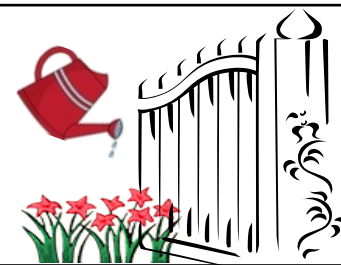




# Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume XIII, Issue 4

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

April, 2020

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

## 20th Annual LAWN & GARDEN EXPO

*Edible Landscaping: A Delicious Concept*

# CANCELLED

Thank you sponsors for your donations even though our event was cancelled  
We thank them for their generosity.



### Listen to KBEC

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

The Ellis County Master Gardeners have a fifteen minute segment every week, offering you helpful information on what you need to be doing in your landscape, as well as "happenings" around the county. Be sure to listen in!

Scotty Rigsby



The Farmer's Market 2020 season scheduled to open on April 25 has been cancelled. Check the City of Waxahachie's website <http://www.waxahachie.com/Departments/DowntownDevelopment/DowntownFarmersMarket> for updated information.

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

Second Tuesday of the month

Due to the restrictions in place for gatherings by the CDC there will be no meeting in April. For May and June check the website, [ECMGA.com](http://ECMGA.com). It will be updated as information and restrictions change.

### ATTENTION E-GARDENING NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS

Beginning with this issue the E-gardening newsletter will be published quarterly. All the same wonderful information, just in less issues!

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**IT'S APRIL...WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?****Planting**

- ☼ Plant warm-season annual flowers. For sun (6+hours per day): angelonias, copper plants, firebush, lantana, moss rose, purslane, pentas, ornamental sweet potatoes and zinnias. For shade (less than 4 hours per day): begonias, coleus, impatiens and perilla. Select short, compact plants.
- ☼ Plant okra and southern peas (black-eyed peas, etc). Squash, cucumbers and melons can still be planted.
- ☼ Many herbs can also be planted from transplants (dill, parsley, fennel, mint, oregano and thyme).
- ☼ Now is the best time to plant Bermudagrass and St. Augustine grass sod. Grade and smooth area prior to installing sod to ensure good soil contact. Keep moist until roots are established.
- ☼ Seeded varieties of Bermudagrass may be sown starting mid-month. Keep soil moist until seeds germinate and grass has established a good root system.
- ☼ Select caladium tubers now, while ample stocks are available, for May planting.

**Fertilizing and Pruning**

- ☼ Apply a high-nitrogen fertilizer to established lawns. Use product containing at least half of its nitrogen in slow-release form.
- ☼ Mow common Bermudagrass at 1½ inches and St. Augustine grass at 2½ inches. Frequent mowing with sharp blades will keep an established lawn thick and healthy; but avoid removing more than one-third of the leaf surface each time.
- ☼ Fertilize roses every four to six weeks from now to September. Start with a balanced fertilizer, then apply ammonium sulfate or other high-nitrogen fertilizer as new growth appears, following a flowering cycle.

**Garden Watch**

- ☼ Check new plant growth for aphids. A few can be tolerated but large numbers should be controlled. Washing them off with a strong spray of water may be all that is necessary for control.
- ☼ Eliminate fire ants in your landscape by broadcasting labeled bait while temperatures are between 70° and 90°. If fire ants are still present after using bait, treat the individual mounds with appropriate insecticide. Contact the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service – Ellis County at 972-825-5175 for more information.
- ☼ Look for rose rosette disease. New growth on diseased roses exhibit elongated/enlarged canes, reddish leaves and stems and excessive thorns. Remove and destroy infected plants and roots immediately. There is no proven control for this fatal disease.
- ☼ Soil purchased for use in beds, low areas and containers should be examined closely. Nutsedge and other weeds are often brought into the yard through contaminated soil sources.
- ☼ Watch newspapers and other media for information regarding wildflower trails, garden tours and plants sales.

**GARDEN CHECKLIST FOR APRIL**

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

- ☼ Removing spent flowers, trimming back excessive growth and applying fertilizer to an established annual bed can do wonders towards rejuvenating and extending the life of the planting.
- ☼ As soon as azaleas have finished flowering, apply an acid type fertilizer at the rate recommended. Don't over fertilize, as azalea roots are near the surface and damage can occur. Water thoroughly after fertilizing.
- ☼ Seeds of Amaranthus, celosia, cosmos, marigold, portulaca, zinnia and other warm-season annuals can be sown directly in the beds where they are to grow. Keep seeded areas moist until seeds germinate. Thin out as soon as they are large enough to transplant. Surplus plants can be transplanted to other areas.
- ☼ It will soon be time for bagworms to attack junipers and other narrow-leafed evergreens. Control measures, such as a dust or spray, should be applied while the insects and the bags are about one-half inch in length.
- ☼ When caterpillars attack live oak trees en masse, it is very alarming, but usually nothing can be done. A healthy live oak will usually regrow its leaves and resume normal activities.
- ☼ For instant color, purchase started annual plants. Select short, compact plants. Any flowers or flower buds should be pinched to give plants an opportunity to become established.
- ☼ Many flower or vegetable seeds left over after planting the garden can be saved for the next season by closing the packets with tape or paper clips and storing in a sealed glass jar in your refrigerator.
- ☼ Turn the material in your compost pile to speed up decomposition. Water when needed.
- ☼ Start weeding early in the flower garden. Early competition with small plants can delay flowering. A mulch will discourage weed growth and make those that do come through easier to pull.
- ☼ Soil purchased for use in beds, low areas and containers should be examined closely. Often, nut grass and other weeds, nematodes, and soil-borne disease are brought into the yard through contaminated soil sources.
- ☼ Watch newspaper and other publicity for information regarding wildflower trails and open garden days. Plan to take a trip to enjoy beautiful gardens and trails that are abundant in many areas of Texas.

**IT'S MAY...WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?****Planting**

- ☼ Plant heat-loving annuals including copper plant, firebush, gomphrena, lantana, pentas, purple fountain grass and ornamental sweet potato in sunny areas.
- ☼ In shady spots plant caladiums, begonias, coleus and impatiens (mildew-resistant types).
- ☼ Seeds of celosia, cosmos, marigold, morning glory, portulaca and zinnia can be sown directly in the beds. Keep seeded area moist until seeds germinate.
- ☼ Achimenes, cannas, dahlias and other summer flowering bulbs can be planted now.
- ☼ Establish new lawns before summer heat sets in. Sow seeded varieties of Bermudagrass early in the month; or sod Bermuda or St. Augustine grass. Water daily for first few weeks to develop a good root system.

**Fertilizing and pruning**

- ☼ Feed fruit trees, perennials, annuals, ground covers and vines with a lawn fertilizer (3-1-2 or 4-1-2- ratio).
- ☼ Fertilize tomatoes and most other vegetables every other week for productive and vigorous plants.
- ☼ Manually thin the fruit on peaches, pears, plums and apples to five to six inches apart early in the month.
- ☼ Prune spring-flowering shrubs and vines soon after flowering. Keep the natural shape of the plant in mind as you prune and avoid excessive cutting except where necessary to control size. Deadhead roses and other reblooming plants.
- ☼ Allow foliage of daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs to mature and yellow before removing.

**Garden Watch**

- ☼ Allow bluebonnets and other reseeding annual wildflowers to die and the seeds to dry before mowing the stubble. Delay mowing until end of growing season if other wildflowers are growing in the area.
- ☼ Check tomatoes for signs of early blight (yellow blotches on lower leaves). Apply a labeled fungicide if needed. Keep soil adequately moist to prevent blossom-end rot (browned tissue on bloom end of fruit).
- ☼ Look for squash bugs in early morning. Destroy eggs found on underside of leaves by hand. Vegetable pests can often be controlled by mechanical, biological or organic means rather than by synthetic pesticides.
- ☼ Watch for bagworms in junipers and other narrow-leaved evergreens. Apply Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) or general insecticide at first sign of larvae feeding. Remember that once the bag has formed, your only option is to manually pull them off.
- ☼ Make initial applicate of Image® or SedgeHammer® to control nutsedge in established warm-season lawns.

**GARDEN CHECKLIST FOR MAY**

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

- ☼ Experiment with a container of Bougainvillea this summer. It is a plant that prefers conditions that are hot and dry! Full sun and a rest period without too much watering are usually necessary before a burst of new blooms.
- ☼ It is not too late to sow directly into the soil seeds of sunflower, zinnia, morning glory, portulaca, marigold, cosmos, periwinkles and gourds. Achimenes, cannas, dahlias and other summer-flowering bulbs can also be planted in May.
- ☼ Allow foliage of spring-flowering bulbs to mature and yellow before removing.
- ☼ Pinch back the terminal growth on newly planted annual and perennial plants. This will result in shorter, more compact, well branched plants with more flowers.
- ☼ Time to plant caladium tubers, impatiens, coleus, begonias and pentas in shady areas.
- ☼ Replace or replenish mulch materials in flower beds and shrub borders to conserve moisture and reduce weed growth.
- ☼ Make cuttings of your favorite chrysanthemums and root them in a mixture of sand and peat moss. Cover cutting box with plastic and place in shaded area for 5 or 6 days to prevent wilting.
- ☼ Prune climbing roses as they complete their spring bloom season. Remove dead or weak wood as needed.
- ☼ Take a critical look at your landscape while at the height of summer development. Make notes of how you think it can be better arranged; plants that need replacement, overgrown plants that need to be removed and possible activity areas that can be enjoyed by family members.
- ☼ Check for insects and diseases. Destroy badly infested plants. Spider mites can be especially troublesome at this time. Select a chemical or organic control or use insecticidal soap.
- ☼ During the summer, soil moisture becomes extremely important and essential for good plant production. Because continual watering is oftentimes costly and time consuming, it pays to conserve the moisture around plants. This is best done by mulching. A good mulch will retain valuable moisture needed for plant growth and improve overall gardening success. Mulches are usually applied 2 to 6 inches deep, depending on the material used. In general, the coarser the material, the deeper the mulch. For example, a 2-inch layer of cottonseed hulls will have about the same mulching effect as 6 inches of oat straw or 4 inches of coastal Bermuda hay.

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



### Planting

- ☼ Buy and plant crape myrtles in bloom to be sure you are getting the desired color. Know the variety's mature size to avoid future pruning. Ask for varieties that are resistant to powdery mildew.
- ☼ This is the best time to plant vinca (periwinkle) in full sun. Look for the variety "Cora" since it is resistant to soil-borne diseases. Water with drip irrigation or soaker hose to keep water off foliage.
- ☼ Plant these tropical annuals for their flowers: tropical hibiscus, "Gold Star" esperanza, mandevilla and Mexican heather. Use croton, bougainvillea and variegated tapioca for their foliage color.
- ☼ June is the time to select day lily varieties as they reach peak bloom.

### Fertilizing and Pruning

- ☼ It is time for the second application of an all-nitrogen, slow-release fertilizer on turf grasses. Cut the amount by half to prevent excessive growth which means more water and mowing!
- ☼ Fertilize container plants and hanging baskets with a water-soluble fertilizer every week or two.
- ☼ Prune back autumn sage and mealy cup sage by one-third their size. Deadhead salvias, as well as annuals and perennials, to stimulate new growth to allow the plant to continue reblooming until late fall.
- ☼ Continue to prune as necessary, fall-blooming plants such as Mexican bush sage, mountain sage, Mexican mint marigold, copper canyon daisies, asters and mums to keep them compact and to prevent buds from forming prematurely. Do not prune after September 1, when buds begin to form.
- ☼ Remove flower stalks on coleus, caladiums, lamb's ear and basil before buds open. This will promote new leaf growth.

### Garden Watch

- ☼ Take a critical look at your landscape while at the height of summer development. Make notes on how the landscape can be better arranged; plants that need replacement, overgrown plants that need to be removed or possibly areas that can be converted to more family-friendly activities. Save this information for implementation later in the year or next spring.
- ☼ Control aphids on crape myrtles with a strong spray of water.
- ☼ Spider mites can be troublesome, especially on tomatoes. Treat with an appropriate organic or synthetic pesticide.
- ☼ Control webworms in pecan and other trees using a pole pruner. Remove while webs are small.
- ☼ Wrap the trunks of newly planted Shumard oak and Chinese pistache trees to prevent sunscald and borers.



## GARDEN CHECKLIST FOR JUNE

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

- ☼ During the summer, water or soil moisture is essential for good plant production. Because continual watering is often costly and time consuming, it pays to conserve moisture around plants. The best way to conserve garden moisture is mulching. A good mulch not only retains valuable moisture needed for plant growth, but also improves overall gardening success.
- ☼ Mulches are usually applied 2- to 6- inches deep, depending on the material used. In general, the more coarse the material, the deeper the mulch. For example, a 2-inch layer of cotton seed hulls will have about the same mulching effect as 6 inches of oat straw or 4 inches of coastal Bermuda hay.
- ☼ Removing faded flowers from the plant before they set seed will keep them growing and producing more flowers. A light application of fertilizer every four to six weeks will also be helpful.
- ☼ Houseplants can be moved outside this month. Sink the pots in a cool, shaded garden bed to prevent them from drying out too quickly. Water pots, container plants and hanging baskets often. Monthly feeding with a balanced water-soluble fertilizer encourages continued growth.
- ☼ Now is the time to plan for next spring. Consider digging and dividing any crowded spring bulbs. Once bulbs have matured and the foliage has turned brown, it is time to spade them up and thin out the stand. Crowded bulbs produce fewer and smaller blooms. They usually need thinning every three to four years. Replant immediately in prepared soil.
- ☼ There is still time to plant some of the colorful, heat-tolerant summer annuals. You can direct-seed zinnias and portulaca, and purchase periwinkle, salvia, marigold and purslane plants for transplanting. Be sure to water transplants adequately until roots become established.
- ☼ Pinch back chrysanthemums, Mexican marigold mint, marigold, autumn asters, salvias and other late summer and fall blooming annuals to prevent the necessity for staking.
- ☼ Re-blooming salvias, such as *Salvia greggii* and *S. farinacea*, should be pruned back periodically during the summer. To make the job easier, use hedging shears and remove only the spent flowers and a few inches of stem below.
- ☼ Fall-blooming perennials, such as Mexican mint marigold (*Tagetes lucida*), chrysanthemums, physostegia, and *Salvia leucantha*, should be pruned in the same manner during the summer to keep them compact, reducing the need for staking. This type of pruning should be completed prior to September 1, since flower buds begin forming about that time.

## Featured Plants from the 14th Annual Ellis County Master Gardener's 2020 Calendar



### April featured plant

Texas Lantana is a low spreading shrub with rough and aromatic leaves. It grows best in poor, sandy, gravelly soils in hot, dry areas, in full sun or light shade. It flowers profusely with the start of hot weather in mid to late summer, with small red, yellow and orange flowers clumped together in clusters. Lantana is the choice of those sites in full sun that are neglected or too far from the hose. Once established, it takes virtually no care except trimming back. It flowers consistently from mid-summer on, always attracting butterflies.



### May featured plant

Vitex, also known as Texas Lilac or Chaste Tree, is a deciduous large shrub or small tree with distinctive palmately compound leaves. Growing to a height of 10-15 feet and up to 15 feet wide, it produces spikes of purple flowers blooming heavily in the early summer and then sporadically throughout summer and fall. It highly attracts butterflies and other pollinators.



### June featured plant

Red Yucca or Red Hesperole, is an exceedingly tough, drought tolerant and heat loving plant. Growing to a height of three to five feet and a width of two to four feet, it's dark green rosette of long, thin leaves rising fountain-like from the base provides an unusual sculptural accent. May through October it produces long spikes of pink to coral bell-shaped flowers that are a favorite of hummingbirds and other pollinators.



### Light House for Learning

(With the Ellis County Master Gardeners)

Due to COVID-19 and the recommended restrictions in place for gatherings by the CDC, all spring classes have been cancelled. We look forward to our classes in the fall.

For questions contact Melissa Cobb at (972) 923-4631 or [mcobb@wisd.org](mailto:mcobb@wisd.org)

### Indian Trail Master Naturalists Events



All events for April have been cancelled due to COVID-19 and the restrictions in place by the CDC.

For more info, call (972) 825-5175 or email [ellis-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:ellis-tx@tamu.edu)

Check the website <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/> for upcoming events once restrictions have been lifted.

## CAN I EAT THAT?

By Linda Ballard



Prickly Pear

**Why forage?** – Wild native plants battle every day to survive so they load themselves up with vitamins, minerals, flavonoids, lycopene's, antioxidants and many other beneficial compounds. They thrive in their local climate and soil conditions. Many are edible, support the local wildlife, add different textures and colors to the landscape.

Foragers are reconnecting with their native habitats while participating in a variety of exercises-walking, bending, digging, climbing and occasionally running from critters. Providing soil free of grass under areas where birds perch may provide new edible plants like amaranth, lamb's quarter, chickweed, dandelions, purslane, sow thistle, dwarf palmetto and many other edible plants.

**Safety first** – Use common sense and become educated on edible native plants in your area. Before consuming any part, positively identify the plant 100 percent.

- Some edible plants look like poisonous plants, so when in doubt, leave it out. Eating the wrong plant can lead to allergic reactions, illness and in rare circumstances, even death. Know the parts of the plant, how it grows, when and what parts may be eaten. Some may require preparation before eating. There are many sources for identifying native plants including books, internet sites and classes offered by foraging experts who will give hands on training and opportunities to meet other foragers.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Watch for environmental hazards such as snakes, insects, animals, possible chemical spills, chemicals leaching around roadways, lead paint from old buildings, stagnant water or areas contaminated from sewage.
- Respect the law. Be aware of where you are wanting to forage. If not on your own land, then ask permission from the landowner. You may gain a new friend. Most state and federal land laws prohibit gathering plants unless it is a survival situation.

**Preparation** – Stay well hydrated while out in nature. Heat, cold and an increase in exercise requires more water. Use insect repellent on your clothing, wear hiking boots, long pants and long shirt sleeves, if the area warrants extra protection. Take another person along or forage in a group; there is safety in numbers and more enjoyment when sharing the experience.

Plan to harvest sustainably leaving portions of the plants to return year after year. Use sharp cleaned tools with alcohol or bleach to prevent transferring disease from plant to plant.

### Some common wild edibles in Ellis County

- **Dandelion** (*Taraxacum officinale*): Young leaves can be cooked to remove bitterness. Flowers are eaten raw or fried. Roots are used as tea or coffee. Plant has vitamins A, B, thiamine, riboflavin, minerals and protein.
- **Prickly Pear** (*Opuntia lindheimeri*): Peeled pads can be pickled, fried, made into jerky; fruit can be raw or blended into a smoothie drink; juice from strained fruit can be drunk, made into ice cream, mixed drinks or preserves. Benefits include vitamin C, some minerals and omega-3 fatty acids.
- **Redbud tree** (*Cercis canadensis*): Flowers may be eaten raw or cooked; young seedpods may be cooked. The flowers have vitamins and minerals; the seeds have protein.
- **Turk's cap** (*Malvaviscus aboresu*): The red unopened hibiscus-like flowers are pleasantly sweet. The apples of the plant in summer to fall are lightly sweet. The flowers and young leaves may be eaten raw or cooked. The flowers are high in antioxidants; seeds are high in protein and starch; leaves high in minerals; and fruits are high in vitamin C.

For a full list of our local native plants, visit the sources listed below. Consider adding some of these delightful plants in your garden or landscape.

**Sources** – [www.foragingtexas.com](http://www.foragingtexas.com);

“Wild Edible Plants of Texas” by Charles W. Kane



Dandelion



Turk's Cap



Redbud Tree

## MY KITCHEN GARDEN

By Agnes G. Douglas, ECMG

**Spring Gardening**....my favorite time of the year! I always get so excited at the thought of home-grown food dug straight out of the earth or picked right off the bush, vine or tree.

A **Kitchen Garden** is a garden in which plants such as vegetables and/or herbs for use in the kitchen are cultivated. My Kitchen Garden produces several fresh vegetables and herbs for healthy, delicious meals for the eating pleasure of my family and friends.

Homegrown, freshly harvested vegetables taste better than those you buy in the store because they are picked when they are ripe and ready to eat and not shipped from another state or country.

For me, the garden is a place of peace, tranquility and serenity. The sound of the wind chimes gently blowing in the wind almost lull me to sleep, but then I remember I'm there to pull weeds and water the plants! Back to reality.



Gardening brings me a sense of accomplishment and "homegrown" self esteem. I love eating what I've grown. Studies have shown that gardening reduces stress and can do wonders for your overall well-being, improving your mood and mental health. It also provides and promotes a sense of community. I often invite family and friends to come to the garden (with a basket) to pick what they want, and they usually leave with a recipe or information on how to prepare what they've picked.

Now I'm going to tell you about my Kitchen Garden. As a teacher, I often used the adjectives *What*, *Where*, and *When*, when writing or telling a story. I have applied these to my garden.

**WHAT:** I had to decide exactly what I needed and wanted from my garden. Simple, I would grow what my family enjoys eating. One year I planted radishes and we had an abundance of radishes! Problem was, nobody in the family cared for radishes, including me! Needless to say, I don't grow radishes. After checking and discussing with the family, we decided that we would grow the following: broccoli, cucumbers, dill, lettuces, greens, onions, garlic, spinach, swiss chard, tomatoes, okra, peppers, green beans, zucchini, kale and a few herbs. We enjoy eating all of these and grew these last year.

Vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories and are important sources of many nutrients, including potassium, dietary fiber and folic acid, along with Vitamins A and C. Research consistently shows that people who eat the most vegetables have the lowest risk of many diseases, including cancer and heart disease. There are many benefits from eating fresh from the garden.

**WHERE:** I knew that I should select a spot that is easily accessible, with at least 6 hours of direct sunlight. I needed to determine where the sun shined the longest and strongest. I chose two gardening spots. One spot is on my patio, which is right outside my kitchen door and is very accessible. Here I am doing container gardening with onions, tomatoes, peppers, spinach and lettuce. The remainder of the vegetables will be grown in a fenced in garden area which is a few feet from the patio, also easily accessible. This area was fenced in so that I wouldn't have to compete with our four-legged friends who just loved my garden that first year, especially the rabbits. The area is a combination of containers and in-ground. I cleaned and cleared out the weeds and added organic garden soil and compost before planting.



**WHEN:** In January, I started spinach, swiss chard, broccoli and onions from seed indoors. These will be transplanted into the garden at the appropriate time. Some seeds will be sown directly into the ground. The benefits of starting from seed are that seeds cost less, there is a greater selection available and the sheer satisfaction of watching a plant grow from seed. Onion bulbs were planted in several boxes.



I also had leaves cleared from all the trees on our property, mulched them and will use in the garden. This will be the second year that I've mulched and used leaves from my own trees. The use of mulch is vital in Texas. A mulch layer on the soil surface allows the soil to soak up more water. It also reduces the rate of water loss from the soil. Mulches also modify the soil temperature, deters weeds and adds organic matter. Soils high in organic matter are easier to till and better suited to vegetable gardening. Applied in late fall, winter mulch insulates the roots, crowns and stems of winter crops from extremely low temperatures. In the summer proper mulching helps keep the soil cooler.

In February, I planted cabbage, lettuce, spinach, swiss chard and collard greens. In March, I planted tomatoes, peppers, beans and cucumbers. In April, I will plant okra, peas, squash, more cucumbers, dill, parsley

and a few other herbs.

**WATERING:** Access to water is crucial for the success of your plants. In keeping with one of the Earth-Kind principles of water conservation, I began harvesting rainwater. I currently have one rain barrel on the patio, one in the garden and two in the front of my house, but could use several more. The best time to water is early morning before the sun comes up. Watering early provides the plants with moisture for vigorous growth during the day. If watering at night, you risk the possibility of fungus problems such as mildew or mold which can harm your vegetable plants. When watering, a good soaking will get water right down into the soil so that it reaches the roots. I have learned to water each plant individually. (*Con't on page 8*)



*My Kitchen Garden (con't from page 7)*

After growing and harvesting all these wonderful vegetables and herbs, what will I do with them? One of my favorite things to do is try new recipes. I also like to create my own recipes from some of my favorite vegetables. Two of my three children are vegetarians and one is vegan so we eat lots and lots of vegetables.

**This is what I do with the fruits of my labor.**

Broccoli: stir-fried, steamed, salads (raw)  
 Cucumbers: dill pickles, bread & butter pickles, salads (salad in a bag)  
 Dill: pickles, cooking, dressings  
 Garlic: In every dish! I love garlic.  
 Greens: steamed, stir-fried, salads  
 Green Beans: stir fried, steamed, raw  
 Lettuces: salads, sandwiches, garnishes  
 Okra: pickled, fried, gumbo  
 Onions: Every dish! cooked, raw  
 Peppers: salsa, cooking, hot sauce, in pickles  
 Spinach: stir fried, steamed, salads (raw)  
 Swiss Chard: stir fried, salads  
 Tomatoes: salads, salsa, cooking, sauces, canned  
 Zucchini: stir fried, salads (raw), relish

In the Fall I create "Gift Baskets of Goodies" with items from the garden. The baskets are filled with items such as dill pickles, pickled okra, zucchini relish, bread and butter pickles or jams and jellies from fresh, organic fruits hand picked from several organic farms. I sell these goodies at outdoor markets and to friends and relatives during the holiday season.



What I love about gardening is the fact that I am continually learning. Also, I have fun and receive satisfaction from growing my own food. I have learned that one year is never the same as the next year. I have also learned that gardening is all about trial and error and is a lifelong learning process. The weather can wreak havoc on a garden in Texas. Being a native Texan, I know that we can have winter and summer in the same day! Since we have no control over the weather, I make the best of it. I can hardly wait until harvest time.

AgriLifeExtension delivers research-based educational programs and solutions for all Texans. Learn more about gardening by visiting [AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu](http://AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu).



Pictured is Shirley Campbell, ECMGA member for over 20 years, receiving her Emeritus award during the March Master Gardener's meeting.

**Upcoming Dates to Remember**

April 12 ~ Easter  
 April 22 ~ Earth Day  
 May 10 ~ Mother's Day  
 May 25 ~ Memorial Day  
 June 20 ~ First Day of Summer  
 June 21 ~ Father's Day



Find us on:  
**facebook®**

Are you a Facebooker? Ellis County Master Gardeners are on Facebook and we'd love to have you join us. Use our page as your point of contact to ask us gardening questions or get information about flowers, vegetables and herbs... we cover it all! You'll find us at the link below, and all you have to do is click the "Like" button to see our daily posts! We look forward to hearing from you with questions and comments.

<https://www.facebook.com/ECMGA>