

Free State Master Gardener News

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BIRTHDAYS:

Volume 5, Issue 4 April, 2019

April

Susan Dahlman, 4/13
Kathy Massey, 4/6

May

Pat Briggs, 5/09
Marsha Sasser, 5/28
Pat Taylor, 5/27

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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

Gardening in Alaska

By Stan and April Trekell

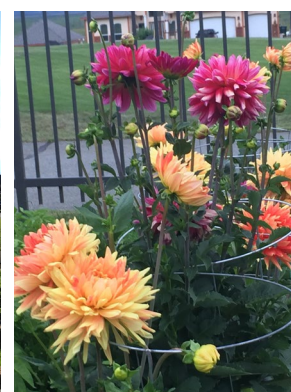
In Alaska we have to start our tomatoes or greens early when there is still inches and feet of snow on the ground and temperatures are in the teens or twenties. We have successfully grown Swiss chard, various kales, spinach and beet varieties such as Detroit reds, Chiggogia and golden. All of these including the beet greens we use in morning shakes. Many people think this sounds yucky. Personally I do not care for the taste of beets but all of these are chocked full of vitamins and nutrition for your immune system. Let me digress for a moment to tell you how we used these year round. We pattaed these in a Vitamix and pour in old-fashioned ice

trays. The "cubes" are then placed in ziplock bags, placed in the freezer to be used each morning. Our morning shakes consist of 4 vegetable cubes, a handful of frozen diced beets, frozen blueberries, half of a banana, half an apple (to disguise taste of beets) chia seeds and almond milk. You can add a scoop of soy protein powder for a delicious shake.

Tomato seeds are started 6 weeks before putting in a heated greenhouse (still 25 degrees outside) and green seeds are started under the grow lights. Greens are set out in the garden when danger of frost is ended. They thrive in the cool weather. The garden soil is 1/3 sand, 1/3 soil/

peat and 1/3 compost. I use a heavy construction nylon fabric over the garden rows with X's cut for the seedlings. I use old siding or plywood strips to walk between rows. Some folks are opposed to using rail ties or treated wood for raised bed siding; however I lap over black visqueen to prevent contamination. Also successful with carrots, peas, broccoli and bokchoy. The vegetables grow quickly and very large due to the soil combination but also the cool climate and long daylight (20+ hours)

Start your garden early and enjoy!!



President's Message

March is over, April is here and FINALLY we are able to get out in the garden to weed, mulch, plant and more! After months of looking at gray skies, dismal flower beds and barren looking landscapes, they are all coming to life with beautiful sunshine, gorgeous blooms and green growth. Once again, we have a chance to renew...our gardens and our minds.

The FSMGs have accomplished a lot so far this year. In three short months, we have sold more than 1400 geraniums, parked cars, held a well-attended and successful seminar, raised money selling caladium bulbs, visited the Dallas Arboretum, held our first Library Series program and worked in the various gardens we oversee. It has been busy, but very rewarding and a lot of fun learning new things and getting to know fellow members better.

Jimmie Pierce, Karen Gonzalez, Becky Hettinger and I are working on a plan to present to you in the very near future of what we have in mind for the "Inspiration Garden." Upon members' approval, this garden will be located on the south side of the Blackwell House in what is now a pasture with a lonely gazebo at its center. The purpose of this inspirational garden is to provide examples of different styles, types and ways to garden in hopes that it will inspire those who visit to use these ideas in their own gardening efforts. We hope to have the plan ready for you to see by the May meeting.

We are also participating in the Grand Saline Main Street Festival on Saturday, April 13. We will have two booths, one for children with gardening-related activities, and one for adults where we will acquaint them with the Master Gardener program. If you would like to help, please let me know.

I am so pleased with the number of members who have pitched in and given their time so far this year to promote our organization. I have received several calls from people in our community who want to know more about the Free State Master Gardeners because they have attended our programs and want to be involved. I'm proud of what we are doing for our community, and so glad to have all of you on board. Thanks to all of you who are helping with these efforts.

P.S. Be sure to watch for the April/May issue of Texas Gardener Magazine.

Garden Guru



Dear Garden Guru: What causes yellowing of azalea leaves?

Age, environment, or nutrition can trigger yellowing azalea leaves. Often, leaves yellow and drop with age. But if plants yellow in the summer, check the leaves for lacebugs - insects that drain chlorophyll and plant juices, leaving the foliage yellowish, stippled or silvery. You will also likely find dark specks, the lacebugs' excrement, on the undersides of the leaf. Use a magnifying glass to look for the insects with their gauzelike wings. Frequent sprays - strong blasts of water - to the undersides of the leaves can discourage populations. They are usually not a serious threat if you keep them under control. Some pesticides that can be used are insecticidal soap, summer horticultural oil, or a mixture of 1 oz. soybean oil, and 1 oz. orange oil in a gallon of water. Be sure to douse the undersides of the leaves.

By John Womack, MG

Gardening on Wheels with David Gray



Sally Mitchell with David Gray

David Gray, our speaker at the March Master Gardener meeting, is extremely busy. He is a representative of the Dallas arboretum where he drives a tram and has logged over 3,000 hours volunteering since 2003. He is also a volunteer at the Speakers' Bureau and has designed and helped to maintain a beautiful yard in his Tyler area home. He does all of this while in a wheelchair. David, who has suffered from muscular dystrophy since 1975, is positive, humorous, and full of good information and gardening tips.

David says that if you are handicapped, you need to adapt your garden and yard to your situation. Everything should be within easy reach, use pots and tools that are smaller and lighter in weight - fiberglass pots, for example - and decomposed granite or flagstone is great for paths because

wheelchairs can roll easily on them. David's yard is beautiful, and he is able - because of the design - to reach nearly everything in his garden.

His yard has a huge variety of plants, bird baths, and also many container plantings. Some plants that are very good for our area and that he recommends are: caladiums, begonias, hydrangeas, azaleas, sweet potato vine, coleus, Kimberly Queen fern, and hosta.

Two final points: Create points of interest, but don't make your yard look like you are having a yard sale, and 90% of plant success is soil preparation.

David Gray is a source of inspiration and information for our gardens and for ourselves!

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.

Gardening Events – April, 2019

By Don Taylor, MG

Wednesday, April 17th
East Texas Arboretum Spring Style Show
and Luncheon Call 903-675-5630

Thursday, April 11 Sun vs. Shade 9:00am VCPL
Chris Brumley/Brumley Nursery

Saturday, April 20th Plant Sale/Art Show Call 903-675-5630
Athens-East Tx Arboretum

Thursday, April 11th 6pm-8pm Simple Delicious
Garland, Tx Dallas County Ext. Office

Saturday, April 13th 10AM-
MG Booth at Grand Saline, with a Children's Booth

Thursday, April 18th 10AM- Rainwater Harvesting
Carter Hallmark, MG

Wednesday, April 24th TBD Lunch &
Learn 12 noon – 1pm Bring your lunch.
Wood County Arboretum & Botanical Gardens

Saturday, May 4th
Hunt County Heritage Garden & Outdoor Learning Center
2311 Washington Street Greenville 9am SHARP

Advanced Training Offerings in 2019

This information is from the TXMG Web site

NEW! Budding & Grafting, April 2-3, – hosted by
 Waller County, Brookshire

April 12-13, Plant Propagation – hosted by Tarrant
 County, Ft. Worth

First Detector #1 – May 2-3, hosted by Ellis County,
 Waxahachie

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

First Detector #2 – May 20-21, hosted by Williamson
 County, Georgetown

Tree Care – June 12-14, 2019, hosted by Hill Country,
 in Kerrville, TX

Greenhouse Management – October 17-19, hosted
 by Tarrant County, in Ft. Worth

Save these dates!

Turfgrass – May 23-24, hosted by Montgomery
 County, Conroe

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

JMG-September 24-26, hosted by Denton County,,
 Corinth, 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.

FREE STATE MASTER GARDENER LIBRARY SERIES PRESENTS

Water Education in Texas

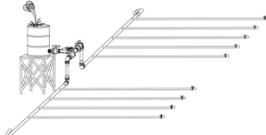


Water

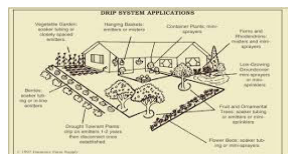
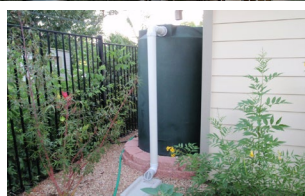
Conservation•Drip Irrigation•Rainwater Harvesting
 Van Zandt County Library

Thursday, April 18, 10 a.m.
Carter Hallmark, MG

Drip Irrigation
 • Small Agricultural
 • Home



Rainwater Harvesting



Water Conservation

- In Your Home
- Lawn & Garden
- Agriculture & Wildlife



Free Public Program, Everyone Invited!



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts Cooperating.
 If you need auxiliary aids to attend this or any Extension Program-please contact the Extension office at 903-567-4149 one week prior to event.

Mimi Sherwin, MG

By Joan Driver

Mimi Sherwin says that her interest in gardening began with memories of the victory gardens of World War II. Her father and other family members were gardeners. She was introduced to Master Gardeners through several friends in Dallas who became members. She joined (FSMG Class of 2015) because of the social contacts of the organization as well as opportunities to improve plant culture skills.



Mimi has a small garden and a keyhole garden, and finds the raised beds most successful for her interests in flowers and vegetables. Like many other gardeners she finds her biggest obstacle to be weeds, and her favorite part of the process is "harvesting and eating." Honest woman!

This is not an exact recipe but idea that can be used by anyone. I love spinach but have had a hard time growing it but can grow Swiss chard easily. You can substitute Swiss chard for almost any recipe that calls for spinach. I use it in frittatas, sauté it with some onion and mushrooms and put it in a container and place eggs on top and cover and bake until eggs are done. Cook just like spinach and use in vegetable lasagna.



A Healthy Tip: That cucumber that grows so easily in the garden is really a very valuable plant. It is valuable not in monetary terms, but as a health-wise vegetable it is full of important vitamins and minerals. The cucumber is a very good source of B vitamins, the anti-inflammatory vitamin K, vitamin C, and vitamin B5. It also has these beneficial minerals: manganese, potassium, and magnesium. In addition, it aids in hydration because it is actually 96% water. Now instead of chips and dip, how about sliced cucumbers and dip???

Community Garden Clean Up Day - Planting Days-April 2nd-9am, April 16th-9am



Anticipation

By Kathy Brasuell

This will be my second spring here in Van Zandt County. Last spring I just watched to see what would grow and flourish around my property. I found some wild roses, and lots of wildflowers that I couldn't identify. One plant with pretty green leaves I discovered later was Giant Ragweed!

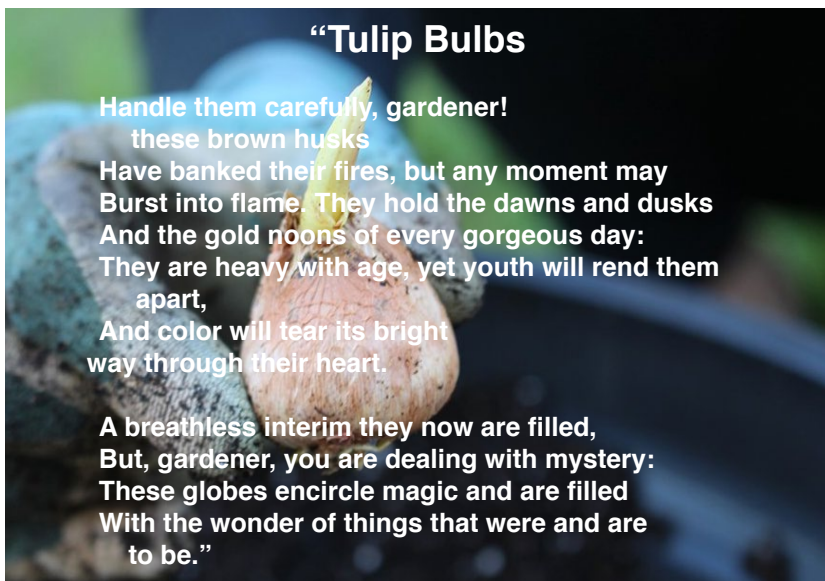
I've thankfully received many plants from other gardeners, and dug plants up from the side of the road. I also spent my fair share of money at the local nurseries! Now, I'm waiting with growing excitement to see what comes back!

Poet Grace Noll Crowell has this to say about the anticipation:

"Tulip Bulbs

Handle them carefully, gardener!
these brown husks
Have banked their fires, but any moment may
Burst into flame. They hold the dawns and dusks
And the gold noons of every gorgeous day:
They are heavy with age, yet youth will rend them
apart,
And color will tear its bright
way through their heart.

A breathless interim they now are filled,
But, gardener, you are dealing with mystery:
These globes encircle magic and are filled
With the wonder of things that were and are
to be."



FSMG's Dallas Arboretum Guided Tour

By Shari Curran

Members of the Freestate Master Gardeners were treated with incredible weather for our trip to the Dallas Arboretum's Dallas Blooms Event on Tuesday, March 19th! Dallas Blooms is hailed as the largest floral festival in the Southwest with more than 100 varieties of spring bulbs and over 500,000 blooms bursting in every color. In addition, the Cherry Blossom trees were in full bloom providing photo opportunities around every corner.

Our guide, Rod provided information about the park in general as well as the specialty test gardens throughout the park. This year's theme, "Life's a Picnic" features a larger-than-life picnic scene topiary comprised of a stunning 40'x40' picnic basket, a vase of flowers, several giant picnic ants and a huge picnic blanket all made from flowers!

For me personally the Dallas Arboretum provides a way to renew my mind and spirit and always motivates me to come home and garden. It was a treat to share one of my favorite places with my friends in Master Gardeners.



Gardening Experiences

By Suan Dahlman

A most memorable experience for me was when I attended an Encore Azalea workshop that was presented by Buddy Lee at Breedlove Nursery in Tyler. For those of you unfamiliar with the name, Buddy Lee is the man who invented Encore Azaleas. He is Director of Plant Innovations at Plant Development Services, Inc. in Independence, Louisiana, and has over 30 years experience in nursery management, breeding, propagation and plant development. The Azalea Society of America awarded him with the Society's Distinguished Service Award.

In his most unassuming style, wearing overalls and using simplistic discourse, he explained to us at this seminar how Encore Azaleas were born. Many years of experimentation and cross breeding tradi-

tional spring-blooming azaleas with rare Taiwanese summer-blooming azaleas finally produced the only patented brand of azaleas to bloom in spring, summer and fall. There are 30 varieties that boast all palettes of red, pink, coral, white and purple blooms that enhance landscapes all year round. Buddy very casually informed us that he was presently growing 32,000 seedlings with plans to grow 40,000 the following year. His ultimate goal is to produce a new hybrid of yellow Encore Azaleas.

I was completely spellbound listening to this very talented man inform the audience on the growing of and caring for these beautiful plants. These are some of the tips I learned for those who want to grow beautiful azaleas:

- unlike traditional azaleas, Encore Azaleas love full sun. For optimal blooms, they can be planted in full sun (morning sun is best) to high-filtered shade. Four to six hours of sun per day is best.
- they are acid-loving plants with optimal pH levels in the soil between 5.5 and 6.5
- like most newly-planted plants, they need to be kept moist but once established do not need frequent watering except in drought conditions. They do not like wet feet.
- prune after initial bloom in spring; no heavy pruning is necessary in the fall as this is when they set buds for spring.
- fertilize sparingly in spring (Hollytone fertilizer was mentioned); mulch with cotton burr compost or pine needles.

If I can do it, guess what ... you can too.

Gregg Grant Spring Seminar

By Paula Marshall

More than 75 people attended our seminar at the Silver Spur Resort on March 5th. Guests were greeted by friendly Master Gardeners, wonderful food and tables that were beautifully decorated with spring plants and colorful flower seed packets that they could take home with them.

Greg Grant, Smith County Agrilife Agent/Horticulture, spoke about heirloom plants and the advantages of using them in today's gardens. He also gave an enlightening talk on the process he has used in developing some new varieties of plants that are now in the nurseries for people to buy.

Many door prizes that were donated by area businesses were given out throughout the evening. Businesses that contributed were Means Hardware, Grand Saline, Tractor Supply, ACE Hardware, Buttermilk's in Canton and three nurseries: Blue Moon, Brumley's and Bruce Miller. When you shop these businesses, please tell them thank you for their support. Silver Spur Resort did not charge us for using their facility, and we are grateful to them as well.

Thank you to the committee who planned this event and went to a lot of trouble to

make it special: Sally Mitchell, Marsha Sasser, Jimmie Pierce, Nancy Szabo, Becky Hettinger, and to those who helped in other critical ways: John Clark and his wife, Debbie, Registration; Pat Briggs and Jan Graham, Door Prizes; Martha Mitchell, Refreshments; and Becky Hettinger, Louella Iff and Bob Williams, Traffic Control.

A second seminar is planned for September featuring Chris Weisinger, "Heirloom Bulbs" and Todd Williams who will demonstrate flower arranging.

