

BIRTHDAYS:

January

Kathy Brasuell, 1/17

February

Nancy Szabo, 2/07

Pat Mullin, 2/12

Danny Elerson, 2/18

Connie Ann Tramel, 2/21

January 10th Meeting -

Please bring your dues of \$20.00 in an envelope and give to Louella Iliff. Thanks

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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
Don Taylor Jan Graham
John Womack

Volume 5, Issue 1January, 2019

2018 Master Gardener Awards Dinner

By Sandra Rosen

***"Twas the week before Christmas, and all through all the room,
We heard laughter and cheers and saw smiles and good friends."***

And so it was at the 2018 Master Gardener Awards Dinner. We said hello to a new president (although she was at a Rock Concert) and to a new board and goodbye to the old. Our outgoing President, Bob Williams, reminded us of the accomplishments of the past year which included:

- The first intern class fully certified by graduation
- 1,400 geraniums sold
- The successful Library Series
- The Fall Seminar
- Van School Day
- Farm Bureau Ag Day
- The continued success of the Community Gardens (1,348 lbs of vegetables this year.)
- The Blackwell House

Awards were given for years of service and for volunteer hours. The President's Special Awards went to Martha Mitchell, Jimmy Pierce, Sandra Rosen, Nancy Szabo, Anna Baker, and Pat Mullin. The Rookies of the Year Award went to Don and Pat Taylor, and the Most Volunteer Hours Award went to Louella Iliff with 286 volunteer hours. The Master Gardener of the Year Award went to Nancy Szabo. It was a wonderful evening of appreciation and fun and good food!



Louella Iliff Most Volunteer Hours



Nancy Szabo Master Gardener of the Year



President Bob Williams,



Community Garden Workers, Carter Hallmark, Sharon Palmer, Louella Iliff



Melisa Rhodes reads Thank You letter from a beneficiary of the community garden



Pat & Don Taylor Rookies of the Year



President's Message

While typing my first message of 2019 to all of you, I am looking out my window and see that the grass is already turning a bright emerald green. The poppies are finally starting to peak out from beneath the mulch in the flower beds, and bluejays, cardinals and two pesky squirrels are scurrying about with a renewed sense of energy and excitement. That is exactly how I feel as your new president for 2019!

This is the 6th year that the Free State Master Gardeners Association has been in existence and we have accomplished a lot. We have held successful fundraisers and provided a number of interesting and informative programs to our members and to the public. Many members have taken advanced training courses and have graciously passed their newly-gained knowledge on to the rest of us.

We have started new gardens and revitalized others, provided fresh vegetables to fellow citizens who are less fortunate, and joined the AgriLife Extension Office in educating children and adults about gardening and other important topics. We have accomplished all of these things by working together and that is something to be very proud of.

My goal for 2019 is simple: It is to make sure that whatever we do, we do well. And to do things well, it takes effort, dedication and many people to help. I hope that each and every one of you will get involved this year by serving on a committee, helping with projects and events, and working in our gardens. If you're limited physically, you could write an article for the newsletter, speak to an outside group, deliver produce to needy families, pick produce, water when needed, use your computer skills to help with administrative tasks, or work with children to instill the fun of gardening and teach the importance of taking care of our environment. Whatever your strengths are, we need them.

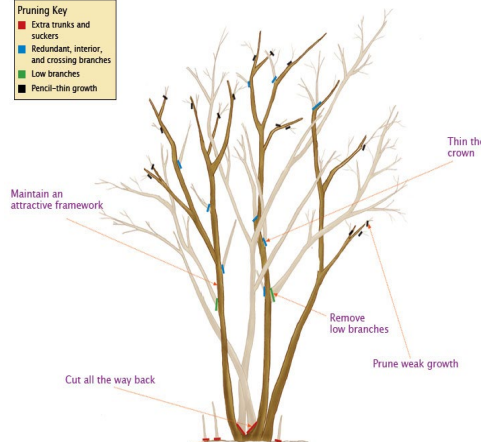
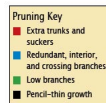
Remember the story of the little Red Hen who worked hard to plant the wheat, hoe the weeds, harvest the wheat and baked the bread but got no help? Just think what she could have accomplished if the other chicks had done their part! We are lucky to have many little Red Hens (and Roosters, too) within our group who have stepped up to be committee leads and head up various projects. Many of you pitch in and help whenever you're asked, and we are so thankful for you; however, as we grow and take on more, it will take every member to ensure that whatever we do, we do well.

Whether you are the little Red Hen (or Rooster) who takes the lead, or you prefer to be the chick who digs in to help, you are needed. We will be setting up committees and planning events for the year, so please get involved in some way or another. We need your ideas, your enthusiasm, and your participation in growing the FSMG program and making it as good as it can be.

Also, I want to send out a big shout out to Becky Hettinger and Sally Mitchell who have spent hours planning programs and scheduling speakers for some great programs in 2019. They will tell us all about them at the January 10th meeting. Thank you, ladies!

I look forward to seeing all of you in January. Please contact me anytime if you have suggestions, comments or ideas on how we can improve the FSMG Association. p

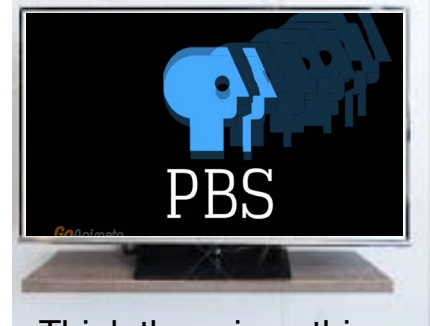
Garden Guru



Dear Garden Guru: I still see lots of trees "topped off," especially crepe myrtles, as a pruning method. Why doesn't this work?

This method of pruning where the tree is cut back drastically to a few large branches is known as the "Texas chain saw manicure." The new growth that emerges is vigorous, bushy, upright, and unnatural. It will seriously affect the tree's structure and appearance. The new growth is weakly attached and can break off during severe windstorms and rainstorms.

It can also shorten the life of the tree by increasing susceptibility to insects and disease. Not a good pruning method.



Think there is nothing left to watch on TV?

PBS KERA Channel 13

Saturday Morning

9:30am-Central Texas Gardener

12:00pm-Growing a Greener World

January Gardening Chores

Tommy Phillips
County Extension Agent, Ag/NR

It's a new gardening year, and hopefully, all your gardening efforts will be fruitful and enjoyable. Old man winter is still around, but winter weather is perfect for a number of gardening tasks. Although you may not think of it this way, just consider how much better outdoor chores, like soil preparation, planting, transplanting and pruning, can be done without getting drenched in sweat while toiling in hot summer temperatures. So, here are a few items the gardener can accomplish in January.

TRANSPLANTING:

If you are considering digging and moving a plant from one spot to another in the landscape, this is the month to accomplish this job. Most plants move best when they are fully dormant as a result of prolonged exposure to cold temperatures. Small and young plants are the easiest to move successfully since there is less shock and they recover from root loss rather quickly. Remember to selectively remove some top growth to compensate for the inevitable loss of some of the roots. Once the plant is moved, water it thoroughly and apply a few inches of mulch over the root area.

PLANTING:

The ground doesn't freeze in East Texas, and many things can be planted at this time of year. At the top of the list are fruit trees and vines. These plants are dug by growers while they are dormant and shipped bare-root. The quicker you make your selection and get them in the ground, the faster they will establish a root system, which means better growth in the spring and summer. Don't let them dry out! Roses and other dormant, deciduous flowering plants are also available this month. Actually, most container-grown nursery stock can be planted during the winter, weather permitting. You can also be preparing the soil now for new flower, rose or shrub beds by mixing in plenty of organic material like compost and fertilizer. This way the soil is ready for immediate planting when the plants arrive.

Start seeds indoors now for planting in late winter and early spring: broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale, lettuce, parsley, petunias and begonias. Tomato, pepper and eggplant seed should be started in late January for transplanting in March. Late January is also the time to start transplants of marigolds, periwinkles and other summer flowers. Use a commercial peat-light soil mix in a clean flat. Place in a warm, bright spot. Cover the tray with a clear piece of glass or plastic or saran wrap until the seeds have sprouted. At that time, place in very bright light to keep the seedlings from stretching.

Plant asparagus roots as they become available at garden stores.

PRUNING:

January and February are the months to accomplish pruning of fruit trees. Annual pruning keeps the harvest within reach, thins crowded branches, thus allowing more light to penetrate developing fruit, and stimulates new growth for next year's crop. Peaches, plums and apricots need this annual pruning. The dormant season of winter is also the time to do any needed pruning of shade trees to correct major problems such as cleaning out dead wood, removing lower limbs and crowded branches to allow more light to reach the ground, and removing hazardous branches which threaten property.

FERTILIZING:

Regularly fertilize pansies to keep them actively growing. Houseplants can be fertilized with reduced rates of water-soluble fertilizer this month. Do not over-water houseplants, and make sure that water does not sit in the saucer under the pot after watering.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Birds of all kinds appreciate a constant source of seed, suet and water during the winter. You'll enjoy all the activity in your yard while providing a valuable service for our feathered friends. Just remember that once you start feeding, you should keep it up through the winter. This is a good time to get your lawn and garden soil tested for its pH level. Soils which are strongly acid stunt plant growth and result in unproductive gardens. Liming lawns and gardens now allows time for lime to react and raise the soil pH before the growing season arrives.

Compost piles should be turned at least once during the month. Leaves are abundant and should be shredded before adding to the pile. Add animal manure or clippings from winter rye for a source of nitrogen. The pile should be at least 3 cubic feet in volume to help hold in the heat generated by decomposition. Check the pile for moisture level. It should be neither too wet or too dry. Add water if it is dry; add more coarse, dry matter if it is too wet.

Gardening Events – January, 2018

By Sandra Rosen

Tuesday, January 8th, **Inviting Nature: Native Plants** at the Zula B. Wylie Library in Dallas, 10:30 am

Thursday, January 10, **Free State Master Gardeners, Van Zandt County Library, 9:00 am**

Saturday, January 12, **"Cut Back, Spring Forward: Pruning and Shaping Your Garden"** at Texas Discovery Gardens, 10-11:30am

Saturday, January 12, **"Peggy Martin Presents Old Garden and Antique Roses,"** FBC Kaufman, 1906 Fair Stree, Kaufman, TX. Tickets are \$35.00 and include lunch. To pre-order tickets and the roses, please e-mail Master.Gardener@KaufmanCounty.net or send a check to the Kaufman County Master Gardeners, 2471 N. State Hwy. 34, Kaufman, Texas 75142. For more information, please call (469) 371-4542.

Friday, January 18 "Master Gardeners at the Library" Lecture series at the Tyler Public Library. Presented by the Smith County Master Gardeners. 11:30-1:00. **"Crepe Myrtles-The Lilacs of the South."** by Keith Hansen.

Tuesday, January 22 **"MasVegetabter Wellness Volunteer Statewide Kick Off Training."** Hopkins County, Sulphur Springs, 8:00-4:00. More information call 903-885-3443.

Friday, February 8 **"Grape, Berry, and Fruit Tree Propagation Workshop,"** The Landing-Meyers Park and Event Center in McKinney. Speakers from Texas A&M. \$35 includes box lunch.. 8:30am

And don't forget the **State Master Gardener Convention** April 25-27 in Victoria, Texas. 19TMGAConference.com

Geranium Sale Kick-Off

Thursday, January 10th
Regular Meeting
Come get your
Packet and be ready to
SELL!



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>

\$8.00ea.

Red
Pink
Orange
Purple
Coral/Salmon

Advanced Training Offerings in 2019

This information is from the TXMG Web site

Home Fruit (South Texas) – February 7-8, 2019,
hosted by Gonzales County in Gonzales, TX

Vegetables – February 13-15, 2019,
hosted by Dallas County in Dallas, TX

Tree Care – March 13-15, 2019,
hosted by Dallas County in Dallas, TX

Save the Dates!

Turfgrass – March 14-15, 2019,
hosted by Montgomery County, in Conroe, TX

Tree Care – June 12-14, 2019,
hosted by Kerr County, in Kerrville, TX

Earth-Kind® – May 16-18, 2019,
hosted by Henderson County, in Athens, TX

Vegetables – August 13-15, 2019,
hosted by Bexar County, in San Antonio, TX

Additional Training Opportunities

Training opportunities for Texas Master Gardeners are listed below:

MASTER GARDENER ADVANCED TRAININGS

– These workshops provide advanced training whereby a corps of Master Gardeners can obtain a specialization which supports or expands specific county educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. To be eligible for an Advanced Training designation, an individual must possess an up-to-date Master Gardener certification.

EARTH-KIND® TRAINING FOR MASTER GARDENERS

– Texas Master Gardeners may select on-line modules to obtain up to 3 hours of re-certification education credits in a calendar year. Each module is worth 1 hour of credit. Master Gardeners are not encouraged to seek re-certification credit for training modules they have completed in previous years.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STUDY COURSES – These courses provide an opportunity for more in-depth training in landscape design than is normally included in the Master Gardener curriculum. Each course is typically approved by local Master Gardener chapters to qualify for 12 hours of continuing education toward maintaining certification for Master Gardeners.

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

Greenhouse - Yay or Nay

By Sandra Rosen

The one certainty for all Master Gardeners is that gardening is more than gardening. It is therapy, it is fun, it is spiritual, it is physical, it is productive, it is a teacher, and it is meaningful and fulfilling. For many of us, that is enough. But for some, taking our gardening to another level might be good. And a greenhouse can introduce many new facets to the gardening process.

The most obvious use of a greenhouse is to overwinter our plants that might be damaged by the cold weather. That is



certainly a good use of a greenhouse. A second important use is to have a place to grow all those seedlings and get ready for our fall or spring gardens. (In my house, the dining table is used for this, and I would love a greenhouse.) Not just vegetables, but flower seeds can also be started. In Bell County, the Master Gardeners have a large table in their greenhouse. It has sides on it and is filled with potting soil. The seeds are started on this large table and as they get large enough, the very small plant is lifted out with a spoon or spatula and put into a small pot. Now when it gets a bit larger, it can be planted outside or sold as a starter vegetable plant.

Now that is another idea – money making – 100 small tomato plants sold to Walmart or to a nursery for \$1 each. Or organic lettuce sold to a local restaurant. Or given to a homeless shelter.

A greenhouse also makes it easier to grow your lemon trees and lime trees and avocado plants.

Having a greenhouse means you can



enjoy your gardening therapy on a daily basis. It also means that you can share your produce and your flowers more easily. Having a greenhouse won't help to end world hunger, but it can help our own little corner of the world produce more food and maybe spread the idea that growing your own food is healthy and economical and fun.



Anna Baker, MG

By Joan Driver

When Master Gardener Anna Baker says that she has “done a lot of stuff,” she’s not kidding. Following the death of her mother when Anna was only nine months old, she spent her preschool years between a grandmother and the cabs of heavy equipment her father operated for a living. After her father remarried the family purchased a new home in Tyler, where her new mom helped her create her own garden spot to grow zinnias, popcorn, radishes and carrots.

Anna’s adult years have reflected her creative and entrepreneurial spirit in myriad ways. As an art major she rediscovered a childhood love of photography which evolved into a series of careers in teaching, graphics, and publishing. During the recession of 2008-11 she survived with jobs in pet sitting, elder sitting, graphics, special events coordinating for a Canton church, and mowing yards.

Anna’s artistic bent has also expressed itself in building and crafts. As a volunteer with the Salvation Army, her

grandmother enlisted Anna’s help in refurbishing toys and clothing as Christmas gifts. This energetic woman also enjoys redoing furniture, and needlework, as well as “most crafts and designing just about anything,” she says. She joined her father and brother in working on cars, airplanes and equipment, and her brother also helped her in construction of two decks at her home. One of her latest educational projects is an online class in preparation for building a storage shed.

“Gardening has always been a big stress reliever for me,” says Anna, who admits she neglects housework because of her preference for the outdoors. Future

plans include replacing fish in her water garden and renovating her yard. She is glad to be a Master Gardener, she states, having “waited a long time to become one [and I’m] so very happy.”



Texas Two-Step Slaw

Salad

1 bag of shredded Cole Slaw
1/4 cup chopped Red Onion
2 Jalapeno Chilies, seeded, finely chopped (optional)
1 bunch chopped Fresh Cilantro
1 (11 oz.) can Whole Kernel Corn with Red & Green Peppers (drained)
1 cup shredded Cheese

Dressing

3/4 cup Ranch Salad Dressing
1 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
1 tsp. Cumin

Directions:

In a large bowl, combine all salad ingredients, mix well.

In a small bowl, combine all dressing ingredients, blend well.

Pour dressing over salad, toss to coat.

Serve immediately or refrigerate until serving time.

Growing Inside During Winter

By Jan Graham

Country Gardens Magazine simplifies inside gardening with interior plants to grace our windows & table tops. A budget-friendly project for a potted garden gives extended pleasure.

White-variegated plants thrive on medium light from east-or west facing windows. Follow plant labels and group according to the level of light needed near north or NE windows with the right amount of water. Pour off excess as you wait for blooms. Also, consider herbs.

Have something to capture the water without soaking plants. Try a large mirror and reflect light on those plants, especially on dark days. Fixtures can be height adjusted to target seeds as they grow. Use caution with lights. Don't water with spraying nozzle or wand.

An indoor dish garden can be arranged with these materials"

- * 12" clear plastic pot liner
- * Awl
- * 12 x 3" shallow pot or tray
- * 4-5 small houseplants (such as Dieffenbachia 'Camille', silver pothos, Hedera helix 'Mini Adam'; Pilea mollis 'Moon Valley'; and Fittonia 'Mini White'), add prechilled bulbs (Muscari, Dutch Iris, crocus)
- * Potting mix
- * Bark pieces and preserved moss
- * Cork saucer



FSMG February 14th Meeting

Heirloom Vegetables with Mike Loggins

Owner of Micro Family Farms/Tyler

