



Ellis County Master Gardeners' E-Gardening Newsletter



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

November, 2021

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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 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.

Calendar of Events

October

30 Master Gardeners' booth at Waxahachie Farmers' Market. Last of the season! See you next year for more Pop Up Horticulture Events!

November

5 Sapling Give-Away. 9 A.M. until noon at Getzendaner Park in the Large pavilion. 100 Bur Oak and Pecan saplings. Master Gardeners on site to help with selection.

9 ECMGA monthly meeting at a **new location**, First Baptist Church, 450 E. Hwy. 287 in Waxahachie, 9:30 a.m. – social, 10:00 a.m. – Meeting. Investiture of new Officers/Board Members. Program: Gardening for Life – Janet Madison and the Intern Class of 2020.

Visitors welcome.

EXPO 2022

The Ellis County Master Gardeners are already planning to be back in the Waxahachie Civic Center March 26, 2022. Save the date and watch for more details as plans develop.



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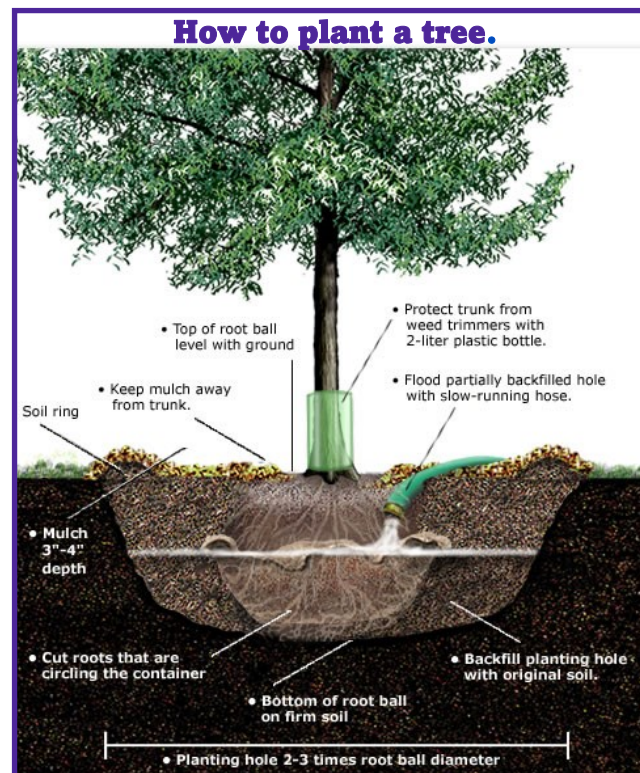
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WHAT TO DO THIS MONTH..... November

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 [Texas Tree Selector \(tamu.edu\)](https://tamu.edu) for help in selecting the right tree for the right location.
- ☼ 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.
- ☼ Remove the tops of herbaceous perennials after they have died. Add 2-3 inches of mulch to the beds to reduce winter weed growth.
- ☼ 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 planting 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°-20° F) Therefore, it is best to choose plants listed for Zone 8, or one or two zones to the north (Zone 6 or 7).

PLEASE WELCOME THE CLASS OF 2021



Ellis County Master Gardeners and Interns share lunch at Getzendaner Park.

The Class of 2021 has completed 8 weeks of study and is now ready to complete their 72 hours of volunteer service. Here are comments and interests shared from some of the students. Please welcome and get to know the **CLASS of 2021!**

Lynn Sawyer, OVILLA – Interests: Earthkind landscaping, fruit trees, ornamental plants, vegetable gardening, and water conservation.

Sharon McIver, WAXAHACHIE – Interests: Flower and vegetable gardens, irrigation, turf management.

Tanya Cates, RED OAK – Interests: Continuing my studies on native or adapted plants, specifically those that attract butterflies and pollinators.

Sally Severson, ENNIS – Interests: Since we have three “Ennis area” people in the class, as well as other Master Gardeners in Ennis, I would hope that we would become active and familiar with resources in the Ennis community.

John S. Davies, CORSICANA – Interests: My main interest is vegetable gardening.

Mary Ann Mezzapelle, ENNIS COUNTY – Interests: Working with students' garden / horticulture programs. Native plants and culinary herbs. Growing flowers for cut arrangements.

Marilyn Hopkins, MIDLOTHIAN – Interests: I liked all of the topics but propagation, plant pathology and native plants were very interesting to me.

Malcolm Avaritt, MIDLOTHIAN – Interests: Interested in working in the public gardens and hoping to learn propagation and greenhouse growing/management. Also looking forward to the Spring Expo plant sale and the return to “normal”.

Edith Smith, MIDLOTHIAN – Interests: Lawn care.

Joshua Hersey, MIDLOTHIAN – Interests: My love for Veggies, Herbs, Flowers did not change, but the class peaked a new interest in Water Conservation and entomology.

Jessi Harbor, WAXAHACHIE – Interests: Currently interested in vegetable gardening, fruit trees, turf grass, and rainwater harvesting... I love it all!

Darrell Searcy, WAXAHACHIE – Interests: Planning, landscaping, soil, irrigation.

Gina Assem, WAXAHACHIE – Interests: My current favorite interest(?) hasn't really changed. :) I have been interested in permaculture for a very long time now. I was sorry we didn't touch on it, but have added a lot of detail to what I do know.

Sue Agullana, OVILLA – Interests: I have enjoyed all the classes and have learned so much. I am interested in taking better care of the plants I have plus growing some edible plants too.

Rannette Woodall, PALMER – Interests: When I started the "Master Gardeners Program" I was mostly interested in learning about composting and fruit & vegetable gardening. However, after these 7 weeks of studying I have found myself interested in landscape design, water & irrigation, Turfgrass and Earthkind plants. I have found myself navigating the "ekps.tamu" website (Earth-Kind Plant Selector) almost daily in my personal study.

Rocky Stones, WAXAHACHIE – Interests: Earth kind Landscape Design

Amanda Weatherly, WAXAHACHIE – Interests: In the beginning, I attended the class to learn about vegetable gardening. After attending, my interests have been peaked in many other areas of the landscape. Currently, I am intrigued with rain gardening and propagation. I look forward to putting what I have learned into action and getting my hands "dirty" with the more experienced gardeners.

Andy Emmons, WAXAHACHIE – Interests: I really enjoyed the irrigation class.

Lea Sandoz, WAXAHACHIE – Interests: Hard choice between entomology and water use. You know, conservation, rain water harvesting, proper irrigation for healthy plants. I'll say entomology because I'm always looking for bugs right now.

Sandy Emmons, WAXAHACHIE – Interests: Everything has been very interesting but my primary interest is edible and medicinal gardening, and how to use native species that adapt to our soil and water situation.



Mama Mia! It's a Lasagna Garden!

My Autumn Garden is looking good. The summer Turks Cap, Rock Rose, Salvias and Gregg's Blue Mist have revived in the cooler weather. The Fall-

blooming Spider Lilies and Oxblood Lilies have been up, adding red blooms to the flower beds. Golden eye and Frostweed started blooming right on time for the last weeks of butterflies. All of this is due to planning and planting back in the Spring.



So in the Fall we need to start or revive beds for Spring blooms or harvest. One of the best ways to do this is "Lasagna gardening", also called sheet or layer composting. This involves layering weed deterrents, nutrients and water retention elements in the bed. Some planting can be done right away or the bed can over-winter to be ready for those plants you purchase at the March 26th Master Gardener EXPO.

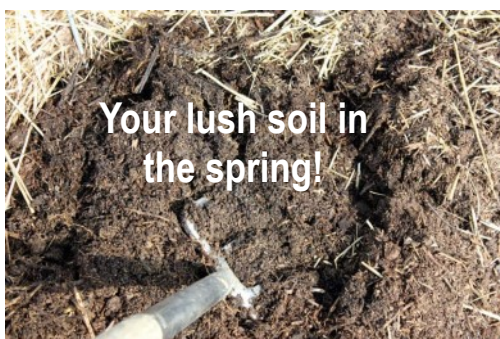
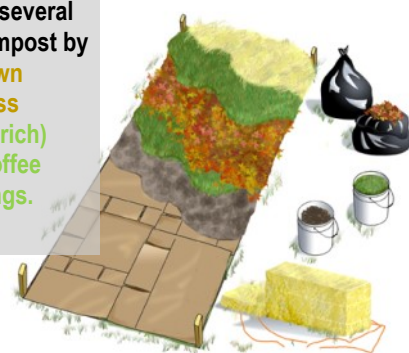
Start by removing as many weeds or grasses as possible. Use herbicide according to label directions or dig or use a string trimmer to remove or severely cut back any weeds or grass. Cut the cardboard to fit around any plants you want to remain in the bed. Water the cardboard after it is down. Cardboard will provide air circulation to keep the microclimate in the soil and will shade out most weeds. Unfortunately, nut sedge and common Bermuda grass will defeat cardboard but this works on other weeds. The cardboard will eventually deteriorate. In lieu of cardboard, you can put down layers of wet newspaper.

Layer wet cardboard over the bed, over-lapping the edges to deprive weeds of light.



Autumn is a great time to mulch fallen leaves or trimmings of branches to use in your beds. But remember last Spring. If any of your wood mulch floated away in Spring rains, now is a good time to heighten the border around the beds or switch to pea gravel as mulch. If you have plants to go in the bed now, you can dig right through the cardboard and all with a sharp spade. Otherwise, let the bed rest for your late winter/early spring planting.

On top of the cardboard, layer several inches of compost or build compost by layering materials that are **brown (carbon rich) dry leaves or grass clippings**, and **green (nitrogen rich) vegetable waste, tea leaves, coffee grounds, or fresh grass clippings**. Then on top, put mulch.



For existing beds, dig out the weeds, usually air-born seeds that floated in and managed to root through the mulch. Then add a layer of compost and another of mulch to prepare the beds for winter. Leave blooming plants until after the first freeze to accommodate bees and late butterflies and consider leaving seed heads for the birds.

Wildflower of the Month

Aster – Sunflower Family (Asteraceae)
Aster ssp.



Region: 1 through 5, 7 (Ellis County is Region 4)
Size: 1-4 feet
Blooms: August – December, perennial



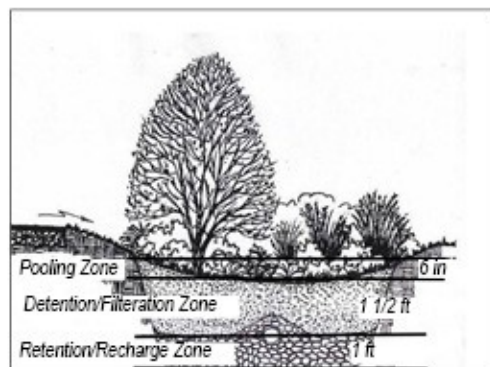
Identifying wild asters by species may be baffling to the amateur naturalist and it often challenges the professional. One authority states that Texas has forty-five species. There are at least six wild blue asters, ranging from blue-white, blue, violet and lavender to purple. The many-petaled flowers range in size from half-inch to two inches. Center disks are yellow. Flowers on the upper stems are profuse. Most asters are fall blooming and an important source of late-season nectar for butterflies. A tea made from cured roots of the plant was used by the Indians to stop diarrhea. Asters can be seen along edges of woods, on prairies and along fence rows, where they grow in clay, sand or gravelly soils.

A Beautiful Solution to Water Pollution

A **rain garden** is a bowl-shaped depression designed as a garden to capture, hold, and absorb rainwater. Rain gardens slow the flow of rainwater from roofs, sidewalks, streets, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces, allowing the water to penetrate the soil.



The soil cleans the water of pollutants before it enters the storm drain and empties into our streams and bays. This process allows us to keep more of the rain that falls on our yards, and the stormwater that finally enters the storm drain is cleaner.



Rain gardens use native plants as well as nonnative plants that are adapted to our climate. When designed properly, water in the rain garden should stand for no more than 24 to 48 hours, too short a period for mosquitoes to hatch. [Rain Garden Plant List—Texas A&M](#)



Another benefit is that rain gardens serve as habitats for wildlife such as birds and butterflies. They are useful for residential, commercial, and public areas.

Above all, a rain garden is a landscape amenity, blending beauty and function—an attractive WaterSmart solution to water pollution.