



BIRTHDAYS:

October

Anna Baker, 10/9
Lou Ellen Bliss, 10/10
Joan Driver, 10/11

November

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

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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

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What is Grafting and Why Would I Want to Do It?

by John Womack

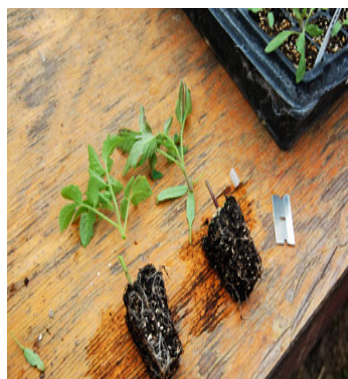
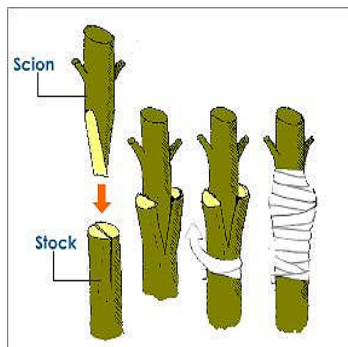
According to one source, grafting is the mad scientist's way of propagating your plants. Slice a piece from one plant and splice that piece onto another plant. You can now have an apple tree that produces both Red Delicious and Golden Delicious apples. Thus the famous "fruit cocktail tree." "But why," you ask, "would I want to do this? It must be complicated."

It does require a special technique, but remember those heirloom tomatoes that taste so great, but don't produce many tomatoes? Graft the heirloom tomato (maybe a Cherokee Purple) onto a Celebrity tomato rootstock, and now you have Cherokee Purple heirloom tomatoes producing in numbers like the Celebrity usually does. What you have done is take the scion of the Cherokee purple (the plant that produces the most desirable fruit) and graft it onto the rootstock of a plant that has desirable disease resistance, stress tolerance, or a vigorous root system; in this case the Celebrity tomato which has a vigorous root system.

Although grafting is not difficult, there are some steps that must be followed. First, you must use young tomato plants, usually with a stem about

1/8" or 3/16" in diameter, not larger than the size of a pencil. Both plants must be about the same size. Planting seedlings designated for grafting at the same time will help ensure the sizes are the same. You could use larger plants, but younger plants heal faster and require less stringent conditions for healing. Next you will need a grafting clip, preferably transparent. (These can be ordered from most any seed catalogue.) Next you would cut the rootstock at a deep angle, 45 degrees, below the cotyledons (the first leaves that develop).

Now match the angled cuts of the scion and the rootstock and use the grafting clip to hold the two plants together. The plant should now be in the planting medium of the original rootstock plant. The plants should be misted and placed in an environment that has relative humidity between 85 and 95 percent and temperature between 72 and 85 degrees F. The plant now needs to be in a dark environment for about 4 days and then gradually exposed to more light.



Again, grafting is not difficult, but the steps must be followed carefully or it will not be successful. Once you get the hang of it, grafting plants is fun and full of unusual possibilities.

Are you interested? (In case you think this is something new, my mother taught me to do grafting of fruit trees many, many years ago.)

Gardening Chores

Tommy Phillips

County Extension Agent, Ag/NR

October has brought us relief from the blistering heat. It seemed summer would never end. Now if we could just get some rain! I know the milder weather has given me and many others energy to work on outdoor projects. Here are several gardening items for your to-do list this month;

Flowers: Many colorful annuals for the fall and winter gardening season can be started now. Easy types from seed include sweet peas, larkspur, poppies, cornflower, bluebonnets and phlox.

Pansies, the most popular of the cool season flowers can be transplanted now. While you will enjoy a scattering of bloom this winter as they become established, the real show will be early next spring. Pansies make great companion plantings for spring bulbs, which also should be purchased and planted soon.

Besides pansies, some other bedding plants that can be planted in October include pinks, dianthus, flowering cabbage and kale, giant red mustard, 'Bright Lights' Swiss chard, stock, snapdragons, wallflower (*Citrona erysimum*), calendulas, diascia and nemesia. Visit your local nursery to see what's in stock.

A tip from Dr. William Welch, Extension Horticulturist at Texas A&M: If you plan to save caladium tubers for another year, dig them in late October, and allow to dry in a well-ventilated but shady area. After 7 to 10 days, remove leaves and dirt, and pack in dry peat moss, vermiculite, or similar material for storage. Pack tubers so they do not touch each other. Dust with all-purpose fungicide as you pack. Place container in an area where temperature won't drop below 50 degrees F.

Landscaping: Fall is an ideal time to plant trees and shrubs. Planting now gives them several months' head start to get their roots established over spring plantings. This is also the best time to increase your supply of perennials by dividing and transplanting established clumps of daylily, ajuga, lirioppe, mondo grass, iris, columbine, Penstemon, yarrow, Shasta daisy, coreopsis, purple coneflower, oxalis, and violets.

Vegetables: There are a few vegetables that can still be started this month – the sooner the better. These include beets, carrots, collards, garlic, leaf lettuce, mustard, radish, spinach, Swiss chard and turnips. If you are short on space in your yard for a vegetable patch, grow them in containers on your patio (if you have enough sun). All of these can be successfully grown in large pots or boxes, provided you water and fertilize them regularly. If you have a traditional garden, be sure to mulch to prevent crusting and weeds. Speaking of mulching, many trees have already begun shedding leaves. You cannot burn them because of the burn ban in all counties. But, why burn them when you can use them as a water-saving mulch for your garden and flower beds? Just run the mower over them to shred them into smaller pieces, and then apply a layer around your plants to reduce evaporation and cut down on weeds. As they break down, they will enrich your soil, providing a better growing environment for your plants

Lawns: If you have not fertilized your lawn yet for the fall, do so now, provided you are also regularly watering your lawn! Fall fertilization, also known as winterizing, promotes continued lawn growth so the grass can continue producing and storing food reserves for use during spring green up. Due to the Stage 1 voluntary water restrictions announced this week, reduced watering means you should also reduce the amount of fertilizer you put out. If you are not watering your yard, then you should also eliminate the fall application of fertilizer. There is no need to be forcing growth if water is not available to the turf grass plants. October is also a good month to lime the lawn and flower beds, if needed, based on soil test results. Cooler weather brings dormant seeds to life. In the world of weeds, you can broadly classify weeds as warm season and cool season. Cool season weeds need mild temperatures (and soil moisture) to germinate, grow and flower. Typical cool season weeds include henbit, chickweed, cranesbill (*Geranium*), lawn burweed, and annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*). If you have maintained a thick lawn through proper mowing, watering, and fertilizing, then winter or cool season weeds should not be a big problem. But, if your grass is thin, and full of summer weeds, you may want to consider using a pre-emergence herbicide to prevent cool season weeds from germinating. You need to put it out immediately, since this mild weather is ideal for seed germination. BUT, if your grass has been severely stressed by the drought, then skip applying an herbicide, because turf grasses under moisture stress are more subject to injury from herbicide applications

Keep in mind that many pre-emergence products have no effect if applied after the seeds have germinated. These products must also be watered in immediately or their effectiveness will be reduced or lost. Read and follow label directions.

Gardening Events – September/October

By Marsha Sasser

Tuesday, November 1: Smith County Master Gardeners present “*First Tuesday in the Garden: Put Your Garden to Bed*”, by SCMGer Ed Bryant. Noon-1 p.m. in the Idea Garden at the Tyler Rose Garden. Free. (You might want to take a chair.)

Saturday, November 12: SCMGers present “*Foodscaping with Incredible Edibles*” by Jared Barnes, at the Tyler Rose Garden Center, as part of their 2016 Garden Lecture Series. Registration 8:00 a.m. Cost: \$15. Call [903-590-2980](tel:903-590-2980) for info.

Keyhole Gardening

by Nancy Szabo

When was the last time you threw old jeans and phone books into your garden? Well, we did on September 10 at the Keyhole Garden seminar hosted by Kaufman County Master Gardeners. The day started with a presentation by Dr. Deb Tolman, author of “Soiled Rotten”, followed by a down and dirty afternoon building a keyhole garden.

Keyhole gardens are easy-to-garden raised containments that can be built for almost nothing, are almost self-watering and completely self-fertilizing. The process involves no native soil but instead lots of recycling and hot composting. The Keyhole Garden is a raised bed that is 6’ in diameter and built to any height. It has a slice on one side to access its distinctive feature – a kitchen basket in the center that holds food scraps and water. This basket continually nourishes and moisturizes the surrounding soil ensuring that microbial life is necessary and always

present for a productive garden. This garden, which can be found in the Kaufman County MG Discovery Garden, was built using cinder blocks, chicken wire, a dumpster load of cardboard, phone books, shredded paper, old jeans, chicken manure, grass clippings and much more. The secret is maintaining a 3:Carbon to 1:Nitrogen ratio when filling the structure. The top is domed from the “kitchen basket” to the wall. A 6-inch layer of potting soil is placed on top and is ready to receive plants. This garden can hold 100 vegetable plants or 70 tomato plants, or 12 fruit trees. The goal is to concentrate planting so that foliage covers the soil reducing evaporation and inhibiting weed growth.

Dr. Tolman holds a Ph.D in Environmental Sciences and Geography and is based in Clifton, TX. She is currently the owner of Avant Gardens, a multi-purpose business with the mission of developing



sustainable approaches to landscaping, education and building practices. For more information, visit www.debtolman.com.





2016 Southern Region
Master Gardener
Conference

<https://2016southernregionmg.com/>
November 1-4, Arlington, TX

H E R B S

“Plants or plant parts that are used mostly for medicinal purposes or in cooking for their flavor or aroma are traditionally called herbs.”

by Paula Marshall

When I was a child, my aunt used to visit our farm in Illinois every summer and she would bring a loaf of home-made “Dilly Bread” for all of us to enjoy. I came across her recipe the other day and decided to bake the bread to see if it was as good as I remembered. It was!

The recipe called for dill seed and, although I grow dill in my garden every year for the butterflies to enjoy and to use as a filler for bouquets of flowers, I had never saved any of the seed or dried the dill fronds (dill weed) to use in cooking. However, that has now changed!

When I went to the store to buy dill seed, it was \$4.99 for a tiny little container – about half of which I needed for one loaf of the bread. The dill in my garden has reseeded from the spring planting and you had better believe that I will now harvest my own dill seed and dill weed this fall. In fact, I have already dried some volunteer plants that came up late summer and now have plenty of dill weed to get me through the winter.

Herbs are some of the easiest, edible plants to grow in a garden. You don't have to have a special spot for them. They're happy to be tucked in among vegetables, flowers, or used as a border. Most of them are aromatic, attracting beneficials to the garden, and many such as mint, parsley, sage, rosemary and garlic tend to repel certain destructive insects.

Many grow quickly and easily by planting seed (dill, basil, cilantro) so don't think you have to buy transplants of these; however, I have had better luck with transplants of oregano, thyme, and parsley.

I dry oregano, thyme, and dill fronds on my kitchen counter, but if I am in a hurry, I will put them on a baking rack which has been placed on top of a cookie sheet and set the rack and herbs in the back of my car (or trunk) on a hot sunny day with low humidity. The herbs will dry within a couple of days and the car smells good too.

I have learned recently that you can freeze basil – and it will keep its color. Place the basil leaves in a baggie and try to separate them from one another the best you can. Add water to the bag, covering the leaves, and lay it flat in the freezer. When you are ready to use it, break off what you need from the icy chunk and let it thaw. The basil leaves will be as pretty as when you picked them. Some people freeze basil leaves in ice cube trays which works just as well.

Always pick the herbs that you plan to harvest early in the morning when they are the most flavorful and be sure to wash them several times in a bowl of water to remove any bugs or debris.

DILL

REPELS:

- * tomato hornworms;
- * squash bugs;
- * cabbage loopers;
- * spider mites;
- * aphids;
- * feeds the black swallow tail butterfly

Aunt Margaret's Dilly Bread

- 1 PKG YEAST
- 1/4 CUP WARM WATER
- 1 CUP SMALL CURD COTTAGE CHEESE
(room temperature or slightly warmed in microwave – you don't want to kill the yeast)
- 2 TBS DILL SEED
- 1 TBS DRIED MINCED ONION
- 1 TSP SALT
- 1 TBS SUGAR
- 2 TBS SOFT BUTTER
- 1 EGG UNBEATEN
- 2 1/4 CUPS FLOUR

Soften yeast in warm water in a medium size mixing bowl.

If cottage cheese is cold, warm it slightly in the microwave or a small sauce pan. Do not let it get hot – it will kill the yeast.

Stir cottage cheese, dill seed, onion, salt, sugar, butter and egg into the bowl with the yeast/water mixture.

Stir in flour, gradually forming a stiff dough. Cover bowl and let rise for 1 hour in a warm place. Stir down and turn into a well-greased or sprayed pyrex baking bowl (1 qt. size, round or oval). Cover and let rise again for 30 to 40 minutes.

Bake in a 350 oven for approximately 40 minutes or until the top begins to turn a golden brown. (If you want top to truly be golden brown, brush with melted butter before baking.)

Remove from oven and let stand for a few minutes. Turn out onto a cooling rack and brush top with more melted butter and sprinkle with coarse salt.

Slice a bit thick and butter each slice to serve.

Wrap in foil, for reheating, or freeze until ready to use. (or keep in refrigerator if using in two or three days.)

Free State Master Gardeners Native Plant Seminar

By Nancy Szabo

Native plants and grasses were on everyone's mind September 8 during the second annual Free State Master Gardener open to the public event. This year the Master Gardeners teamed up with the AgriLife Wildlife Management

to preparing the land, planting and allowing the natives to establish themselves. Native grasses provide grazing for cattle, erosion control, wildlife habitat, water filtration and soil formation.

Dr. Dotty Woodson, a Water Resources Extension Program Specialist, finished off the evening with an informative presentation on



Committee to host a night filled with information for the rancher and backyard gardener.

The evening started with Ms. Heidi Bailey, a Texas Parks



Utilizing Natives in the Landscape. Handouts on Native and Adapted Plants for North Texas were available. Why use natives? Because it just makes sense. They require less water, little maintenance, are naturally disease and pest-resistant, require little or no fertilizer and they are hardy and beautiful additions to your landscape. Dr. Woodson's presentation included recommendations for trees, shrubs, ground covers, grasses, vines and flowers that will do well here in East Texas.



and Wildlife biologist, speaking on Native Prairie Restoration. Native grasses, wildflowers and forbs provide many benefits to a landowner because they evolved here and are suited to the climate and grow well in the soils of the region. To convert a pasture from introduced grasses (bermuda, coastal, etc.) to native grasses requires a three year commitment

A special thanks goes out to Mr. Chris Brumley of Brumley Farms who donated over twenty plants for door prizes. Brumley Farms is open by appointment at 36580 Hwy 64, Wills Point, TX 972.670.7052. Thank you to both the FSMG committee and Wildlife Management committees for their hard work putting on a wonderful program.



If you attended the seminar and/or helped prepare for it, don't forget to add your hours to A&M website. This is how it should be categorized according to Tommy: Hours before the day of the meeting in planning are volunteer hours. Time spent on the day of seminar including setting up and breaking down room is counted as CEU time. Texas.volunteersystem.org

Master Naturalist to Offer Open House

The East Texas Chapter of Master Naturalist, a non-profit organization, will hold its 2nd annual OPEN HOUSE from 6:30-8:30pm at the Tyler Nature Center, 11942 FM 848 in Tyler, on Thursday, Oct. 29. In preparation for our 2017 classes, members will present table displays showing prospective trainees the types of volunteer activities our members are involved in.

Light refreshments will be served and Valerie Marler with Crosstimbers Ranch Wildlife Center will give a presentation on bobcats. Please go to the website at <http://txmn.org/etwd/> for an application and more information. The Master Naturalist program is sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas A & M AgriLife. Come learn with us!

Thanks, Jim Lathem

Volunteer Opportunity

By Jim Lathem

Sunday, October 2, I worked in the Discovery Butterfly Garden at the State Fair of Texas. It was lots of fun showing children and adults three caterpillars (two eating foliage and one hanging in a "J" shape preparing to spin a cocoon). Everyone enjoyed the fragrance of Almond Verbena. Frost Flower is a "magnet" for butterflies, a favorite of Monarch butterflies, and honey bees. It is a Florida native wild flower. I purchased a packet of Frost Flower seeds from Florida Wild Flower Growers Cooperative. Their email address is floridawildflowers.com.

Discovery Garden has a Master Garden demonstration garden. All volunteers must attend an orientation before the State Fair begins, and are provided free parking in the Discovery Garden parking lot and free admission to the State Fair. Please contact Jennifer Hoffman if you would like to learn more about volunteering during 2017 State Fair of Texas. Her email address is jhoffman@texasdiscoverygardens.org.

Let's all go to the Dallas Arboretum Wednesday, October 19th

Members have been asking that we venture out as a group and visit some places that are of interest to Master Gardeners. What better place than to visit the Dallas Arboretum? No R.S.V.P's are required. Everyone is on their own as far as travel arrangements go, but for those who want to stay together as a group, we'll meet at 10:00 at the ticket booth. **If weather is bad, trip will be canceled. If there's time and we need to cancel, we'll send out an email. Otherwise, please call Paula if you have a question about the weather. 972-877-7988**

Here are the details: When: **Wednesday, October 19th** - Arboretum is open from 10:00 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays (normally closes at 5:00)

Where: **8525 Garland Road, Dallas, 214-515-6500**

Cost: ***General Admission is \$15 for ages 13-64 and \$12 Age 65+**

Parking: \$15 (Parking is \$8 if you reserve on-line.)

OPTIONAL: Admission to Children's Garden: \$3.00 (applies to DA members too) *General admission is BOGO on Wednesdays through October (Buy One, Get One free). This offer applies to tickets bought at the booth, not those purchased on-line. Arboretum members park for free and may bring a guest at no admission charge.

Garden Guru

Dear Garden Guru – Why do I have to chill my tulip bulbs? Will it really make a difference?

Yes, it will make a difference. Chilling breaks a cycle that would allow the plant to begin growth too early. This keeps the embryo from emerging during hot weather which would potentially kill the new growth. The more scientific definition has to do with a gene known as FLC or Flowering Lotus C. The chilling period represses this gene, even after the chilling is done, until other environmental signals, such as day length, confirm it is okay to flower.

Dear Garden Guru – I have so many small oak shoots sprouting up around my oak tree. I have been trying to dig them out but they come back and there are so many. Help! I don't have time for this.

Digging them out is time consuming and although it does keep them from coming back in such abundance, they do keep coming back. You cannot use any herbicides, of course. I have the same problem with our youpon bushes – so many sprouts and these grow out from the bush quite a bit. My solution, not a very scientific one, is to cut them down with the weed eater. They come back, but this method does save time. Another solution would be to put weed barrier, double or triple it, around the tree. That might help for a season or two.

John Womack is our Garden Guru. Please send all your questions to him at sandrарosen42@yahoo.com

