

# E-Gardening Newsletter

*A Place to Dream*

## Calendar of Events

**July 15** – Master Gardener Booth at Waxahachie Farmers' Market – **Pop Up Horticulture Day**  
**Featuring: Flame Proof!** Perennials that can take the Heat! Many plants are suffering in the heat of Summer, but some hardy perennials can take the heat and thrive when temperatures soar! Come by our booth to learn about these lovely and tough plants.

**July 30** – Master Gardener Booth at Waxahachie Farmers' Market – Let's talk Compost!

**July 2** – Master Gardener Booth at Waxahachie Farmers' Market – We're here to answer your gardening questions!

**July 16** --Master Gardener Booth at the **2022 Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County Quilt Show "Carnival of Quilts in Ennis"**. Come to say "Hi" and bring any gardening questions while viewing the lovely fabric art. Sokol Hall at 2622 East TX Hwy 34, Ennis, TX 75119.

**July 9** – Master Gardener Booth at Waxahachie Farmers' Market – Come by our booth for suggestions of vegetable varieties for your fall garden.

**July 23** – Master Gardener Booth at Waxahachie Farmers' Market – Ask us about our favorite tools!

**July 26** -- Master Gardener Intern Meet & Greet and Information Session.  
5:30 p.m. -- 7:00 p.m. First Baptist Church Waxahachie, 450 E. Hwy. 287.  
**See information on page 3.**



## PLANTING

- Plant tomatoes and peppers from 4-inch pots. Visit <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable> for recommended varieties.
- Early July is the time to plant small and medium pumpkins for a Halloween harvest.
- Plant heat-tolerant annuals that have been acclimated to hot, sunny conditions. This includes moss rose, purslane, trailing lantana, purple fountain grass, firebush and copper plants.
- Lawn grasses can be planted this month, but you will need to water twice daily for short intervals to keep soil surface moist until the grass has established good roots, usually in two to three weeks.

## FERTILIZING AND PRUNING

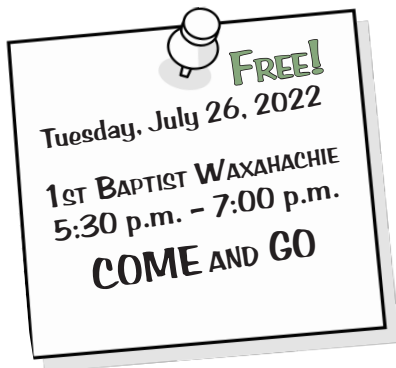
- Fertilize plants that bloom on new growth, such as crape myrtles, tropical hibiscus and roses, with a high-nitrogen fertilizer to promote late-summer growth and fall blooms. Apply same fertilizer to boost summer annuals and fall-flowering perennials.
- Light pruning of erratic spring growth may be done to maintain the natural form. Dead and diseased wood from trees and shrubs should be removed. Major pruning should be postponed until mid-winter.
- Deadhead all blooming plants. Remove dead leaves and spent blooms from container plants.

## GARDEN WATCH

- Be a "plant health" detective! Plants respond in various ways to heat and drought stress. These symptoms are often misdiagnosed as an insect or disease problem. Correctly identify the problem before turning to a pesticide.
- Galls on leaves of oaks, hackberries and other trees are caused by many species of gall-forming insects and are a result of the female stinging the leaf tissues as she lays her eggs. Galls are harmless since the insect doesn't feed on plant tissues.
- Watch for lawn pests. Dry, light-colored areas in sunny parts of St. Augustine are probably the result of chinch bugs (small black insects with a white diamond on their backs). Apply Merit (imidacloprid) or other labeled insecticide. Grub worms are the culprits if the turf turns brown and easily comes up when pulled on. Treat with a granular insecticide.
- Rapid death of established landscape plants and orchard trees during the summer may signify the presence of cotton root rot, a soil-borne fungal disease common in our calcareous clay soils. Since there is no effective control, verification by the Plant Diagnostic Lab at Texas A&M (<http://plantclinic.tamu.edu>) will help you know what plants can be used as replacements.



# Master Gardener Intern Meet & Greet and Information Session



- Open to residents (18 or older) of Ellis County or nearby areas.
- Selection is based on the volunteer needs of our organization and the qualifications of the applicants.
- All applications will be kept in strict confidence and privacy is respected.
- **Requirements** – Interest in helping people; Ability and desire to learn; Willingness to provide unbiased, research-based information; Be a team player.
- **GARDENING EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE NOT REQUIRED**

**Classes** will be held on Thursdays / September 8 through October 27 / 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 pm.

**Tuition:** \$200 - Includes text book and 50+ hours of researched-based gardening education.

**First Baptist Church - Waxahachie** -450 E. Hwy. 287

## Ask A Master Gardener...

by Kim Rainey, Master Gardener

**This question came to the Master Gardener booth at the Waxahachie Farmers Market:**

**Cynthia asks: My neighbor has been telling me I should grow and use Holy Basil. What is it and how do I grow it?**

Holy Basil (*Ocimum tenuiflorum/sanctum*) is a distant relative of sweet basil and Thai basil. It is commonly used as a medicinal herb in India; It also makes a wonderful tea. Holy basil is sometimes distinguished from the other basil by being called Tulsi.

Holy basil is native to tropical and subtropical Asia. It's an aromatic plant in the mint family, Lamiaceae. It is spicier than other basil and quicker to go to seed, but still usable when covered with purple flowers. Plants will grow to 12-24 inches tall and wide, with hairy stems and simple, green leaves that are strongly scented. Leaves are ovate, up to almost 2 inches long, usually slightly toothed. The flowers are purplish in close elongated whorls. It is a perennial in its homeland, but acts as an annual here in Texas.

To grow, direct seed when soil warms up in late spring or transplant after danger of frost in well-drained moderately rich soil. I was able to find seeds on Amazon. The seeds are VERY tiny. Young seedlings will damp off if heavily watered during cool cloudy weather. Thin to 8–12", pinch off the tops of mature plants to induce branching and increase total yield. Harvest before plants blossom. Holy Basil is heat loving and more tolerant of cold than most basil but absolutely intolerant of frost and damaged by temperatures in the 30s.

As far as the medicinal properties of Holy Basil go, although they sound wonderful, they are mostly unsubstantiated. However, from personal experience, I can tell you the tea is delicious.



By Shashidhara halady - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=42947318>

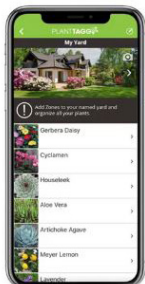
# Butterfly Garden Update

## Do you know what this is?

This sign is posted at the ECMG Butterfly Garden. It is an invitation to learn more about the plants you see. Visitors will find PlantTAGG information in a growing number of community gardens and nurseries. PlantTAGG will help you learn more about the garden plants, including plant identification. Visitors can use their mobile phone camera to access plant profiles and have the ability to save favorite plants for future reference. Soon, signs will be added to the Learning garden in Getzendanner Park and to the Ridgeview garden in Midlothian.



## PLANTTAGG®



Gardeners using PlantTAGG will get data-driven expert guidance on plant selection, landscape design, companion planting and the most comprehensive recommended care tasks and tips based on the precise location of a yard.

For more information on PlantTAGG and it's many functions, check out their website: <https://planttagg.com/>

## Rocks-a-Hachie decorates!



Have you noticed fun hand-painted rocks around town? Most likely the rocks are a gift to the community from members of Rocks-A-Hachie. They are a group of volunteers using their talent to paint rocks, relay a positive message and bring smiles to all who come across their creations. One of their current projects is to pave the walkway at the Butterfly Garden which is located along the trail behind the Farmers Market. We're excited to have the group's help in making the butterfly garden an extra fun place for children of all ages to walk through.

We ask parents to ensure rocks are left behind for others to enjoy.





# Grow Your Own Jack-O'Lantern for Halloween

by Marj McClung, Master Gardener

Most pumpkins take from 90 to 120 days from planting to harvest, so for a Halloween Jack-O'Lantern you need to plant your pumpkin patch in June or early July.

A Pumpkin Patch needs up to 200 sq. ft. or a 10' by 20' garden of loose, well drained soil amended with compost. They need at least 6 hours sun each day. Gardeners often plant pumpkins once spring crops are harvested. Pumpkin vines can also be tied to climb a fence if support

(a sling) is provided under pumpkins as they gain weight. Plant in hills with 3 to 6 seeds per hill. Water well. Seeds take 5 to 7 days to germinate. After about 10 days, when the plants have their second pair of leaves, thin each hill to the two most vigorous plants. If there is no rain, water about once a week through the growing season. Use a complete fertilizer soon after thinning and again at four- week intervals.

You will need pollinators for pumpkins, so you may want to locate your patch near flowers to attract bees. You can pollinate by hand with a small brush or Q-Tip. Put pollen from the male flowers into the female flowers. Both male and female flowers grow on the same plant. Male flowers have pollen; female flowers have a bulge at the base. Flowers fade at mid-day, so hand pollinate early.

**Pie Pumpkins** – 10-20 lbs. – Connecticut Field, Rouge d Etamps

**Mini pumpkins** were bred from small Asiatic squash. Baby Boo, Munchkin and Lumina are small ornamentals good for decorations. Jack-be-Little and Munchkin are popular baked whole.

**Small Pumpkins** – 6-10 lbs. -- Small Sugar, Triple Treat, Spookie, Baby Bear, Jack Be Little, Mystic

**Medium** – 10-16 lbs. – Jack O Lantern, Autumn Gold, Funny Face, Bumpkin

**Large** – 16-30 lbs. – Howden, Happy Jack, Ghost Rider, Aladdin, Fairytale, Magic Lantern, Merlin, Prizewinner

Mammoth 50-200 lbs. and up – Atlantic Giant, Big Max, Big Mac

Leaves protect pumpkins from sun scald. Keep watch under leaves for squash bug, cucumber beetle and pickleworm eggs. If the leaves show powdery mildew, remove them before it spreads or use a fungicide. Take care to read and follow the labels of any insecticides or fungicides used since some pumpkins will be eaten and others will be handled in making decorations.

Pumpkins are ripe when the skin is hard (resistant to a fingernail) and the stem dried. Cut stems and set aside for wounds to heal. Do not leave pumpkins out to freeze.

## It's Time To Start Thinking About Planting For Your Next Harvest

Here is a list of plants that you can plant now.

Vegetables	Fall Planting	Days to Maturity
from seed unless otherwise noted	As to Avg. Freeze Date	
Tomato (plants)	Jun 15 - Jul 30	55 - 100
Okra	July 1 - Aug 25	55-65
Watermelon	July 20 - Aug 10	80-100
Beans, Lima Pole	Jul 25 - Aug 15	75-85
Beans, Snap Pole	July 30 - Aug 10	60-70
Cantaloupe	July 30 - Aug 10	85-100
Eggplant (plants)	July 30 - Aug 25	80-90
Peppers (plants)	July 30 - Aug 25	60-90
Potato, Irish	July 30 - Aug 10	65-100
Beans, Snap Bush	Aug 1- Sept 15	45-60
Squash, Summer	Aug 1 - Aug 30	50-60
Cabbage, Chinese (seed or plants)	Aug 10 - Aug 30	65-70
Corn, Sweet	Aug 10 - Aug 25	70-90
Pumpkin	Aug 10 - Aug 25	75-100
Squash, Winter	Aug 10 - Aug 30	85-100
Beans, Lima Bush	Aug 15 - Sept 15	65-80
Broccoli (plants)	Aug 15 - Sept 30	60-80
Brussels Sprouts	Aug 15 - Sept 30	90-100
Cabbage (seed or plants)	Aug 15 - Sept 30	60-90
Cauliflower	Aug 15 - Sept 20	70-90
Chards, Swiss	Aug 15 - Sept 15	45-55
Kohlrabi (plants)	Aug 15 - Sept 20	55-75
Mustard Greens	Aug 15 - Sept 30	30-40
Onion (plants)	Aug 15 - Sept 15	80-120
Parsley	Aug 15 - Oct 10	70-90
Peas, Black-eyed	Aug 15 - Sept 1	60-70
Collard Greens	Aug 25 - Sept 20	50-80
Cucumber	Aug 25 - Sept 10	50-70
Kale	Aug 25 - Sept 20	50-80
Turnip Greens	Aug 25 - Nov 1	30
Turnip Roots	Aug 25 - Nov 1	30-60
Beets	Sept 1 - Oct 1	50-60
Carrot	Sept 1 - Sept 30	70-80
Cilantro	Sept 1 - Sept 30	40 - 60
Lettuce	Sept 1 - Sept 30	40-80
Onion (Seed)	Sept 1 - Sept 20	90-120
Peas, English	Sept 15 - Nov 1	55-90
Spinach	Sept 15 - Nov 1	40-60
Radish	Sept 20 - Nov 15	25-40
Asparagus	Not Recommended	700
Garlic	Not Recommended	140-150
Potato, Sweet	Not Recommended	100-130

First avg. frost date Nov 17

From Dale Groom, CEA-Horticulture, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Dallas, TX

# Wildflower of the Month

**Silverleaf Nightshade** – Nightshade Family  
(Solanaceae) *Solanum eleagnifolium* Cav.

**Region:** 1 through 10 (Ellis County is in Region 4)  
**Size:** 1 – 3 feet  
**Blooms:** March through October, Perennial



Melinda Kocian



The stems and leaves of this prickly plant are covered with tiny stellate or star-shaped, hairs that give it a silvery-green or gray-green appearance. Leaves are one and one-half to six inches long, with shallowly wavy edges. The five petals of the blue to purple flowers unite at the base for about half their length, then separate into five wide lobes. They look a little like fat, one-inch stars. Flowers are centered with very conspicuous, erect, yellow anthers. Silverleaf nightshade is considered a problem plant by farmers. The wildflower enthusiast, however, can appreciate the beauty of the blue and silver plants growing in masses along roads, in pastures, and abandoned places. This relative of the tomato is highly toxic to livestock and humans. Its fruit, a half-inch yellow berry, is sometimes used as a substitute for rennet in making cheese.

# GARDEN GUILT

## part two

By Dottie Love, Master Gardener Intern

So. Last month I confessed what a slacker gardener I am. Before I retired a year ago, I was worker-beeing deep into the night with my headlamps and patio lights. I planned to spend my retirement in a jaunty hat, snipping roses while holding a wicker basket like English Ladies do. Why, I might even wear gloves!

But retirement reveals that a lack of time isn't the problem. It's hot. My back hurts. The strap on my headlamp makes me sweaty and itchy. I haven't replaced my patio lightbulbs all year. I'm tired. Why, I haven't even hooked up my four-hose manifold! I move all my tools off my chair and remove my jaunty hat, I only see all the unfinished projects.

## I Google:

Methodology of Decision-making. Problem-solving Techniques.

Marie Kondo asks: "Does it spark joy?" *My garden gives me more punishment than joy.*

Others say to make lists: Six Steps, Pros, Cons, Goals, Strategies.

### Six step guide to help you solve problems

1. Step 1: Identify and define the problem ...
2. Step 2: Generate possible solutions. ...
3. Step 3: Evaluate alternatives. ...
4. Step 4: Decide on a solution. ...
5. Step 5: Implement the solution. ...
6. Step 6: Evaluate the outcome.

**This looks good and organized.**

**Identify.** *Uh, I think I covered that...*

**Possible Solutions.** 1) *Let the geese in to eat plants; goats for shrubs; cut trees down.* 2) *Build she shed that covers the yard.* 3) *Create miniature golf course.*

**Evaluate Alternatives.** 1) *Dig up my garden of 15 years?* 2) *I have a she-shed.* 3) *I hate mini golf.*

**Decide.** *Go for nap instead.*

**I switch to Pros/Cons List.**

**Pros:**



Annuals, perennials, vines, shrubs, and trees are fine; 90% are established and don't need watering. Spotlights on trees is nice.



**Not good:**



Nine containers need daily watering. I'm building yet another bed. Empty pots piled up.

**Cons:**



Dang trumpet vine everywhere. Shaggy undefined green blanket, needs ruthless thinning. Tired, worn-out human.





## **I Switch to Goals and Strategies.**

**Goals:** A pretty, enjoyable, relaxing space. No backache, no heat stress, no guilt.

**Strategies:** ???

Well, maybe I need a few more naps...Check back next month!



Watch for more details on the  
2022 Ellis County Master Gardener Intern Class  
in August's newsletter