

E-Gardening Newsletter

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21st ANNUAL ELLIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS LAWN & GARDEN EXPO 2022 HOMESTEADING HEROES MARCH 26TH—9AM-4PM

ADMISSION AT THE DOOR \$5
(CHILDREN UNDER 12 FREE)

FREE ADVANCE TICKETS
AVAILABLE FROM
OUR SPONSORS

WAXAHACHIE CIVIC CENTER
2000 CIVIC CENTER LANE,
Waxahachie, TX

**Over 100 Exhibit Booths ~ Childrens Workshops ~ Plant Sales
Ask the Experts ~ Door Prizes**

GUEST SPEAKERS [\(more details on page 2\)](#)

**Keynote: Jay White, Texas Gardener Magazine 🌀 Liz Espie, Agrilife:
Ginger Cole, Carolyn Ross & Maureen Nikowski, ECMG.**

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS—GET YOUR FREE TICKETS HERE!

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Tex-Scapes
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GREEN

AmeriGrafix, Boyce Feed and Grain
Marilyn Norcross, Realtor, City Real Estate
Guardian Southwest Printing
Leaf Filter North Texas
Texas Gardeners Magazine
Texas Tree Farm, Travis Equipment
Cowboy Bank of Maypearl, Brookshire

LEARN FROM OUR SPEAKERS at the ELLIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS LAWN AND GARDEN EXPO

10:30 A.M. ★ “PRESERVING YOUR HARVEST: FREEZING, DRYING AND CANNING” WITH LIZ ESPIE.

You have eaten and given away your fresh fruits and vegetables and still have more! Family and Community Health County Extension Agent Liz Espie will speak on enjoying your harvest throughout the year by learning how to safely preserve fruits and vegetables while retaining flavor.

11:30 A.M. ★ “HOW GRANDMA SURVIVED THE DEPRESSION” KEYNOTE SPEAKER, JAY WHITE.

With a MS in Agriculture from Texas A&M, owner and publisher of Texas Gardener magazine, Jay White has a passion for the science of horticulture which he combines with his experience in gardening at his Brenham home and with lessons from gardeners who pass along plants and share gardening wisdom. In his talk about “How Grandma Survived the Depression”, Jay will show how lessons from the past combined with current horticultural methods can help you contend with shortages at the grocery and rising food prices by producing food in your own yard.

12:30 P.M. ★ “RAISING CHICKENS” BY CAROLYN ROSS.

Chickens are reasonably easy to raise and their eggs can provide a good source of protein. Their manure, when composted, is an excellent addition to your garden. A Master Gardener for 14 years, Carolyn will introduce you to raising healthy chickens, tending to them, feeding them and providing shelter. She will also provide resources to help you successfully raise your flock.

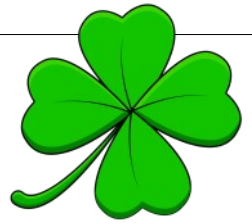
1:30 P.M. ★ “A QUICK PICTORIAL WALK-THROUGH OF URBAN HOMESTEADING” BY GINGER COLE.

Ginger has been a Master Gardener for 13 years. Her topics will cover testing your soil, composting, choosing the right plants for our area with plant and seed sources, designing a garden, raising chickens and beekeeping. Attendees will receive a soil test kit, seed and plant catalogues, resource URLs for gardening topics and literature on EarthKind gardening, rainwater harvesting, and how to reduce use of commercial herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers.

2:30 P.M. ★ “PEACHES, PEARS AND FIGS – OH MY!” WITH MAUREEN NITKOWSKI.

There is nothing better than eating a ripe peach pulled from your own tree, still warm from the sun. With 20 years as a Master Gardener, 11 years as a Master Naturalist and training in biology and chemistry, Maureen can help you learn varieties of fruits that do best in Ellis County and how to keep the plants healthy and bearing fruit.

WHAT TO DO THIS MONTH..... March



PLANTING

- Plant these annuals early in the month for spring color: petunias, larkspurs, foxgloves and stocks. Other annuals such as marigolds, celosia and wax begonias may be planted late in the month.
- Plant tomatoes, peppers and eggplants from four-inch pots after March 15th. Plants should be hardened off (gradually exposed to outside conditions) before putting in the ground.
- Plant warm-season vegetables – beans, corn, squash, melons and cucumbers starting mid-month.
- Plant herbs in raised beds with soil amended with organic matter. Harden off plants before planting.
- Plant perennial flowers in amended well drained soil. Know each plant's prime blooming season, height, width and color to ensure season-long color. Mulch new plantings.



FERTILIZING AND PRUNING

- Trees, shrubs, vines and groundcovers can be fed with high-nitrogen fertilizer or compost. For patio pots and container gardens, apply a diluted, water-soluble, high-nitrogen fertilizer once a week.
- Remove old growth from Bermuda grass lawns by lowering mower one or two notches, allowing the grass to spread faster and choke out weeds. Bag the clippings for composting or as much.
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs and vines such as flowering quince, azaleas, forsythia, bridal wreath (Spiraea), Lady Banksia rose and Carolina jessamine immediately after they finish



GARDEN WATCH

- If frost or freeze is predicted, cover tender vegetables and annuals with frost cloth. It can make a six to eight-degree difference.
- Beware of close-out sales on bare-root trees as survival rate is low when planted this late in the season. Spend a little more on container-grown plants.
- Control black spot, powdery mildew and thrips on roses with an appropriate fungicide or systemic insecticide. Use a stream of water or insecticidal soap on aphids.
- Apply pre-emergent herbicides on lawns to control broadleaf and grassy weeds if needed. A "weed and feed" fertilizer is not recommended because it is too early to fertilize lawns.



972 825-5175 Ask a Master Gardener

Prepared by MG Intern, Sharon McIver



“After a windstorm, all fruit fell from my mature peach tree. Most peaches had holes in them and worms inside. What causes this?”

Answer: This is probably caused by Plum curculio.

Plum curculio (*Conotrachelus nenuphar*) is one of the most important insect pests attacking fruit trees. The larvae tunnel into developing fruit and render it inedible. Adult snout beetles chew holes in fruit as they feed and for depositing their eggs. Wounds resulting from feeding and egg laying in peaches causes shiny surface areas or disturbed fuzz or bumps on the fruit. Internal

injury results from the larvae burrowing into the fruit.

Pest activity is closely tied to temperature with 70°-75°F being ideal. Adults overwinter in ground debris and along fence rows. Adults begin laying eggs in fruit after shucksplit (when the calyx separates from the base of new fruit, about 14 days after bloom) by chewing a hole in the fruit and depositing eggs.

Treat now by clearing all fallen fruit and leaves from under the tree before it blooms. Most larvae-infested fruit will drop to the ground during April or May or result in small mature fruit that is grub infested. Clear these up then to limit infestation next year.

Plum curculio control requires regular insecticide treatments from **petal fall** to harvest. *Note: insecticides applied during bloom will kill honey bees.* Suggested pesticides include malathion, carbaryl or permethrin at petal fall and 10-14 day intervals thereafter. Be sure to follow label instructions when using pesticides, including the pre-harvest interval between the last allowed application and harvest date.

Suggested Reading:

E-145 Homeowner's Guide to Pests of Peaches, Plums and Pecans. At: http://www.plantanswers.com/homeowner_peach_guide.pdf or Texas Cooperative Extension

Bookstore or online at <http://tcebookstore.tamu.edu>

References:

Mott, Dale A., EA-IPM, Texas Cooperative Extension, Georgetown, Texas & Knutson, Dr. Allen A, Extension Entomologist, Texas Cooperative Extension, Dallas, Texas. extensionentomology.tamu.edu/publications/plumcurculio.
Nesbitt, Monte, Most Common Fruit and Nut Tree Problems in Texas.



Vegetables to Plant in March

Varieties for Ellis County

Beans, Bush: Blue Lake, Derby, Dwarf French Tendergreen, Early Contender, Festina, Florence, Goldcrop Wax, Improved Golden Wax, Jade, Long Tendergreen, Maxibel, Nash, Tendercrop, Topcrop

Beans, Pole: Kentucky Wonder, Northeaster, Purple King, Rattlesnake, Smeraldo

Beans, Lima: Florida Butter Pole, Florida Speckled Pole, Fordhook, Henderson Bush, Jackson Wonder Bush, King of the Garden Pole, Sieva or Carolina

Cantaloupe: Ambrosia, Caravelle, French Orange, Magnum 45, Mainstream, Mission, Perlita, Sugar Queen, TAM Uvalde

Corn, Sugary Enhanced: Ambrosia (Bicolor), Kandy Korn (Yellow), Legend (Yellow), Sugar Buns (Yellow), Tendentreat (Yellow)

Corn, Shrunk, Supersweet, Extra Sweet: Crisp-N-Sweet (Yellow), Florida Staysweet (Yellow), Honey n Pearl (Bicolor), How Sweet It Is (White), Mirai, Summer Sweet

Corn, Normal Sugary: Bonanza (Yellow), Merit (Yellow), Silver Queen (White), Sweet G-90 (Bicolor)

Corn, Triple Sweet: Honey Select, Serendipity

Cucumber, Pickling: Calypso, Carolina, H-19 Little Leaf, Sumter

Cucumber, Slicing: Diva, Spacemaster, Sugar Crunch, Suvo, Sweet Slice, Sweet Success, Sweeter Yet

Eggplant: Fairy Tale, Neon, Purple Rain, Ichiban (Oriental), Pingtung long (Oriental)

Okra: Cajun Delight, Clemson Spineless, Emerald, Louisiana Green Velvet, Silver Queen

Peas, Southern (April): Blackeye #5, Colossus, Mississippi Silver, Pink Eye Purple Hull, Texas Pinkeye, Zipper Cream

Peppers, Hot: Anaheim (Chile), Cherry Bomb, Hidalgo Serrano, Kung Pao, Long Red Cayenne, Mexibell, Mucho Nacho Jalapeno, Super Cayenne, TAM Jalapeno, Tequila, Vera Cruz Jalapeno

Peppers, Sweet: Banana Supreme, Big Bertha (Bell, Green), Blushing Beauty (Bell, YOR), Cubanelle (Green/Red), Early Sunsatation (Bell), Fat 'N Sassy (Bell), Golden Giant II (Bell), Golden Summer (Bell), Gypsy (Bell, YOR), Jackpot (Bell), Jupiter (Bell, Red) Karma (Bell, Red), Lilac (Bell, Lavender), Orange Sun (Bell), Senorita (Mild Jalapeno), Summer Sweet (Bell, Yellow), Sweet Pickle (OYR), Sweet Spot (Banana, Yellow), TAM Mild Jalapeno

Potato, Sweet: Beauregard, Centennial, Jewel, Vardaman

Pumpkin: Large: Connecticut Field, Medium: Howden, Jack O' Lantern, Small: Baby Boo, Jack Be Little, Small Sugar, Triple Treat

Squash, Summer: Ambassador (Zucchini), Burpee's Butterstick (Yellow, Straightneck), Conqueror III (Yellow, Straightneck), Dixie (Yellow, Crookneck), Early Yellow (Crookneck) Eight Ball Tigress (Zucchini), Gold Rush (Zucchini), Goldbar (Yellow, Straightneck), Goldrush (Yellow, Straightneck), Horn of Plenty (Yellow, Crookneck), Lioness, Magda (Zucchini), Multipik (Yellow Straightneck), Patty Pan (White, Scallop), Peter Pan (Green, Scallop), Prelude II (Butternut), President (Zucchini), Senator (Zucchini), Sunburst (Scallop), Sundance (Yellow), Sundrop (Yellow), Sunray (Yellow Straightneck, Sweet Gourmet (Zucchini)

Beans, cantaloupe, corn, cucumber, okra, peas, pumpkin, squash and watermelon –plant seeds.

Squash and cucumber are easier by seed but can transplant.

Tomatos, Sweet Potato - transplant.

Eggplant, , peppers - either seed or transplant

Wildflower of the Month

Texas Bullnettle, Mala Mujer – Spurge Family (Euphorbiaceae)

Cnidoscolus texanue (Muell. Arg.) Small

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

Size: 1-3 ½ feet

Blooms: March through September, Perennial



Melinda Kocian

Be very careful if you want to smell these flowers! Bullnettle is well defended, with stinging hairs covering all parts except the flowers. Once stung, you'll know this



plant forever. Upright and branched, it is common across Texas and frequently forms large colonies in disturbed areas. Fragrant, white, tubular flowers consist of five to seven flaring sepals that form loose terminal clusters. Seeds are held tightly in compartments of a tough, almost round seedpod and the large, edible seeds are considered very tasty when ripe. A deep, tuberous taproot, branching underground, lets bullnettle thrive during hot summers and drought. Mala mujer (bad woman), another common name, was given

because, like a “bad woman,” bullnettle is hurtful to touch.

Continued from page 5.

Squash, Winter: Cream of the Crop, Early Butternut, Sweet Mama Kabocha, Table King (Acorn), Table Ace (Acorn)

Tomato, Large: Better Boy, Big Beef, Big Boy, Bush Beefsteak, Bush Goliath, Capello, Carmello (Heirloom), Sunny Goliath, Super Fantastic, West Virginia Sweet Meat (Heirloom)

Tomato, Medium: Bush Early Girl, Carbon, Carnival, Carolina Gold, Celebrity, Champion, Dona, Early Girl, First Lady, Golden Girl (Heirloom), Golden Jubilee, Golden Sunray (Heirloom) Heatwave, Husky Gold, Lemon Boy (Yellow), Miracle Sweet, Paul Robeson (Heirloom) Porter Improved, Solar Fire, Solar Set, Sunmaster, Sweet Tangerine, Taxi (Heirloom)

Tomato, Paste: Classica, Golden Rave, Roma, San Marzano (Heirloom), Viva Italia

Tomato, Small: Black Cherry, Blitz, Cherry Grande, Dasher, Dona, Gold Nugget (Cherry), Golden Gem (Cherry), Husky Cherry Red, Jolly, Juliet (Grape), Large Red Cherry, Small Fry, Sugar Snack (Cherry), Sun Gold (Cherry), Suncherry (Cherry), Sunsugar (Cherry), Sweet 100 (Cherry), Sweet Baby Girl (Cherry), Sweet Chelsea (Cherry), Vita-Gold, Yellow Cherry

Watermelon: Black Diamond, Bush Sugar Baby, Crimson Sweet, Crimson Tide, Desert King (Yellow) Golden Crown, Jubilee, Legacy 800, Mickylee, Minilee, OrangeGlo, Starbrite, Tendersweet (Orange), Yellow Doll, Tiffany (Seedless)

Beans, cantaloupe, corn, cucumber, okra, peas, pumpkin, squash and watermelon –plant seeds.

Squash and cucumber are easier by seed but can transplanted.

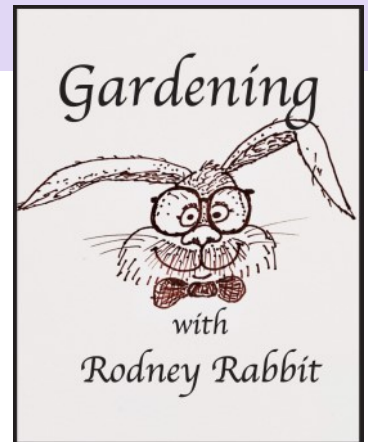
Tomatos, Sweet Potato - transplant.

Eggplant, , peppers - either

Bag Worm Prevention

Dear Rodney,
Last year I had problems with bag worms. Is there anything that I can do now to head them off?
Thank you, Debbie

Dear Debbie, You were not the only person to have bagworm issues last year. Many homeowners felt overwhelmed and called the local pest control to hit their yard with a general pesticide that is non-specific and kills everything, good as well as bad insects. There is a better way that is more environmentally friendly that targets only the bagworms and now is a good time to start preparing to determine when the worms are most vulnerable.



Bagworms feed on foliage of evergreens, roses, and often other trees and bushes. They protect themselves by building a "bag" of web and plant material, usually evergreen needles that they add to during the summer months as they grow. Once in their bag, they are very hard to treat with a spray that will not penetrate their bags and your recourse is to hand pick them when you see them.

Worms can be treated easily if you catch them in the right life stage. Worms hatch out in the early spring and begin feeding shortly thereafter. As they feed, they begin gathering materials to build their protective bag. Male and female worms grow in their bags until fall when the males morph into moths and find female worms to reproduce. Females never leave their bag and in time the female lays eggs in her bag, dies, and the eggs over winter, protected by the bag. When the weather becomes favorable in spring the eggs hatch and begin the next cycle.

Look around your yard now and pick about 15 bags off your trees and shrubs and put them in a sealed plastic bag or jar. The bags that you will find are either abandoned male bags or female bags that contain eggs. Place the bags where they are exposed to outside temperature, out of the light, and watch the bag. When you start seeing tiny worms moving about in the bag, it is time to treat for them. It is important to treat while the worms are tiny and actively feeding before they can build their bags.

I recommend using a spray of *Bacillus thuringiensis* or BT. This is a naturally occurring bacteria that makes toxins that affect immature insects (larva/caterpillars) when they eat it. The bagless larva will eat foliage that has been sprayed with the BT solution and get very ill. BT does not affect a wide range of insects like most chemical pesticides and the bacteria are only active for a few days after they are sprayed on your trees and shrubs. The bagworms have only one cycle a year, so at worst case you will have a lot fewer worms this summer.

Last year BT sold out quickly during the army worm problem and currently stores have it on their shelves. You might want to purchase a couple of bottles while there is plenty available.

Resources

<https://agrillifeextension.tamu.edu/library/gardening/bagworms/>

Workdays at the Demonstration Gardens

Ridgeview Garden Workday.

From left to right – intern Malcolm A., Scotty R. and his son, Maureen N & intern Edith S.



Maureen N. giving the rose bushes their Valentine's Day trim and intern Edith S. trimming up the lantana.



Workday at the Butterfly Garden.



From left to right in back – Allan Ramos, Larry Kollie, Ginger Cole, Sara Gouge, Mary Ann Mezzapelle, Sharon McIver. Center front – Butterfly Garden Chair – Cheryl Sandoval



Congratulations to Agnes Douglas, chair of our Children's Education. Here she is in College Station going through the Junior Master Gardener training.

Creative raised beds.

Send in your pictures of creative or successful raised beds you have seen in use. There are many more options we can show. ellismga@tamu.edu



Raised bed in a boat! Courtesy of Dottie Love



Raised beds of garden bags and cattle protein buckets
! Courtesy of Jessi Harbor