



BIRTHDAYS

- April**
Cynthia Holifield
4/15
Melisa Rhodes
4/16
May
Pat Briggs
5/09
Marsha Sasser
5/28

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We welcome all of our Master Gardeners to forward articles or information for our newsletter to our Editor: sandrarosen42@yahoo.com
News Committee:
Sandra Rosen Joan Driver
Paula Marshall Anna Baker

Geranium Sale

A Phenomenal Success!

By Paula Marshall

More than 900 beautiful geraniums were sold by the Free State Master Gardeners in our second annual fund raiser!

Bob Williams, Nancy Szabo, Heidi Stone, John Clark, Jimmie Pierce, Mimi Sherwin, Pat and Mike Mullin, Pat Briggs, Joanne Elston, Elaine and Donald Smith, and Paula Marshall all met at Pat Mullin's house at 9 a.m., Thursday, March 31st, to help unload the delivery truck. They had 950 geraniums sorted by individual orders by 11:00 a.m. and members began picking them up at 2:00 that afternoon.

The remaining geraniums were loaded in Elaine and Donald Smith's cattle trailer and transported to the Extension Office to be sold at Friday and Saturday's Trade Day event.

Friday was cold and rainy, but volunteers endured the bad weather and sold more than 113 geraniums on that day. Saturday was a beautiful day and sales were a little slower, but, thanks to members who worked in two-hour shifts, the majority of the remaining geraniums were sold by 5:00.

Those who worked the booth on Friday and Saturday were: Heidi Stone, Joan Driver, Connie Tramel, Susan Dahlman, Pat Briggs, Kathy Massey, Martha Mitchell, Marsha Sasser, Sally Mitchell, Jan Graham, Jorja Merrick, and Paula Marshall.

A great big THANK YOU to Pat Mullin who coordinated this sale and allowed us to use her barn to stage and store the geraniums, to Eva Stuart for her help in providing whatever we needed, and to Elaine and Donald Smith who provided their livestock trailer to get the geraniums to and from the Extension Office.

Who sold the most?

- Top Seller: Pat Mullin 106**
2nd Joan Driver 53
3rd Susan Dahlman 46
676 geraniums sold in presales
225 sold at Trade Days



This is what 950 geraniums looks like!



Special Delivery!

Reminder to volunteers who helped unload truck, worked at Trade Days, or those of you who picked up and delivered geraniums you presold – don't forget to log your time, including travel time, under "misc" in [//texas.volunteersystem.org](http://texas.volunteersystem.org)



Gardening Chores

Tommy Phillips
County Extension Agent, Ag/NR

April is a great month to do gardening chores.

PLANTING

Annual flowers may be seeded now, including amaranthus, celosia, cosmos, marigold, portulaca, zinnia, gomphrena, and several other warm-season annual flowers. These can be sown directly in the beds where they are to grow. Keep seeded areas moist until seeds germinate. Thin out as soon as they are large enough to transplant so the remaining plants will not be crowded. Surplus plants can be transplanted to other areas.

For faster color, purchase annuals already started. Select short, compact plants, preferably ones that have not yet begun to flower. Remove flowers and buds to give the plants an opportunity to become well established before flowering.

One of the best hot-weather, summer

plants is the periwinkle (vinca). Eager gardeners setting out vinca too early may lose it to a fungal blight. By waiting until it gets hot (later in May) to plant vinca in the sunny part of the yard, you almost totally avoid this problem. Mulching can also help reduce disease problems by reducing soil splashing up onto the leaves.

Perennials for summer color include lantana, daylilies, verbena, hostas, salvia, sedums, ornamental grasses, purple coneflower, rudbeckia, ferns and summer phlox.

VEGETABLES

There's still time in early April to plant many vegetables, including bush and pole beans, cucumber, cantaloupe, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, summer & winter squash, and watermelons from seed; and transplants of tomatoes, peppers and eggplants. All these should be seeded or transplanted right away for

best results. Okra and Southern peas do better with warmer soil and therefore should be planted a bit later in the month.

I often see garden plots with very crowded rows of vegetable seedlings. Without thinning these seedlings to allow room between each individual plant, the plants will be weak and spindly and the harvest will be disappointing.

Follow recommended spacing distances between plants for each crop. For example, green beans should be thinned to a 3 – 4 inch spacing, while lima beans grow larger and need 4 – 6 inches. Pole beans need about 6 inches between plants. If the plantlets are very large, and pulling would disturb their neighbors, thin by clipping the shoots off at ground level. Greens, like lettuce, collard and mustards, should be thinned several times until you get the final spacing. That way you can eat the "thinnings".



Garden Guru

Dear Garden Guru

I know that permaculture is part of the horticulture/agriculture world, but what exactly is it?

Permaculture is a design system that is based on working with nature, rather than against it. For example, if rain water runoff causes erosion on your land, then use berms and swales to redirect the water to where it is needed. Everything can be a positive resource; it is up to us to figure out how to use it as such. It is a somewhat complicated system that promotes sustainability and care of our natural resources.

Pelargonium Hortorum Let's sell these next year!

By Paula Marshall

Before you think that spell check has gone crazy and our proofreader is on a sabbatical, *pelargonium hortorum* is the "official" name for plain ole Geranium. Since we probably all bought some of these for ourselves during our fund raiser, we thought it might be interesting to know a little bit more about these beautiful plants.

Geraniums are native to South Africa, and true geraniums are members of the genus *Geranium* and are smaller perennial plants. There are many different types to choose from including trailing and scented. Lemon, rose and apple geraniums are heavy in foliar oils and suitable for herb gardens.

Trailing geraniums (ivy-leaved) with glossy deep green leaves are beautiful in hanging baskets. They require bright light but don't do well in the Texas summer heat.

Garden Geraniums (I think that's what we sold) do well in full sun in the spring and fall, but prefer some afternoon shade from hot summer sun. That is why they are generally grown in pots rather than in-ground; however, many people have had success when planting directly in their flower beds. They do require good drainage so keep that in mind if you plant them in the ground.

To keep these beauties in full bloom, old flower stems should be snapped off (diseases are spread by clippers) and fertilized every 2 to 4 weeks with a balanced plant food. Keep them slightly root bound and don't let them dry out to the point of wilting. I have had them slow down their bloom in the heat of the summer, but they will start back up in the cooler days of fall ... just like us!



Pat's Reminders

Spring is exciting! And I think it is especially exciting for gardeners. The new "greens" peeking through, the planting of beautiful colors and anticipation of what it will look like as it grows, the planting of seeds and wondering if the spring storms will drown them or move them into another county! I do love it! As a child, I was uninterested in plants and my mom would say, "Every plant has a face just like a person. You just need to get to know them to recognize them." It wasn't until I was much older that I would really get interested in plants and gardens.

One of the most rewarding facets of the Master Gardener Program is the camaraderie of working together on projects. Our geranium sales overall

was a huge success and working at the extension office selling plants allowed us to get to know some others better. Also working on the Train Depot in Wills Point this past week. Well, the Extension Office gardens, the Junior High Butterfly garden and various other places we help out allows us to meet and rub elbows with each other. Soon we will be putting together the Canton Jubilee which is a large project open to the county. Everyone has something to offer and we hope you can join in with us to make all of our endeavors successful as we serve our County.

Questions???

Have you participated in a gardening event or training that you would like to tell other members about? If so, send me the specifics and we'll add it to the April or May newsletter in our new "Master Gardeners on the Move" column.

Do you have a gardening problem you need help with? The Gardening Guru is eagerly awaiting your questions.

Thanks everyone hope to see you at Thursday's meeting. We'll have the results of our fabulous geraniums sale! A big ole shout-out to all who participated!!



Gardening Events – April/May 2016

- Saturday, April 16:** Calloway's Nursery in Mesquite. Garden Series Class: "Perfect Perennials for Texas Gardens". 10:15 – 11 a.m. Free.
- Saturday, April 23:** 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. Iris Garden Club of Canton's Plant Sale at the Blackwell House Museum yard.
- Saturday, April 23:** (rain or shine) Henderson County MG's Plant Sale. 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. inside the Senior Citizens' Center, 3356 St. Hwy. 31E, Athens (by the Rodeo Arena).
- Saturday, April 23:** Calloway's Nursery in Mesquite. Garden Series Class: "Enchanting Butterfly & Hummingbird Garden". 10:15- 11 a.m. Free.
- Saturday, April 23:** Wood County Master Gardeners' "2016 Spring Fling" at the Mineola Nature Preserve, 1860 CR 2725, Mineola. 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Gardening demos from 10 a.m. – noon on : Sensory Gardens, Lasagna Gardening, and Gardens on Wheels. (Call 903-763-2924 for info.)
- Tuesday, May 3:** First Tuesday in the Garden lecture. Noon on the patio of the Idea Garden in the Tyler Rose Garden. 30 minute program followed by Q&A. Free. SCMG Sandy Pannett presents: "Keeping Chickens in the City"
- Saturday, May 14:** (with rain date of Saturday, May 21) Hunt County Master Gardeners' Garden Tour, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Tickets are \$10. (Call 903-455-9885 for info.)
- Saturday, May 14:** Master Gardener Day at Holly Ross's Hollyberry Farm in Canton. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Program from 11 – noon: "The Rabbits' Place in the Garden". Program from 2-3 p.m.: "How to Make an Herb-Infused Vinegar".
- Saturday, May 21:** Texas Discovery Garden at Fair Park, Dallas. 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. "Edible Wild Plants". Director of Horticulture Roger Sanderson shares which are tasty – and which are not! Sample some of the native fare. \$25; \$20 members. (Call 214-428-7476, x343.)
- Saturday, May 28:** Tyler's Annual Home Garden Tour, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Five homeowners open their private gardens for viewing with SCMG-ers at each home to answer questions. Tickets \$10 in advance or \$12 day of tour. Homes on the tour: 527 Pam Drive, 2115 Holly Creek Drive, 4486 Cascade Shoreline Drive, 4350 Cascade Drive, and 810 W. 9th. Tickets available by mail to: MG Garden Tour, 19461 Sandhill Drive, Flint, Tx 75762. (Call 903-590-2980 for info.)
- April and May at the Dallas Arboretum:** Quite a few Lunch and Learn programs. Most cost around \$25. 11:30 – 1 p.m. (Go their web site, click on "Adult Programs", then "Gardening and Design" for listing.)



Pat Briggs & Paula Marshall



Five members worked at the Wills Point Train Museum on Monday, April 5, pulling weeds and planting new flowers in two beds. Nancy Szabo coordinated the workday and members who participated were: Nancy, Paula, John Clark, Connie Tramel, and Ross.

Great Job Everyone!

Corrections to Year Book
John Clark - correct phone No. 903-560-7041
Jimmie Piece - use home No. 903-567-4353
Connie Tramel - correct email: connietramel@att.net.



Our speaker for the March meeting was Jim Burt, a Kaufman County Master Gardener. Jim gave us plenty of information on a variety of subjects. He helped clarify many definitions for us:

Heirloom – These plant varieties have been around for at least 50 years. They have been saved by farmers and gardeners and must be open-pollinated and are not in any way genetically modified. A heirloom vegetable tastes great – not like the grocery store vegetables – but they are not huge

What/When to Plant and A Compost Refresher March Meeting

By Sandra Rosen

producers.

Hybrid – A hybrid plant is one that is created by cross-pollination. It can be done by a commercial operation seeking to create a plant that is safe from a disease or it can be done naturally. These plants may have been modified to improve the genetic characteristics

Open-pollinated – This refers to a plant that has been pollinated by nature. It could have been by the wind, by insects, or the gardener.

Self-pollinated – This term really goes with open-pollinated, but refers to a plant that has the capacity to pollinate itself.

Cross-pollinated – This is where a hybrid plant is created. It could be

intentional by someone trying to produce a seed with the best qualities of two plants or it could occur naturally.

He also talked about composting and helped clear up some confusion about how to do it. A compost pile must have moisture and carbon (brown material) and nitrogen (grass, green material). It may also include these things: grass, leaves, garden residue, manure, yard clippings, vegetable scraps, weeds, sawdust, sod, and hay. It must not include these things: carnivore manure, meat scraps, fats, oils, or noxious and diseased weeds. This was an interesting program with much valuable information

Edible Landscaping

By Sandra Rosen

Edible landscaping means simply that you integrate your vegetable and fruit gardens into your ornamental gardens. This is nature at its best – not separating, but combining all of our garden parts. It can be messy, but with some thought it can be beautiful and a real conversation starter when someone asks, “Now what is that gorgeous plant?” and you answer, “It is a kale plant, and it is delicious. Have a bite.”

If you want to do edible landscaping, the only rule is that you should start small. Add just a few plants into your ornamental garden. Of course, you will need to pay attention to the sunlight/shade requirements. Some that work well are, of course, herbs. Rosemary is a lovely plant that doesn't just need to be in your herb garden. (A recent study said that people who smelled rosemary often had less memory loss.) Chives work well as a border plant in any bed. And oregano makes a great ground cover. Other plants that you can incorporate into your yard easily are lettuce varieties, spinach, kale and Swiss chard. The multi-colored Swiss chard is a real eye-catcher as a background plant. To make harvesting easy, it is important to put the edibles near the borders in your landscape.

If you get past simple and start adding many edibles into your landscape, it can be visually overpowering. In this case, you would need to emphasize the strong lines of your landscaping defined by pathways, patios, planters, hedges, and other structures. Make your landscape fun and interesting!

Starting an edible landscape with spinach and onions.



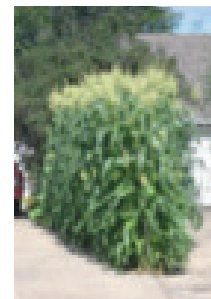
Potatoes and spinach planted in a bed between 2 pecan trees



Colorful chard



Corn as a hedge



2016 Texas Master Gardener State Conference: Buds and Bark: Earth-Kind® in the Park

Submitted by Dawn Oldfield, CCMGA PR Chairperson

“One of the most delightful things about a garden is the anticipation it brings.” W. E. Johns

Spring is in the air and one of the most anticipated events of the year is almost here! The 2016 TMGA Conference, hosted by The Collin County Master Gardeners Association, is just a month away, and plans are in full bloom! Come play in the dirt with us! The three day event will be held at beautiful Myers Park and Event Center in McKinney, Texas from May 17-19, 2016. Tick, tock, tick, tock - Conference Countdown: If you haven't signed up yet, what are you waiting for? The month of May will be here before you know it! Jim Ewoldsen, our 2016 Conference Co-Chair says, “While we are still limiting registration for the conference to the first 800 registrants, we are excited to announce that we have opened up The 2016 Texas Master Gardener State Conference to the public. Tell your friends and family to join you for the conference! This is a wonderful, rare opportunity for them to learn more about the Master Gardener program, attend great workshops and presentations from the best in their field, go on fun, interesting tours, and be inspired by acres of award winning research and demonstration gardens. I promise this is a conference they won't want to miss!” Presentations & Workshops: Learn something new! We have a full slate of presentations on a wide variety of topics from renowned experts that will

appeal to gardeners on all levels. Here's a sample of what you can expect to enjoy during the conference: Steve Houser: Indian Marker Trees Diane Sharp: Perennials in the Research Gardens Justin Scheiner: GMO's – The Good, the Bad, and What it Is and Isn't; Neil Sperry: Sorting Fact from Fantasy; Greg Church: Common Plant Diseases Matthew Elmore: Lawn Management; Steve Chaney: Leadership & Recruitment within the Extension Service & MG Associations Leadership Jayla Fry: So Happy Together Amy Stewart: Wicked Plants Amy Stewart: Garden Blogging Mike Merchanat: Unlocking the Power of Bugguide.org; Russ Wallace: Growing Vegetables & Strawberries Using Protective Covers for Season Extension Tim Hartman: Earth-Kind® Herbs: Bringing Beauty to the Landscape and Kitchen David Slesak: Rose Breeding and Genetics: A Continuing Story of Cross-Cultural Exchange And More!!!

These educational activities will inspire you personally, but more importantly will open you to new ideas for teaching and sharing research-based gardening with others in your community. Visit our [website](#) to follow our evolving itinerary. 2016 conference cost: Hurry, don't wait! Sign up January 1 through April 15 \$200.00 Sign up April 16 through May 17 \$225.00. Your conference fee includes:

At least fifteen hours of higher education opportunities (NEW to the schedule is the hands-on Garden Journaling workshop presented by the amazing Mary Nell Jackson. \$20 fee includes class and materials.) Lunch Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday Reception Tuesday evening Awards Banquet Wednesday* Tours (*check the [website](#) to see itinerary for all inclusions) So much more! Also in the Area: If your schedule allows, be sure to explore additional local North Texas attractions. The [Heard Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary](#) in McKinney, the [Dallas Arboretum](#), and [Fort Worth Botanic Gardens](#) are a must for any tourists (especially a garden enthusiast) list. You won't want to miss two local nursery gems, either. [Shades of Green](#) in Frisco and [Pucketts's Nursery](#) in Allen are truly unique. Both are offering 10% discounts to Master Gardeners who show their badge! Make your reservations for the 2016 State Master Gardener Conference, Buds and Bark: Earth-Kind® in the Park now. Keep up to date with what we're up to by visiting our [website](#). Please email txmg2016@ccmgatx.org or call 214-425-5612 with questions. There will be plenty of opportunities to earn CEUs, and just have some fun! Follow us online for up-to-date details on [Facebook](#), or Instagram – [txmgstateconf2016](#).