



BIRTHDAYS:

June

Paula Marshall, 6/29
Jorja Merrick, 6/6

July

Pat Brand, 7/1
Heidi Rose Stone, 7/24
John Womack, 7/12
Susan Warren, 7/28

August

Jan Graham, 8/31
Jimmie Pierce, 8/12

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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
Susan Dahlman

Volume 3, Issue 3..... July/August, 2017

Van Kindergarten Agriculture Day

By Sally Mitchell

Free State Master Gardeners were invited to help plan and participate in Agriculture Day for kindergarten students of J. E. Rhodes Elementary School in Van. Our master gardeners sponsored five stations, each teaching lessons at a kindergarten level on horticulture and healthy eating.

Eleven master gardeners participated in the kindergarten event:

Sally Mitchell and Jimmie Pierce (Propagation and Soil Preparation);

Donna Burcham, Lou Ellen Bliss, and Louella Liff (Com-

ball project, and Mr. Orbin Smith from Van, a local beekeeper, added so much fun to the pollinator station.

The children were very enthusiastic and responsive to



what was being taught. Donna's wiggly worms and Mr. Smith's beekeeper suit were favorites--the worms were in need of psychotherapy after all the handling!! Teachers were appreciative of all the work and time given to make the project a success--and were amazed at the responses given later in the classroom when the children were asked to tell one "something new" they learned that day. Teachers admitted learning "something new" themselves!

Thanks to everyone who answered the call for help with the project. Don't be surprised if we are asked to help again next year!!



posting and Vermiposting); Paula Marshall and Pat Briggs (Pollinators/Bees); Nancy Szabo, Pat Brand, and Carter Hallmark (Seed Balls to take home). Bob Williams was responsible for setting up and taking down canopies which shaded each station. Melisa Rhodes, County Agent, taught lessons on healthy eating in our fifth station. Our gardeners are grateful for the support of family members: Job Marshall and BJ Anderson helped in the set-up and tear-down process; Stacey Anderson assisted with the seed



Gardening Chores

Tommy Phillips
County Extension Agent, Ag/NR

July/August Gardening Check List:

The transition into summer brings with it a change in gardening chores for the month of July. Gardening activities usually slow way down in the summertime as the temperature continues to climb into the 90's. July is often a very dry month, and, like most years, can be very hot, too. So, we usually don't start a lot of new garden projects, but there's always maintenance chores to do. It is hard to believe, but our thoughts need to be turning to our "fall" gardens and the preparation for those.

The best time to do any kind of gardening or maintenance is in early morning when it is not so hot, or late in the day after supper. Watch the heat, dress cool, take frequent breaks, have plenty of water on hand and drink frequently. Here are a few items for the July gardening calendar.

WATERING:

Whether or not the preceding months have been kind with abundant rainfall, the gardener should now be alert for summer drought conditions which could occur at any time now. A typical pattern of the last several years has been for rainfall to be shut off in early July, leaving normally well-hydrated plants lacking sufficient water.

Proper watering is essential to keep plants healthy. The main rule of thumb is to water deeply and as infrequently as possible, as opposed to frequent, light sprinklings. This will encourage a deeper root system that can take advantage of a larger volume or "bank account" of water stored in the soil. Frequent and light sprinklings tend to keep the majority of plant roots near the surface of the soil. Plants with this type of root system are more susceptible to extreme heat and water shortages and are easily stressed during the summer.

One of the best strategies for getting shrubs and young trees through summertime dry spells is to apply a thick layer of mulch over the root systems of plants. All organic mulches break down over time, so if it has been awhile since you've mulched, carefully check all plants in your yard. A three to four inch layer will prevent most evaporation from the soil and significantly lower the soil temperature in the root zone, reducing stress on the root system. Common materials used for mulch include pine needles, pine bark, cypress bark, aged grass clippings (let them thoroughly dry before using), shredded paper, sawdust (aged is best).

LAWN CARE:

Lawns at this time of year are rapidly growing and need frequent mowing. The best lawns will be those that are mowed regularly. If you mow often enough, you can return the clippings back to the lawn. The rule of thumb is to not remove more than 1/3 of the length of the blades per mowing. This may mean mowing every 5 or 6 days instead of once a week (or less). Removing more than 1/3 is stressful on the lawn, and will tend to leave visible clippings on top of the grass.

As rainfall becomes less regular, irrigation will be need to be more frequent. Lawns need about 1 inch of water per week. This can be supplied in one or more applications per week, depending on the soil type and how hot and dry the weather has been. Sandy soils need more frequent watering, as do newly planted lawns.

Watch out for lawn pests. Chinch bugs multiply rapidly in warm weather, and their feeding causes St. Augustine grass to look like drought stress. No treatment is needed until symptoms first appear. Look for wilting grass which does not respond to water. The grass will continue to dry, giving it a burned look. Look for tiny, 1/6 to 1/5 inch bugs scurrying quickly up and down grass blades and or scurrying to hide down in the thatch. Flooding the perimeter area with water, or soaking the edge with soapy will drive them up from the thatch onto the grass blades where they are more easily seen. Damage usually occurs first in the hottest and driest parts of the lawn.

July and August is also the time to treat for white grubs if there is a problem. Treatment is based on whether grubs are present in the turf and the way to find out is to dig a few test areas and look for the small grubs in the soil. Not all lawns will have grubs and excessive use of pesticides can lead to other turf problem and contamination of sewer discharge, so it is better to check first rather than automatically treat.

VEGETABLES:

Harvest vegetables regularly from your garden to keep it productive. Letting squash turn as big as baseball bats will cause production to go down. Harvest vegetables at their peak of maturity for maximum nutrition and quality.

Begin preparing for the fall garden in July. That's right! It may seem odd to start a fall garden in the summertime, but you need to get plants started in time for harvests before first freeze.

Examine existing plants you might consider carrying through to fall. Tomatoes often are not replanted, but if they are covered up with spider mites (they're often bad by this time of year), seriously consider replanting this month. You'll need to pamper new transplants a little to get them started, but they'll be ready for a great harvest in October when quality will be high!

Do not plant the same vegetable type in the same spot year after year. Soil-borne diseases will build up and eventually cause major problems. Add compost or other organic matter, and composted manure, cotton seed meal or other fertilizers to the garden spot before tilling. Also, if you thought plant growth was poor this spring, check the pH of your garden soil before adding nutrients, and add lime if needed.

Besides transplanting tomatoes in July, other vegetables that can or should be transplanted this month include eggplant (7/15 – 8/1) and peppers (7/1-8/1). Other crops that can be started from seed this month include Lima beans (7/15 – 8/15), cantaloupes (7/15 – 8/1), southern peas (7/1 – 8/1), pumpkin (7/1 – 8/1), summer squash (7/15 – 8/15), winter squash (7/1 – 7/15), and watermelon (7/1 – 8/1) [(dates in parenthesis indicate optimum planting window for best results)].

Here's a tip for getting seeds up in the heat. Make your rows and open up a furrow. Soak the bottom of the furrow with water and then sow the seed, covering it with dry soil to the proper depth. This will help prevent crusting. Finally, lay boards or wet burlap down the row to give some more protection from the intense heat. Check every day; once germination begins, remove the covers.

Drip irrigation combined with mulch is an excellent way to maintain high quality vegetable plants throughout the summer. Drip systems are easy to install and require less water than sprinkler or furrow irrigation. Usually drip systems need to be operated frequently (how often depends on soil type and drip system) to adequately supply water to the plant's root zone. Frequently check emitters for clogging.

SUMMER COLOR:

If you are still looking for summer color to plant, you are not out of luck. Marigolds, cosmos, vinca (periwinkle), gomphrena, cleome (spider flower), zinnias, purslane and portulaca all do well in the summer heat. As a matter of fact, marigolds planted in late summer and carried into fall tend to have brighter colors than spring-planted marigolds. Spider mites, the number one pest of marigolds, are not as prolific during the cooler days of fall as they are in the summertime.

Plant bright, tropical color with esparanza (yellow bells), firebush (Hamelia), allamanda, mandevilla, Mexican heather, tropical and perennial hibiscus, bougainvillea, and pentas. Copper plants should be planted now so they'll have time to grow before they turn the reddish copper color in the fall.

Be sure to cut off faded flowers before they set seed (called deadheading) to promote new growth and more flowers. Once a plant's energy goes to maturing seeds, blooming will slow down or stop.

Chrysanthemums should be fertilized and pinched back this month. Pinching makes them bushier and produces more blooms for the fall. They will start setting flower buds in August.

OTHER MAINTENANCE TIPS:

Prune hydrangeas right after bloom if you need to cut them back. Flower buds are formed in late summer and early fall, so late fall and winter pruning removes these buds and eliminates next year's flowers.

Blackberries need to be pruned now that harvest is ending. Remove the dying fruiting canes and tip back the vigorous, new growth two or three times to form a dense hedge for greater fruit production.

Plants in containers and hanging baskets need to be frequently watered in the summer to keep them from drying out. All this water leaches out plant nutrients from the soil. Use a water-soluble fertilizer regularly to keep your plants growing and healthy.

Now is the time to plan for next spring. Consider digging and dividing any crowded spring-blooming bulbs. Once the bulbs have matured and the foliage has turned brown, it is time to spade them up and thin out the stand. Crowded bulbs produce fewer and smaller blooms. They usually need thinning every 3 to 4 years.

August Gardening Chores

It is sometimes hard to think about gardening in the heat of August. Most folks want to think about sitting in the shade with a cold drink or in a pool relaxing. However, there are some items that can be done around the garden in August.

WATER

August is typically one of the driest months of the year in East Texas. Even if it does rain, chances are it isn't enough to supply the needs of your lawn and garden. Use a rain gauge to actually measure how much rain you're receiving. Lawns and shrubs need about an inch of water per week in the summer time. Often the showers may seem like they are dumping a lot of water, but they may be too brief to penetrate the ground more than an inch. Make the best use of water by giving plants a thorough soaking as infrequently as the weather and your soils will allow.

Many plants will signal their need for water: turfgrass lies flat after being walked on, and many plants lose their shine and droop a little. Unfortunately, most trees do not readily show drought stress, yet are negatively impacted by prolonged droughts, and the effects can carry over to the next few years. Weakened trees become more susceptible to other stresses and diseases, and may succumb after a series of droughts.

When watering lawns during hot weather, do it early in the morning. Otherwise, much of the water will evaporate from the grass before the plants get to use it. To further avoid excess evaporation, use a sprinkler that produces large drops of water instead of a fine mist.

Check the thickness of mulch around your shrubs, flowers and newly planted trees. Unmulched soils can reach more than 100 degrees, hot enough to kill roots. Mulched soils can be three to 10 degrees cooler even several inches deep. Besides reducing soil temperature, mulches also conserve water by reducing evaporation, often up to 65 percent. In one test, pine needles gave the greatest reduction in soil evaporation. Of course, mulch reduces weeds which also compete for water.

Here are some mulching materials and suggested depth for each: shredded bark (3-4"), wood chips (3-4"), bark chunks (4-6"), chipper debris (3-4"), sawdust, wood shavings (1-3" – use only aged, weathered material), pine needles (2-3"), lawn clippings (1" – dry clippings before use), leaves and leaf mold (2-4"), partially decomposed compost (2-4").

PESTS

Chinch bugs are a major lawn pest of St. Augustine in the summer. If patches in the lawn look dry, like it needs water, and you are certain, after testing the soil, that is getting sufficient water, then suspect Chinch bugs. Be sure your sprinkler is doing a proper job. Low water pressure may result in erratic coverage or "hot spots" in the yard that need supplemental water. Check with a shovel and your fingers to determine soil moisture levels.

August is also the month to begin checking for the presence of white grubworms. Not every lawn will need grub worm control. As a matter of fact, probably only a small portion of lawns are bothered by these pests. Lawns which have been heavily damaged in the past by these root-eating, soil-dwelling white grubs are prime targets to be attacked again. White grub damage is characterized by a very loosely rooted turf which can be very easily pulled up. If grubs are suspected, check the soil under affected grass for the small, white grubs. Now through mid-August is the time to apply insecticides to control white grubs if you find them. Be sure to thoroughly water the insecticide into the soil immediately after application.

Azalea lace bugs are a major pest of azaleas, and increase rapidly in the summer time. Affected azalea leaves look like they are stippled until they are almost white. A quick look on the underside of leaves will reveal black, varnish-like spots which is a sure sign of azalea lace bugs. Spray with an insecticide, making sure the spray contacts underneath the leaves where the lace bugs are feeding.

Use pesticides with caution and only as needed. Follow all label directions and never increase the rate. Do not rinse sprayers or dispose of excess spray in the drain, storm sewer or other place where runoff can contaminate our water system.

VEGETABLES:

Starting in mid August plant broccoli plants, Brussel sprouts, cabbage plants, Chinese cabbage, carrots, cauliflower plants, Swiss chard, collards, kale, English peas, Irish potatoes, and summer squash.

Set out tomato transplants (if you can find them) right away for a fall harvest. Look for an early maturing variety (65 to 75 days). Remember that our average first freeze is mid-November and that tomato maturity slows down as the days get cool and cloudy.

Peppers and tomatoes planted earlier this year will not set fruit during the heat of summer, even though they may still be flowering. If the plants remain healthy, they will set fruit again once temperatures stay below 90 degrees. Sidedress established, healthy plants with fertilizer and keep watered to encourage new growth.

An eggplant is ready to harvest when the fruit is fully colored and has achieved the mature size for the variety. Seed should be white, and the tissue firm. If the seeds are brown and hard, or the skin has become dull rather than shiny, the fruit is past eating quality, so harvest the next fruit sooner.

Remove old plants that have stopped producing to eliminate shelters for insects and disease organisms.

ODDS AND ENDS

Order your spring-flowering bulbs now. A good guideline to use is 'biggest is best' in regard to bulb size. Be careful about so-called "bargain" bulbs as they may be small or of inferior quality.

Potted plants outdoors may need watering daily to prevent wilting. Such frequent watering will leach out nutrients, so be sure to regularly

Wills Point Depot Garden Update

By Nancy Szabo



In 2015 a request was sent out by our now TMG President, Peggy Rogers, requesting a Master Gardener take over the maintenance of the Wills Point Depot Museum garden. Ms. Rogers had taken on the initial work of planting and mulching; however, the garden had become disorderly. Hardy fern, day lilies, iris and the inevitable weeds had taken over. The sidewalk was obscured and the birdbath all but hidden.

As an intern with hours to fill, and as a Wills Point resident, I decided to take on the task. After reviewing the current state of affairs and working with the Wills Point Historical Society, a plan was developed to add plants that would provide color from spring to fall and be attractive to pollinators. A work crew came together in fall 2015 to tackle the job of pulling out ferns, thinning day

lilies and iris, trimming back nandina, turks cap, spirea and crape myrtle. It sure looked much better after that.

A second outing of MG's in spring 2016, helped in planting and mulching. The following plants were put in: dianthus, lantana, salvia, passion flower, dusty miller, coreopsis, canna, carolina jasmine, mums and plumbago. Marigold and zinnia seeds were planted to provide some long summer flowers. The garden did well in 2016 and I was anxious to see what would survive over the winter.

Some early spring weeding and mulching, let me know that not all the plants survived and it was still too early to tell about others. However, the carolina jasmine, red roses, white iris, dianthus and spirea were happily showing off their color. This past week, a work crew came up to pull weeds and do some trimming. By then, turks' cap, day lilies, cannas, and coreopsis added brightness to the garden. The coreopsis got a haircut and errant ferns and weeds were pulled.

We lost the passion vine, plumbago and mums but everything else looked well. This is truly a wonderful little garden and adds a touch of beauty to Wills Point. Thanks to all the MG's who have put time and effort in the creating and maintaining this gem.



Gardening Events - July/August 2017

By Susan Dahlman

Saturday, July 8 *"How Do I Garden with Drought-Tolerant Plants?"* Texas Discovery Gardens at Fair Park. 10 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Discover the diversity of landscape plants that are highly drought resistant.

Thursday, July 13 *"Bees for Beginners* with Jim Burt, Kaufman County Master Gardener

Saturday, July 15: Pop-Up Horticulture – Irrigation Efficiency with Jim Derstler & Allan Paxton at Farmers Market, 100 S. Rogers St., Waxahachie. 8 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Free. 972-825-5175.

Thursday, July 20: Van Zandt County Library Series sponsored by Van Zandt Free State MG at the Van Zandt County Library, 317 First Monday Lane, Canton. 10:30 a.m. *"Beekeeping for Beginners"* by Nancy Szabo. Free.

Thursday, July 27: Henderson County MG Summer Series featuring *"Home Grown Herb Garden with Ann McCormick, the Herb 'n Cowgirl."* 6 p.m. – 7 p.m. Cedar Creek Library, 410 E. Cedar Creek Parkway, Seven Points. Free.

Tuesday, August 1-4, Friday: Junior Master Gardener Specialist Training for Master Gardeners hosted by Denton County MG at the Global Spheres Center, 7801 S. Interstate 35E, Corinth. Registration deadline July 15. 940-349-2892.

Thursday, August 17: Van Zandt County Library Series sponsored by Van Zandt Free State MG at the Van Zandt County Library, 317 First Monday Lane, Canton. 6:30 p.m. *"Vegetables"* with John Womack. Free.

Saturday, August 19: Pop-Up Horticulture – Irises with Kathy Graves at Farmers Market, 100 S. Rogers St., Waxahachie. 8 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Free. 972-825-5175

Gardening Classes Going Well

By Paula Marshall

Two gardening classes have been held for the public at the Van Zandt Library so far, and both have been a huge success. The first class, "Plant Propagation," and the second, "Culinary Herbs in Your Garden and Diet," were taught by fellow Master Gardeners, Joanne Elston and Nancy Szabo, respectively.

Attendance by the public has been exceptional, requiring us to add more tables and chairs for the last class. Surveys passed out for guests to complete reflect that people are extremely pleased and excited that we are offering these classes.

Thanks to all of you who are presenters, and also to those members who help by bringing refreshments, setting up the room and cleaning up afterwards. Upcoming classes are:

July 20th, 10:30 a.m.

Beekeeping for Beginners – Nancy Szabo

August 17th, 6:30 p.m.

Vegetables – John Womack

Sept. 21st, 10:30 a.m.

Vermiculture/Composting – Donna Burcham, Lou Ellen Bliss

Oct. 19th, 10:30 a.m.

Roses for Beginners – John Clark

Lemon Thyme Shortbread Cookies

By Paula Marshall

2 C. flour
1 C. butter, unsalted, room temp
½ C. Powdered Sugar
1 Tbsp. fresh thyme, finely chopped
1 Tbsp. lemon zest
½ tsp lemon extract, or ½-1 tsp. lemon juice
½ tsp. vanilla
¼ tsp. salt

Beat butter (room temperature) in mixing bowl until creamy. Add sugar and mix thoroughly. Add thyme, lemon zest, lemon juice, vanilla and salt and continue to mix until combined.

Add flour 1 cup at a time until the mixture just starts to come together. Form dough into a ball and slightly flatten. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Remove from refrigerator and roll dough to ¼ inch thick on a lightly-floured surface. Cut out cookies with cookie cutter and place on parchment covered cookie sheet. Place cookies in refrigerator for 20 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350. Remove cookies from refrigerator and bake for approximately 8-10 minutes or until cookies are brown around the edges. (recipe says bake until golden brown, but I think doing so makes them too dry.) Let cookies cool completely and then ice them with the following glaze:

Glaze: Using electric mixer, mix together: 1 lb. powdered sugar, 1-2 tsp. lemon juice (or extract), some lemon zest if desired, ¼ to ½ cup water (add slowly to get desired consistency) and a couple of drops of yellow food coloring (optional). Mixture should not be runny, but should not be stiff – you just want to thinly glaze the top of the cookie. Let glaze harden before you serve the cookies. Good for a couple of days if kept in tightly sealed container.



Master Gardener Sandra Rosen

By Joan Driver



Becoming a Master Gardener was more about love of the outdoors than about growing plants, says Sandra Rosen. "I soon learned to love landscaping because it added to the pleasure of being outdoors and also added to the value of my homes."

Her interest in organic vegetable gardening is based on the health benefits of a plant based diet.

A happy small town girl, Sandra grew up in Woodville and returned there to teach after an education at Baylor University. She has two children, three grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. She and her other half, John Womack, met late in life and moved to Van Zandt County from Sun City in Georgetown. Their shared interests include anything, apparently, related to gardening and the benefits of the associated active lifestyle, and also their blended family.

Sandra is inspired by John's knowledge of gardening, his enthusiasm, and his love of learning. Together they have explored new ways of gardening, new vegetables, propagation techniques, and the resulting fresh produce. Says she, "According to our children we are sometimes overly enthusiastic about the health benefits from growing your own food." Sandra, a Master Gardener since 2008, has also expanded her expertise with specialist certifications in rainwater harvesting and permaculture design.

Her gardening wisdom includes a wry observation that planting directions saying "all day sun" don't mean Texas sun and follow directions carefully when planting. She also finds it fun to create edible landscapes by combining herbs and vegetables such as okra into flower beds.

Sandra's Marinated Vegetable Medley

Chop in fairly large pieces any raw vegetables that you like: onions, tomatoes, squash, carrots, broccoli, radishes, peppers, etc. Pour over it a package of dry Ranch dressing mix and then a small bottle of Italian dressing (not diet). Mix well and marinate for several hours. I have also used this mix with fruit and with potato salad. Really different and easy!

Gardening Choirs (Continued from pg 3)

fertilize potted plants with a water-soluble fertilizer.

Finish planting lawns this month to give the new grass opportunity to become established before cold weather stops growth. Wait to fertilize established lawns until September.

A late-summer pruning of rosebushes can be beneficial. Prune out dead canes and any weak, brushy growth. Cut back tall, vigorous bushes to about 30 inches. After pruning, apply fertilizer, and water thoroughly. If a preventive disease-control program has been maintained, your rose bushes should be ready to provide an excellent crop of flowers this October.

It is not too late to set out another planting of many warm-season annuals, such as marigolds, zinnias, and periwinkles. They will require extra attention for the first few weeks, but should provide you with color during late September, October, and November.

Sow seeds of snapdragons, dianthus, pansies, calendulas, and other cool-season flowers in flats, or in well-prepared areas of the garden, for planting outside during mid-to-late fall.

Plant bluebonnet and other spring wildflowers. They must germinate in late summer or early fall, develop good root systems, and be ready to grow in spring when the weather warms. Plant seed in well-prepared soil, one-half inch deep, and water thoroughly.

Picking flowers frequently encourages most annuals and perennials to flower even more abundantly.

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Schedule Set for *Workday* in the Gardens

By Paula Marshall

Tommy Phillips announced at the June meeting that the third Wednesday of each month would be designated a "Workday" for members to work in the various gardens we have undertaken. This includes the two Extension Office Gardens, the butterfly garden at Canton Junior High School, the CAC vegetable garden and the Wills Point Train Depot garden. With the exception of those working at the Wills Point Train Depot, members are to meet at the Extension Office in Canton at 8:30 a.m., and will be directed by the Leads of each garden on where to work and what is to be done.

Nancy will be responsible for coordinating efforts at Wills Point. We will remind members by email (or phone) the week prior. If a workday is canceled or if you are not sure if it is being held because of bad weather, etc., please watch your email for last minute changes, or call Paula Marshall at 972-877-7988. Thanks to Joy Crabtree, Gay Mitchell, Pat Briggs, Kathy Massey, Lou Ella Iliff, Michael Stevenson, Bob Williams, Jimmie Pierce, and Paula Marshall who worked in the four Canton gardens, and to Nancy Szabo, John Clark, and Kathy Massey who worked earlier in the week in Wills Point.

3rd Wednesday

MG Work Day

8:30am @ Extension Office

July 19
August 16
September 20
October 18
November 15
December 20
January 17
February 21
March 21
April 18
May 16
June 20

Please contact Nancy Szabo for Wills Point Garden.
Emails with changes will be sent. Thanks!

President's Message



Happy Summer Master Gardeners – This is certainly a busy time for gardeners of all kinds whether you garden vegetables, flowers, or a combination. My Celebrity tomatoes are coming on strong, cucumbers are ripening every day and my Jubilee watermelons and cantaloupes are also going to market soon. Our Library Series has had two very successful public seminars with better than expected turnouts. Many thanks to Susie Pully and the Van Zandt County Library for letting us use their facility and equipment. Joanne's class on propagation was very well received as was Nancy's class on herbs. Well done ladies! Nancy will also be giving the next in the series seminars on Bee Keeping for Beginners, on Thurs. July 20th at 10:30.

All master gardeners are welcome. I would like to welcome two new master gardeners, Marylee Haldeman and Elizabeth Lowe, to our group. They are both transferring in from the Henderson County MG Assoc. And of course, congratulations to our 2017 Intern Class for completing the Master Gardener classes. Thanks to Pat Mullins for hosting the graduation dinner at her lovely home on a beautiful evening. We had our first scheduled monthly workday on June 21st. It was announced at the June membership meeting and we will continue to hold these workdays on the 3rd Wed. of each month. Hopefully this will help us get better participation maintaining the many gardens we now oversee and not put too much burden on a few MGs. All members are asked to participate. Hope to see you all at our July 13th membership meeting.

President, Bob Williams

Intern Graduation

By Paula Marshall



Pat Mullin and Bob Williams

Because of the damage to Mimi Sherwin's house in the April tornado(s), the Intern Graduation dinner was held at Pat Mullin beautiful home on May 25th.

Tommy Phillips awarded certificates of completion to the five interns who were there, and two of the interns, Lou Ella Iliff and Carter Hallmark, received their Master Gardener certificates.

Congratulations to all of the interns for completing the Master Gardener course. We are excited that you have joined us and look forward to the enthusiastic energy you bring to our club.

Also, a big THANK YOU to Marsha Sasser, who coordinated and led the intern training classes this past year. The interns presented Marsha with a beautiful bouquet at the dinner in appreciation of her kindness and leadership.



L to R: Tommy Phillips, Louella Iliff, MG, Sharon Palmer, Marsha Sasser, Susan Warren, Sherri Doss and Carter Hallmark, MG.



2017 Intern Project, A Community Garden

By Sharon Palmer

A community garden was the chosen class project for the 2017 Intern Class of the Free State Master Gardeners. The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), located off Highway 243 in Canton, was interested in using a portion of its property to install a community garden that would benefit those in Van Zandt County. They contacted Tommy Phillips to let their desires be known, and it was a go from there.

We met together as a class to discuss what vegetables we wanted to plant and the size plot that would be suitable, as well as thinking through the steps we needed to take in order to prepare the soil. A soil sample was taken to be tested so we would know what was lacking and how we could amend the soil.

Because of all the steps involved, this was a big undertaking that required a lot of manual labor and commitment from all six of us in our graduating class. The finished product is a 20'x40' garden plot and growing with-



in it are: tomatoes of several varieties, bell peppers and hot peppers, rosemary, okra, yellow squash, zucchini, cucumbers and purple hull peas. To date, we have delivered at least 30+ pounds of produce to Manna Food Bank and the Van Zandt County Detention Center. We hope to multiply that greatly in time to come.

I might have said, "the finished product", but I think we all know a garden is never done! We are 'getting to know' our garden as we work in it; learning its quirks, the positives and the negatives, so that we can improve upon what

we've worked so hard for. We have many more plans, one that includes a fall garden, that will hopefully come to fruition in the near future. We have had fun and we have learned much; from our teachers and mentors as well as from each other. I think I can say, on behalf of the 2017 class, that this experience has been enjoyable and that we have worked well together and look forward to future learning and involvement within the Master Gardener community!

Garden Guru

Dear Garden Guru – There is a black, hard shelled, elongated bug that burrows its head and body into my peaches and strawberries and sometimes the blueberries. What is it and how can I get rid of it?

This insect is a click or clicker beetle, also known as a wireworm because of the long cylindrical shape. They usually spend 3 – 4 years in the soil and can travel from plant to plant. The best methods for pest control are crop rotation and plowing the land before your next planting to destroy the pupae. Chemical control is difficult because of having to spray the fruit. Read pesticide directions carefully.



Meet Elizabeth Lowe

By Paula Marshall

A native of the Ft. Worth/Arlington area, Elizabeth Lowe now lives in southern Van Zandt county. A life-long gardener and with degrees in Art and Art Education, she has taught art for the Arlington Independent School District until moving to the Martin's Mill School district this past year. She took the Master Gardener class in Tarrant County and joined the Tarrant County Master Gardener program in 2015. She lives in the country with her husband, Bob Erickson, a Master Gardener in Henderson County. This past year, she along with Donna Burcham and Nancy Szabo, initiated a Junior Master Gardener program for elementary students at Martin's Mill starting with three raised bed gardens and more to come.



A Team Effort and A Keyhole Garden

By Sandra Rosen

Making a keyhole garden is not easy, but when you have finished, you have a sustainable gardening method that recycles kitchen and garden waste as food for your garden. Nancy Szabo first gave us the facts at our April 13 meeting, and then we went on a working field trip to her lovely home and actually made a keyhole garden. The other advantages of a keyhole garden are: suitable for a harsh dry area, uses less water, no bending over, less weeding, less fertilizer, and critter resistant. Building a keyhole garden does require a lot of work and a lot of materials. Nancy's garden needed around 45 cinder blocks, a truckload of brown cardboard material for the carbon, and green materials for the nitrogen, plus a lot of volunteers. It was a fun learning experience, and I'll let the photos tell the story.



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Gardening Classes 2017

Van Zandt County Library Series

Beekeeping for Beginners

Nancy Szabo, Master Gardener

Thursday, July 20, 10:30am



Library Series

Gardening Classes

for July

FREE STATE MASTER GARDENERS
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Van Zandt County Library Series

Vegetables

John Womack, Master Gardener

Thursday, August 17, 6:30pm

