



BIRTHDAYS:

January

Hey, we are all staying young!

February

Nancy Szabo, 2/07
 Pat Mullin, 2/12
 Sherri Doss, 2-17
 Connie Tramel, 2/21

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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
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 Sandra Rosen Joan Driver
 Paula Marshall Anna Baker
 Connie Tramel

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2018 Officers for Van Zandt Free State Master Gardeners

By Sandra Rosen

Although we all easily recognize the new slate of officers in our MG group, how well do we really know each of them? Here they are with a bit of information that you might not know.



President – Bob Williams. Bob's grandfather had a truck garden in East Lansing, MI, when he was very young. He grew mostly sweet corn, but also tomatoes, onions, fruit, etc. Bob and his cousin would sell at a roadside stand. He remembers taking a salt shaker to the stand so that they could eat tomatoes as they waited for customers. When he retired, Bob decided that he wanted a farm that the grandkids could visit and hopefully have memories as he does. He had a backyard kitchen garden for years but wanted to increase his knowledge, so the MG program seemed the thing to do. He is continually learning, is amazed at how much you can grow in raised beds, and has discovered that horse manure compost is like "gold."



Vice President – Mimi Sherwin. Mimi became a MG after friends in Dallas spoke highly of the program. When she and her husband moved here in 2001, she finally had a place for a garden where she could grow things. Mimi remembers as a child going with her father and grandfather to their gardens and how she enjoyed these experiences. The best part of gardening for her is the harvest of the very "first fruits", no matter if it is a squash or a tomato or a green bean. She, like all MG, loves the sense of accomplishment of gardening, growing, and harvesting.



Vice President – Louella Iliff. Louella has always loved house plants, flowers, landscaping, but felt frustrated because she had more failures than successes. She totally avoided vegetables because she was afraid of failure there also. (Sounds familiar, doesn't it?) So becoming a MG has been the answer to learning and to success. Sharon Palmer and Tommy Phillips have been a great help to Louella in learning about vegetables, and it is interesting that the project for her intern class is a hugely successful community vegetable garden. Louella enjoys working with the warm and welcoming MG's and is proud to be a part of the program.



Treasurer – Sally Mitchell. Sally has always enjoyed growing plants, mostly flowers and creating flower beds. She first learned about plants from an older man in her neighborhood who grew plants in his backyard for sale. He was very knowledgeable, and she loved to visit when all his plants were in bloom. Sally and her husband spent 20 years in the Air Force, and she always enjoyed the landscaping process every time they moved. Since her vegetable gardening experience was limited, when she learned there was a MG program being offered in Van Zandt County, she called Tommy and the rest is history. Still, her favorite part of gardening is the flower beds and says that beginning a new flower bed is like working with a blank canvas.



Secretary – Paula Marshall. Paula's mother was a gardener and although Paula didn't help much, she feels that exposure is what developed her interest later on in her 20's. Her husband encouraged her to sign up for the MG class in 2014, and her favorite parts of gardening are the fun of growing her own vegetables and flowers and seeing the interest that her children and grandchildren have when they come to visit. In addition, the people she has met and friends she has made through the MG experience make it really special.



Assistant Secretary – Connie Tramel. Connie's mom grew mostly hedges and ivies and irises, but watching the Rose Bowl Parade every year really made Connie become interested in flowers. Taking a floral design course also kept her interested, but she really liked flower beds and vegetable gardens. She also worked at a feed store where there were plenty of farmers who were willing to share their fresh vegetables. Connie still misses the Herrin Feed and Seed Store in Wills Point. When she saw an article in the paper about the Van Zandt FSMG, she realized that was an opportunity she was ready for, and she is now enjoying her education growing flowers and vegetables.

January Gardening Chores

Tommy Phillips
County Extension Agent, Ag/NR

Planting

- Continue to plant new shade trees, fruit trees, and evergreen shrubs. Mulch root areas.
- Continue to transplant established trees and shrubs while they are dormant.
- Finish planting pre-chilled tulip and hyacinth bulbs if you did not do so in December.
- Plant any bare-root plants including fruit and nut trees as well as roses.
- Continue planting pansies, snapdragons, kale, Swiss chard and other cool season annuals. Plant onion transplants anytime soil is ready. Plant spinach and snap peas mid to late month.
- Sow seeds in flats or containers to get a jump on the season. Petunias, begonias and impatiens can be started now. Tomatoes, peppers and beans can be started in late January into mid-February indoors, in a hot bed or heated greenhouse.

Pruning

- Prune with a purpose. Do not “top” any trees or shrubs including crape myrtles. Never leave stubs. Cut flush against the maining branches on shrubs and along the branch collar on trees. Peach and plum trees should be pruned to encourage horizontal branching; remove any vertical shoots.
- Continue to prune evergreen trees such as magnolias, live oaks, and wax myrtles to minimize possible ice damage.
- Re-shape evergreen shrubs and shade trees, as needed, during the winter dormant period.

Plant Care

- Check houseplants for insect pests such as scale, mealy bugs, and spider mites.
- Continue to mulch leaves from the lawn and remove debris from turf areas to reduce disease and insect problems.
- Continue to water lawn once every three weeks or so, if you have not had at least 1” of supplemental rain.
- Watch for scale insects on camellias, hollies, and euonymus.
- Water outdoor landscape plants when the soil is dry. Water plants thoroughly before a hard freeze to reduce chances of freeze damage.
- Fertilize pansies and other winter annuals about once a month throughout the winter.
- Protect tender plants from hard freezes.
- Till and prepare new planting beds when soil is workable. Work in organic material. Add compost and mulch to all beds.
- Know your soil by getting a soil test. You have time to get your soil in “shape” before Spring time!



President's Message

Happy New Year Master Gardeners

I hope everyone enjoyed the many activities we had last year as well as all the new programs we initiated such as moving our membership meetings to the Van Zandt County Library, the Public Library Series, the years of service awards and the volunteer hours awards. We plan to continue with those again this year plus add a few new things into the mix. Topics for the membership meetings are being finalized as well as the Library Series which will kickoff in May. Remember, this is a program where we want our own Master

Gardeners to share their knowledge with the public. Congratulations to the 2017 Intern Class for finishing your first year with our Association and we look forward to your active involvement in 2018. I'm please to announce that it appears we will have 11 or 12 people in our 2018 Intern class which includes three couples. Also being planned for 2018 is both a Spring and a Fall public seminar. The Spring one is going to be **“Growing Fruit in East TX”** and the Fall seminar is **“Perennials, Annuals and Texas Natives in the Landscape”**, presented by Steve Chamblee of the Chandor Gardens in Weatherford. Steve is an excellent speaker and a contributor to Neil Sperry's magazine. Both events will be held at St. Therese Catholic Church in Canton. I'm also excited to be working with a few new board members, Mimi Sherwin, Louella Iliff and Connie Tramel. Big shout out to both Paula and Sally for also staying on for another year. Lastly, I would like to put in a plug for the **State Master Gardener 40th Anniversary Conference in April**. Registration is open and to encourage our members to attend this three-day conference, the board has agreed to reimburse attending members \$100 to help defray the cost.

Geranium Sale Kick-Off

Free State Master Gardener Association of Van Zandt County
2018 Annual Geranium Sale
 Locally Grown Americana Geraniums
 to be distributed Wednesday, March 28, 2018
 Three Beautiful Colors to Choose From
 For more information or to order:
 Call Pat Mullin, 903-520-8556 or
 Texas A&M University Extension Office 903-567-4149
<https://www.facebook.com/FreeStateMasterGardener>



Yes ... already... It's time to sell geraniums and make lots of \$\$\$ for the Free State Master Gardeners! Here are some important dates:

Kickoff Date/Packets Handed Out	January 11
Cut-Off Date for Orders (no exceptions)	March 23
Delivery Date and Pick-up Date	March 28

Here are some important details:

Price	\$8.00 each
Goal for each member to sell	33 plants each

Other: The sale will be structured pretty much the same as in the past with a few exceptions. There will be only one day to pick up the plants at Pat Mullin's and that will be after lunch on March 28th. Pick up times will be structured so there are not so many people there at the same time. This is the Wednesday before Easter.

There will be NO Pickups at Pat's by customers. Each member is responsible for getting the plants to their customers.

If there are any plants left at Pat's house at the end of the day on March 28th, they will be sold to people who have asked to be on a waiting list. If you don't get your orders – or arrange for another member to pick them up for you – they will be sold to someone else. No \$ will be refunded to members or their customers. Please take this seriously, as last year Pat was left holding some members' geraniums for over two weeks. The only people allowed on Pat's property will be members. Please do not bring other people with you. We will have plenty of people there to help load the geraniums for you.

Money must be collected when the customer places the order. Orders with the money can be turned in as you get them to Sally Mitchell. If you have any questions, we can address them at January's meeting (January 11, Thursday) or give Pat Mullin a call .

Free State Master Gardener Sally Mitchell, Class of 2014

As Free State Master Gardener treasurer, Sally Mitchell was honored at the December awards dinner for the largest number of volunteer hours. Sally is no stranger to dedicated service, having spent 27 years as a coordinator for a Tyler-based nonprofit which owns and operates a home for abused and neglected children.

Sally's background is steeped in family and military service. A native of small town Columbus, Texas, she attended UT-Austin and married her A&M sweetheart while they were both undergraduates. Her husband's 20-year Air Force career led to stays throughout the southwestern states and several foreign countries before they returned to Van Zandt County to live in the Mitchell family compound near Colfax. One of their greatest pleasures is having daughter Stacey and her husband recently return to live nearby, and Mike and Sally's schedules revolve around grandparent duties.

Sally says that she has always loved growing plants and using landscape to help create a home-like environment during their many moves. After learning about the Master Gardener program from a friend in Louisiana she was excited to be accepted to the 2014 class of Free State

Master Gardeners. "I love being outdoors," she says, "and I love the process of creating a space that blooms all year. It's fun to see what survives the winter and plan changes with new plants."

One of her favorite plants is lariope because of the way it adds texture and color to landscaping. It is hardy, can work alone or as a border, and its purple blooms add interest. She also enjoys container gardening and has recently become interested in heirloom plants. A big problem she has encountered resulted from planting a wrong flower variety. Remembering the beautiful violet border at a previous home, she planted woodland violets, not realizing how invasive they are. "I can only get rid of them by pulling each one up individually," she confessed. "After ten years I am making some progress. Beware of these sweet-looking little demons!"

Sally's gardening has been largely influenced by two writers, Greg Grant ("I have his books and have heard him speak on heritage plants. He writes for the *Texas Gardener*, and Steve Bender, the Grumpy Gardener of *Southern Living*. "He has good solutions to common problems. I was given his book, *Passalong Plants*, for Christmas."

(Garden photos on page 5)

SALMON PATTIES

- 1 can (15-16 Oz) pink salmon
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup flour
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 Tablespoons of liquid from salmon
- Saltine cracker crumbs

Drain salmon and save the liquid. Set aside 2 Tablespoons of this liquid.

Mix salmon, egg, onion. Stir in the flour. Add the baking powder to the 2 Tablespoons of liquid and stir until frothy. Add to salmon mixture. Make patties and roll in cracker crumbs. Fry. (I make four large patties, but smaller ones are good.) This is a great meat dish when you have forgotten to thaw something for dinner --- or the kids come by and are staying for dinner. Just make two batches!! Enjoy!

Gardening Events – Mid-Winter, 2018

By Connie Tramel

January 12 – Smith County Master Gardeners at the Library

Free lectures of 2018 at the Tyler Public Library: <http://txmg.org/smith/coming-events> or by calling 903-590-2980

1-12 MG Dee Bishop at 11:30 AM., Make No Mistake... Gardening Mistakes, What Not to Do!

2-9 Sm.Co. Ag. Greg Grant, Texas Tough, History of the Texas Superstar Plant Program

3-19 Wayne Elliott, Raised Bed Gardening on a Hillside

4-13 Andy Rathbone, Pass-along Plants

5-11 Debbie Watkins, Plant Propagation Specialist, Sex in the Garden, All About Propagation

January 16 - Master Gardener Bob Erickson will present “**Where Did Our Food Come From?**” **5:30 p.m.**, Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library, 121 S. Prairieville, Athens. This extremely interesting presentation will explore the mouth-watering subject of how and why our food has evolved through the years. This presentation is a part of Henderson County Master Gardener’s ‘Learn at the Library’ series, presented on the third Tuesday of each month. The presentation is free and open to the public.

January 17 - Work Day for Free State MG has been **canceled** for this month only.

January 31 - **Is the last day to pay \$20 membership dues to Sally Mitchell.**

February 2 - Parking at Canton Trades Days, contact Pat Mullin 903-820-8556, to volunteer, this is a fund raiser.

February 8 - Plant Health and Diagnostics Educator in Gonzales, TX,

February 14-16 - Vegetable Training in Dallas contact: Steven Hudkins at: Ag.TAMU.edu. or call 214-904-3050.

February 19-20 - MG Earth-Kind Specialist Training - at McKinney Roughs Nature Park in Cedar Creek (Bastrop CO), TX.

February 27-March 1 - 2018 JMG National Leader Training, in College Station! This 3 day JMG National Leader Training Conference will familiarize you with all aspects of Junior Master Gardener program/curricula, equip you with everything you need to host dynamic JMG Training Workshops and to effectively coach teachers/leaders to grow successful garden-based learning projects in your county! Training will emphasize proven ways you can support JMG programming at schools, after-school programs and community-based clubs. Program sustainability through community collaborations & partnerships will be addressed and a host of proven program resources and marketing materials will be provided.

March 30 - Parking Lot Fund Raiser at Canton First Monday Grounds

March 23 - Last day to order geraniums.

March 28 - Pick up geranium orders at Pat Mullins house.

1:00-3:00pm Last name of MG beginning with - A-L

3:30-5:30pm Last name of MG beginning with - M-Z

May 23-25 - Greenhouse Management Specialist Course. This training will be held in Kerrville

April 4-6 - 40th Anniversary of Master Gardener, College Station, TX

April 25 - Texas Master Gardener Conference in Victoria, TX



Classified Ads

We want to keep this feature, however, the ads need to come from our members. Please remember to send your ads into Anna at baker2anna@gmail.com.

3rd Wednesday
Master Gardener
Canceled this month only!
at
Extension Office
January 17

Garden Guru



Dear Garden Guru
– Our Guru has the flu, so here is some information they had passed along earlier.

SOME INTERESTING WEBSITES
www.localharvest.org At this web site, you put in our zip code and find that there are all sorts of interesting farms around our area. You can visit and buy from these; most are small, but interesting farms.

www.butterflywebsite.com Lots of good information on butterflies, butterfly festivals, etc.

www.tanglewoodcreekfamilyfarm.com A very interesting family farm – the children are homeschooled and they believe in using herbs as medicine. They grow mainly garlic and herbs. Some of us attended the seminar in Athens where they talked and sang and we learned a lot about growing and using garlic.

www.boggycreekfarm.com The “go-to” place in Austin to buy organic produce. Beautiful web site with lots of pictures, stories about the hens, and great recipes.

*Sally Mitchell's
Garden photos:*



2017 Awards Dinner Group Photo of Free State Master Gardeners



Awards Dinner Celebration

Paula Marshall, MG

Approximately 60 members and guests attended the 2017 Master Gardener Awards dinner held at the Van Zandt Country Club, December 14th.

Bob welcomed everyone, and after a blessing was given by County Judge, Don Kirkpatrick, a delicious buffet dinner of stuffed chicken breasts and pork loin roast, oven roasted potatoes, green beans, rolls, and salad was served with peach cobbler and cheesecake for dessert.

After dinner, Bob called Joy Crabtree to the front of the room, where she was presented with a beautiful Christmas centerpiece, and serenaded by the crowd singing "Happy Birthday," since December 14th happened to be her birthday.

Tommy introduced the special guests in attendance: Judge Don Kirkpatrick and his wife, Virgil Melton and Tim West, County Commissioners and their wives, Denise Stapleton, Canton Jr. High teacher who works with the MG's at the Butterfly Garden, Peggy Rogers, State Master Gardener President and her husband, and then gave a very special introduction and thank you to Melisa Rhodes, his counterpart at the Agri-Life office for the support she gives him throughout the year, and for all of the work she does for the community.

Bob gave a short talk about the many accomplishments our group made in 2017 and some of what he has planned for us for 2018. He thanked the Board Members for their service and gave beautiful copper garden ornaments to outgoing Past President, Pat Briggs, Co-Vice Presidents, Jimmie Pierce and John Clark and Assistant Secretary, Susan Dahlman.

Special pins were presented to members for years of service as a Master Gardener: Pat Mullin and Marsha Sasser 17 years, and Jorja Merrick 13 years. Pins were also given to members who logged 50+ and 100+ hours or more of volunteer time in 2017.

Shirts with "Free State Master Gardeners" embroidered on them were given to Rookie of the Year, Louella Liff, Most Volunteer Hours, Sally Mitchell and Master Gardener of the Year, Paula Marshall.

Bob presented a patch with the Texas Master Gardener logo to several members whose "behind-the-scenes" contributions are so important to our organization. Those members were: Martha Mitchell, for coordinating the delicious refreshments served at meetings and events throughout the year; Marsha Sasser for coordinating the Intern Classes for 2017; Sandra Rosen for making sure our efforts are publicized in local newspapers; Anna Baker for the fantastic job she does in laying out the newsletter and advertising material, Sally Mitchell for the incredible job she does as Treasurer and Paula Marshall for her assistance throughout the year.

It was a wonderful evening celebrating a wonderful year with wonderful people.

