

# Speakers

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**Mike Arnold**

**Director of the Gardens and Professor**

Texas A&M University Department of Horticulture Sciences

Mike has been with the Texas A&M Department of Horticultural Sciences as a professor of landscape horticulture and in other capacities since 2012 and 1993, respectively. Mike earned a B.S. in business administration, a B.S. in agriculture (horticulture major) and an M.S. in Landscape Horticulture at The Ohio State

University. Then, he received a Ph.D. in horticultural sciences from North Carolina State University. In 2020, Mike took on the role of Director of The Gardens at Texas A&M. Arnold's passions are a unique intersection of teaching and researching horticulture. A popular professor of plant materials at Texas A&M, Arnold is a former president and chairman of the board for the American Society of Horticultural Sciences and former chair of the Texas Superstars committee.

His research has primarily focused on the landscape establishment of container-grown plants and transplant establishment factors as well as new plant development. Now, he is extending his passion of teaching and horticulture into the community.

**Topic: Anticipated and Unanticipated Impacts of Global Climate Change on Our Texas Gardens**



**Scooter Langley**

**Horticulture Instructor**

Lee College

I guess you could say horticulture is in his blood. His dad taught horticulture for Lee College for 31 years. Following in his footsteps, Scooter graduated from Sam Houston State University in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture. In 2008, he replaced his

dad as the Horticulture instructor for Lee College Huntsville Center's program on the O.B. Ellis Unit in Huntsville, Texas.

He got his first professional experience working for A&B Landscaping from 2002 to 2008 doing Landscape Design and Landscape Maintenance. He maintains his professional relationship with A&B as an occasional consultant.

For the past 9 years, he has been a member of the Walker County Farmers Market selling and raising fresh produce from his families land. His family raises over 1,000 tomatoes plants each year on their small tract of land to sell fresh to the local community. As Scooter says, "It's so great to be able to get your hands dirty with the ones you love."

**Topic: Farmer's Market and the Horticulture Technician Program within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice**



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**Larry Stein****Professor & Extension Specialist**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Larry Stein, Professor/Extension Horticulturist began his Extension career 38 years ago, earned his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University in 1985, attained the rank of professor in 1999, and accepted an additional role in 2012 as associate department head and Extension program leader in horticultural sciences.

As an AgriLife Extension specialist, Dr. Larry Stein is renowned for extraordinary research and outreach to improve crop production, primarily of spinach, pecans, grapes, and citrus, as well as “Texas Superstar®” plants. He is a founder of the International Spinach Conference, now in its 20th year. He developed production improvements for the pecan industry, specifically regarding late season irrigation and crop load management, which are nearly universally adopted today. He is credited with five plant variety releases—two new bluebonnet color types, the “Victoria Red” grape, and two satsumas, including the patented “Arctic Frost,” which has given rise to potential expansion of the citrus industry beyond the sub-tropical zone. By teaching producers about new technology and practices, Dr. Stein advances the availability of safe, abundant food for 27.5 million consumers in Texas and beyond. Stein represents the epitome of an Extension educator, who strives to create high-quality, relevant continuing education that encourages lasting and effective change. Stein’s greatest accomplishment in the last few years has been the establishment of a spinach disease screening nursery and trial area due to the closure of the Del Monte research farm in the Wintergarden area. This has been a joint venture between Stein and two area farmers Ed Ritchie and Jimmy Crawford. This site trials spinach from all over the world and all the major seed companies. Stein is a 4 time recipient of the team Superior Service Award, individual Superior Service, as well as the Vice Chancellor individual and team award. He was named Regents Fellow in 2017.

**Topic: What do pecans, fruit, grapes, spinach, tomatoes, watermelons and Texas Superstar plants have in common?**

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## SESSION SPEAKERS

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### Becky Bowling



#### **Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist for Urban Water**

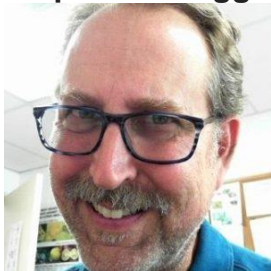
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Dr. Becky Bowling is an Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist for Urban Water with Texas A&M AgriLife. She grew up in Lewisville, Texas and went on to complete a B.S. and M.S. in Horticulture from Texas Tech University before pursuing a PhD in Crop and Soil Sciences at the University of Georgia. In her position, Dr. Bowling works jointly with the Texas Water Resources Institute and the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences to conduct research on water conservation and resource-use efficiency in the urban landscape. As part of AgriLife's urban water team, she collaborates with fellow researchers to better understand the roles of plant selection, irrigation programming, and soil management in improving water-use efficiency. She also works to provide strong outreach and educational programming to Texas landscape professionals and other key stakeholders that play a critical role in landscape water use.

**Session Topic:** **Greener Grass: Tips for an Environmentally-Friendly Lawn**

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### Stephen Brueggerhoff



#### **County Extension Agent – Horticulture, Brazoria Co.**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Stephen Brueggerhoff is Horticulture Extension Agent for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Brazoria County. Stephen furthers the Extension mission, offering horticultural consultation to home and business owners and green industry educational programming. Stephen manages and proudly supports the Brazoria County Master Gardeners Association, providing coordination for quality regional programs.

Stephen received a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture from Sam Houston State University and a Masters of Forest Resources from the University of Washington. With over 15 years of experience, Stephen has supported the environmental community as lecturer, instructor, administrative organizer and collaborative partner. Stephen is a member of several professional development and community service organizations such as Texas Nursery and Landscape Association, Texas County Agricultural Agents Association, Native Plant Society of Texas, Houston Area Urban Forestry Council and Epsilon Sigma Phi.

**Session Topic:** **Citrus on Deck!**

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**Steven Chamblee****Executive Director**

Longview Arboretum and Nature Center

Steven Chamblee is a horticulturist, writer, and popular public speaker. Active in horticulture for more than forty years, Steven uses humor and heart to bring hard science home and inspire gardeners across Texas. He also loves dogs.

**Session Topic: Great Garden Ideas: Stealing Inspired Concepts From Brilliant People**

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**Steve Chaney****Retired County Extension Agent – Horticulture, Tarrant Co.**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Originally from a small town in south Oklahoma, Steve Chaney learned to love the garden from a very young age. After receiving two BS degrees from Oklahoma State University in Landscape Architecture and Marketing, he owned and operated a design/building firm for over ten years before joining the Extension family and acquiring his master's degree in Agricultural Education.

He first served as a CEA in Wichita County and, after four years, continued his service to the community as a CEA in Tarrant County, where he continues to make a significant impact. His experience and expertise have helped to make the Tarrant County Home Horticulture programs recognized as "top in the state".

**Session Topic: Greenhouses: How Big Should You Go?**

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**Dale Galiano****Master Gardener**

St. Lucie County, Florida

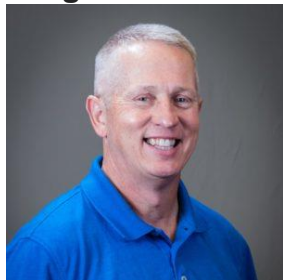
Dale Galiano graduated from the St. Lucie County Florida Master Gardener Program in 1997, along with a Florida Friendly Yard Certification. She has volunteered over 7000 hours throughout the county in schools, at county fairs, farmers markets, in library programs and in the nursery propagating for plant sales and teaching programs. She also teaches classes and mentors dozens

of interns and presented at the Florida State Conference in 2015. Dale has participated in award-winning programs throughout the county from newcomer programs to citrus canker education.

**Session Topic: Garden Art: Recycle, Reuse, Repurpose**

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## Greg Grant



### County Extension Agent – Horticulture, Smith Co.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Greg Grant is an award-winning horticulturist, writer, photographer, conservationist, preservationist, and seventh-generation Texan from Arcadia, Texas. He is author of *In Greg's Garden-A Pineywoods Perspective on Gardening, Nature, and Family* and *Texas Fruit and Vegetable Gardening*, and co-author of *Heirloom Gardening in the South*, *Texas Home Landscaping*,

*The Southern Heirloom Garden*, and *The Rose Rustlers*. He also writes the popular "In Greg's Garden" column for *Texas Gardener* magazine, a garden column in the *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, and writes a monthly "Greg's Ramblings" blog. His real job however is the Smith County horticulturist for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Tyler, Texas.

He has degrees in floriculture and horticulture, both from Texas A&M University and attended post graduate classes at Louisiana State University, North Carolina State University, and Stephen F. Austin State University where he is currently working on a PhD. He has previous experience as a horticulturist with SFA Gardens, Mercer Arboretum, and San Antonio Botanical Gardens, an instructor at Stephen F. Austin and Louisiana State Universities, director of research and development at Lone Star Growers, and with the famed Antique Rose Emporium.

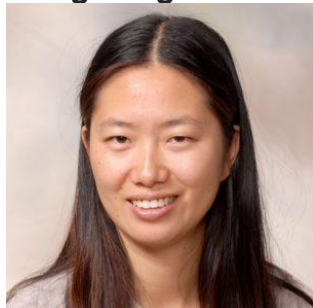
Greg has introduced a number of successful plants to the Southern nursery industry including: Blue Princess verbena, dwarf pink Mexican petunia, Gold Star esperanza, Laura Bush petunia, John Fanick phlox, Stars and Stripes pentas, Pam's Pink honeysuckle, Lecompte and Flora Ann vitex, Henry and Augusta Duelberg sages, Big Momma and Pam Puryear Turk's Cap, Peppermint Flare hibiscus, and the Marie Daly and Nacogdoches (Grandma's Yellow) roses.

Greg and his Cajun bride live in the Pineywoods of Deep East Texas in his grandparents' old farmhouse, where he tends his *Rebel Eloy Emanis Pine Savanna and Bird Sanctuary*, two dozen chickens, one terrier, one German shepherd, and three cats.

**Session Topic: Narcissus, Naturally**

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## Mengmeng Gu



### Assistant Professor and Extension Ornamental Specialist

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Dr. Mengmeng Gu is an Associate Professor/Ornamental Extension Specialist in the Department of Horticultural Sciences at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in College Station, TX. She is the liaison between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Texas Nursery and Landscape Association (TNLA) and serves on TNLA Education Committee and Park & Patio Task Force.

Dr. Gu is currently leading the multi-disciplinary multi-state effort to manage crape myrtle bark scale and she's also interested in sustainable practices in horticulture production and landscapes, such as container substrate research. She



blogs and provides regular FREE webinars at [greenviion.wordpress.com](http://greenviion.wordpress.com). She is also the BEST horticulture tour guide in China.

**Session Topic: Cultivars of Crapemyrtles**

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### **Tim Hartmann**



#### **Program Specialist – Earth-Kind®**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Tim Hartmann, originally from Blanco, TX, graduated from Texas A&M University with his Bachelors of Science in Horticulture in 2009 with an emphasis in fruit and vegetable production. He received his Masters Degree in Plant Breeding and Horticulture in 2013 from Texas A&M, where he worked on a research project with peaches. Tim began working for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in 2014 as a program specialist with the Earth-Kind®

program where he focuses on water conservation in the home landscape.

Primarily working with homeowners and Master Gardeners, his responsibilities include training Master Gardeners, plant trialing, and developing online and printed educational resources for Earth-Kind®. Tim's interest in exotic fruits has led him to pursue work on a doctoral program in Horticulture, focusing on the adaptation of golden kiwifruit as a potential new fruit crop for Texas.

**Session Topic: Is There a Future for Golden Kiwifruit in Texas?**

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### **Soni Holladay**



#### **Owner and Grower**

Local Flora Farm

Soni and her husband Boone have been professional horticulturists for over a combined 30 years! They met while both working at a plant sale for the now defunct Holistic Garden at TAMU. Since graduating from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture, Soni has worked in agriculture research at Baylor College of Medicine, as

horticulturist and greenhouse manager at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, Cockrell Butterfly Center and in retail and wholesale nurseries. Boone is the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Horticulture Agent for Fort Bend County. They started farming cut flowers in 2016.

**Session Topic: Growing Cut Flowers**

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### **Dennis Howard**



#### **Master Gardener**

Lubbock County

Dennis Howard has been a member of the Lubbock Master Gardener Association since 2015. He holds Advanced Training in Vegetable Gardening and Greenhouse Management. He holds national certification in rainwater catchment systems and design from the American Society of

Sanitary Engineers and the American Rainwater Catchment System Association. Dennis has been an active gardener for many years and involved in aquaponic gardening for the last 14 years. He currently holds a Master Design Certificate in Aquaponics System Design from the Murray Hallam school in Australia. Dennis currently runs a moderately sized aquaponics system in the greenhouse at his home in Lubbock.

Along with gardening and aquaponics, Dennis is an accomplished writer. He has been published in Texas Gardener magazine and currently manages his website, West Texas Organic Gardening (<https://westtexasorganicgardening.com>)

**Session Topic: Introduction to Aquaponics**

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### **Rachelle Kemp**



#### **Co-Owner**

R and R Landscaping

Rachelle and her husband moved to Waco, Texas in 1993 to continue their careers in the agricultural field. Her portfolio includes owning R and R Landscaping, working for several golf courses, owning a floral business, working for the largest owned wholesale grower in Texas, retail nursery manager for a rose grower, growing vegetables commercially, helping with the family tree farm and several farmers' markets. She

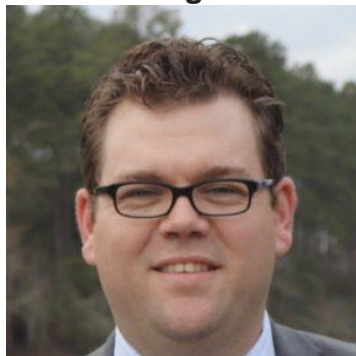
obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in landscape horticulture and a Masters in Science. She specialized in Management and became an Associate Professor at Texas State Technical College where she taught landscape design, insect and disease identification, horticultural math, and other industry-related courses for over 10 years. She worked as the Technical Services Specialist and Franchise Consultant for The Grounds Guys, a full-service landscaping company serving commercial and residential customers in the Waco area. This past year she has returned full-time to her company R and R Landscaping.

Rachelle was a charter member of the McLennan County Master Gardeners; she has a master certification from the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association and is a consultant for Neil Sperry. She is currently a consultant and technical specialist for Neighborly, a community of home service experts.

**Session Topics: Technology in the Landscape and Texas Freeze Damage**

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### **Andrew King**



#### **Owner**

King's Nursery

Dr. Andrew King is the 4th generation owner of King's Nursery in Tenaha, Texas. Andrew, as his father and grandfather before him, grew up on the nursery. But unlike them, Andrew knew from an early age that he wanted to be a horticulturist. Earning a B.S. in Horticulture from Stephen F. Austin State, Andrew became the first of 4 generations to be formally educated in Horticulture. Not long thereafter, he earned a M.S. and PhD, both in Horticulture, from Texas

A&M University. After teaching Horticulture at A&M for 5 years, Andrew made his way back home to take his turn at operating King's Nursery.

**Session Topic: King's Nursery**

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### **Tom LeRoy**



#### **CEA Emeritus**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Tom LeRoy began his 35-year career with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service right out of college, after receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Horticulture in 1975 and a Master's Degree in Plant Breeding in 1977, both from Texas A&M University.

He served the first 11 years of that career as the Montgomery County, Extension Agent – Horticulture. It was during that time that Tom LeRoy's most notable accomplishment would emerge, when he implemented the very first Master Gardener Program

in the State of Texas. A mere 25 Montgomery County residents graduated from that program. Since that time over 115 Texas counties have implemented their own Master Gardener Program. In 2004, Tom LeRoy was presented an awarded from the Texas Master Gardener Association in recognition of his efforts implementing the first County Master Gardener Program in the State of Texas.

Tom LeRoy also served as the Harris County Extension Agent – Horticulture from 1988 until 1998, heading up their Master Gardener Program. Tom has co-authored three gardening books, "Growing Fruits and Nuts in the South," "Common Sense Vegetable Gardening in the South", and their latest, "The Southern Kitchen Garden."

In 1998 Tom returned to Montgomery County where he remained until retirement in July 2012 as the County Extension Agent Horticulture for Montgomery County. Tom has been recognized for his superior service by Texas A&M University, Texas Cooperative Extension, first in 1985 for Innovative Programs including the First Master Gardener Program in Texas and again in 2006 for Standard Setting Leadership in Implementing the Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Model. This was the first time the Superior Service Award for Volunteerism had been presented by Texas AgriLife Extension Service in the State of Texas.

Tom LeRoy has also received many other awards during his 35 years of service with Texas AgriLife Extension Service. In July 2012 he retired and was honored with County Extension Agent Emeritus by Texas AgriLife Extension Service. For 3 years he worked part-time as the Assistant Texas Master Gardener Coordinator assisting Jayla Fry with special projects. Tom LeRoy resides with his wife of 39 years, Sandy; and he and she are proud grandparents of 8 grandchildren by their two daughters, Christie and Niki.

**Session Topic: The Patio Farmer**



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**Laura Miller****County Extension Agent – Commercial Horticulture, Tarrant Co.**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Laura M. Miller is the Texas A&M AgriLife Commercial Horticulture Extension Agent for Tarrant County. Through the application of science-based knowledge, she provides continuing education and problem solving services to anyone trying to make some money in horticulture from green industry professionals to fruit, vegetable, and ornamental plant growers. Prior to taking on her present position in March 2008, she was a University of Florida/IFAS Commercial

Horticulture Extension Agent for seven years.

A sixth generation Texan, she is a graduate of Eagle Pass High School who earned a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture and a Master of Education in Agricultural Education from Texas A&M University in College Station. She is a Texas Certified Nursery Professional and serves on the boards of Region V of the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association, the Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council, and the International Plant Propagators' Society-Southern Region of North America.

**Session Topic: Death and Taxes: Emerald Ash Borer and Crapemyrtle Bark Scale**

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**Julia Minter****Texas Master Gardener Program Assistant**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Julia Minter grew up in Mount Vernon, Texas where her parents' and grandparents' gardens inspired her to love horticulture from a young age. She graduated in December of 2020 with her B.S. in Horticulture and a minor in International Development in Agriculture from Texas A&M University. She is currently working for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service as the TMG Program Assistant. In August, she will attend graduate school to obtain her M.S. in Horticulture.

During her undergraduate years, long hours of studying and unique opportunities at Texas A&M developed in her a deep appreciation, some may say obsession, for coffee. She traveled on two study abroad trips to Guatemala and Costa Rica where she had the opportunity to meet coffee farmers and tour their farms. She was a founding member of the Texas A&M Coffee Club. She also researched the uses and components of the coffee by-product, Cascara, for an undergraduate research project. In her free time, Julia enjoys gardening, camping, thrift shopping, visiting coffee shops, and taking road trips.

**Session Topic: From the Grounds Up: An overview of coffee's history, production, and brewing methods**

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## Emily Monroe



### Extension Program Specialist

Texas Water Resources Institute

Emily Monroe joined the Texas Water Resources Institute in October 2018 as an extension program specialist. She is primarily responsible for working with local stakeholders to develop plans that restore and protect water resources and securing funds to implement projects identified in watershed plans. She also leads and tracks project implementation progress and success, and sustains stakeholder group engagement through the delivery of educational materials and programming.

Emily earned a Bachelor of Science in environmental sciences – field technology at Abilene Christian University in 2013, with a minor in chemistry. She is certified in project management for development professionals (PMD Pro) from InsideNGO, as well as monitoring & evaluation learning in leadership from WSU. Currently, she is pursuing a Master of Science in ecosystem science and management with a focus in rangeland management and GIS. Previously, Emily was the program coordinator for Asia at the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture where she managed over \$7.5 million in agriculture development projects.

Outside of work, Emily enjoys camping, gardening, art, cooking and reading.

**Session Topic: Texas Watershed Protection Planning**

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## Addison Regennitter



### Texas Master Naturalist Program Student Assistant

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Though originally not from Texas, Addison has called the Lone Star State her home since 2011. Addison is a recent Master of Natural Resources Development graduate from Texas A&M University. She also received her B. S. in Wildlife & Fisheries Sciences and a minor in horticulture from Texas A&M in 2019. She currently works as a Student Assistant for the Texas Master Naturalist Program and is a certified Texas Master Naturalist herself (class of 2016). Addison has also

spent time volunteering as a Texas State Parks Ambassador, an adult group leader for the Texas Brigades, and for a non-profit that incorporated non-releasable rehabilitated birds of prey into educational conservation-focused programs. Now that she has graduated, Addison is seeking a career in conservation, interpretation, or natural resources management.

During her free time, you'll most likely find Addison camping at a State Park, cooking and/or baking, making observations on iNaturalist, or sitting on the couch with a cat on her lap and a hot beverage in-hand (most likely coffee or Earl Grey tea!).

**Session Topic: From the Grounds Up: An overview of coffee's history, production, and brewing methods**

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**Skip Richter**



## **Skip Richter**

### **County Extension Agent – Horticulture, Brazos Co.**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Skip received his master's degree in Horticulture from Texas A&M University, "the source of all earthly knowledge." He has been with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service for 32 years in Montgomery, Travis, Harris and Brazos County where

he currently serves as a County Extension Agent in Horticulture.

Skip has gardened in the brush country of south Texas, the rocky hills of the Missouri Ozarks, the acid sands of the East Texas piney woods, the semi-arid climate and high pH soils of central Texas, and the humid, hot climate and black clays of southeast Texas.

He is an enthusiastic student and teacher of natural gardening techniques. He helped develop Extension's "Don't Bag It" yard waste recycling programs, the "Composting for Kids" educational web page, and the Grow Green environmental education program which educates Austin residents on landscaping practices that protect water quality.

Skip is a popular speaker for garden clubs, Master Gardener programs, and other gardening events across Texas. He has written a bi-weekly internet column for the National Gardening Association, and numerous newspaper and magazine articles on gardening. His "Gardening with Skip" YouTube channel features over 120 brief gardening videos.

Skip has served as the National Gardening Association's regional horticulturist for the southeastern U.S. and is a contributing editor to *Texas Gardener* magazine. He is the host of the Gardening Success radio show in College Station, which is also available by podcast online. His book, "Texas Month-by-Month Gardening" provides guidance on planting and caring for your garden and landscape every month of the year.

**Session Topic: Finding Research Based Gardening Information Online**

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## **David Rodriguez**

### **County Extension Agent – Horticulture, Bexar Co.**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

David Rodriguez is deeply rooted in the Texas gardening and landscape plant world. He started working at the prime age of 10 with local nurseries which included Grimm's Garden Centers and Landscape, Wolfe Nurseries and Calloway's. David then went off to Texas A&M University and earned bachelor and master's degrees in horticultural sciences.

Before and during these formal educational years, he often worked seven days a week to save up money for his educational and living expenses. David joined the ranks of the Extension Service an educational agency of the Texas A&M University System in 2006 as the area Extension Horticulturist. During his service with the Extension Service, David has helped expand youth horticulture programming, enhanced outreach to the green industry which includes trialing and releasing new plant introductions in support of the Texas SuperStar™ Plant Program as well as increasing the awareness of the Bexar County Master Gardener program and their significant contributions to the community.

David also oversees the Bexar County Youth Gardens program, which serves more than 80 schools, the majority of which are in low-income areas of Bexar County. Among the most popular of his youth gardening programs are two award winning and national recognized Children's Vegetable Gardens at the San Antonio Botanical Garden and at Phil Hardberger Park. As part of these programs, children are provided a plot and learn to grow their own vegetables, herbs and seasonal annuals under the mentorship of a Master Gardener. For many urban youth, these programs provide their first experience working in a vegetable garden and learning how plant-based foods are grown and how their nutritional value impacts overall health. It also teaches them responsibility, teamwork and leadership in addition to many aspects of earth science.

David can be heard every Saturday morning on the WOAI 1200 AM Lawn and Garden Radio Show answering horticulture and gardening questions. He regularly provides his expertise through television interviews, print articles and numerous presentations on gardening and landscape topics at venues countywide and beyond.

David has received numerous awards and recognition including the recent The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Vice Chancellor's Superior Team Award in the category of Earth-Kind® Environmental Landscape Stewardship for his many community activities and educational outreach efforts.

**Session Topic: The Texas Superstar® Plant Program – Then and Now**

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### Justin Scheiner



#### **Assistant Professor and Viticulture Specialist**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Justin Scheiner is an Assistant Professor and Extension Viticulture Specialist with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. In his Extension role, Justin provides educational programming and technical support for grape growers in the Texas Gulf Coast Region and North Texas. His research program focuses on best management practices for vineyards in areas affected by Pierce's Disease. Justin also teaches undergraduate courses in the

Department of Horticultural Sciences at Texas A&M University in College Station and serves as a member of the graduate faculty.

**Session Topic: Earth-Kind™ Grapes**

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### Randy Seagraves



#### **Program Specialist and Curriculum Director**

Junior Master Gardener Program

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Randy is an Extension Program Specialist & Curriculum Director for the International Junior Master Gardener program. A former 3rd grade teacher in College Station ISD, Randy is the lead author of 9 JMG® curriculum guides, including the evidence-based *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO* curriculum and the new *Early Childhood Learn, Grow, Eat & GO* curriculum developed for teachers of our youngest

gardeners. He guest lectures for horticulture and education courses at Texas A&M, he has been a guest host for the Weekend Gardener television segment for local CBS affiliate in College Station, and Randy regularly speaks at regional, state and national conferences across the country.

**Session Topic: Growing Back into Schools with Junior Master Gardener In-Person AND Virtual Learning Tools**

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### Ginger Easton-Smith



#### **County Extension Agent – Horticulture, Aransas Co.**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Virginia (Ginger) Easton Smith has been an Agricultural Extension Agent for more than 26 years, the last 9 with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Aransas County. Prior to living in Texas, Ginger spent 29 years in Hawaii where she earned her B.S. and M.S. degrees in Horticulture Science at the University of Hawaii. Ginger spent 17 years as the Agriculture Extension Agent in Kona specializing in coffee, macadamia, cacao, and

other tropical fruit. A new cacao variety from the University of Hawaii was recently named 'Easton' in her honor.

As the Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent in Aransas County, Ginger enjoys conducting educational programs emphasizing practices which protect our natural resources, and working with youth in the 4-H program.

## Session Topic: Chocolate: From Bean to Bar

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### Mark Vorderbruggen



#### Developer and Author

Foraging Texas

Mark “Merriwether” Vorderbruggen, Ph.D. is often (somewhat) jokingly described as a scientist raised by wolves. Having a M.S. in medicinal chemistry and a Ph.D. in physical organic chemistry, he brings science into the world of wild edible and medicinal plants. On the science side he has fourteen patents and numerous articles in research journals from his career as an oilfield chemist. But his true love is plants and the miracles they contain. Since 2008 his website [www.foragingtexas.com](http://www.foragingtexas.com) has been one of the top wild edible/medicinal plant sites on the internet; he’s written countless foraging articles for a wide variety of magazines; taught hundreds of foraging walkabouts; appeared on radio, TV, and podcasts galore; wrote the acclaimed book *Idiot’s Guide Foraging* (available on Amazon); and was co-creator of the Wazoo Survival Gear foraging bandana. In 2016 he turned his herbal chemistry skills to consumer goods to help develop the Workman’s Friend line of skin care products. In 2020 he made the biggest leap of his life to become the medicine man for Medicine Man Plant Co. where he can finally bring forth the ancient plants that can still help with modern issues. Check out these herbal products here on Amazon at [www.amazon.com/medicinemanplantco](http://www.amazon.com/medicinemanplantco)

**Session Topic: 10 Edible Plants Your Mom Wrongly Said Were Poisonous and 2 She Was Right About**

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### Jay White



#### Owner and Publisher

*Texas Gardener* magazine

Jay White is the owner and publisher of *Texas Gardener* magazine. He is an avid gardener who grows vegetables, herbs, native and improved flowers, flowering shrubs, bulbs, fruit trees and native hardwoods on his two-acre Brenham property. He is huge supporter of local farmers who are growing ecologically responsible flowers for the cut flower market and the favorite things in his gardens are the heirloom and pass along plants that have been shared with him by the incredible gardeners he has been blessed to know. Jay loves sharing the stories of the plants and the people that make Texans the greatest group of garden enthusiasts on the planet. While Jay is a hobby gardener, he has a B.S. and M.S. in Agriculture. His time in graduate school at Texas A&M helped him develop a passion for the science of horticulture which he loves sharing in his fast paced and entertaining lectures. Whether you love growing fresh sprouts that only take a few days or mighty trees that take a lifetime, Jay’s talks will give you the encouragement and knowledge you need to be highly successful in your Texas garden.

**Session Topic: Dr. Seuss Taught Me to Garden**



**Lisa Whittlesey**  
**Senior Extension Program Specialist and International Program Director**

Junior Master Gardener Program  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Lisa Whittlesey is an employee of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and received her bachelor and master's degree from Texas A&M University in horticulture with an emphasis in education/curriculum development.

Lisa serves as the program director for the JMGs International Junior Master Gardener program which currently operates in all 50 states and has expanded internationally through collaborative partnerships with the Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture, JMG Korea, and expansions through US Military and National Guard projects.

She is the author/co-author of nine award winning youth environmental curriculums and her horticulture work and expertise has been featured in over 170 popular press/newspaper articles including *Saturday Evening Post*, *Southern Living*, *Better Homes and Garden*, *Readers Digest*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Family Life*, 7 national children's magazines, local/regional television appearances and on HGTV. She has been an invited speaker to over 275 regional and national conferences and her recent work has focused on utilizing the Junior Master Gardener program (Learn, Grow, Eat & GO curricula) as an intervention as a part of a 5 year USDA AFRI funded Extension and Research project focused on child and family interventions for obesity prevention. In addition to her work with the JMG Program, Lisa provides leadership to horticulture programming, staff development/management and as a PI federal contracts with the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Windham Schools – TDCJ, and with Lee College prison programming efforts. Lisa is a guest lecturer for floral design and socio-horticulture classes at Texas A&M University and does educational videos for the public through Texas A&M AgriLife Extension social media outlets.

In her spare time Lisa enjoys doing floral design, cooking, teaching Bible classes, playing piano and traveling. She is married to Randel Whittlesey and has two grown children.

**Session Topic: Growing Back into Schools with Junior Master Gardener In-Person AND Virtual Learning Tools**