

Free State Master Gardener News

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BIRTHDAYS:

September

Shari Curran, 9/2
Don Taylor, 9/8
JoAnne Elston, 9/24

October

Anna Baker, 10/9
Lou Ellen Bliss, 10/10
Sharon Palmer, 10/21

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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 Dahlman

Volume 4, Issue 8.....September, 2018

Free State Master Gardeners Give Two \$500 Scholarships

By Paula Marshall



Mackenzie Morris, Martin Mills High School with Carter Hallmark, MG, receives her scholarship, Nicole Neal was already at college so could not attend.

Mackenzie Morris, Martin Mills High School, and Nicole Neal, Edgewood HS, were selected by the FSMG Scholarship Committee to receive two \$500 scholarships.

Mackenzie is enrolled at Trinity Valley Community College for the fall semester, with plans to transfer to Abilene Christian University to get her B.S. degree in Special Education. Nicole attends Trinity Valley Community College and will get her degree in Child Development and Family Studies at Texas Tech University.

Congratulations to these outstanding young women! We wish them continued success in their college years and thru out their careers.

Coming Events for FSMG

By Sandra Rosen

The Library Series will have its fifth presentation of this year on Sept. 20 at 10:30 a.m. at the Van Zandt County Library. John Womack will discuss landscape design. John has been a Master Gardener for 17 years and completed the extensive Landscape Design Study Program at Texas A & M sponsored by the National Garden Clubs, Inc. John will present basic principles of design along with many practical ideas for making your landscape work for you and your family.

A second event will be the Fall Seminar – one of two big events held each year – that will be presented by Steven L. Chamblee. Steven will discuss “Texas Tough Plants, Texas Tough 50,” certainly a topic that will interest gardeners in



our Texas tough weather. This event will be held at the Crossroads Church in Canton on September 22 from 9 to 12 p.m. The public will be charged \$15 and FSMGs should make reservations by calling the AgriLife office. Steven is a horticulturist and a garden writer with a love for discovery, whether on the road

giving presentations across Texas or at home, walking his familiar meadow. He seeks connections between hard science and matters of the heart, often chronicling them in his Native Son articles in Neil Sperry's e-Gardens. Currently, Steven is the horticulturist at Chandor Gardens in Weatherford.



Misadventures of the Orchardist's Wife

By Cheryl Weidmann & Fred Weidmann

"OK, so now you've retired officially. What do you want to do because you're driving me crazy." Not a really Christian way to greet your spouse, but very true. After several days of concerted thought, Fred came up with "You know, I've always been interested in growing fruit trees." After 35 years of marriage, that came as a shock to me. We did have a small battalion of patio trees around our backyard in Greenville, occupying all good, sunny spots, but it never occurred to me that he'd want to grow fruit trees on a full-time basis.

Since both of us were engineers, we approached the problem very methodically (sarcasm font here). We chose the soil type we wanted – definitely not the Blackland Prairie because fruit trees don't like wet feet. And we started looking for a place. It took us 18 months and two realtors.

After four summers of "Life With Trees", here's what I learned;

Don't plant an orchard if your spouse is a collector. You'll wind up with onesies/twosies of everything from apples to olives to hazelnuts. Each one will have specific, competing requirements.

Don't let your significant other go shopping unattended. You never know what will follow him (her) home.

Don't believe what you read in growers' catalogues. It is not their intent to help you find trees that do well in your specific area. Their intent is to sell stuff – expensive stuff. Where their data on range or disease resistance is "good", it's probably not for Texas – more likely Pennsylvania.

Don't be a softy. If it doesn't grow well the first year, it probably never will. Rip it out and find something that appreciates Texas' soil and weather.

Don't have two cars. At some point in time, your significant other will want to put trees into the garage, "Just to keep them out of the weather". Sooner or later, just like the proverbial camel, the potted trees will take over the garage. Guess what loses. Yeah, right.

Don't upset your neighbors. You never can tell when you'll need to give a bag of peaches away.

Don't be a picky eater. Make sure you like the taste of what you grow. Believe me, 140 fruit and nut trees can grow a lot of fruit. (Did I mention that my husband was a collector?)

There is only one "Do". Very simply – "Do experiment. You'll never know what strange things will happen!"



A true Key Lime tree

Orchard with varieties of asian pears, apples, plums, hazelnuts, and peaches.



Three-year old Pendolino Olive



Developing true Key Limes

September Gardening Chores

Tommy Phillips
County Extension Agent, Ag/NR

September is a transition month in the southern gardening world with the official arrival of Autumn later this month, and hopefully, a return of cooler and wetter weather. Despite the heat that lingers this month, September is still one of the better times of the year to be gardening, especially for planting landscape plants.

September is also the month for new learning opportunities. The Library series in September will be great. Mr. John Womack will be instructing on Landscape Design. To top it off - DO NOT FORGET The Fall Gardening Seminar on Saturday, September 22nd. We are very excited about Mr. Steve Chamblee coming to be our guest speaker...so tell all your friends about these two great programs.

LAWNS

Folks will want to pay attention to lawn care this month. The hot, dry weather could encourage chinch bugs which can turn St. Augustine into what looks like a drought-stricken lawn.

September is also the time to apply lawn fertilizer to keep the grass healthy and growing up to first frost. Fall fertilized lawns are better equipped to make it through the winter and resume growth next spring than lawns that receive no fertilizer.

Did you have weeds last spring before the grass started growing? These would have been cool-season weeds which germinated last fall. A pre-emergence herbicide (weed preventer) applied this month will help reduce the recurrence of the same weeds next spring (unless they are perennials like dandelions). Avoid pre-emergent herbicide applications on newly planted, or weakened grass or in dense shade. Carefully follow label rates of application, since applying more than is called for can damage your lawn.

Lawns that suffered dieback from drought, chinch bugs or disease can be safely sodded in September. It's too late to try to establish Bermuda or Centipede from seed, but ryegrass and tall fescue can be sown toward the end of the month.

Fall is also a good time to test your soil, especially to determine the pH which tells you the acidity of the soil. Strongly acidic soils are corrected with an application of lime. Keep in mind that it takes a few months for the lime to react with your soil, and that you may need to reapply lime every few years.

PERENNIALS, ANNUALS AND BULBS:

If you enjoy growing wildflowers, collect seed for your garden from summer bloomers for sowing next spring. Save seeds from favorite self-pollinating, non-hybrid garden flowers such as marigolds, cosmos, gomphrena, coneflower, coreopsis, Rudbeckia and zinnias by allowing the flower heads to mature. Lay seeds on newspaper, turning often to dry; then store in glass jars or envelopes in a cool (40 to 50 degrees F), dry, dark place.

Sow spring wildflower (like bluebonnets) seed now. For more reliable, uniform seed germination of our State flower, purchase **acid-treated bluebonnet seed**. This treatment pits the seed coat, allowing nearly 100% germination in one to two weeks.

Perennial phlox should be divided about every third or fourth year. Early fall and early spring are the best times to plant and transplant them. Divide big clumps into thirds.

Create new perennial flower beds, and dig, divide, and replant overcrowded beds of cannas, irises, daylilies, daisies and other perennials. Spread a liberal amount of organic matter evenly over the area and mix into the soil at least 6 to 8 inches deep. Space divisions at least 1 foot apart in all directions so root competition will not be a problem for several years.

Purchase spring blooming bulbs as soon as they become available in the garden centers, or mail order special varieties. Tulips and hyacinths should be stored in a refrigerator until November.

Plant bulbs by loosening the soil and make a hole with a trowel or bulb planter. Don't mash the bulb into the soil or you may damage the basal plate (bottom of the bulb), causing it to rot.

Tip back roses the first week of September if you didn't last month to stimulate a new flush of growth for a final burst of fall color. Don't take off much, cutting back only a quarter of the growth. Make a light application of fertilizer, and watch for black spot disease which can be a problem once frequent rains return.

TREES AND SHRUBS:

Frequently check the soil around first-year trees and shrubs with your fingers to make sure the root ball and soil are getting enough water. At the same time, take care to not keep the soil soaking wet. Just because it's hot doesn't automatically mean the soil is dry 3 or 4 inches deep. Check it out that deep to be sure.

Examine your flower, ground cover and shrub beds for seedlings of privet, sweetgum, oaks, elms, blackberry, greenbriar, sedges and other unwanted weeds. If they are already well established, wait for soaking rains to soften the ground when they'll be a little easier to pull. A pair of pliers may also help get woody plants out of the ground.

Pine needles will soon be abundant. Collect and use them as a long lasting mulch around shrubs, young trees, and in vegetable gardens and other places where weed control and water conservation is needed.

VEGETABLES

Plant beets, broccoli (plants), Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower (plants), Swiss chard, collards, kale, garlic, lettuce, mustard, parsley, English peas, radish, spinach and turnips this month. Soak seed furrows with water before sowing seed, and mulch lightly. Water the rows daily in hot weather to promote germination and growth of young seedlings. Treat cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower with Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) as needed to prevent damage from cabbage loopers.



President's Message

Greetings

I'm looking for some cooler weather as I'm sure you all are also. My vegetable gardens and peach orchard are done for the year and I had my last weekend at the Mineola Farmers Market last week. I hope everyone enjoyed the peaches they got from me. It certainly was quite a bumper crop. Fingers crossed for a cold winter and another good crop next year. At September's membership meeting we will be voting on the revised By-Laws and Standing Rules. I emailed them out to everyone this week. A lot of work by your executive committee has gone into preparing those and I hope all will spend some time reading through them before the meeting. One of the main efforts was to eliminate the redundancy between the two. The By-Laws are considered more permanent than the Standing Rules. The Standing Rules are meant to be the day-to-day guide to the operations of the association. If I can answer any questions before the meeting on September 13th, please call me.

Robert Williams, President
713-628-6936



August Meeting on Floral Design by Todd Williams, Rockwall, CAE



Todd Williams and Mimi Sherwin

A large crowd was present for the program given by Todd Williams, Rockwall CAE, on Floral Design. Members enjoyed learning about how to use greenery, flowers and even weeds from their own property to make beautiful flower arrangements. Future classes may be available in Rockwall.



Design principles and the importance of fresh flowers



Same flowers different design, how to use different containers, using only the inside of containers, wrapping moss around the base, using color, design and size of floral arrangement many different ways.

UPDATE ON THE MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

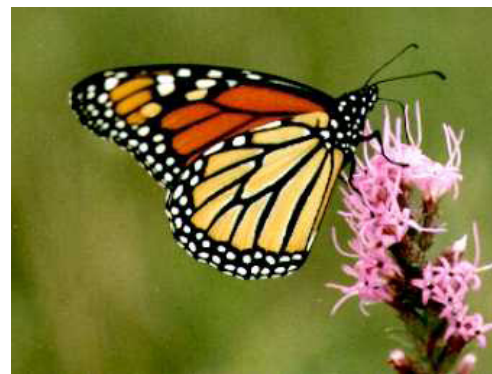
Sandra Rosen

The news is not good. The migratory monarch population that overwinters in Central Mexico from eastern Canada and the U.S. declined 84% between 1997 and 2014. The loss of the milkweed habitat in the U.S. has been a major factor in this decline. Because of pesticide use, herbicide use, and fewer open spaces for the milkweed to survive, this decline in milkweed has been significant.

What can we do? We can plant milkweed in our yards and in our open areas. The mother butterfly drinks nectar from the milkweed flowers and lays her eggs on the leaves. The striped, yellow, black and white monarch caterpillars eat the milkweed leaves and absorb the toxic sap that renders them and adult but-

terflies distasteful to birds, lizards, and other predators. In time, of course, the beautiful Monarch emerges and continues its flight.

The good news is that some farmers have begun turning some precious acres of land over to a plant they had previously seen as a nuisance. The milkweed makeover began when researchers in Quebec transformed the plant's silky fibers into a high-end insulation material for winter clothing and advanced other commercial uses for it. Winter coats stuffed with milkweed fiber fetched \$800 or more, and the Canadian Coast Guard tried milkweed garb and liked it. At present, more than 100 farmers in Canada and half a dozen in Vermont are producing milkweed.



The Texas State Insect
Monarch Butterfly

Milkweed varieties best for our area are the native species or tropical milkweed. It's at your local nursery. Let's bring the Monarchs back!

Gardening Events – September, 2018

By Susan Dahlman

Tuesday, September 4: Smith Co MG First Tuesday in the Garden with Greg Grant. Topic is **“Wildlife in the Winter Garden”** at 12 p.m. in the Patio in the IDEA Garden (Tyler Rose Garden, 1900 W. Front). Free.

Thursday, September 13: FSMG Wildflowers for Texas Gardens - Janella Cole

Saturday, September 15: Texas Discovery Gardens’ “Plant Sale Safari.” Members Sale is on Friday, September 14 from 4 – 7 p.m. Public Sale is from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. More than 600 varieties of rare native and adapted pollinator-friendly plants. 3601 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Dallas (Fair Park, Gate 6).

Saturday, September 15: East Texas Arboretum & Botanical Society’s Fall Plant Sale.

8 a.m. – 4 p.m. at 1601 Patterson Rd., Athens. 903-675-5630.

Thursday, September 20: Creating a Landscape Design with John Womack, MG, Van Zandt Co. Library 10:30 a.m.

Saturday, September 22: Free State of Van Zandt Co MG Fall Seminar. Guest speaker is Steve Chamblee of Chandor Gardens in Weatherford. 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Cross Roads Church, 1930 Trade Days Blvd. Hwy 19S, Canton. Cost: \$15; RSVP to Tommy Phillips 903-567-4149.

Saturday, September 22: Wood Co MG **“Build a Barrel Fall Fest”** to be held at the Pavilion at the Mineola Nature Preserve, 1860 CR 2724, Mineola. 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Tuesday, October 2: Smith Co MG First Tuesday in the Garden with Anne Pattullo at 12 p.m. in the Patio in the IDEA Garden (Tyler Rose Garden, 1900 W. Front). Topic is **Bulb Basics** with a preview of the “Bulbs to Bloom” event being held on Saturday, October 13. Free.

Thursday, October 4: Henderson Co MG Fall Conference Fund Raiser **“An Evening with Neil Sperry.”** Athens Country Club, 500 Park Dr., Athens. 6 p.m. with Dinner, Silent Auction. Cost is \$50. 903-675-6130.

Friday & Saturday, October 5 & 6: “300 Years of Plants on the Move in Texas” sponsored by SGHS State Ambassadors Program, Stephen F. Austin State University Gardens and Friends of Historic Nacogdoche to celebrate Texas’ Tricentennial in gardening with tours, lectures and a reception. Event will be held at the prestigious Fredonia Hotel & Convention Center in Nacogdoches, 200 N. Fredonia St. Attendees will be able to attend a rare plant sale at the SFASU’s Piney Woods Native Plant Center. fohni@yahoo.com

Wednesday, October 10: Dallas Co. MG presents **“Post Harvest Care of Young Grapevines”** with Michael Cook, Viticulturist. Texas Agrilife Extension, 715 Rowlett Rd., Garland. 10:00 – 11 a.m. Free.

Saturday, October 13: Dallas Co MG Fall Garden Tour featuring 5 residential gardens and one school garden, Moss Haven Farm. 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Educational opportunities with experts speaking about water features, pollinators, turf, chickens and vegetable gardening. Ticket cost \$15 advance purchase and \$20 on day of home tour. info@dallasmga.com

Saturday, October 13: Smith Co MG **“Bulbs to Blooms”** Conference & Sale at Harvey Hall, 2000 W. Front St., Tyler. 8:30 a.m. - . Bulb Sale is at 11:30 a.m. “Hardy, heirloom and hard to find bulbs for Texas and the South. Free

Thursday, October, 18: FSMG Library Series Presents **“Earth-Kind® Roses for Your Garden”** with John Clark at Van Zandt County Library at 5:30 pm.

Specialist Training Offerings in 2018

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

Classified Ads

Wanted: someone or the name of someone, who makes slip covers for furniture.

Contact Paula Marshall 972-877-7988.

If you need something or need to get rid of something advertise here. Contact Paula or Sandra with the information.



Fall is a good time to get a soil test.

Contact the Extension Office

**3rd Wednesday
Master Gardener
Work Day**
9:00 am
meet at
Extension Office
September 19, 2018



FSMG Martha Mitchell

By Joan Driver

Like many other Master Gardeners, Martha Mitchell grew up in a gardening culture. "I spent my early years in the Cumberland Mountains of East Tennessee where gardening was a way of life," she says. "Everyone I knew had a garden." In Michigan her mother continued to garden on a smaller scale.

Her opportunities were reduced as she moved with her husband and his job demands, but recalls picking up sprouted coconuts on the golf course when they lived in San Juan, Puerto Rico and planting them in large outdoor containers.

When the couple retired to their Mitchell family "compound" near Colfax, Martha came under the happy influence of Sally Mitchell, who piqued her interest in the Master Gardener program. She has enjoyed learning about the importance of educating the public about protecting and caring for the environment. She credits the organization for opportunities to meet many wonderful and interesting people.

Martha is especially grateful for assistance in adjusting to the eccentricities of Texas gardening.

She ruefully explains that in contrast to Tennessee, where she gardened in rich, red soil, and Michigan, which has record inches of top soil, her area of Van Zandt County is sand.

"My first year here we had record grasshoppers. They ate everything I planted. Hard line winds blew down my

Kentucky Wonder beans, wild hogs ruined my cantaloupes, rabbits ate my asparagus, gophers dragged my tomato plants away and ate the roots of anything they wanted. I planted grapes and had them growing nicely the second year and came home one day and the deer were eating them."

She is, however, adjusting by fencing her yard, growing Texas friendly plants, and educating herself about the uniqueness of Texas gardening.

Martha's dry, self-deprecating humor is further evident in her declaration that she has no special recipes. She just cooks whatever she has on hand and is fond of eating out. She further admits, "I'm still trying to overcome the stigma of trying to pass off a salsa recipe from Michoacana as my own." We will not let her forget this!

Just a Note: Martha is the source of our great refreshments at our meetings!

We have a new member!

Bonita Herron has transferred to our association from the Denton County Master Gardener Association. She is a recent graduate of the Master Gardener Program and is anxious to get her volunteer hours and CEU requirements behind her. No problem there, Bonita! We have plenty of opportunities for you to get those hours and MORE!! Welcome ... we are happy to have you as a member of our group!



Garden Guru



Dear Garden Guru: What will grow under a shade tree that won't just take over my grass?

You need Horseherb (*Calyptracarpis vialis*), native to South Texas and naturalized here in our area. Horseherb has a small rough leaf, tiny yellow flowers and grows only about 6 inches tall. Deep waterings two to four times in July and August keep it looking prime until it goes dormant with the first hard freeze. Cover it with unraked leaves where it will break dormancy as soon as the weather gets mild. Horseherb is a mowable ground cover.

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



Horseherb draws many butterflies, like the Dogface.