



BIRTHDAYS:

Volume 2, Issue 10 Nov./Dec., 2016

November

John W. Clark, 11/03
Karen Gonzalez, 11/04
Martha Mitchell, 11/12
MiMi Sherwin, 11/15
Tommy Phillips, 11/17
Donna Burcham, 11/25
Elaine Smith, 11/27
Sally Mitchell, 11/30
Bob Williams, 11/30

December

Joy Crabtree, 12/14

Master Gardeners of 2016 Take on Extension Office Front Garden

By Karen Gonzalez



Sketch Book Plan for new Garden



Original Front Yard

Seasons come and seasons go but one thing that never changes is LOVE!

I have found in these last seasons that we (the up and coming master gardeners) LOVE our beautiful gardens. We all have our own weeds to hoe but we have all come together with our own God given gifts to give our best.

All that to say "2016 Free State Master Gardeners Rock!" With just a couple of tweaks left, the job is almost complete. And better than expected. (God's good like that.) I'm proud to say that a group of strangers with a love of plants and gardening have been able to do a tough job that has turned out beautiful.

A huge part of the projects' success is due to the hard sweaty work of all members but even more than that is the

generosity of each of the team members. We've had weed killers, dirt and mulch haulers, rock movers (sometimes more than once on weeds and rocks) very hard workers, planners, painters, shoppers, encouragers, some on the front lines and some in the trenches, and everyone has given their all and then some. There have been several secret touches, lots of good old elbow grease, sweat and tears, don't forget the magic tonic of fish emulsion and seaweed mix... water it in good, hug your new friends share with you're new neighbors, encourage everybody you can and thank God for the beauty and ability he has given us.

From all of 2016 Master Gardeners, thanks for all the help, knowledge, and encouragement. It's been a real down to earth experience we hope to pass on to the next crew!! And your baking is awesome too!

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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



Now there is a walkway, and a refreshed new front to the office, Thanks Class of 16

Gardening Chores

Tommy Phillips

County Extension Agent, Ag/NR

NOVEMBER

Now is the time to tidy what remains of our summer gardens. Removing plant debris this year discourages diseases and insects that may return next spring.

Perennials can be divided and replanted at this time.

Gathering all the vegetables from the vegetable patch will keep "Jack Frost" from getting the last tomatoes. Cultivation of the garden area in winter reduces weeds and grass problems by exposing their roots to freezes.

Pansies should be planted in rich, moist soil in sun or light shade. Feed them with a balanced fertilizer or blood meal. Control pill bugs, slugs and snails with commercial snail bait. They love pansies.

Have a soil test. If lime is needed and applied in the fall it will be more effective for the spring garden.

Mulch plantings to protect from winter. Grass and shrubs should not be lacking moisture going into a hard freeze. Water well.

Composting all those leaves this month will pay off in the spring.

Drain gasoline from power tools and run the engine until fuel in the carburetor is used up.

Drain and store garden hoses and watering equipment in accessible areas. You may still need them throughout the winter.

DECEMBER

December is the month when shorter daylight hours and cold weather really begin to restrict the gardener's outdoor activities. Winter gives you a great opportunity to catch up on reading your favorite gardening magazines and books. Here are a few tips and topics to occupy the gardener's time this month.

Planting: There's still time to plant pansies. These colorful annuals will live through the winter and be spectacular next spring. They work especially well when mixed with bulbs. Choose bright and light colors if you'd like the bed to be seen from a distance

Also, hardy trees and shrubs can be planted this month. Just take care to water them carefully, not letting them dry out, nor keeping the soil sopping wet.

If you are planning to create a new shrub, flower or rose bed for next spring, go ahead and prepare the soil now. Dig it up, remove the weeds, and work in leaves and compost. If you discover that the soil stays wet longer than it should, add more organic matter, sand and soil and create a raised bed to facilitate better drainage.

Remember those tulips and hyacinths you have chilling in the refrigerator? After 45 to 60 days of chilling, they can be set out in the landscape.

PRUNING:

Don't get too anxious to do major pruning. Most woody trees and shrubs can be safely pruned December through early March. But, if you can't justify the removal of each branch or limb, put up your clippers and go spade the garden instead.

Some of the right reasons for pruning include removing dead or winter-killed or diseased or insect-injured wood, as well as branches broken by wind or wild kids. Avoid severe pruning if possible. Never leave stubs, long or short, which do not heal properly and invite the entry of insects and disease.

Plants which bloom in early spring, like azaleas, forsythia and spirea, should be pruned after they flower, while those that bloom later in the spring and summer can be pruned during wintertime. Roses are pruned in mid-February except spring-only bloomers which are cut back after spring flowering.

One pruning practice that needs to be changed is how crape myrtles are pruned. Every winter crape myrtles are severely cut back to short stubs resulting in ugly plants. Although there is disagreement among landscapers on whether or not to prune back crape myrtles, scientific research indicates that early winter pruning of crape myrtles can result in significant freeze damage.

Gardening Events – November/December

by Marsha Sasser

- Saturday, November 12:** Edgewood Heritage Festival
- Saturday, November 12:** Smith County MGers, as part of the 2016 Garden Lecture Series, presents Jared Barnes, "Foodscaping with Incredible Edibles", at the Tyler Rose Garden Center. 8:00 a.m. Cost \$15.
- Saturday, November 12:** "Herbs for the Winter Garden," at the Dallas Arboretum. 12:00-2:00 p.m. \$35.
Call 214-515-6615 for info.
- Friday, November 18:** "Earth-Kind Living Conference" at First Baptist Church, 116 Oak Avenue, Sulphur Springs. 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
\$35 at the door. Contact Larry Pierce, 903-834-6191 or lpierce@ag.tamu.edu.
- Friday, December 2:** Same as the Nov. 18th program except at different location:
Ben E. Keith Beverages, 2019 W. Oak Street, Palestine.



Earth-Kind Living Expo Offered at two locations

November 18, 2016
First Baptist Church, 116 Oak Ave
SULPHUR SPRINGS, TEXAS OR

December 2, 2016
Ben E. Keith 2019 West Oak
PALESTINE, TEXAS

For more information and to register,
go to <https://agriflife.org/earthkindliving>

Pre-registration October 10-November 10: \$25
(after November 10 or on-site: \$35)

For general information, contact Larry Pierce at lpierce@ag.tamu.edu

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

This conference will introduce consumers, producers, and volunteers to Earth-Kind Living, a balanced system using university-research-proven techniques for quality living, environmental stewardship, and overall well-being. Experts will share information on agricultural production, land stewardship, health and wellness, and Earth-Kind friendly homes.

SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

General Sessions:

*Research Based Truth in Agricultural Production,
Land Stewardship, Health and Wellness*
Susan Ballabina, PhD
Ron Gill, PhD
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

*Environmental Stewardship,
Managing for the Next Generation*
Steve Nelle, Range & Wildlife Specialist
Gary Price, Rancher and Businessman

Food Waste
Jenna Anding, PhD
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Concurrent Sessions:

Earth-Kind Pasture Management
Clint Perkins, MS

Earth-Kind Vegetables and Herbs
Tim Hartmann, MS

Earth-Kind Landscapes
Steve George, PhD

*Earth-Kind Kitchen - Kitchen Composting,
Pantry Pests, Vermiculture*
Jheri-Lynn McSwain, MS
Denita Young, MEd

Earth-Kind Beekeeping
Janet Rowe - Master Gardener

*Earth-Kind Home - Air Quality,
Energy Efficiency, Water*
Mandy Patrick, MA

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

2016 Southern Region Master Gardener Conference

By Paula Marshall

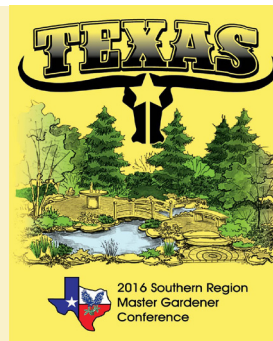
Master Gardeners from six states attended the 2016 Southern Region Master Gardener Conference held November 1st through the 4th at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in Arlington, Texas.

Presentations on various topics were given by several experts from Texas A&M, Arkansas State University, Mississippi State, Bob Byers, Director of Fort Worth Botanical Gardens, Dr. William C. Welch, Professor and Texas AgriLife Extension Service Horticulturist, G. Michael Shoup, owner of Antique Rose Emporium, Steve Chamblee of Chandor Gardens, and Neil Sperry, Author and Broadcaster.

Some of the topics presented Wednesday and Thursday were Community Gardening, The Art of Diagnosis, Landscape Renovations, Dynamic Soils, Texas Rose Rustlers, Genetically Modified Organisms/ Genetic Engineering, Kids in the Garden, Foodscaping – Edible Ornamentals, and several others. Participants chose which sessions they wanted to attend when registering for the conference.

Neil Sperry gave an informative and enjoyable talk entitled, "Gardening: Facts, Fun and Fabulous!" He told the group that he has been suffering from Vertigo and migraine headaches since June, and hasn't been able to attend any speaking events. He did fine, though, on this day and entertained the crowd with his humor and knowledge, speaking for almost an hour and a half. He has published a new book entitled, "Lone Star Gardening" that includes a monthly calendar listing gardening/lawn/landscaping activities that should be accomplished that month.

In addition to the presentations, many tours were offered to participants including a trip to the Fort Worth Botanical Gardens, Chandor Gardens, a tour of several private gardens in the area, and an event at Billy Bob's in Fort Worth on Thursday evening.



Pat's Reminders

By President Pat Briggs

Our year is coming to a close, and I thank you for allowing me to serve you this year as president of our association.

Our Executive Committee has been an exemplary group, full of good ideas and lots of energy. They have put in many hours planning and tirelessly working to improve our group and make everything we do represent the MG program as a viable educational program with multiple benefits for its members. We have also assimilated a group of 8 interns into our membership and they have hit the ground running.

I look forward to next year as we continue to build our FSMGA.

Free State Master Gardeners

Friday, Dec. 9th, 6:30p.m., Ag Extension Bldg.

Awards and Christmas Banquet

Catered BBQ - \$8.50 per person

Reservations by Friday, Dec. 2nd, 903-288-7928

Giving Thanks at Thanksgiving

For many of us, Thanksgiving is our favorite holiday – just family and friends, good food, lots of laughter, lots of special traditions, and years of good memories. Really, there's usually no need to change anything and certainly no time to add anything else. However, here are some ideas that might enhance the day and could become traditions also.

Place inspirational quotes about gratitude at each dinner plate or around the room and have each person read the one that is at his/her plate.

Some ideas might be:

Gratitude turns what we have into enough.

God gave you a gift of 86,400 seconds today. Have you used one to say "Thank you"?

Silent gratitude is not much use to anyone.

Grace isn't a little prayer you chant before receiving a meal. It's a way to live

If you want to turn your life around, try thankfulness. It will change your life mightily.

Do not take anything for granted – not one smile or one person or one rainbow or one breath or one night in your cozy bed.



Try a Thanksgiving tree (a table tree) decorated with family photos and paper leaves. Everyone prints what they are thankful for on the leaves. Everyone writes something that they are thankful for on a piece of paper and puts it into a glass jar. Someone reads each paper before eating. Names are optional.

Find a charity, local or online, that you, as a group, can donate to as part of your Thanksgiving. My family uses calfarley.org or onesimplewish.org. We look at the website and decide how much we can donate and talk about how fortunate we are and how we can help others all year round.

Thankfulness is a lovely habit to cultivate, and we all need to be reminded how blessed we are.

New Free State Master Gardener Website in the works. If you have some ideas or information you would like on it please contact Nancy at nancy.l.szabo@gmail.com.

Back in June when we had the Jubilee I offered to show kids how to use egg shells as a home for seed starting.

After reading and listening to one of our speakers at the fall gardening seminar I decided to practice my egg shell seed starters and start a fall garden.

I am very pleased with the results, the rains did not wash the seeds down the hill to my neighbors' yard and I am ready to plant the eggs. Arugula, Basil, Carrots and Cilantro, so far!.

Practicing What You Preach!

By Anna Baker





Fermenting vegetables is a simple, inexpensive process to preserve food that was used reliably for thousands of years. It is now re-emerging as nutritionists have begun to realize that all that sterilizing and freezing was not really good for the nutrient content or the flavor of the vegetables. Fermented foods are beginning to be considered artisan – part of the new food movement that encourages simple, fresh foods. Fermenting vegetables requires only the vegetable, some salt, and a crock or glass jar with a lid – pretty simple. Well yes and no! It does require a process, but once you understand the process, it really is pretty simple.

Fermented vegetables are nutrient dense and are part of the puzzle that helps keep the good bacteria, or probiotics, in our diet and in our gut, and they also help to support our immune system. Also very important, the fermentation process doesn't call for any chemical preservatives.

Okay, so what can I ferment? I will give you a partial list – arugula, asparagus, basil, green beans, beets, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, chard, cilantro, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, etc. Notice that I am only to C. The list goes on and also includes fruits, desserts, and drinks.

There are actually 3 slightly different procedures that will give you the same end result – a lacermented pickled vegetable. First there is kraut making; next is brine pickling; and the third process is a melding of the two. Let's just start with kraut making because most of have already done some pickling. Remember to use clean, washed utensils and vegetables, but there is no need for sterilizing anything. The kraut mantra is shred, salt, submerge.

The Process: 3 ½ lbs (1-2 heads) cabbage, 1 ½ tablespoons unrefined

Fermenting: Back to the Past

By Sandra Rosen

sea salt

1. Remove some of the coarse outer leaves of the cabbage. With a stainless steel knife, quarter and core the cabbage and slice thinly. Transfer to a large bowl.
2. Add one tablespoon of the salt and with your hands, massage it into the leaves. Then taste. You should be able to taste the salt without it being overwhelming. Add more salt, if necessary. The cabbage will soon look wet and limp and liquid will begin to pool. If you don't see much brine (the liquid), let it stand, covered for 45 minutes. Then massage again.
3. Now transfer the cabbage to a crock or a 2 quart jar, a few handfuls at the time, pressing down on the cabbage with your fist or a tamper to work out air pockets. You should see some of the brine on top of the cabbage when you press down. Leave 4 inches of head space for a crock, 2 to 3 inches for a jar. Top the cabbage with one or two of the reserved outer leaves. Then, for the crock, top the leaves with a plate that fits the opening of the container and covers as much of the vegetables as possible. Weigh the plate down with a sealed, water-filled jar. For a jar, use a sealed, water-filled jar or a zip lock bag as a sealer-weight combination.
4. Set the jar or crock on a baking sheet to ferment, somewhere nearby, out of direct sunlight and cool, for 4 to 14 days. Check daily to make sure the cabbage is submerged, pressing down as needed.
5. You can test the kraut on day 4. You will know it's ready when it's pleasingly sour and pickle-y tasting. The cabbage should have softened some, but still retains some crunch, and it is more yellow than green and slightly translucent.
6. Ladle the kraut into smaller jars and tamp down. Pour in any brine that's left. Tighten the lids, then store in the refrigerator. This kraut will keep, refrigerated, for one year

You can add other vegetables into this basic kraut recipe. In addition, you could use this same process with other vegetables – cauliflower, Brussel sprouts, etc. You can also add herbs and spices. You will certainly encounter unfamiliar tastes, textures, and odors. Some even call fermented vegetables the ultimate super foods. There are many, many recipes and directions and videos on the web. Enjoy!

Garden Guru

Dear Garden Guru – What is a CSA and are there any around Canton?

CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture and for over 25 years has been a popular way for consumers to buy local, seasonal food directly from a farmer. Consumers purchase a share (or membership or subscription) at the beginning of the season and in return receive a bag (or box or basket) of produce each week throughout the season. Sometimes the farmers want the consumers to work when they pick up the produce; others deliver to pick up points around the city; and still others don't require a subscription, you can just go and buy from the farm. In Fruitvale, there is the Fisher Family Farm and Ranch; in Canton, the Partin Ranch; and in Wills Point, there is the Blessed Farm. For more information go to the web site localharvest.org

