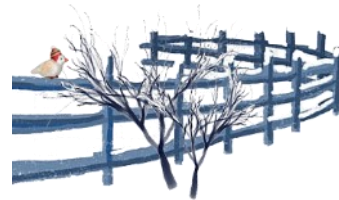




# Ellis County Master Gardeners'

## E-Gardening Newsletter



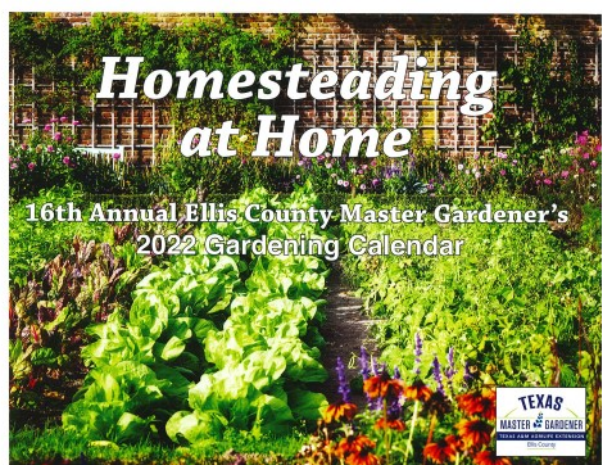
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Official E-Newsletter of the Ellis County Master Gardeners Association, Waxahachie, Texas

December, 2021

# W

elcome to the Ellis County Master Gardeners' 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 fill out the form at the bottom of the home page. Best of all; it's FREE! Editors and Newsletter Team: Marj McClung, Kim Rainey and Bree Shaw.



**The 2022 Master Gardener Calendar is Here! See page 3 for locations to pick up your FREE copy!**

**Join us March 26th for  
Expo 2022  
Learn to be a  
Homesteading  
Super Hero**

**Begin a season of greater sustainability  
Classes ▼ Products ▼ Plants.**

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# WHAT TO DO THIS MONTH..... DECEMBER

## PLANTING

- ❁ Plant berry-producing trees and shrubs to add winter color to yo landscape. Choices include possumhaw and yaupon holly, Carolina buckthorn, rusty blackhaw viburnum and American beautyberry.



- ❁ Plant pre-chilled tulip and hyacinth bulbs mid to late month. Plant bulbs in masses for best effect.
- ❁ Daffodil bulbs may still be planted. Look for early and small-flowering varieties that tend to naturalize and return yearly.

- ❁ Considering a living Christmas tree? Choose an adapted plant. Junipers, Arizona cypress and pyramidal hollies are good options. While indoors, place the tree in the brightest natural light and keep soil moist. Do not leave indoors for more than two weeks.

## FERTILIZING AND PRUNING

- ❁ Apply a root stimulator such as liquid seaweed or a high -phosphorus fertilizer to newly planted trees and shrubs.
- ❁ Do not top crape myrtles or remove the central leader of any shade tree. It destroys the crape myrtle's natural shape, and delays blooming by five or six weeks. If your plant is too tall or too wide, remove or relocate it and replace with something smaller that won't require trimming
- ❁ Remove mistletoe from trees as soon as it becomes visible. Use a pole pruner to remove the entire twig from infected branches before the mistletoe produces berries. There are no effective consumer products to control this parasitic plant.



## GARDEN WATCH

- ❁ Protect tender vegetation from the cold with lightweight frost cloth available at most nurseries and garden centers.
- ❁ Continue to water lawns, newly planted trees, shrubs and perennials if rainfall is insufficient.
- ❁ Prepare garden soil for spring planting by tilling in 6 inches of organic matter (compost) to a depth of 8 to 10 inches.
- ❁ Take time during the holidays to check out the new seed and nursery catalogues. Order early to ensure availability.
- ❁ Let's not forget our feathered friends during the winter when their natural food supply is limited. Providing sunflower, safflower and thistle seed, suet and fruit will attract many species of birds to your backyard. Also be sure to provide water.



# The 2022 Ellis County Master Gardeners' Calendar Is Here!

With the theme of "Homesteading at Home", the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Ellis County Master Gardeners' Calendar is ready and available at our sponsors this week.

The past year has forced many of us to be at home more, resulting in a new interest in self-sufficient living. In keeping with the Homesteading theme, the calendar includes articles on bee keeping, the home orchard, foodscaping, chicken keeping and canning as well as monthly tips on gardening and landscaping, average high and low temperatures for our area, average rainfall and community events.

Following is a list of our wonderful sponsors who make this calendar possible.

## **Waxahachie**

ARK Country Store (1)  
Boyce Feed & Grain  
Carlisle  
Central Kubota  
College Street Pub  
Ellis County Art Association  
Farmers' Market, City of Waxahachie  
Ellis County Title Company  
Larken Farms Orchard  
Living Magazine  
Texas Tree Farms  
The Greenery  
The Waxahachie Sun  
Waxahachie Civic Center  
Mosquito Shield of Waxahachie

## **Midlothian**

Creative Quilters of Ellis County  
EarthTones Greenery  
Rigsby Garden Center  
Silverado Lawn & Landscaping  
Travis Equipment

## **Ennis**

Ennis Chamber of Commerce  
Tex-Scapes Greenery

## **Ellis County**

John Houston Homes  
Ellis County Master Gardeners

## **Cedar Hill**

Pam Daniel, Realtor

## **The Award Winning Ellis County Master Gardeners' 2022 Calendar Committee**

### ***Ellis County Master Gardener's 2022 Calendar Committee***



Pam Daniel



Shelia Cloonen



Linda Ballard



Scotty Rigsby



Susan Knapp

The 2022 ECMGA Calendar Committee is Pam Daniel, Shelia Cloonen, Linda Ballard, Scotty Rigsby and Susan Knapp. This committee has received the 2021 First Place Award in written education from the Texas Master Gardener Association. The written education award recognizes any form of printed material which is created and written by Master Gardeners as a tool for education.

Articles in the ECMGA Calendars are

written using current horticultural research results and are geared to gardening conditions found in Ellis County. Chock full of gardening information, the new calendar looks like another winner! Get yours at one of our sponsors to plan for a great gardening year.

**Join us on March 26th, 2022 at Expo 2022 and start your journey to becoming A HOMESTEADING SUPER HERO!**

## Wildflower of the Month

**Greenthread** – Sunflower family (Asteraceae)  
*Thelesperma filifolium* (Hook.) Gray



**Region:** 1-2, 4, 6-10  
**Size:** 8-30 inches  
**Blooms:** February – December, Perennial

There are at least eight species of *Thelesperma* in Texas. All species have opposite leaves, which are divided once, twice or sometimes thrice, into segments that are ultimately linear and threadlike. Greenthread has eight yellow, three-lobed, ray flowers around a yellow or brown disk. Occasionally there may be a diffuse brown or reddish brown color near the base of the rays, but never in a definite spot. Indians made a tea from this plant, as well as other *Thelesperma* species, hence they all are sometimes called “Navajo tea.” Some people prefer this tea to commercial varieties. *Thelesperma* is found in dry soils in pastures, prairies, vacant lots and on roadsides.



Bringing in evergreens is a traditional way to decorate for seasonal celebrations. However, remember that living plants don't really like living *with* us. Air in our homes is too dry and light is too sparse for all but house plants that have adapted, and even these need special care to get enough humidity and sun.

To have a living Christmas tree, keep it watered and away from the fireplace or heat vents. Have it in the house as short a time as possible and get it out and planted as soon as possible after Christmas.

Living Christmas trees don't have to go inside at all, but can be planted and decorated outside. Birds and other wildlife appreciate unsalted popcorn and cranberry garlands.

***See next page for suggestions and pictures of living Christmas trees you can plant in your landscape in North Texas.***

Eastern Red Cedar, Afgan Pine, and Arizona Cypress are good trees for North Texas. When young, these have a Christmas tree shape with silvery-blue foliage. Japanese Black Pines like more acidic soils than we have in Ellis county, but with good drainage, they will tolerate alkaline soil and are drought tolerant.



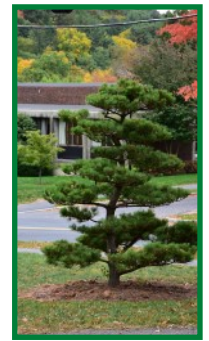
Eastern  
Red Cedar



Afgan Pine



Arizona Blue  
Cypress



Japanese  
Black Pine

Several junipers make good accent trees with their textured, greyish blueish foliage. The branches may hold lightweight ornaments but are better suited for garlands. For our area, try:



Blue Point  
Juniper



Hollywood  
Juniper



Skyrocket  
Juniper



Wichita  
Blue Juniper

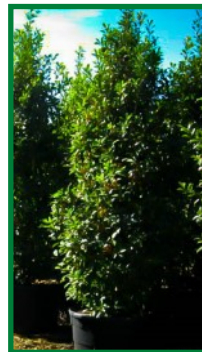
Because of sharp spines, Hollies are best undecorated although they can be draped with lights.



Nelli R.  
Stevens Holly



East Palatka  
Holly



Savannah  
Holly



Rosemary

Finally, Rosemary is often sold this time of year pruned into pyramids. After Christmas, this lovely herb will be happier outside. These make large bushes that bloom small blue blossoms in winter.