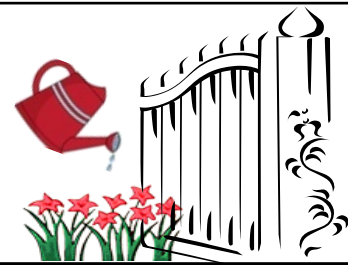


# Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter

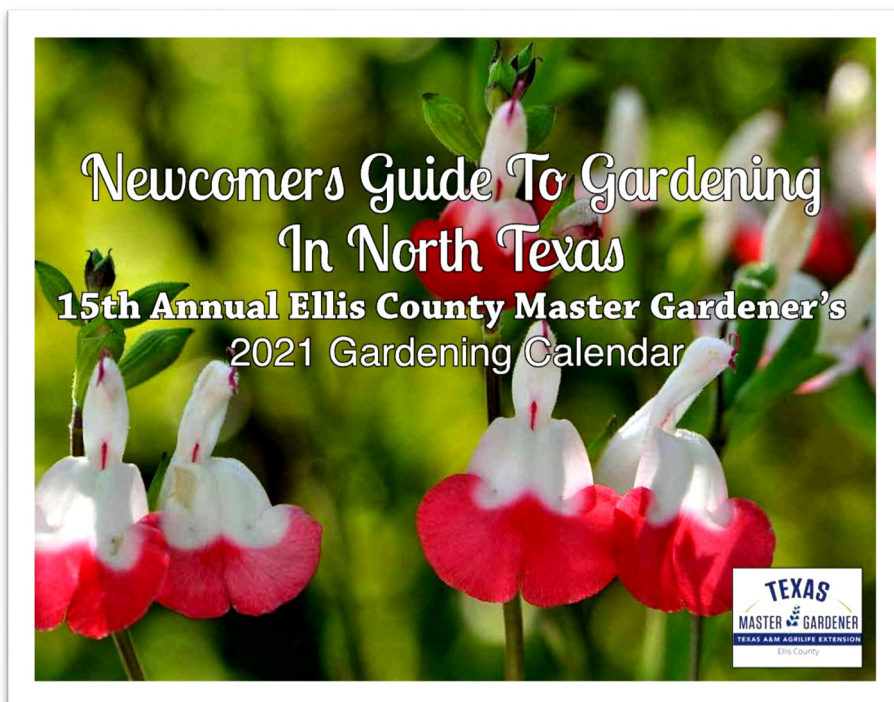


Volume XIII, Issue 1

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

January, 2021

**W**elcome 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 Knapp, Donna Seery, Bree Shaw



## 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 Ellis County Master Gardeners are proud to present our 15<sup>th</sup> annual gardening calendar. As always, this beautiful and informative calendar includes month-by-month gardening information, soil preparation, fertilization, moon signs, average temperature and rainfall each month, holidays, as well as the sponsor's events.

Your **FREE** copy is now available at all of the calendar sponsor's locations. While you are there to pick up your calendar, please shop at their businesses. You might find just that special gift you are looking for. Also thank them for sponsoring this year's gardening calendar! Without them there wouldn't be a calendar.

### Waxahachie

Ann's Heath Food  
Ark Country Store  
Carlisle Chevrolet  
Central Kubota  
Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County  
CNB - Citizens National Bank  
College Street Pub  
Ebby Halliday Realtors, Pam Daniel  
Ellis County Art Association  
Ellis County Master Gardeners  
Ellis County Title Company  
Glenn's Warehouse Carpets  
John Houston Custom Homes  
Larken Farms Orchard  
Living Magazine  
Texas Tree Farms

The Greenery  
The Waxahachie Sun  
Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce  
Waxahachie Civic Center  
Waxahachie Downtown Farmers Market

### Ennis

Ennis Chamber of Commerce  
Tex-Scapes Nursery and Landscaping

### Maypearl

Maypearl Insurance Agency

### Midlothian

EarthTones Greenery  
Rigsby's Garden Center  
Silverado Lawn & Landscaping  
Travis Equipment Co.

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*ECMGA will be going back to a monthly newsletter beginning March 2021. Enjoy this newsletter which includes information for January and February.*



### Save the Date

**March 27, 2021 "Expo at Chautauqua" 9am to 3pm**

**ELLIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS INVITE YOU TO  
JOIN US FOR AN OPEN-AIR EVENT AT THE HISTORIC CHAUTAUQUA  
AUDITORIUM IN WAXAHACHIE'S GETZENDANER PARK**

**400 S. Grand Avenue Waxahachie, TX 75165**

**SPEAKERS - GREG GRANT AND DANIEL CUNNINGHAM**

**PLANT SALES - PERENNIALS, VEGETABLES, HERBS AND MORE**



**IT'S JANUARY ... WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?****PLANTING**

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

**FERTILIZING AND PRUNING**

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

**GARDEN WATCH**

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



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>



February 14



## Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian  
Ellis County Master Gardener



**Anemone, Windflower** - Buttercup Family (Ranunculaceae)  
*Anemone decapetla* (Nutt.)

**Region:** Range 1-8, 10 (Ellis County is Region 4)

**Size:** 6 – 20 inches

**Blooms:** January – April (Perennial)

Blooming earlier than nearly any other flower, anemones bring the promise of spring. Ranging in colors from white, pink, violet and blue to purple, the wheel-shaped flowers are one and one-half inches across and appear at the tips of unbranched stems. Ten to thirty petal-like sepals encircled a cylinder, which elongates to one and one-half inches as the flower matures. Between a basal rosette of leaves and the flower, a whorl of much smaller leaves surrounds the stalk. Three species of anemones are found in Texas. They grow mostly in grassy areas, their flowers opening in the sun and closing at night. Our word “anemometer,” for wind gauge, is derived from the same Greek word as anemone or windflower.

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

### PLANTING

- ♥ Cool-season vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale and potatoes should be planted mid-month, or about four weeks prior to the average last freeze date (March 15 in Ellis County). Beets, carrots, lettuce, radishes, spinach, Swiss chard and “greens” (collard, mustard and turnip) should be planted two to four weeks prior to the average last freeze.
- ♥ Plant asparagus crowns in 10-12 inches of soil. When buying crowns, look for two-year-old root systems with healthy roots.
- ♥ When buying plants, biggest is not always best, especially with bare-root plants. Small to medium sizes establish faster.
- ♥ Dig and divide warm season perennials (cannas, coneflowers, perennial salvia, mums) before they break dormancy.

### FERTILIZING AND PRUNING

- ♥ Prune bush roses around Valentine's Day. Prune old, dead and weak canes back to the ground. Leave four to eight vigorous canes, removing one-half of their growth above an outward facing bud. Wait to prune climbing or leaning roses until after they bloom. Prune errant canes any time to maintain shape.
- ♥ Herbaceous perennials and ornamental grasses may be cut back now. Prune autumn sage (*Salvia Greggii*) by 50%. Mexican heather grass does not require pruning.
- ♥ Dig and divide large clumps of ornamental grasses, especially if the center of the plant has died.
- ♥ Cut or mow liriopse before new growth emerges. Trim Asian jasmine back to four or five inches.

### GARDEN WATCH

- ♥ Begin controlling insects and diseases on fruit and nut trees. Spraying is essential for a successful harvest. Contact the Texas A&M AgrLife Extension Service – Ellis County for a copy of “Homeowners Fruit and Nut Spray Schedule”.
- ♥ Look for aphids and caterpillars on vegetables, and control with insecticidal soap and Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), respectively.
- ♥ Check for scale insects adhering to the trunk, branches and leaves of hollies, euonymus, shade trees, fruit and pecan trees. Apply horticultural oil to control these and other over-wintering insects.
- ♥ For the more difficult-to-control crape myrtle bark scale, apply a neonicotinoid insecticide, such as imidacloprid, as a soil drench to the root zone of infested trees.

## FOR EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON This Is The Season To Start Your Compost Pile

By Rob Franks, ECMG



Leaves make perfect compost material and it is a great way to be environmentally friendly and reduce waste at the same time. This makes me sad because this time of year I see people placing bags of leaves on the curb which are then hauled away to the land fill.

First, landfills require a lot of space and they have a limited use time before they have to be covered and started anew next to some other person's house or land. Additionally, people bag those leaves up in plastic bags that are expensive and do not decay. Lawn and tree matter is full of nutrients that you may have spent a lot of time and money on during the previous season. Many people pay dearly for "organic" produce that you can raise at home if you have compost and you can make it yourself.

Compost reduces the need for chemical fertilizers and provides numerous micronutrients that commercial fertilizers just do not provide. Compost also provides organic materials that, when tilled into the soil, will loosen up tight clay soils like we have in Ellis County and help establish drainage that plants need for root development.

Briefly, you want to provide an environment that enables microbes to break down plant matter into a form that allows plants to take those nutrients up through their roots. First, you need to decide how you want to allow this process to occur and that is determined by the space that you have available. Some folks build bins which can be simple or pretty elaborate. I have made them from old pallets and also used commercially available bins. Once I had so much compostable material that I just made a big pile in the back corner of my lot.

Composting requires that oxygen be available to decompose the plant material and the pile needs to be kept moist. This requires that the pile be turned over and mixed up regularly. Some folks build bins side by side so that compost can be moved from one bin to another so that the pile will be turned over. The rotary bins are supposed to make this easier but they have a size limitation and can only make small amounts of compost.

What else can you put in your compost pile? Plant material including leaves (available now), grass clippings (proper composting will kill seeds), vegetable peelings from your kitchen and coffee grounds are a few items that compost well. If you choose to put food in your compost pile avoid any meat and grease and be aware that food scraps will attract critters to your yard that you may not want.

There are many ways to compost and many things that need to be considered if you are going to do a good job composting. Here is the link to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension website where you can find more detailed information <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/library/gardening/composting/>.

Don't be surprised when the neighbors give you funny looks when you ask if you can have their leaves. Happy composting!

## Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

*Submitted by Melinda Kocian  
Ellis County Master Gardener*



### Showy Buttercup Family— (Ranunculaceae)

*Ranunculus macranthus* Scheele

**Region:** 2-7, 8 (Ellis Co. is in Region 4)

**Size:** 12-36 inches

**Blooms:** February – June, Perennial

Buttercups are familiar in the north temperate zone worldwide. There are about four hundred species and many have invaded America. The Latin name, *Ranunculus*, means "little frog," and the plants enjoy the same habitat as amphibians. Some species are called "crow-foot" for the shape of the divided leaves. All species are acrid. Some are poisonous to grazing animals and the juice of some can blister the skin. Flowers are solitary at the end of a stalk, with five or more petals, and they are yellow or white, rarely reddish or green. Yellow-flowered species have a waxy patina because of a peculiar layer of cells beneath the surface. At least one species can be found in each region of Texas. *R. macranthus* (pictured) has eight to eighteen cupped petals, layered so that they appear semi-double. The flower may be over an inch across. Stems can be erect, reclining or often creeping. Hybridization makes identification difficult.

## LIGHT HOUSE FOR LEARNING

Join Ellis County Master Gardeners and Ellis County Extension Agency in a variety of classes to prepare your gardens and yards for spring.



### **Monday, March 22, 6:00pm–7:30pm. PLANT PROPAGATION Part I—Sexual Propagation**

Learn how to reproduce plants from seeds. This class will cover the advantages of seed propagation and methods to improve your rate of seed germination. You will gain an in-depth understanding of plant development from seeds.

*Instructor: Walt Friis*

### **Thursday, March 25, 6:00pm–7:30pm. PLANT PROPAGATION Part II—Asexual Propagation**

Come learn how to propagate plants from some of your favorites or some of your friends' plants. This class will give you information on different methods of propagation such as layering, cuttings and plant division. You will have both classroom and hands-on activities.

*Instructor: Walt Friis*

### **Monday, March 29, 6:00pm–7:30pm. VEGETABLE GARDENING IN CONTAINERS**

Come learn many ways to grow vegetables. This class will teach you how to grow vegetables in raised beds, square foot gardens and containers. Our Ellis county soils require special techniques for successful spring and fall gardens. Gain a wealth of knowledge to grow your own vegetables for your family. We're here to help!

*Instructor: Joan Brammer*

### **Monday, April 5, 6:00pm–7:30pm. HOBBY GREENHOUSE MANAGEMENT**

Greenhouse growing is easy and fun! This class will cover the basics to get you started. Learn about site preparation, types of greenhouses, materials, growing, temperature control, common pests and solutions.

*Instructor: Walt Friis*

### **Thursday, April 15, 6:00pm–7:30pm. TEXAS SUPERSTARS**

Learn a brief history of how plants have been named Texas Superstars and how they were found. Highlights of these superstars include annuals, perennials, fruits, trees and many more.

*Instructor: Gayle Johnston*

### **Monday, April 26, 6:00pm–7:30pm. TEXAS TREES – Tree planting and care**

For relaxation, food, protection and monetary value, trees add so much to our landscape. This class will teach you what trees will grow best in our area; how to plant both bare root or container grown trees, proper care after planting and how to control any possible pests.

*Instructor: Sheila Cloonen*

### **Monday, May 3, 6:00pm–7:30 pm. GARDENING FOR BUTTERFLIES**

Regardless of age, everyone loves to watch butterflies. There's something magical about watching them flit about, going from one flower to the next. In this class we'll cover what it takes to attract butterflies, what they need to survive, what types of plants they like, how to identify their life cycle and what varieties you can expect to see in your garden.

*Instructor: Cheryl Sandoval*

### **Monday, May 10, 6:00pm–7:30 pm. USING HERBS IN TEXAS LANDSCAPES**

Come learn how herbs can meet a variety of needs and play an important role in our Texas landscapes. This class will cover how to plan and start an herb garden in the garden or containers.

*Instructor: Alice Thompson*

*All classes cost \$14.00 and are held at the Waxahachie High School located at 3001 US Highway 287 Bypass. Students and teachers will enter the building on the west side of the campus in the Billy Bates Career and Technology Center. There is both a separate parking and a separate entrance there. Masks are required for all attendees. Social distancing will be practiced and class size is limited to 9 or fewer. Classrooms are sanitized and hand sanitizer is available.*

**To Register:** Mail it in- WISD 411 N. Gibson St., Waxahachie, TX 75165 Walk it in – WHS/Career & Technology  
Make checks payable to: Waxahachie ISD. For questions call Melissa Cobb at (972)923-4631.



## CARROT SOUFFLE

From the cookbook Food Editors Favorite TREASURED RECIPES

Shared by Jackie Milam, ECMG, on May 8, 2019

*This is a delicious and easy recipe that even carrot haters will like.*

### INGREDIENTS

1 pound carrots, cooked	Dash of ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	2 tablespoons flour
3 eggs	Dash of ground cinnamon
1/2 C. melted butter	1 teaspoon baking powder
1/3 C. granulated sugar	

Preheat oven to 350° F.  
Puree cooked carrots in blender.  
Add eggs to pureed mixture and blend well.  
Add sugar, flour, baking powder, vanilla, butter, nutmeg and cinnamon. Puree until smooth.  
Pour into greased 1 ½ quart souffle dish.

### TOPPING INGREDIENTS

1/4 cup cornflake crumbs	3 tablespoons light brown sugar
2 tablespoons butter	1/4 cup chopped nuts

Topping: Combine crumbs, brown sugar, butter and nuts.  
Sprinkle over casserole and bake in 350° oven for 1 hour.

*(Jackie substituted toasted oats for the cornflakes in the topping and it was wonderful.)*



## Ellis County Master Gardener Scholarship 2021

In 2003, Ellis County Master Gardener Association (ECMGA) decided to make scholarships available to graduating high school seniors residing in Ellis County. We wanted to provide opportunities to these students that chose college studies in horticulture and/or life sciences disciplines. Since then, we have awarded 43 graduating high school students with college scholarships totaling \$93,600.

One of the objectives of the ECMGA is to build partnerships with the Ellis County community to expand horticultural education and opportunities. In keeping with this objective, the ECMGA will again make scholarship funds available in 2021 to deserving high school seniors pursuing studies in horticulture/life sciences – related fields. To qualify, the applicant must be a 2021 graduating high school senior residing in Ellis County from an Ellis County High School, Ellis County Charter High School or Ellis County Home School Program. The applicant must have an elected academic major in a horticulture/life sciences – related field that includes, but is not limited to horticulture, agriculture, environmental science, forestry, botany, biology (e.g.: plant genetics, plant physiology), landscape design or entomology. Other horticulture/life sciences – related fields of studies are delineated in the scholarship application package available on the ECMGA website. Applicants must be able to provide proof of acceptance at an accredited institution of higher education. In addition, this year the ECMGA has decided to allow former ECMGA College Scholarship Awardees currently enrolled in horticulture programs/life sciences degree plans to also apply for an ECMGA 2021 College Scholarship to continue their college/university studies.

ECMGA college scholarships awarded to qualifying students in 2021 will be up to \$3,000. Students applying for the ECMGA College Scholarship are invited to visit <http://www.ecmga.com> to download the application package found under the “Scholarship” tab. The completed application may be submitted by registered mail (return receipt requested) or in person to the Texas AgriLife Extension Service office located at 701 South I-35, Suite 3, Waxahachie, TX 75165. If additional information is needed regarding the ECMGA Scholarship, please call (972) 825-5175 (Ellis County AgriLife Extension Office) or George Cole, Chairman, ECMGA 2020 College Scholarship Program at 972/937-2440 or <mailto:georgedcii@att.net>.

**All scholarship applications must be received no later than 4:00 P.M. on March 15, 2021**