

BIRTHDAYS:

Volume 4, Issue 6..... June, 2018

June

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

July

Pat Brand, 7/1
 John Womack, 7/12
 Cheryl Weidmann, 7/15
 Heidi Rose Stone, 7/24
 Gordon West, 7/28
 Susan Warren, 7/28
 Fred Weidmann, 7/30

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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 Dahlgren

Interns Receive Their Certificates

By Paula Marshall

More than 60 people attended the potluck dinner and graduation celebration of the 2018 Master Gardener Intern Class at Louella and Jimmy Iliff's country home on May 10th.

Ten out of 11 interns received their Master Gardener certificates signifying they had completed the required 50 hours of classroom instruction and 50 hours of volunteer hours. This is commendable, considering interns are allowed one year to accrue the volunteer hours' requirement. The interns took on landscaping the grounds at the Blackwell House as their class project and have already made enormous improvements in this historic home's surroundings.

In addition to presenting the interns their Master Gardener Certificates, Tommy Phillips presented Bob Williams and Nancy Szabo with their Vegetable Specialist certificates.

Congratulations to all, and a big thank you to Mimi and Louella for coordinating the dinner, and a HUGE thank you to Louella and her husband Jimmy for allowing us to hold this celebration at their beautiful home.



New Master Gardeners: Top L/R: Don Taylor, Cheryl Weidmann, Fred Weidmann, Patricia Tinney, Gordon West, 2nd Row: Pat Taylor, Shari Curran, April Trekell, Kathy Brasuell, Stan Trekell. Congratulations Class of 2018!



Mimi Sherwin and Jorja Merrick



Best weather, friends and food.



Gordon West, Tommy Phillips and Stan Trekell

Gardening Day for Van Elementary School

By Sally Mitchell

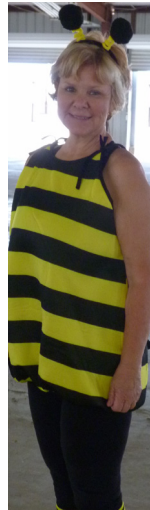
The Master Gardeners of Van Zandt County hosted an all-day Gardening Day for the second grade of Van Intermediate School.



Teachers, parents, and 192 students were involved to the event, which was held May 15th at The Arbors on the grounds of First Monday Trade Days.

Eight stations were set up to teach, on second grade level, the principles of starting new plants, growing plants, pollination (bees and butterflies), composting with worms, and healthy eating choices. Mr. Orbin Smith, a local beekeeper, dressed in his white beekeeper suit and provided a live bee exhibit.

Healthy Eating Choices



Bees as Pollinators

Hands-on activities with take-home projects were provided. The children planted seeds on paper towels, planted sweet potato



slips in paper cups, made wild-flower seed balls, made a butterfly feeder, and handled worms in the vermicomposting station. The worms are always a favorite—as is glitter (pollen the children glued on bees)! Yard games and therapy dogs provided entertainment during the lunch hour.

Twenty Master Gardeners logged volunteer hours for planning the day, buying supplies, teaching, crafting, and, hopefully, instilling the love of all that Master Gardeners represent. The children were enthusiastic about their learning

Vermicomposting



How to Grow Your Own Sweet Potatoes



Several ways Seeds can be planted



Pollinators

Continued on Page 5



experience in horticulture.

Teachers and parents admitted having learned something new as well!

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make this a successful event.

We have no idea how many little people were influenced to try gardening at some point in their lives because of your willingness to share your time and enthusiasm. Thank you to Tommy and Melisa for support in every way needed!! We appreciate Mr. Smith, who is always eager to help us. We are so appreciative of Mr. Henry Lewis allowing us to use The Arbors and restroom. This year's experience surpassed last year's - and the facility was a main reason.

Everyone must have taken their vitamins as we all survived quite well! Get a long rest in the months ahead as we will probably be asked to do this again!



Feeders for Birds & Butterflies

June Gardening Chores

Tommy Phillips
County Extension Agent, Ag/NR

School's out, it's getting hotter and summer time activities are getting into full swing. June brings both the opportunity to plant summer color, and the routine garden maintenance of mowing and weeding. We have not had the needed rainfall during the spring months than we typically have, thus many home owners have already had to rely heavily on their sprinkler system or supplemental irrigation.

Take advantage of the longer days by doing gardening tasks in the morning or evening when it is more pleasant to be outside. To keep the lawn and garden looking great, here are a few tips for this June.

LAWNS

Hotter weather means grass will be growing faster. Keep up with the mowing so you don't have to bag the clippings. That may mean mowing every 5 or 6 days instead of every 7 to 10 days. Letting the clippings fall back into the lawn recycles nutrients but does not promote thatch. Keep the mower blade sharpened. Mowing frequently at the correct height will promote a healthy, thick turf that is resistant to weeds.

For St. Augustine or Bermuda lawns making poor growth thus far this year, make a second application of fertilizer. For best results, use a fertilizer with a high percentage of slow-release nitrogen so the grass won't grow quite so rapidly. Be careful to not apply too much fertilizer.

Centipede lawns fertilized earlier this year do not need to be fertilized at this time. Wait until fall for the next application.

As spring rains slack off and give way to drier days, apply supplemental water as needed. The rule of thumb is to water enough to wet the soil 5 to 6 inches deep. Do not water too frequently. Shallow, frequent watering promotes a shallow root system that is more susceptible to the stress of summer heat and winter cold.

LANDSCAPE PLANTS

The best way to conserve moisture in the landscape is by mulching. Pine bark, pine needles, cypress bark, composted grass clippings and shredded leaves are among the materials suitable for a mulch. A three to four inch layer over the root zone retains moisture, keeps the soil cooler and helps prevent weed seeds from germinating under your shrubs, trees and flowers.

As you check your shrubs, ground covers and flower beds, watch for seedling trees, such as oak, hickory and pecan. They are more easily pulled when young, and an old pair of pliers will help you get the grip needed close to the ground to pull up root and all. They are also more easily extracted when the soil is moist.

SUMMER COLOR

June is a great month for setting out colorful summer annuals. For large areas, try directly seeding zinnias, cosmos, gomphrena or portulaca. There are several others you can set out now as transplants including marigold, salvia, gaillardia, petunias, purslane, verbena, dusty miller, lantana, ageratum, amaranthus, gomphrena (globe amaranth or bachelor's buttons), celosia, Texas bluebells (or lisianthus), cockscomb, and firebush. Plant copper plants now in a sunny spot for a beautiful display this fall.

Color for shady areas include caladiums, coleus, impatiens and bedding begonias. Try nicotiana and coleus in partial shade, or for full sun the two Texas SuperStars (TM) SunColeus varieties 'Burgundy Sun' and 'Plum Parfait'.

Many nurseries now have a great supply of perennials to brighten the summer garden. Look for perennial hibiscus, canna, day lilies (select soon for the color you want), yarrow, summer phlox, salvia, perennial lantana, montbretia, Rudbeckia 'Goldstrum' and purple coneflower.

Plant mums now for fall bloom. Pinch back established mums, along with other fall bloomers like Mexican mint marigold, Mexican bush sage (Salvia leucantha) and autumn asters to encourage compactness and more flowers.

Water transplants before you plant and then again afterwards. The soil should be well-prepared with additions of organic matter, and well-drained. Apply a diluted solution of water-soluble fertilizer at planting and then regularly once plants begin to put on new growth. Remove faded blooms to encourage new growth and repeat bloom. A layer of mulch will conserve water and prevent weeds.

Summer tropical plants, though they are not freeze hardy, are perfectly at home in our East Texas heat and humidity. Plant them in the ground for quick growth or plant in pots or tubs so you can overwinter them indoors. Some of the best include tropical hibiscus, penta, oleander (semi-hardy), bougainvillea, mandevilla vine (spectacular!), agapanthus, trailing lantanas, allamanda vine and plumbago. These sun and heat lovers will quickly brighten up your yard and give a great display all summer and fall.

ROSES

Be sure to mulch your roses to conserve moisture and keep down summer weeds. Continue a routine spray program to control blackspot, and watch for insects and mites. Remove flowers as they fade and feed regularly to encourage new blooms.

AZALEAS

Apply a four to six inch layer of pine needles or other mulch to conserve water around these shallow-rooted shrubs. Feed them very lightly with a complete fertilizer to encourage production of new growth. Watch out for spider mites and lace bugs which feed on the underside of leaves. Their piercing and sucking causes the leaves to look stippled and bleached or bronzed.

PESTS AND PROBLEMS

One of the most common tomato disorders is blossom end rot. This is not a disease but a physiological problem caused by a lack of calcium and fluctuating soil moisture. Keep the soil evenly moist, mulch to conserve moisture and lime the soil before planting the next crop to provide calcium. Blossom end rot usually only affects the first tomatoes to ripen.

Spider mites can occur on tomatoes, roses, junipers, marigolds and other ornamentals now that the weather is hot and dry. Look for stippled leaves, and under severe infestations, fine webbing. Spider mites can be detected by taking suspicious leaves and rapping them over a white sheet of paper. Any dots which move are probably mites. Light infestations can be reduced by frequently spraying leaves with a sharp stream of water or using insecticidal soap. For more severe problems, use an approved miticide.

Free State Master Gardener Donna Burcham

By Joan Driver



Gardening is in my blood," says Donna Burcham, claiming her heritage as a direct descendant of the Santerre family, early French colonists who settled in what is now downtown Dallas.

Her grandparents, Paul and Kate Santerre, maintained a garden and fruit orchard of almost seven acres "which sustained a family of six all year long until the next planting season," adding that her parents always had a garden as well. All this became her inspiration for her love of the outdoors and growing vegetables and flowers. She prefers raised beds for her projects.

Donna grew up in Cedar Hill, married (M. H. "Jim" Burcham), and reared two sons before moving to Canton in 1987 to pursue son Troy's dream of training thoroughbred race horses. (Five grandchildren and their parents are the love of her life, she says.) After retiring from a 90-plus-mile postal route she became one of a group of four Van Zandt women who commuted to Quitman in 2013 for Master Gardener training and became the nucleus for Free State Master Gardeners.

Donna's current passion for Master Gardeners centers around a Junior Master Gardeners project with students at Martins Mills School. She loves working

with Ms. Lowe's students and watching their growing interest in the program.

One of Donna's favorite memories (admittedly not directly associated with gardening) is a trip to Los Angeles in 2007 with fellow rural carrier Polly Alexander to appear on "The Price Is Right." "Both of us got to 'come on down' and both of us won a car!" Donna's positive attitude is obvious in her declaration, "I have a great life and I'm not planning on slowing down!"

Hamburger Noodle Bake

- 1-1/2 lb. hamburger
- 1 - 10 oz. can tomato sauce
- 1 - 8 oz. brick cream cheese
- 1 - 10 oz. carton sour cream
- 1 bunch green onions
- 1 - 16 oz. package egg noodles
- 1-1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese

Brown hamburger (salt & pepper). Add to browned meat, tomato sauce, cream cheese, sour cream and green onions (chop all of onions). Cook noodles, drain. Place noodles in 9 x 12 casserole dish. Cover with meat mixture. Sprinkle grated cheese on top. Bake at 325 degrees. Freezes well for another meal.

Essie Moore by daughter Donna Burcham.

Van School Day Continued



Making Seed Balls



Taking Care of Texas

Gardening Events – June, 2018

By Susan Dahlman

Saturday, June 2: Ellis Co. MG announces a Private Garden Tour 2018 in Midlothian with 5 gardens open to the public. Tickets \$10 for adults, children under 16 free. You can purchase tickets at the gardens or locally. Contact Mattie Thompson at mattiethompson500gmail.com.

Saturday, June 2: Hunt Co. MG Garden Tour. Cost \$5. Tickets available at Host homes. Call 903-455-9885.

Saturday, June 2: Smith Co. Annual Garden Tour. View 5 private gardens & landscapes in Tyler ranging from a lake setting to a small intimate garden. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. \$10 in advance; \$15 day of tour. Purchase in advance May 1-June 1 at Brookshire's Rice Road, Potpourri House, Blue Moon Gardens, Anderson's Gardens & Gifts, Flint Extension Office.

Thursday, June 7: Henderson Co. MG Summer Series I – Plant Propagation with Jim Kracht at the Athens Senior Center, 3344 Hwy 31 E, Athens. 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Free

Thursday, June 14: FSMG - Fences, Paths, Trellis and Garden Art with Peggy Rogers, 8:30am social; 9:00am program

Saturday, June 16: Shade Tolerant Plants at the Texas Discovery Gardens, 3601 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Dallas. Speaker is Roger Sanderson, Director of Horticulture. 10 – 11 a.m. \$10 members; \$15 non-members.

Tuesday, June 19: Henderson Co. MG Library Series with Stephen Gent, owner of McDade's Nursery in Tool. He will present the Do's and Don'ts of Summer Time Gardening at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library, 121 S. Prairieville Rd., Athens. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Wednesday, June 20: Dallas Co. MG presents Success with Cactus & Succulents. Speaker is Gina Woods; Farmers Branch Senior Center, 14055 Dennis Ln., Farmers Branch. 10:00 – 10:45 a.m. Free.

Thursday, June 21: Free State of Van Zandt Co. MG Gardening Series: Backyard Chickens 101 with Sharon Palmer & Bob Williams at the Van Zandt County Library, 317 First Monday Ln., Canton. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Thursday, June 28: East Texas Horticulture Field Day – Will be featuring hundreds of Ornamental Varieties in the fields where they will be evaluated by Dr. Brent Pemberton as part of the East Texas Bedding Plant Greenhouse & Garden Performance Trial Program. Texas A & M Agrilife Research & Extension Center, 1710 FM 3053 N in Overton. Free. flowers.tamuedu/field-da

Specialist Training Offerings in 2018

Junior Master Gardeners-July 24 – 26, 2018 hosted by Denton County In Corinth, TX.

Vegetables –September 4 – 6, 2018 hosted by Bexar County in San Antonio, TX

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

Composter –December 5 – 7, 2018 hosted by Fort Bend County in Rosenberg, TX.

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



President's Message

Greetings Master Gardeners!

Congrats to all of our new Master Gardeners, Class of 2018. We had a wonderful evening graduation dinner last month. Special thanks to Louella for hosting at her farm. Thanks to Mother Nature for providing such a nice evening and to all of the MG's who provided the food. It was a special treat to be able to have so many from one class be certified as well as graduate at the same time.

I am certainly sorry we had to cancel our Spring Seminar. I know I was looking forward to it as were some of you. We just couldn't justify the cost versus the number of people who RSVP'd. If you haven't been out to the Community Vegetable Garden, you need to see it. The class of 2017 has done a great job out there and the produce is looking so good. This month we had to swap presentations so we will be having Peggy Rogers (past president of our State org) present on Fences, Paths, Trellis and Garden Art. Hope to see you all there.

Robert Williams
713-626-6936



**FSMG — June 14th,
Peggy Rogers**
(past president of our State org)
**Fences, Paths,
Trellis and Garden Art.**
8:30 social; 9:00 program

**Van Zandt Co. Library Series
June 21 - 5:30pm
Backyard Chickens 101
Sharon Palmer
Bob Williams
Bring a Friend!**

**3rd Wednesday
Master Gardener
Work Day
9:00 am
at
Extension Office
June 20, 2018**

The Texas Master Gardener Conference at Texas A & M

By Sandra Rosen

The Texas Master Gardener Conference held this year at Texas A & M was just “over the top” – well done, fun, and educational. One of the most interesting seminars was “The Backyard Forester” presented by Gretchen Riley. This was about the long overlooked value of the pine tree. They are not just for timber any more. There are over 100 species of pine trees in the world and 9 that are native to Texas. Pine trees are long-lived, anywhere from 100 to 500+ years. They are fire resistant when mature and are also drought and wind resistant. In addition, pine trees can take it! The pine tree – as long as it has some space – can handle concrete or asphalt nearby. They are evergreen, fast growing, and easy to care for. Pine trees lose their needles every 3-8 years, so are then self-mulching. They are a great bird habitat and with a tap root that can go down 20 feet, the pine tree is tough as well as pretty. Let's appreciate this jewel of the forest.

Another seminar was “Late Bloomers” by Jan Bills. This one was funny and so full of information; I had 10 pages of notes and didn't get it all down. She started by saying, “If I woke up in the morning and nothing hurt, I'd think I was dead.” Her landscape design tips were good:

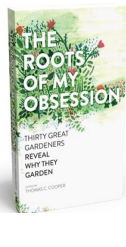
- 1. Plant in odd numbers.
- 2. Your plantings should flow – big, swoopy, curvy areas.
- 3. Mass plantings are more attractive.
- 4. The entrance must be welcoming.
- 5. You must also think about the inside looking out.
- 6. Color, texture, interest, scent are all important. Think foliage first, then flowers
- 7. Always think about maintenance.

She also introduced sheet mulching if you have an area that you want to clear for planting. First you should mow down the weeds. Next spread manure or compost over the area. Next put down newspapers. Then put down cardboard and water well. Put soil or mulch on top and don't peek for 3 months. Now you will have a plant ready area.

She ended with a gardener's trick that all gardeners know: “Wash your hair; clean your fingernails.” This was another delightful and informative seminar.

July 12th - Members Only-Plant & Book Swap

Our July Meeting will be for us! Remember to bring plants if you want to exchange them. Clean out your old magazines, books, etc and exchange with other members.



Garden Guru



Dear Garden Guru: How do I get rid of nutsedge or nut grass in my lawn?

It is not easy to get rid of nut grass because it grows by rhizomes that spread over the yard and these can be from 2" to a foot deep. From this nut grass grow more and more rhizomes that will come up this year or maybe the next. Unless you pull all the attached rhizomes up (and they could be all over the yard), this method really won't work.

Okay, what will work? Some say sugar??? But that is actually a folk method and unproven, so let's just use a herbicide. Use one that has MSMS or a chemical called bentazon in it. If you have a large section, you will want to spray or spread it according to the directions, but if you only have a small section, you might just put some of the herbicide on a small cotton ball and starting at the very base of the nut grass, wipe the stem with the herbicide. This will kill the plant and possibly the rhizome underneath the ground.

Of course, you will need to wear rubber gloves and possibly a mask to protect yourself or you could kill more than the nutsedge.

John Womack
Specialist: Rainwater Harvesting, MG
Vegetable, MG
Landscaping Design, NGC
Permaculture Design