



Ellis County Master Gardeners' E-Gardening Newsletter



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

September, 2021

Welcome 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 click on [subscribe](#). Best of all; it's FREE! Editors and Newsletter Team: Marj McClung, Kim Rainey and Bree Shaw.



Farmers Market new venue at 701 Howard Road

EXPO 2022

SAVE THE DATE!

Waxahachie Civic Center

March 26, 2022

Watch this space for more details
as plans develop.



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WHAT TO DO THIS MONTH..... **September**

PLANTING



- ☼ Plant these fall vegetables now: beets, carrots, "greens" (mustard, collard, turnip), kale, lettuce, radishes and spinach.
- ☼ Lawn establishment using warm-season grasses such as Bermudagrass, St. Augustine, zoysia and buffalo grass should be completed early in the month.
- ☼ Overseed established Bermudagrass lawns with perennial ryegrass this month, if desired.
- ☼ Plant these fall-blooming annuals from bedding plants before buds have opened: marigolds, petunias, asters, pinks, snapdragons and mums. Wait until cooler weather to plant pansies, violas and ornamental cabbages and kale.
- ☼ Complete sowing bluebonnets to ensure spring flowers. For season-long color, purchase a wildflower mix that contains annuals and perennials, as well as cool-season and warm-season plants such as bluebonnets, black-eyed Susan, Indian blanket, Indian paintbrush, Mexican hat, plains coreopsis, purple coneflower and evening primrose. Sow seeds in areas that are free of grasses and lightly tilled. Lightly rake area to get good seed-soil contact before watering.



FERTILIZING AND PRUNING

- ☼ Apply high-nitrogen fertilizer (4-1-2 ratio) on lawns and shrubs to prepare plants for fall and winter. Container plants will benefit from using high-nitrogen, water-soluble fertilizers.
- ☼ Tidy up summer perennials by removing dead and faded flower stems and seed stalks. Continue through fall.
- ☼ Root-prune trees and shrubs to be transplanted this winter. Cutting the roots around the plant with a spade will stimulate new root growth in what will become the soil ball when the plant is moved.



GARDEN WATCH

- ☼ Apply a pre-emergent herbicide to lawns early in the month to control winter weeds. Depending on the type of weed targeted, it may be necessary to apply two products one for grassy weeds (annual bluegrass, ryegrass, etc.) and another for broad-leafed weeds (chickweed, clover, dandelions, henbit, etc.).
- ☼ Make final application of Image® or SedgeHammer® before mid-month to control nutsedge in warm-season lawns.
- ☼ Remove webworms from pecan trees. Cut off the ends of branches as soon as the webs appear. Tear open large webs to expose worms for birds. Spraying is not practical.
- ☼ Spray roses suffering from black spot and powdery mildew with labeled fungicide.
- ☼ Prepare beds for spring-flowering bulbs. Add organic matter to improve water drainage.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST

- 28** Master Gardeners' booth at Waxahachie Farmers' Market. Need help planning your Fall garden?

SEPTEMBER

- 4** Master Gardeners' booth at Waxahachie Farmers' Market. It's Grill Fest!
- 9** Classes begin for the Master Gardener Student Class of 2021!
- 11** Master Gardeners' booth at Waxahachie Farmers' Market. Iris Giveaway!
- 14** ECMG monthly meeting, The home of Ginger and George Cole, 9:30 a.m. – social, 10:00 a.m. – meeting. Program: A tour of Ginger's garden. Bring a sack lunch!
- 16** Master Gardener classes continue.
- 18** Master Gardeners' booth at Waxahachie Farmers' Market. Bring gardening questions; we've got answers!
- 23** Master Gardener classes continue.
- 25** Master Gardeners' booth at Waxahachie Farmers' Market. Plan to plant in Fall/Winter for Spring blooms.
- 30** Master Gardener classes continue.

Later this Year-Dates To Be Determined

Online Bulb/Rhizome Sale featuring a variety of lovely named Irises.

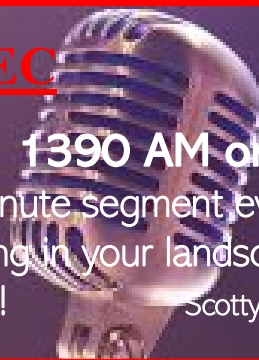
Fall Master Gardener Plant Sale to get ready for a glorious Spring is tentatively scheduled for October 2nd.

Listen to KBEC

Saturday mornings at 8:10 a.m. 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 Rigsby



It's Time to Make Some Salsa!

With tomatoes and peppers harvested, it's time to get out the Molcajete and tejolote (motar and pestle) and start making salsa! At Grill Fest (September 4th at the Waxahachie Farmers' Market), Janet Madison will have some grills roasting vegetables and one grill devoted to roasting peppers. Stop by for a taste of her Salsa Verde.

Master Gardener Rob Franks roasts his peppers and then uses or freezes them although he says he has successfully frozen peppers, then roasted as needed for a recipe. So you can save your harvest to warm up Winter meals.

Your cilantro likely bolted (flowered) and turned bitter when the hot weather hit, but you can start a new batch in your fall garden along with tomatoes and peppers. Or hit the Farmers' Market for ingredients.

Master Gardener Alice Thompson has shared the following family salsa recipes, one of her own and one from her sister. No quantities are given to allow for your available harvest and tolerance for hot and spicy. The results are sure to have your family saying "Ole!"

#1 - Salsa/Hot Sauce

Roma Tomatoes

Fresh Jalapenos

Fresh Cilantro (to taste)

Fresh Lime Juice

Chopped Garlic

Blanche/peel tomatoes and cut into pieces. Cut in half and deseed the jalapenos. Put all ingredients into blender and blend until liquified. Add salt to taste.

#2 - Salsa

Any kind of tomatoes Red & green bell pepper

Chili peppers (to taste) Chopped Onions

Chopped Garlic Cilantro

Fresh Lemon/Lime juice Olive Oil,

Kosher Salt Pepper (Red or Black)

Blanche/peel tomatoes and cut into pieces. Cut in half and deseed the jalapenos and bell peppers. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Fun Sunflower Facts

THEY'RE NATIVE TO THE AMERICAS BUT HAVE TRAVELED THE WORLD.

Like potatoes, tomatoes, and corn, sunflowers were cultivated in North America as far back as 3000 BC. They were exported to the rest of the world by Spanish conquistadors around 1500. Tsar Peter the Great was so fascinated by the sunny flowers he saw in the Netherlands that he took some back to Russia. There they became popular for their oil. By the 19th century, Russia was planting two million acres of sunflowers every year. Russian immigrants to the U.S. brought these highly developed sunflower seeds that grew bigger blooms with them. This sparked a new interest in the native American plant. Later, in the 1970s, American sunflower production exploded as consumers looked for low-cholesterol alternatives to animal fats.



THEY TRACK THE SUN.

Sunflowers display a behavior called **heliotropism**. The flower buds and young blossoms will face east in the morning and follow the sun as the earth moves during the day. However, as the flowers get heavier during seed production, the stems will stiffen and the mature flower heads will generally remain facing east.



THE WORLD'S TALLEST SUNFLOWER REACHES 30 FEET AND 1 INCH.

In the summer of 2014, Veteran green-thumb Hans-Peter Schiffer toppled the Guinness World Record for third year in a row. The local fire brigade lent its help in measuring the sunflower, which required its own scaffold.

THEY HAVE TRAVELED TO SPACE.

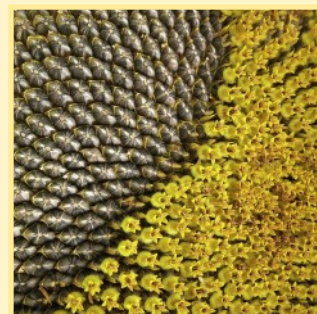
In 2012, U.S. astronaut Don Pettit brought along a few companions to the International Space Station: sunflower seeds. Petit regularly blogged about his budding friendship and shared photos of the gardening process.



ISS SUNFLOWER 2012

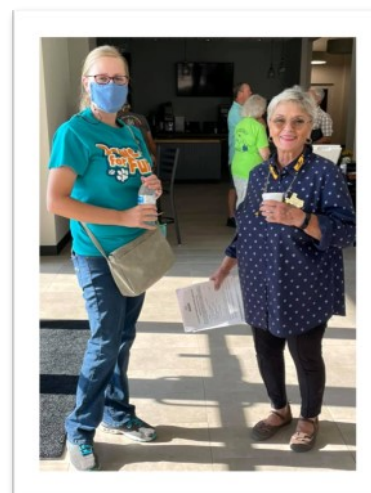
THEY ARE ACTUALLY THOUSANDS OF TINY FLOWERS.

Each sunflower's head is made of smaller flowers. The petals we see around the outside are called ray florets, and they cannot reproduce. But the disc florets in the middle, where the seeds develop, have both male and female sex organs, and each produce a seed. They can self-pollinate or take pollen blown by the wind or transported by insects.



Ellis County Master Gardeners Class of 2021

This September marks the start of classes for new Master Gardener students. Following over **60 hours of instruction**, the new Master Gardener Interns will begin the **75 hours of volunteer work** needed for certification. Current Ellis County Master Gardeners look forward to working with the new students in our mission to provide the public with research-based gardening information specific to growing conditions in Ellis County.



So we send you a big Aggie “Howdy” and virtual hug.

Welcome Class of 2021!



Plant Irises This Fall for Spring Blooms

Ellis County Master Gardeners will give out iris rhizomes at the Waxahachie Farmers' Market on September 11th. Also, we plan an online bulb/rhizome sale in the fall featuring a variety of lovely iris flowers. If you don't grow irises, now is the time to join gardeners throughout the world who love this plant.

Named for the Greek goddess who rode rainbows, there are about 300 species of irises with thousands of varieties. This is the Fleur-de-lis of France and flower of Florence, Italy. It is also an easy to grow perennial for Texas gardens.

The most common in our area are tall bearded irises (TBI) with 3 petals hanging down (falls) and 3 upright petals (standards) with a "beard" of hairs on the falls. They grow 2 to 3 feet tall. There are also dwarf and miniature varieties of bearded irises.

There are also irises that are beardless with smooth falls. Spuria irises do well in our region. Louisiana irises, which are more tolerant of moist soil and are often found around ponds, also work well here. Siberian irises and Japanese irises are more of a challenge since they prefer a more moist climate.



Ellis County Master Gardeners will have an Iris give away at the Waxahachie Farmers' Market on September 11th.

Dutch irises grow from bulbs, not rhizomes. These grow in both tall and dwarf sizes. These bloom earlier than other irises. Bulbs are planted deeper (about 5 inches) than rhizomes.

Most irises like fertile soil and tolerate our alkaline soils well if organic matter is mixed in. **They need good drainage so rhizomes don't rot.** However, Louisiana irises thrive in poorly drained, more acidic soil. Siberian and Japanese irises also like more moist and acidic soil

Irises go dormant in summer so this is when gardeners divide the clumps. A rhizome only blooms once but produces offshoot rhizomes with growing points (leaves) for future blooms. **After about three years, clumps get crowded and need to be divided.** Dig up and break off or use a sharp knife or shears to cut apart rhizomes. Dip cutting implements in a 9 to 1 water/bleach solution to combat bacterial soft rot. Cut out any diseased or rotting rhizomes. Soak the rhizomes and leaves in the bleach solution for a few minutes or dust with sulfur to prevent carrying disease to a new flower bed. Plant in full sun to partial shade. Rhizomes are planted horizontally barely covered with soil. Plant Siberian irises a little deeper. Usually, irises are planted in groups of the same color for a nice display. Water well after planting. TBI need water when rains are infrequent, but others need moisture more often. Lightly fertilize TBI with 6-10-6 fertilizer in spring after blooming and in fall. Use an azalea/camellia fertilizer (more acidic) for Louisiana irises.



Cut off diseased, brown or yellowed leaves. Some gardeners cut leaves when dividing to prepare plants for division. Otherwise, there is no need to trim the leaves. In some parts of the country, iris borers lay eggs on leaves which hatch and tunnel down to the rhizome, but these borers don't like Texas weather.



Flowers not deadheaded can produce seed pods. Trim these off if you don't intend to plant the seeds. Irises grown from seeds take several years to bloom. The color of the seed-grown flowers depends on the parent plants.