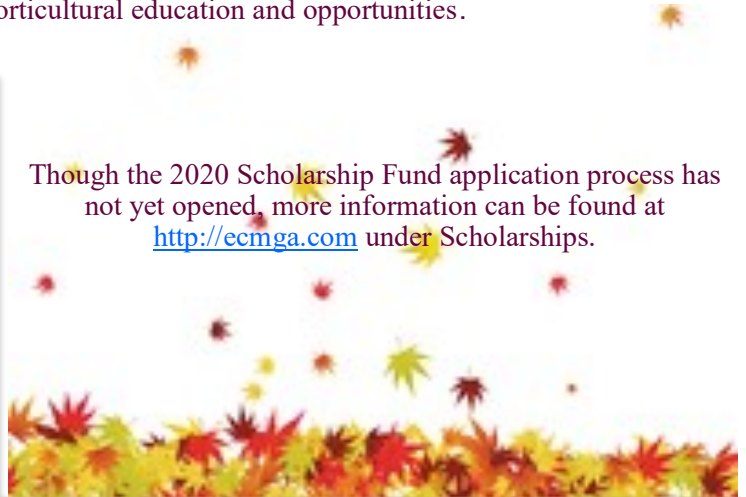
## ELLIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS FALL PLANT SALE

Saturday, October 5, was the first ECMGA Fall Plant Sale. Though still warm from our extended summer, many braved the heat to acquire perennials, trees, shrubs and some specialty bulbs from an anonymous donor.

This sale came to fruition as an idea to boost the ECMGA's Scholarship Fund. The Scholarship Fund, available to all Ellis County high school seniors pursuing studies in horticulture/life sciences – related fields, is one of the objectives of the ECMGA; to build partnerships with the Ellis County community to expand horticultural education and opportunities.



Though the 2020 Scholarship Fund application process has not yet opened, more information can be found at <http://ecmga.com> under Scholarships.



### Tidbit #1

Ellis County's soil is known as Blackland Prairie soil. It is also known as "cracking clays" because of the large deep cracks that form in dry weather. This high shrink-swell property can cause serious damage to foundations, highways and other structures. Making sure to keep foundations watered in hot dry conditions can help to offset this "shrink-swell" effect.



### Tidbit #2

Texas averages 60 million pounds of pecans annually. Pecan trees are alternate bearers meaning they produce a very large crop one year and few the next. The best pecan varieties for North Texas are Caddo, Pawnee and Osage.





**NOVEMBER HERB of the MONTH – MEXICAN MINT MARIGOLD***Submitted by Arlene Hamilton, Ellis County Master Gardener*

You may have noticed a sturdy little plant with clusters of three-quarter inch golden flowers blooming in the October - November gardens. Mexican mint marigold (*Tagetes lucida*), also known as yerba anise in Mexican cooking, has a lot to offer the Texas gardener. It thrives in our hot, humid climate. Its bright yellow flowers are one of the last to bloom before frost, and it has a delightful licorice-anise aroma and flavor. Many southern cooks use its dark green leaves as a substitute for French tarragon, a temperamental herb that seldom grows successfully in the southern garden. Native to the mountains of Mexico and Central America, this neat, upright plant can grow to three feet but looks best if trimmed back in mid-summer. According to legend, the ancient Aztec chieftains used a powder made from the leaves to calm

the victims of sacrificial rituals.

The fresh leaves can be chopped and used to season chicken, fish and salad greens. Sprinkle the flower petals over a green salad or on pasta. The sweet, anise flavor brews up a wonderful tea, either hot or iced. It makes a delicious herbal butter blended with orange zest and minced onion chives. When making a white sauce or a cheese sauce, add some chopped mint marigold toward the end of the cooking time as its flavor breaks down quickly when heated. In salads, vinegars, oils or quick-cooking recipes substitute it for French tarragon in equal proportions.

Mint marigold's dried leaves and flowers add fragrance and color to potpourris and sachets. Harvest the long stems before a frost while they are still green and with bright flowers. Bundle, tie and hang in a dark dry place to dry. When crisp-dry, remove leaves from stems and add to a potpourri of other aromatic herbs and flowers. The flowers add long-lasting color to fresh bouquets and dried arrangements.

This robust plant thrives in almost any well-drained soil and is relatively easy to grow. It requires very little fertilizer and will tolerate short droughts. Place in full sun for best blooms. In our Zone 8 mint marigold will die back in the winter, but new green shoots will emerge in early summer after the soil has become warm. If you have allowed the seeds to remain on the plant, they will scatter and germinate in the fall with a profusion of robust seedlings. These seedlings are easy to propagate and move to new locations or share with lucky friends. The flowers will attract bees and butterflies to your garden. Try planting some with blue fall asters for a striking color combination.

**CAN IT BE FALL ALREADY?***By Jane Sloan, ECMG*

This is the month for family and friends to visit and enjoy the holiday. Thanksgiving is a holiday of food and more food. Gardeners are not always as faithful to their gardens in November. So, the question is, what can we do in the garden in the month of November? Sometimes it is cold and other times the sun warms us and our garden is growing and producing vegetables. Basically, November is a transitional month in the garden. You have probably done one of two things, pulled all remaining foliage or planted a winter crop.

Some of you will want to plant and harvest until that first cold snap. A fall crop can be planted and harvested. For fall gardeners, we know that it's just a matter of time before the first frost. Making sure that you are ready is key to keeping some of those not so hardy fall veggies going through to harvest. You have two options; purchase row covers, or you can use old sheets, and cover your plants when the weather forecasts predict a frost. You can build a frame to keep the fabric off the plants. The cover will keep the dampness off the plants. If you have tomato and pepper plants with fruit, you can keep them going, but you will not get any new fruit as they need warm weather to bloom. When there is a forecast for frost or freeze, make sure you water the soil beforehand. It helps to keep the roots warm and more tolerant of the cold. Mulch is very important in keeping the weeds down and keeping the plants insulated from both heat and cold.

You may not want to plant a winter crop. It gives you time to clean up, then get ready for a new spring garden. A pepper or tomato plant will grow until you have harvested the last fruit before frost. With summer plants mixed with fall plants in the garden, it's a challenge to get ready for your next spring crop. The next step, clean the garden. Remove the dead material and till the soil. It is a good time to amend the soil for spring. Add compost and other amendments now so they have time to break down in the soil. Tilling helps to expose the little pests to the cold temperatures and will kill many of the bugs.

Cover crops help put back nutrients in the soil naturally. The problem with sowing a cover crop is the tilling process in the spring. The benefit of this process is adding nutrients to the soil organically.

Try to experiment with something new or improve the performance of your favorite variety. In any case, make your list of things you want to plant.

Crop rotation is important. It has a twofold benefit. It reduces insects that might attack a vegetable plant and it allows nutrients that were depleted by the vegetable plant to be replaced. Be watchful of crop rotation. It's difficult to do when growing in a small garden, but important.

Plan for when your spring plants need to be in the ground. If you have a greenhouse, it's time to clean it up and get ready for the new seedlings you will be starting in January.

## Featured Recipe of the Month

### Fall Harvest Salad with Pumpkin Goddess Dressing

From 'The Seasoned Mom' on Pinterest



#### Ingredients

##### For the Pumpkin Goddess Dressing:

- 1 cup plain Greek-style yogurt or substitute with sour cream or mayonnaise
- 2 Tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon maple syrup
- ½ cup sour cream or additional plain Greek-style yogurt
- 1/3 cup pure pumpkin puree (I used the canned version)
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic or about ¼ - ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon

##### For the Salad:

- 1 acorn squash plus olive oil, maple syrup, cinnamon, and salt for roasting\*
- 1 apple, thinly sliced
- ½ cup toasted pecans
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- 1 pkg. 5-6 ounces mixed salad greens (you can use any blend that you prefer, but I like a mix that includes broccoli slaw, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, and chicory)

Serves 8

#### Instructions

##### For the Dressing:

- Place all ingredients in a blender and combine. Chill until ready to use.

##### Roast the Acorn Squash:

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray and set aside.
- Slice squash lengthwise, remove seeds, and slice horizontally into ½-inch thick rounds. Place sliced squash in a single layer on prepared baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and maple syrup, sprinkle with a dash of cinnamon and salt, to taste. Toss squash to coat.
- Bake squash at 400°F for approximately 20 minutes (or until tender and caramelized), flipping halfway through.

##### Assemble the Salad:

- Once the squash has cooled, cut it into bite-sized pieces and place it in a large salad bowl with the remaining ingredients. Add Pumpkin Goddess dressing and toss gently.
- Serve immediately.

#### Recipe Notes

\*can substitute with diced roasted sweet potatoes or butternut squash

#### Recipe Variations

- ~ Swap out the acorn squash with roasted butternut squash or sweet potatoes
- ~ Use toasted walnuts or roasted pumpkin seeds instead of the pecans
- ~ Omit the sliced apple and replace it with sliced pear
- ~ Use mayonnaise in lieu of the Greek yogurt for a creamier, less tangy dressing



**GARDEN CHECKLIST FOR NOVEMBER***by Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist, TX A&M*

- ◆ Place orders for seeds this month so you will have them available when you are ready to plant. By ordering early, you will be more certain of getting the varieties you want.
- ◆ Don't get in a hurry to prune woody plants. Late December through February is usually the best time to prune them.
- ◆ Reduce the fertilization of indoor plants from late October to mid-March. An exception would be plants in an atrium or a well-lighted window.
- ◆ Drain gasoline from power tools and run the engine until fuel in the carburetor is used up.
- ◆ Drain and store garden hoses and watering equipment in a readily accessible location. The lawn and plants may need water during a prolonged dry spell.
- ◆ November through February is a good time to plant trees and shrubs.
- ◆ Continue to set out cool season bedding plants, such as pansies, violas, stock, snapdragons and dianthus. Sweet peas may also be planted now in the southern half of the state.
- ◆ Use good pruning practices when selecting Christmas greenery from landscape plants. Don't destroy the natural form and beauty of the plant.
- ◆ Protect your lawn from excessive winter damage by providing irrigation during dry periods.
- ◆ Plant spring-flowering bulbs if you haven't already done so.
- ◆ Take advantage of good weather to prepare garden beds for spring planting. Work in

any needed organic matter and have beds ready to plant when needed.

- ◆ Don't forget tulip and hyacinth bulbs in the refrigerator. They can be planted after they have received 60 or more days of chilling.
- ◆ Don't spare the pruning shears when transplanting bare-rooted woody plants. Cut the tops back at least one-third to one-half to compensate for the roots lost when digging the plant.
- ◆ Take advantage of bad weather and holiday time to study seed and nursery catalogues as well as good gardening books.
- ◆ Berrying plants, such as holly and yaupon, may be pruned now while they can be enjoyed as cut material inside the house.

**AUTUMN IDEAS***Submitted by Cheryl Sandoval, ECMG*

Containers are the best way to add color to porches and decks this time of year. Pansies, violas, snapdragons, crotons and even Swiss chard, parsley and kale make nice colorful additions. When watering pots, we lose some of the nutrients. Be sure to include regular fertilization in your garden regimen especially since color annuals are big feeders. Follow the directions on the fertilizer you select. This, along with regular deadheading (clipping off spent blooms), ensure an on-going display of blooms well into the season.

Nandina's, especially with red berries, juniper, stems of holly, rosemary, lemon verbena or even rose stems with rose hips are just a few ideas.

Tuck cuttings around pumpkin and gourd displays or strip off lower leaves and put into vases. Just take a pair of scissors and be open to whatever you find in your own yard. Enjoy the Autumn Season!

**11-30-19: CHRISTMAS WREATH WORKSHOP**

Make a memory this Holiday Season with loved ones as you all build a Christmas Wreath using fresh tree clippings. Add in all the accessories to make it a masterpiece for your Holiday Decor in your home or as a gift! Christmas music and hot chocolate in our decorated workshop area add the perfect touch! \$35 per creation, and working together is accepted and encouraged! Workshop starts at 3pm.

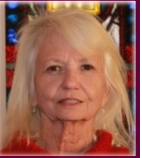




## Eclectic Gardening

With Jane Slone, Ellis County Master Gardener

### DOES GOLDENROD CAUSE YOU TO HAVE ALLERGIES?



It is fall in North Texas, and a yellow flowered plant, Solidago, begins to appear. Planted by some gardeners. Destroyed by others. Why would you want to chop down this beautiful flower? The reason, some believe that this plant will bring on allergies. So, is that true or is it false?

Goldenrod is sold as a perennial. It will seed easily and produce beautiful yellow flowers. It is scientifically called *Solidago*. It may bloom all summer in North Texas, but found abundant in fields during the fall season.

It blooms at the same time as ragweed, but it is the ragweed that causes the allergies. These two plants are not closely related, but both produce pollen. Ragweed has over seventeen different species. It produces a large amount of pollen that is released into the air. The pollen grains are so small they float into the atmosphere and travel by wind. This is the culprit that causes the allergic reaction.

Sowing seeds of Goldenrod can occur in late fall or early spring. They will self-seed each year and can become invasive in the garden. It is possible to take cuttings and root them in areas where the growing season is short. They are a native plant in some states. The beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Beauty or beast.

Before you plant, check the soil for acidity. If the pH of the soil is slightly acidic within the range of 5 to 7, the plants will grow without any additional amendments. If the pH needs to be reduced, you can add some peat, coffee grounds or compost tea. The soil should be rich with nutrients and the need for fertilizer is not necessary. These plants are native to many areas and will adapt to the environment.

These native flowers in Texas are sometimes harvested by hikers and used to make tea. They are edible in salads, but the nutritional value has not been determined.

The other reason you might consider Goldenrod for your garden is to use it as a border, either in front or behind the fall flowers. Seeds can be found online if your local nursery does not carry them. The one I liked was a miniature. It would be great to use in flower arrangements. It can also be dried and used in a fall wreath for the front door. You can have a cup of *Solidago* tea, sit on your front porch and admire your homemade wreath. The next time someone tells you that this plant will make you sneeze just smile and tell them no, but ragweed will.



### HOW CAN I KEEP TROPICALS AND POTTED PLANTS FROM FREEZING?

With frosts and freezes approaching, sensitive plants need protection. During light frosts, cover plants with a cardboard box or fabric, with paper such as cardboard being an especially good insulator. For low plants, covering with several layers of newspaper works well. It is best that the plant not actually touch the covering material, so use something like a tomato cage or stakes to keep the plant separated from the covering. It is especially important that plastic covering not touch the plant since this can cause damage. This method can also work well with pot plants. Be sure to remove the coverings during warm sunny days. For hard freezes, plants must be sheltered in a greenhouse, garage or other warmer area.



*Why is it poppies for Remembrance Day?*

*It is strongly linked with Armistice Day (11 November), but the poppies origin as a popular symbol of remembrance lies in the landscapes of the First World War. Poppies were a common site, especially on the Western Front. They flourished in the soil churned up by the fighting and shelling.*

## Thank You All!

Thanks to the sponsors, exhibitors and visitors for making the 2019 Ellis County Master Gardener's Lawn & Garden Expo a great success!

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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  
C & J Farms  
Central Kubota  
Chautauqua Preservation Soc  
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Ellis County Engineering  
Ellis County SPCA  
Ennis Garden Club  
Flamingo Food & Beverage  
Garden Charms  
Garden Variety Organics  
Gardenscapes by Diane  
Girl Scouts NETX  
Goss, Karl & Jim  
Greenery, The  
H. Summit Enterprises  
Habitat for Humanity, Ellis Co.  
H-E-B  
Hollyberry Herb Farm

Homestead EQ./Maint-BCS  
Hot Produx  
Imagine That  
Indian Trail Master Naturalists  
Jams, Jellies and More  
JL Glass Designs  
KA-Ranch  
Koke Gardens  
Landmark Equipment  
Lazy River Pool Co.  
LeafFilter North Texas  
Living Earth Technology Co.  
Native Solar  
Ovilla Garden Club  
Peachy Page Farm  
Perline Company Inc.  
Prairielands Groundwater GCD

Rain Drop Studio  
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.