

BIRTHDAYS:

April

Kathy Massey, 4/6
Melisa Rhodes, 4/16
Susan Dahlman, 4/13
Cynthia Holifield, 4/15

May

Pat Briggs, 5/9
Marsha Sasser, 5/28

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Update on Intern Projects	1—3
President's Message	3
April Gardening.....	4
Geranium Success	5
March Meeting.....	5
Gardening Events.....	6
Garden Guru.....	7

Newsletter Staff Needs Your Help!

If you like to write, or even if you don't, but have good ideas for articles and/or subjects for the newsletter please consider joining the newsletter staff. Contact Sandra Rosen or Paula Marshall for more information.

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 4, Issue 4.....April, 2018

Update on Intern Projects

By Sandra Rosen

Anyone who has completed the 50 hours of classwork as a Master Gardener intern knows that the work is not over; it is just beginning. The intern project that comes next has been described as overwhelming: hours and hours of planning and then hours and hours of really hard work. However, these words are also used: bonding, fun, sense of awesome accomplishment, and wow – look what we did! Let's look back and see what the intern projects accomplished.

2014

Approximately 12 members of the MG class of 2014 cleared the grass on the west side of the Extension office in early 2015 with the intention of planting a flower garden with mostly native plants. We started by spraying the grass (a little bit of grass and a whole bunch of weeds!) with a grass killer, laid cardboard and



Side of Extension Office Spring of 2017

with a few revisions – namely the unplanned construction of a storage shed for the Extension Office – the plan was put into motion. We didn't have much money to work with at the time because the FSMG Association had only been in existence for a little over a year. Members brought plants from their gardens, and we bought a few extras to form the backbone of the garden, using mostly perennials hoping to keep the cost down and

provide.

We hear a lot of positive comments about our garden; now in its fourth year. Many times people stop by while we're working and comment on how beautiful it is and how much they enjoy watching it grow. We know that it definitely benefits the community by giving people something positive to see and talk about, and we hope that it will inspire some to go home and try gardening or plant a flower for the first time. Since the garden is located so closely to the Canton Trade Days grounds, it also presents a positive image of Canton and our community to the many visitors who come to Trade Days every month. We're proud of our garden, and even though it takes several hours each month to keep it looking nice, it gives all of us who work in it a chance to visit and learn from each other as well as helping to improve our community. If you haven't had a chance to work in any of our projects



Side of Extension Office showing soil samples. Our first MGs took their classes in Wood County and this was their project. Spring 2014

hauled trailer loads of beautiful black compost a member had found on someone's property and who gladly gave us permission to haul it away. A plan was drawn up by Joanne Elston and her committee, and

maintenance to a minimum. Although the initial plan was to have strictly a Texas native garden, we got off-track by planting a few non-natives because we wanted more color than the native plants would



*First Section of
Butterfly Garden
at Canton Jr. High*

Butterfly Garden at Canton Jr. High with new handicap path and garden expansion in 2017



with fellow gardeners, you are missing out on one of the best benefits of being a member of the FSMG...the chance to interact with a great bunch of people and a nice way to contribute to the community. (Paula Marshall)

2015

Our class was the class of 2015. There were only 9 people in the class and of those 9 only 6 are active members. Our class project was to establish a butterfly garden on the East side of the Canton Jr. High in what is part of a sloped area covered with Asian jasmine. This was done at the request of the science teacher, Denise Stapleton.



New sidewalk and student help in 2017 at CJH.

The garden is intended to act as a way station for Monarch butterflies and as a place to attract any and all pollinators. Our first year we concentrated on clearing out the jasmine, and we also had some issues with the watering system. It was quite a bit of work clearing the jasmine out, but we managed to open up a small area the first year and get it planted with some perennials that attract butterflies. The second year we expanded the garden area and are currently working to

install some stepping stones and a cement bench at the top of the path. Ms. Stapleton has engaged her students in the project, and they have been very helpful with the weeding, clearing and planting. The project is not complete as we are continuing to plant flowers and trying to keep the jasmine from taking over the beds. There are currently 3 members who are helping with the project, and occasionally we get some help from other members.

When the students help, the work goes much faster, but the work is ongoing, and I'm not sure it will ever be "completed." It benefits the students because they gain knowledge about both horticulture and about pollinators. The area is now much more attractive to the people who go to and through that area. (Mimi Sherwin)

2016

The class of 2016 hoped to plant a xeriscape garden at the front of the extension office. There were 6 interns in the class, and they hoped to have a garden where plants were less dependent on water and care. After the hard work of removing the solid grass sod – very labor intensive, they planted mostly native plants such as Turks Cap, Butterfly Bush, Rock Rose, Agave, native



Before and After front of Extension Office



grasses, and rosemary. It has been quite successful, and they have lost only a couple of plants. The garden requires weeding and watering only about once a month unless it is extremely hot and dry.

In addition to learning that with careful planning, a xeriscape landscape can work, the group also learned the value of working side by side – doing really hard work – where you really get to know and appreciate your fellow interns. It was a “bonding” and a fun experience. They also want to be sure that Connie Trammel and her husband get credit for the sturdy and attractive signs that they have made for the intern groups to use on their projects. (Jimmie Pierce)

2017

The class of 2017 consisted of six excited and friendly people. From the first day, we all bonded; it was so much fun learning together. Tommy Phillips did a great job of pulling a group of people together who could complement each other's strengths. We were eager to gain as much knowledge as possible and in our excitement we were constantly asking questions during the lectures. Our class “mama,” Marsha Sasser, was so kind and thoughtful; she made us feel like we were already part of the Free-state Master Gardener Community.

It took us a while to figure out what our class project should be. Tommy helped to guide us toward doing a community garden. He wanted us to partner with Melisa Rhodes in the project, and she has been a great as-



set to us, guiding us to where we should share our harvest. We started with a garden plot size of 20' X 40' and expanded it to approximately 30' X 100'. The size and layout is always changing as we study and learn how the plants grow best. The proj-

ect is year-round, but we love doing it! In spite of a few learning curves, the garden has been very productive. We were able to give our produce to the county jail and have high hopes of expanding the recipients of our harvest. What a blessing it is to give the gift of fresh produce. It's a passion for us as well as a labor of love. (Louella Iliff and Sharon Palmer)

Stay tuned for the 2018 Intern Project at the Blackwell House



President's Message



Happy Spring to all! Finally we're having some nice weather. Personally I'm waiting for the 1st of April to begin my vegetable garden planting although I already have onions, leeks and potatoes in the ground. As you are aware, as I write this we are concluding our yearly fundraiser with the geranium sale. I hope we can do the 1200 plants forecasted as our budget was based on this. I am sorry

to learn that some members are not participating in this event, as everyone benefits from our programs.

I really appreciated Melisa's presentation on food preservation in March. I thought it was well-received and should be very popular with the public version scheduled for the upcoming Library Series.

Remember we are going to vote on the updates to the By-Laws and Standing Rules changes we covered in the March meeting. Copies were emailed out to all last week. Call me if you have any questions. See you all in April if not sooner.

Bob W.

April Gardening Chores

Tommy Phillips
County Extension Agent, Ag/NR

LAWNS

April is the month to begin fertilizing lawns. The ideal time to apply fertilizer is after you have mowed actively growing grass once or twice. Early April is a good target date for St. Augustine and common Bermuda grass. Centipede lawns are usually slower to green up and turf experts recommend that they be fertilized in early May. For best results, have your soil tested for pH and fertility before applying fertilizer. Soil test kits are available from all county Extension offices; otherwise use a 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 fertilizer ratio.

PLANTING

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

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

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

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

VEGETABLES

There's still time in early April to plant many vegetables, including bush and pole beans, cucumber, cantaloupe, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, summer & winter squash, and watermelons from seed; and transplants of tomatoes, peppers and eggplants. All these should be seeded or transplanted right away for best results. Okra and Southern peas do better with warmer soil and therefore should be planted a bit later in the month.

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

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

Store left over vegetable seeds in a sealed container in the refrigerator if you'd like to keep them for next season. A tablespoon of powdered milk wrapped in tissue can help absorb moisture to keep the seeds fresh.

For best growth and yield, make additions of nitrogen fertilizer (called side dressing) every couple of weeks, starting about a month after transplanting or seeding. This will keep vegetables growing vigorously so they reach their maximum yield potential.

PESTS

Watch new growth for insect pests. Aphids, also sometimes called plant lice, may get on the new growth of any type of plant. While a few aphids can be tolerated, large numbers can distort growth and should be controlled. A strong jet of water to knock them off can provide temporary control, and insecticidal soap products will also help control them.

Geranium Sale a HUGE SUCCESS!

By Paula Marshall



More than 1,550 geraniums were ordered, delivered, counted, sorted, and piled into members' cars and trucks for delivery on Monday, March 26th!

Because of heavy rain forecasted for the originally scheduled delivery date, the grower and Pat Mullin jumped through hoops to get the flowers delivered two days earlier than planned. Volunteers and members rearranged their schedules at the last minute to make sure the geraniums were distributed before stormy weather hit.

Thanks to the Geranium Sale Committee, Pat Mullin, Sally Mitchell, Pat Briggs, Jimmie Pierce, Jorja Merrick and Paula Marshall, for the many hours spent coordinating this fundraiser, and to Nancy Szabo and Bob Williams for jumping in at the last minute to help on delivery day.

We surpassed this year's goal by 300+, so an "ATTABOY" goes out to all of you - members and interns - who made the effort that resulted in this fundraiser being a huge success for the FSMG Association!

(How many do you think we can sell next year????)

March Program – Food Preservation with Melisa Rhodes

By Sandra Rosen

Melisa Rhodes gave an interesting and informative program on food preservation at our March meeting. About canning, we learned that you really must follow the suggested recipe because the recipe has been chemically tested for the preservation process. Changing it in any way could mean that it is not safe. Along with some really useful information, we were also treated to some delightful stories. From one we learned that watermelon jelly is not safe and that salsa that has turned milky is also not safe. Melisa is a great speaker – we learned and laughed a lot.



Gardening Events – April & May, 2018

By Susan Dahlman

Tues.-Wed., April 3-4 FS Jr. Master Gardeners, volunteers needed at Martins Mill from 1:00pm—2:00pm

Tue., April, 3 Tuesday, Dallas MG Gardening Workshops "Shady Gardens" at the Dallas Public Library, 5626 Royal Ln., Dallas at 6:00 – 6:45 p.m. Speaker: Diana Harris. 214-904-3053. Free.

Wed.—Fri., April, 4—6 TMGA 40th Anniversary Celebration of Master Gardener Program, College Station, TX; to register go to www.2018TMGAConference.com

Fri., April 6 - Ham Orchard Fruit Pruning Clinic, 12:00—4:00 at Ham Orchard, 11939 County Road 309, Terrell, Texas 75161. The cost will be \$15.00 per person and there will be 2 General C.E.U.'s for private pesticide applicators. Please call the Extension office at (972) 932-9069 or e-mail sbburden@ag.tamu.edu to pre-register for the program.

Fri.—Sun., April, 6—8: Texas Discovery Gardens at Fair Park "Pollinator Plant Sale," 3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. More than 600 varieties of native and adapted pollinator-friendly plants, many of which are not found in local nurseries. 214-428-7476 x 341.

Thur., April 12: Ellis Co MG Water University Workshop: "Put the Care Into Lawn Care" at First United Methodist Church, Banquet Hall, 505 W Marvin St., Waxahachie. 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Learn tips on how to use the ULandscapIT tool on our website to become your own landscape designer. Free.

Fri., April 13, Smith Co. MG at the Library "Pass-along Plants" by Andie Rathbone at the Tyler Public Library, 201 S. College Ave., Tyler. 11:30 a.m. Free.

Sat., April 14: Spring Gardening Conference: The Smith Co. Environmental Education Horticulture Committee is sponsoring a Spring Gardening Conference on Saturday, from 9-12 a.m. at The Hub, 337 East Ferguson in downtown Tyler. Speakers include Gregg Grant, Smith Co. Horticultural Agent, Texas A&M Extension Service, and Bob Byers, Director of the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. They will cover basic landscape design and principles for creating beautiful gardens. Cost: \$15.00 Contact: (903) 590-2980 for more information.

Sat., April 14: Dallas MG Gardening Workshops "Grape Pruning & Planting" at Raincatchers Garden at Midway Hills, 1101 Midway Rd., 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. Free. 214-904-3053.

Sat., April 14: Kaufman Co. MG **Plant Sale** at Kaufman County South Annex, 3003 S. Washington St. (corner of Hwy. 34 S & FM 11388 Kaufman. 9:00a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tues., April 17: Henderson Co. MG "Square Foot Gardening: with Susan Skormmesa," HCMG, at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library, 121 S. Prairieville, Athens, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Free

Wed., April 18 - Dallas MG Gardening Workshop "Homegrown Herbs for Healthy Home Cooking" at Farmers Branch Senior Center, 14055 Dennis Ln., Farmers Branch at 10:00-10:45 a.m. Speaker: Barbara Gollman. Free

Sat., April 21: - Dallas MG Gardening Workshop "Plants for Sun & Shade" at Texas Agrilife Extension Bldg., 715 Rowlett Rd., Garland. 1:00-2:30 p.m. Speaker: Stephen Hudkins. Free. 214-904-3053.

Tues.-Wed., April 24-25 FS Jr. Master Gardeners, volunteers needed at Martins Mill from 1:00pm—2:00pm

Sat., April 28 - 9:00am-2:00pm, Henderson Co. MG **Plant Sale**, Henderson Co. Senior Citizens Center, 3356 State Hwy. 31 E., Athens Free

Sat., April 28: - Spring Open House at Blue Moon Gardens, 13062 FM 279 in Edom. Informational presentations on topics: Color from Tropicals, Succulents, Healthy Living through Herbs, Raising Chickens and more. 903-852-3897.

Northeast Texas Beekeepers Second Monday of each month. 6:30pm; Crossroads Church, 1930 Trade Days Blvd. Canton, TX

Specialist Training Offerings in 2018

Rainwater Harvesting – April 30-May 2, hosted by Dallas County

Greenhouse Management – May 23-25, 2018, hosted by Hill Country in Kerrville, TX

Texas Superstars – September 18-20, 2018, hosted by Smith County

Further Information and Registration is available for all these classes on the Texas Master Gardener Website - www.Txmg.org., then Specialist Training

Classified Ads

Ink Cartridges for a
HP Officejet Pro 8600, got these
2 days before the printer died.
All 4 colors - Unopened - Free.
Contact: Anna at
baker2anna@gmail.com

Summer of 2017, Plant It and
They Will Come.



3rd Wednesday
Master Gardener
Work Day
8:30am
at
Extension Office
April 18, 2018



Garden Guru

Dear Garden Guru,
What are the best organic fertilizers to use and when do you use which one?

ORGANIC FERTILIZERS	N*	P*	K*	
Agrispon	—	—	—	Cytokinin root growth stimulator, helps control pathogens, reduces plant stress
Alfalfa	3%	1%	2%	Vitamin A, folic acid, trace elements, enzymes
Bat Guano	10	3	1	Excellent phosphorus and trace element fertilizer.
Blood Meal	12	0	0	Good nitrogen source but expensive
Bone Meal	0	10	0	Steamed material is good phosphorus and calcium source, raises pH.
Cattle Manure	2	1.5	1	Use composted only to avoid weeds, same for horse and other live-stock manures
Compost	(Varies)			Best all around organic fertilizer
Cottonseed Meal	7	2	2	Acid pH, trace elements, mix with blood meal
Earthworm Castings	2	1	5	Bacteria, trace elements, humus. Excellent fertilizer.
Enersol	—	—	—	Liquid leonardite shale, good carbon, and humic acid source
Fertilaid	4	2	0	Tankage, bacteria cultures, trace elements, humus, humic acid. Helps control diseases.
Fish Emulsion	5	2	2	Excellent Foliar Food, helps control insects. Fish meal is also good.
Granite Sand	0	0	5	Low pH, excellent source of minerals
Nitron A-35	—	—	—	Soil conditioner and activator. Helps release nutrients and detoxify soil.
Phosphate, Colloidal	0	16	0	Economic long lasting source of phosphorus and calcium.
Poultry Manure	5	3	2	High in nitrogen, economically available.
Rabbit Manure	3	2	1	Not enough rabbits
Seaweed, Kelp	1	0	1	Trace minerals,
Sewer Sludge	6	4	0	More cities should produce and sell for lawn food. Avoid using on edible crops.
Sul-Po-Mag	—	—	—	Best source of sulfur, potash, and magnesium

* N=Nitrogen P=Phosphorus K=Potassium

From *Plants of the Metroplex* by Howard Garrett (1975)



FSMG Spring Seminar

May 26, 8:30-12:00 at the Catholic Church Hall on 859
Speaker: Dotty Woodson