

A Message from our President



It's summer! As a child, I loved summer vacation. Going to my grandmother's farm, helping to harvest in the garden, snapping beans and shelling peas with the grown-ups under the trees, catching crawdads during the day and fireflies at night. As an adult those memories carry on in my love of caring for my own gardens and flower beds. Many of the plants around my home are either directly from my mother and grandmother or a purchase of a plant they loved and grew in their yards. Working with other gardeners and sharing my love of horticulture with others is a direct result of the time I spent learning about gardening with my family.

As Master Gardeners, we continue to learn about horticulture and share that knowledge with our community. We would love to have you join us! Information about becoming a Master Garden volunteer can be found on our website page: Become a Master Gardener. The intern classes will begin in September, and we are happy to answer any questions you may have. Email us at ecmgahelpdesk@gmail.com or leave a message at the Agrilife office, 972-825-5175.

Happy gardening, Ellis County!

Elizabeth Green

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LOCAL FARMERS MARKETS

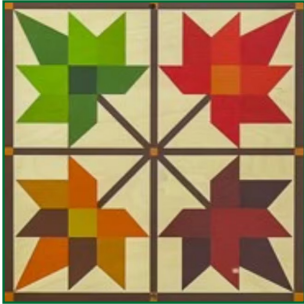


Congratulations to Malcolm Avaritt for his Best of Show daylily, Lime Tree Delight, at the Daylily Growers of Dallas show on May 29. Malcolm, an Ellis County Master Gardener, was thrilled with the award and says the hardest part is getting the flowers (which only last one day, hence the name) from Waxahachie to the show in pristine condition.

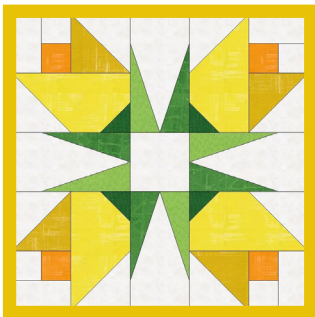


The Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County is once again having their annual quilt show. The show "Welcome to Our Porch" will be Friday and Saturday, July 17 and 18, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Sokol Hall, 2622 Hwy. 34 East, Ennis, TX.

Ellis County Master Gardeners have had an "Ask the Master Gardener" booth at the quilt show for many years. This year we also have the opportunity to give short talks on gardening subjects.



Friday at 11 a.m. - Autumn Gardening -- Freshen Up and Plan: Use fall to revive summer stressed plants and work on implementing your landscape plan. Ideas include cleaning up, pruning, dividing and planting perennials, shrubs and trees for a picture perfect spring.



Friday at 1 p.m. - Fall Planting for Spring Blooms: Autumn is the time to plant bulbs (and corms and rhizomes) for a beautiful spring show. Learn about varieties that do well in Ellis County soil.



Saturday at 11 a.m. - Grow It - Sew It - Literally: For gardener/quilters who want to piece a quilt from the ground up, learn about fiber and dye plants for Ellis County and a few other techniques to preserve your blossoms in textile art.



Saturday at 1 p.m. - Vegetable Gardening in the Fall: Nurse the baby plants through the last of hot weather, then stand back and get ready to harvest. Tips include planting so you can harvest until the first blue norther and beyond. Charlotte Chronkhite of Swan Haven Fabric and Plants in Duncanville will also give talks on house plants. Join us to enjoy the beautiful quilts and to talk plants!



Meet Samuel Adams, the new Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agent for Ellis County. Originally from Oregon and northeast Arkansas, Samuel has worn a variety of hats throughout his career, from a hotel waiter and emergency medical technician, to combat medic, commercial fisherman, and agriculture teacher. And all these roles have shaped him into a well-rounded extension agent.

Samuel grew up in Oregon and Arkansas, but it was along Oregon's coast where he learned the commercial fishing trade. He spent 3 years along Oregon's coast, fishing for salmon in the winter and Dungeness crab in the summer. Eventually, a new adventure called, and he enlisted in the U.S. Army, where he became a combat medic.

During his enlistment, Samuel was stationed in Texas, where he has called home ever since. He has a 20-acre farm along the Trinidad where he and his family raise sheep, turkey, pigs, and cattle. After separating from the army, Samuel decided to go to college and become a math teacher. Dr. Bob Williams, Mayo professor of Agriculture, Food and Family at Texas A&M University System, saw something different for Samuel's future. He recruited him to become an agriculture teacher. This academic path led Samuel into the education world where he taught agriculture for 9 years.

As an Extension Service agent, Samuel will use his education and experience to help Ellis County residents learn about our natural resources and agriculture. Samuel is excited to embark on this journey. He has a passion for community and family. One of his objectives is to help people learn and understand what goes into growing produce. This aim is exactly what AgriLife Extension is all about: education.

Asking him to sum up a message to Ellis County residents, Samuel simply said, **"Let's grow."**

To reach Samuel Adams, call (972) 825-5175 or drop by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office at 2675 US-287 Business, Suite 100, Waxahachie, Texas.

by Teresa Brown, ECMG



Texas Star Hibiscus



Echinacea or Cone Flower

Texas Primrose



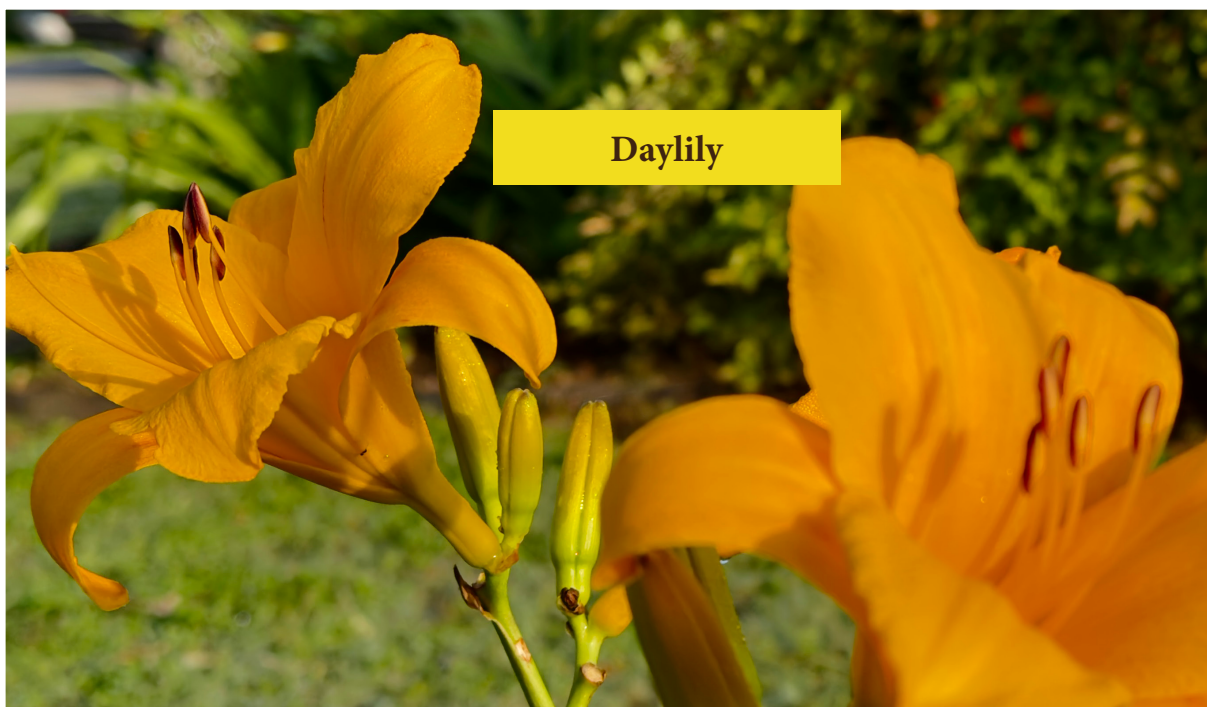
Fragrant Mistflower

THE ECMGA LEARNING GARDEN AT GETZENDANGER PARK

*Learning how to bloom
where you're planted.*



Celeste Fig



Daylily



An Underground City of Bees

by Paul Thomas, ECMG

Millions of mining bees, *Andrena regularis*, thrive beneath a mowed cemetery lawn in Ithaca, New York

Mining bees live in the ground, and in an Ithaca, NY, study, their nests were found in a partly shady cemetery lawn beneath mowed grass. The soil there is sandy loam—well-drained, easy to excavate, and stable enough to hold brood cells. Because the grass is only mowed and not aerated, the bees tolerate it as a low-level disturbance.

Back here in Ellis county, soils are heavier and more clay-rich, and mining bees tend to prefer bare soil in those conditions. With no cover, clay warms and cools quickly, and it breaks up more easily, making excavation simpler. In sandy loam, on the other hand, vegetation cover isn't as much of a barrier, so bees can nest even under grass.

Biologists studying East Lawn Cemetery in Ithaca found an astonishing 3.1 to 8.0 million *Andrena regularis* living there—essentially an underground city of bees. That's the equivalent of 140 to 270 honey-bee hives packed into less than a hectare. Despite the density, the bees were remarkably docile, allowing researchers to work safely among them.

Nearby apple trees on a college campus provide the bees' main food source. Their

bloom coincides perfectly with the bees' spring emergence, offering abundant pollen and nectar just when females need to provision their nests. This synchrony likely helps sustain the massive population year after year.

Supporting Our Local Pollinators

The discovery of millions of *Andrena regularis* thriving quietly beneath a mowed cemetery lawn reminds us that pollinators don't always need pristine wildflower meadows—they need stable soil, seasonal blooms and minimal disturbance. The apple trees on campus provide the spring nutrition that fuels this underground city of bees, while the cemetery offers safe nesting ground. Together, they form a living example of how even managed landscapes can support biodiversity. Protecting these habitats—whether lawns, orchards, or roadside patches—helps ensure that our pollinators continue to flourish in our communities.

Sources:

- Hoge, S.T., Kueneman, J.G., Fordyce, R. et al. (2026). Emergence dynamics and host-parasite associations in a large aggregation of *Andrena regularis* (Hymenoptera: Apoidea: Andrenidae). *Apidologie* 57, 29. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13592-026-01256-6>
- Petrov, Anton (May 11, 2026). Bizarre Discovery in NYC Cemetery Rewrites What We Know About Bees. [YouTube]. <https://youtu.be/uFxi7YrbNJQ?si=CJXqvcYKVqeF6TFe>



Zucchini Boats

by Beth Norris, ECMG

My mother was an avid gardener, and to this day I can remember the smell of her roses and lilies and just about anything I can imagine. I also remember her vegetable garden and how abundant her zucchini produce was this time of year. She would experiment with many recipes to use up her generous bounty. Some of my favorite recipes were zucchini bread, zucchini and tomato salad, zucchini and summer squash casserole, and you catch my drift here. One dish stands out the most: zucchini boats. She would serve these as a main course along with salad and bread (regular loaf bread, that is). Her recipe was a basic go-to but since those childhood days, I've let my imagination run wild with other possibilities based on that original recipe.

The original recipe is for two zucchinis and will make four boats.

Ingredients:

- 2 zucchini (Tip: for the best boats, choose large, long zucchini and leave the ends and stems intact)
- 1 finely chopped medium onion or ½ large onion
- ½ green pepper or poblano pepper finely chopped. (Optional: I do this, but it was not in my mom's original recipe)
- 1 tablespoon oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 eggs beaten till smooth
- 4 pieces of bacon fried till crisp and coarsely chopped
- ½ cup fine breadcrumbs (I make my own from leftover bread, but you can use store bought breadcrumbs of your choice)
- 1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese, divided in half cup portions



Instructions:

- Gather all ingredients.
- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- Steam the zucchini until fork tender, then split in half lengthwise. Gently scoop out and remove the flesh (reserve for the next step), leaving a ¼ inch border for the boat. Set the boats aside.
- Sauté reserved zucchini flesh, onions and peppers (if using) in the oil.
- Season with salt and pepper to taste and mix.
- Transfer to a medium-sized bowl and allow the mixture to cool slightly. (Mom would cook the bacon while the onions and zucchini flesh were cooling).





- Add the cooked bacon, breadcrumbs, half of the cheese and eggs to the onion and zucchini mixture.
- Mix to incorporate all ingredients.
- Scoop $\frac{1}{4}$ of zucchini filling and gently fill each boat (use all of the filling). You may need to round up the tops. Taste and adjust for seasoning.
- Top with remaining grated cheddar cheese.
- Bake about 20 minutes or until heated thoroughly and the cheese is melted.

Notes:

You can make this vegetarian by using mashed black or other beans of choice in place of the bacon. You can also substitute the cheese and eggs for the appropriate vegan alternatives.

I've substituted Italian sausage for the bacon and added Italian seasoning. The possibilities are endless!

So, use up that bounty of zucchini this summer and enjoy!