

Free State Master Gardener News

<http://www.facebook.com/Free State Master Gardener>
<https://txmg.org/freestatemastergardeners>



BIRTHDAYS:

February

Nancy Szabo, 2/07
Pat Mullin, 2/12
Danny Elerson, 2/18
Connie Ann Tramel, 2/21

March

Gay Mitchell, 3/2
Sandra Rosen, 3/10

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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 2

February, 2019

Superstar Program

By Joan Driver, MG

Master Gardeners know that plant culture in Texas has unusual challenges. Of twelve soil types world wide Texas has eight of them. Annual rainfall varies from 14 inches in arid West Texas to as much as 54 inches in East Texas. Complicated variables have always made difficult one of the most basic questions a gardener commonly asks: What should I plant?

Fortunately for Texas gardeners and landscapers, a collaborative effort produced a successful educational and marketing tool known as Texas Superstars. This program brilliantly publicizes those remarkable plants that have proven themselves winners in a range of climates and soil types across the state.

The beauty of the Texas Superstar program is that it simultaneously addresses needs of both supplies and consumers. An executive board of seven horticulturists from the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension Services and Texas Tech University solicit input from horticultural professionals across the state to identify remarkably attractive and hardy plants. Field trials of 2-3 years, in which plants must thrive with minimal soil preparation, reasonable levels of water, and no pesticides, lead to designations of new Superstars. Trial sites located in College Station, Overton, Lubbock, and San Antonio subject test plants to a range

of Texas growing conditions. The plants also must pass evaluation of marketability: whether they can be produced in sufficient quantities to meet customer demand that has been created by the success of the Texas Superstar brand.

Superstar offerings may come from old traditional garden favorites, such as the hardy Laura Bush Petunia or several heirloom roses chosen for the program, or they may be newer varieties like Tidal Wave Petunias, the Texas maroon bluebonnet or Mystic Spires Blue Salvia. While the program initially focused on landscape plants, more recent choices include several oranges, peppers, tomatoes, vegetables, a strawberry, and a sweet, seeded wine grape. The executive board is constantly evaluating new attractive and unique plants.

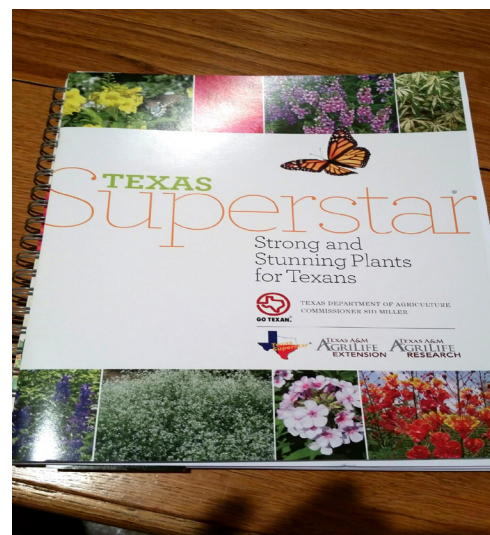
Marketing of selected plants is promoted through Texas Nursery and Landscape Association. The "Go Texan" initiative of the Texas Department of Agriculture promotes Texas Superstars through a colorful, frequently updated booklet which includes full data on each selection, including description, growing conditions, season, soil type, and suggested uses. Accompanying symbols

identify water requirements, hardiness zones, and whether each attracts deer or pollinators. Plants are presented in categories of annuals, perennials, per-annuals (tropical perennials used as annuals outside the tropics), wood shrubs, trees, and specialty plants.

Colorful containers and plant labels also assist consumers in locating promoted plants. Nurserymen find that the plant labels more than pay for themselves in attracting shoppers to plants in the Superstar program.

More information about Texas Superstars is available on line at texassuperstar.com. Several videos are searchable on youtube.com.

The popularity of the Texas Superstar program is a result of gardeners' landscape and gardening success with tested, proven plants consistently providing beauty and toughness.



The Community Garden - Part 2

By Sandra Rosen, MG

The Master Gardeners of Van Zandt County harvested over 1,000 pounds of produce from their community garden last year. Now if the Master Gardeners didn't take home the harvest (and they didn't), where did all that bounty go? Well, it opened some doors – doors into people's homes who really need fresh vegetables and who need and want to know about the value of good nutrition.

Melisa Rhodes, a County Extension Agent with the Texas A & M Agrilife Extension office here in Van Zandt County, went first to the housing authority in Grand Saline. Melisa has had extensive training in the A & M Master Wellness Program, and she asked if she could bring free fresh vegetables to the residents of the housing authority and also provide some education in good nutrition. The door was opened, and the program has been a huge success. Most of the residents of the housing

authority are seniors, single parents, physically or mentally disabled residents, and some are grandparents raising grandchildren – all are living on small fixed incomes. And as one resident said, "As one could imagine, many people living on a budgeted income struggle to find enough room in their limited finances to afford and follow a fully-balanced nutritional diet. Quite frankly, it is cheaper to eat junk processed foods high in sodium and other chemicals and ingredients that are not healthy for anyone."

Soon the Fruitvale Housing Authority called requesting Melisa's free vegetables and training sessions and then Edgewood called. The story doesn't end here, however. Now the residents of the Edgewood Housing Authority decided they would like to have their own gardens. So Melisa has helped them start a container garden where they have grown their own tomatoes, cabbage, lettuce, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and basil and are planning to expand next year.

One Edgewood Estate resident has written to Melisa: "So again, I cannot thank all of you enough for the great work you do throughout Van Zandt County. I myself am looking forward to continuing what we have started in my community and trying to get more residents involved in the growing process, for therapy and exercise, or just enjoying the fresh vegetables from our garden and reaping the benefits of a balanced diet. Thank you all once more."

So what started as a simple project for interns working their way to becoming Master Gardeners has expanded into an outreach program that touches many people. What a beautiful example of the ripple effects of good deeds! Kudos to Melisa, the Texas Agrilife Extension service, and the Master Gardeners.



President's Message

The FSMG year has started off with a bang! The Geranium Sale has kicked off, two well-known speakers and a great venue are booked for the spring and fall seminars, and exciting new programs and garden tours are scheduled for 2019.

The project leads are meeting with their committees to improve our current gardens, making them even more productive and beautiful, and the planning for a possible future "inspiration garden" is underway. A pledge to reach out to other towns within the county this year by participating in more of their events will give us the opportunity to promote the MG program and recruit prospects for the 2020 Intern Class and beyond.

I'm excited about how many of you have stepped up and committed to help with all of the things we have planned for this year. Without you, we would not be able to maintain what we have put in place during the last six years, or have the ambition to undertake new activities that enable us to be more visible in Van Zandt County and beyond.

If you have not had a chance to sign up to help with what we have planned, don't despair! The Committee Sign-Up Sheet will be coming back around at our February meeting, and I expect to see YOUR name in several places! Thanks everyone for what you do and making me very proud to be your president.

Sincerely,

Paula

"Whatever we do, we do well."

Garden Guru



Dear Garden Guru: What is the "real" definition of a heirloom tomato?

Basically heirloom tomatoes (or any vegetable) are those that are open-pollinated, meaning that you can save the seeds from year to year and they will produce the same tomatoes because the seeds have not been treated in any way or hybridized. Other characteristics include: the seeds have been handed down from year to year – from generation to generation-from country to country; someone says it is heirloom; the tomato is weird shaped and ugly; and it tastes great.

By John Womack, MG

February Gardening Chores

Tommy Phillips
County Extension Agent, Ag/NR

February is one of those months that you never know what "Mother Nature" is going to have in store for us. It could be sunny and in the 70's one day...and then a freak cold blast the next. However, "Mother Nature" and her issues aside, there are things that we can continue to do in the garden this month.

Planting

- * Continue to plant evergreen shrubs, fruit, nut and shade trees.
- * Plant asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cilantro, collards, English peas, lettuce, kohlrabi, onion transplants, parsley, potatoes, radishes, spinach, Swiss chard, and turnips.
- * Plant early spring-blooming annuals like dianthus, petunias and alyssum in late February.

Pruning

- * Complete pruning of oak trees before February 15
- * Prune other shade trees and woody shrubs as necessary to remove dead wood and improve structure.
- * Finish pruning pecan trees and fruit trees before spring bud break.
- * Prune all standard roses, except climbing varieties, by about 50% by mid- February.
- * Prune tall Nandinas, if necessary, to improve fullness, by removing one-third of the tallest canes at 2-3" above ground level (late February). Repeat the next two years.
- * Trim or mow grassy ground covers such as liriope and mondo grass, if needed, due to freeze damage or ragged appearance, before spring growth begins.

Plant Care

- * Apply horticultural oil to fruit and pecan trees, and to scale-prone shrubs such as euonymus and hollies, when temperature is 45-65 for two weeks (mid-February). Check the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service website bookstore for a pamphlet on the Homeowners Fruit and Nut Spray Schedule.
- * Fertilize cool season grasses such as fescue and rye grass with a slow release fertilizer.
- * Apply per-emergent herbicides to established lawns to control warm season broad leaf and grassy weeds, such as dandelions and crabgrass no later than early March.
- * Fertilize pansies and other winter annuals with your favorite fertilizer.
- * Continue to protect tender plants from hard freezes

2019 Free State Master Gardner First Monday Hwy. 64 Parking by Civic Center Schedule

Sign-Up Sheet for Thursday, February 28, 2019

<u>Name</u>	<u>Tel. No.</u>
7:45 am – 10:45	
1. Nancy Szabo	330-801-3180
2. John Clark	903-560-7041
3. Jimmie Pierce	903-567-4353
10:45 am – 1:30 pm	
1. Mimi Sherwin	214-616-2612
2. Jorja Merrick	940-453-7870
3. Susan Dahlman	361-215-1434
1:30 pm – 4:15 pm	
1. Kathy Brasuell	214-668-9701
2. Don and Pat Taylor	903-505-9219

2019 Free State Master Gardner First Monday Hwy. 64 Parking by Civic Center Schedule

Sign-Up Sheet for Friday, March 1, 2019

<u>Name</u>	<u>Tel. No.</u>
7:45 am – 10:45	
1. Donna Burcham	903-363-5667
2. Carter Hallmark	972-273-0537
3. Don & Pat Taylor	903-505-9219
10:45 am – 1:30 pm	
1. Sally Mitchell	903-963-5678
2. Jorja Merrick	940-453-7870
3. Jimmie Pierce	903-567-4353
1:30 pm – 4:15 pm	
1. Pat Mullin	903-520-8556
2. Martha Mitchell	903-368-0711

Wear Aprons or Shirts, Bring Water, Snack, Chair

Gardening Events – February, 2019

By Sandra Rosen, MG

Thursday, February 14, Free State Master Gardeners, Van Zandt County Library, 9:00 am - Heirloom Vegetables with Mike Loggins

Friday, February 8, "Grape, Berry, and Fruit Tree Propagation Workshop," 8:30 – 4 at The Landing – Myers Park & Event Center in McKinney. \$35 fee includes snacks, beverages, and lunch. Speakers from Texas A & M Agrilife.

Saturday, February 9, Dr. Peter Schaar slashes through rose myths and teaches proper pruning and care of roses. 10 – 11. Texas Discovery Gardens at Fair Park.

Thursday, February 14, "Climbers, Twisters and Viners – Using Vertical Space" by Linda Gay, Arbogate Horticultural Specialist, 6:30 for social, 7 for program at the Ina Brundrett Conversation Education Center at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center in Nacogdoches.

Friday, February 15, Master Gardeners at the Library, "Basics of Hobby Greenhouses," by Debby Watkins, Smith County Master Gardener Greenhouse specialist. 11:30 – 1:30 at the Tyler Public Library

Saturday, February 16, "Plant Propagation" – Easy propagation techniques 10 – 12 at the Texas Discovery Gardens, Fair Park.

Saturday, February 23, Cherokee county Master Gardeners Spring Conference 1 – 3. Fee \$10. For more information contact brendasheridan47@gmail.com

Monday, February 25, "Native Plants of Texas," 1 – 2. Texas Discovery Gardens, Fair Park.

MARCH 5, 6:00pm, Silver Spur Resort, Canton, TX, Spring Seminar – "Heirloom Gardening in the South – Yesterday's Plants for Today's Garden." Presented by Greg Grant \$20. FSMG need to register with Extension Office before February 22.

April 25-27, Master Gardener Convention in Victoria, TX



DALLAS ARBORETUM
AND BOTANICAL GARDEN

The Free State Master Gardeners will have a guided tour through the Dallas Arboretum during Dallas Blooms on Tuesday, March 19th! If you are interested in attending, please contact Shari Curran. The cost is \$20, check payable to her before or at the February meeting.

Sign up for Carpooling will occur at the February 14th meeting.

We will meet in the Ag Office parking lot at 8:00am and depart for the Gardens. This is a slow walking tour that lasts about 1.5 hours. Wheelchairs are available. Please let Shari know if you need one and it will be reserved at the front gate.

The \$20 cost will include entry, the additional fee for the guide and several dollars to cover parking.

The RAIN DATE is the following Tuesday, March 26th. If the weather looks threatening, we will email everyone the day before, so check your inbox!

Please contact Shari at 903-526-9590 with any questions and bring your cameras!



Advanced Training Offerings in 2019

This information is from the TXMG Web site

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

Tx Fruit Growers Assoc. - Spring Conference & Field Day March 1-2, Tx A&M Horticulture Teaching, Research and Extension Center.

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, Advanced Training



FREE STATE MASTER GARDENERS OF
VAN ZANDT COUNTY



Spring Garden Seminar

Tuesday, March 5, 2019—6:00 pm

Silver Spur Resort

13785 Hwy 19— Canton, Texas

75103 \$20 per person

RSVP to (903) 567-4149

Overnight accommodations are available at The Silver Spur Resort



Greg Grant—CEA, Horticulture, Smith Co.

Topics:

***Heirloom Gardening in the South - "Yesterday's Plants for Today's Garden"**

Cultural influences in Southern gardens, proven heirloom plants and Greg's own old fashioned garden

***Let Me Introduce You - Plants Greg has introduced to the gardening world and the stories that go with them.**

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

Is a Tomato a Fruit or a Vegetable?

By Sandra Rosen

Well, according to a Supreme Court decision in 1893 – Nix v. Hedden – the tomato is a vegetable. In 1886, Nix (the plaintiff) imported tomatoes from the West Indies to New York City. Hedden (the defendant) the collector of the Port of New York, collected import duties on the tomatoes in accordance with the Tariff Act of 1883. The Act imposed a duty on vegetables but exempted fruits. In 1887, Nix brought suit to recover the duties he had paid on the

tomatoes, claiming that because the tomatoes were fruits, the tomatoes should not have been subject to the tariff.

The ruling of the court was that the Tariff Act used the ordinary meaning, not the technical botanical meaning of the tomato. The court said: "Botanically speaking, tomatoes are the fruit of a vine, just as are cucumbers, squashes, beans and peas. But in the common language of the people, whether sell-

ers or consumers of provisions, all these are vegetables, which are grown in kitchen gardens, and which, whether eaten cooked or raw, are, like potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, beets, cauliflower, cabbage, celery and lettuce, usually served at dinner in, with or after the soup, fish or meats which constitute the principal part of the repast, and not, like fruits generally, as dessert." (Nix v Hedden. No. 137. Supreme Court of United States.



FREE STATE MASTER GARDENER Gardening Classes 2019

Van Zandt County Library Series



March 21 - 10:00am

It's Time to Garden

Choosing a Site, Soil Preparation, Composting,
Mulching/Types of Beds

Tommy Phillips, CEA, Ag/NR

April 18 - 10:00am

Rainwater Harvesting/Drip Irrigation

Carter Hallmark, MG

May 16 - 5:30pm

Backyard Chickens

John Ramos, Urban Chicken Ranching

June 20 - 5:30pm

Olives

Jim Henry of Texas Olive Ranch

July 18 - 10:00am

Master the Art of Bulbs

Joanne Elston, MG

August 15 - 10:00am

Creative Gardening

Peggy Rogers, MG

September 19 - 5:30pm

Bugs in Our Gardens

Erfan Vafaie, Texas AgriLife Extension

October 17 - 10:00am

Bees

David Kennedy of North Forty Bee Farm

November 21 - 5:30pm

Fruits and Nuts

Bob Williams, MG

