

# THE GALVESTON COUNTY Master Gardeners

Vertical interest in the garden

April 2012 - Issue 178

*Vines*



*Agri*LIFE EXTENSION  
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*"Every spring is the only spring – a perpetual  
astonishment" – Ellis Peters*



*By Camille Goodwin  
MG 2008*

Spring has sprung in our beautiful Galveston County coastal region. Most of us, however, don't do the regular indoor spring chores and home improvement projects at this time of year. We're out in our gardens weeding and raking to clean out the winter debris. We're pruning our roses, perennials and ornamental grasses. We're amending our soil and weeding and composting.

We're dividing and transplanting, mulching and still weeding. We perform maintenance tasks on our lawn and garden equipment and clean and organize our tools for the new growing season along with tending to our perpetual weeding! We've had several inches of much needed rain these last few weeks, but along with the rain, the bugs and insects seem to have come back triple-fold after last summer's drought along with those eternal weeds! It's definitely a busy time of year in the garden for us as we work to beat the coming summer heat.

Later, after all your hard work and when you're relaxing with your favorite beverage, we hope you'll enjoy this current issue of our newsletter. It's filled with timely educational and informative articles we can all reap something from. In the Q&A section this month, page 4 discusses the extremely serious Citrus Greening Disease. CGD has now been found in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. It's up to us to learn about this devastating citrus disease, recognize its symptoms early and know what control methods are available.

Page 5, another Q&A, describes that pesky Asiatic Hawksbeard weed. Our Edible Theme Gardening Fun by the Square Foot series continues on page 6 with a design plan for a delicious Salsa garden. Page 7 features tips from our MGs on how they eradicate weeds—did I mention all the weeding we're doing? On page 8 Donna Ward gives us tips to keep our blooming plants vibrant and provides some plant ideas to add movement and texture to our landscapes. Jan Brick's article on page 9 discusses the very popular Heirloom Tomatoes. These types of tomatoes are now more widely available and have become more popular in recent years for those who like to grow for historical interest, those who like to save seeds and those who like tomatoes with great taste.

If you have a vertical area that needs some landscaping options, check out our Best Shots story (page 11) this month featuring beautiful vines that can be used to enhance these up-right spaces. Please enjoy meeting Master Gardener of the Month, Dick Carter, on page 12. Page 14 describes the objectives and the very interesting current research findings of our Rose Rootstock Study project.

Learn more about our Association's Board of Directors and Officers (page 13) and mark your calendars to attend a quarterly meeting. Page 17 features information about other gardening events around our local region and also within a few hours of home such as the Orchid Society's 41<sup>st</sup> Orchid Show being held at Zilker Botanical Gardens in Austin and the Steven F. Austin State University Annual Garden Gala in Nacogdoches, TX. If you like cooking and baking with herbs, this month's featured shortbread cookie recipe was a favorite at a recent 2012 MG Intern class (page 15). Do you love fig ivy or is it a monster in disguise? See Dr. Johnson's article on page 19.

Don't forget to check out our updated calendar and bulletin board sections where upcoming meetings, seminars, conferences, classes, specialty training and volunteer opportunities appear. Please volunteer! A reminder - don't forget to report your first quarter MG Volunteer Logs to [mghours@wt.net](mailto:mghours@wt.net). Note that Wayne Elliott is our MG Volunteer Hours Coordinator now and he receives all e-mails sent to [mghours@wt.net](mailto:mghours@wt.net).

*Photo by Frank Budny*





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Check out page 11 to get some ideas for vines for vertical interest to your garden

Front Cover Photo  
by MG Mona Ray

## How to Reach Us



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We encourage your articles!  
Due the 20th of each month.

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*References to trade names are made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Texas Agrilife Extension is implied.*

# ask a master gardener...



By Laurel Stine  
MG 1996

## Q&A

### Hot Line Topics



Asymmetry of Blotchy Mottle



Corky Veins

#### THERE IS A QUARANTINE IN EFFECT TO PREVENT MOVEMENT OF INFECTED PLANT TISSUE INTO OTHER AREAS:

You cannot bring citrus into Texas, the commercial zone (Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy counties) from other parts of Texas, & You cannot move citrus into any other citrus producing state or country.

#### WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS?

One of the most perplexing things about Citrus Greening (CG) is that the symptoms can be similar to those of other citrus problems. Here are some that tend to be hallmarks of (CG):

Asymmetrical Blotchy Mottling of Leaves (photo above). As a general rule, the pattern of the mottling is asymmetric across the leaf midrib.

Raised, "Corky" Veins (photo above)  
Veins of the midrib may be raised, some may have a "corky" appearance

**Q**uestion: Can you give me some information on citrus greening?

Citrus Greening (*Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus*) is a bacterial disease. It is also known as huanglongbing, which is Chinese for "Yellow Dragon." Yellow Dragon describes a particular form of growth associated with trees infected with this disease.

It originated in India in the 1700s, and was found in China in the late 1800s. It was first found in Florida in 2005.

Citrus Greening occurs on plants in the citrus family (Rutaceae). Once a tree is infected, there is no cure. Trees will decline over the next months or years, until they eventually die.

The carrier for this disease is the Asian Citrus Psyllid (*Diaphorina citri*). This is an invasive insect first found in Florida in 1998.

Photo of psyllids: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/D/I-HO-DICI-CO.001.html>

How is the disease transmitted? A tree is fed upon by an infected psyllid. It takes approximately 15-30 minutes of feeding to acquire the disease. Symptoms manifest in the foliage after a 6 month to 2 year latency period. During the latency period, the tree will inoculate the psyllids that feed upon it.

Unfortunately, the foliage will not test positive for the disease until it manifests symptoms. A psyllid, however, will test positive immediately upon acquiring the disease.

What is the best defense against this disease? At this point, controlling the carrier, the Asian Citrus Psyllid, is the best way of controlling the spread of Citrus Greening. Commercial growers of citrus have been following a spray program for this pest for awhile now. Homeowners also need to do their part.

Asian Citrus Psyllids are susceptible to a variety of insecticides. Timing of sprays is important. Spraying in January helps control any overwintering psyllids, which overwinter as adults. They tend to overwinter in the interior of the tree.

The psyllids need new growth for laying eggs and the sustenance of nymphs. During the growing season, it is important to watch for those flushes of new growth, and to time the sprays accordingly.

Here is a chart of materials for controlling Asian Citrus Psyllids in the home landscape: <http://hidalgo.agrilife.org/files/2012/01/Home-Psyllid-Control-2-9-121.pdf>.

There is one systemic product on the chart - Bayer Advanced Fruit, Citrus & Vegetable Insect Control. Be aware that on citrus it can only be applied once a year and, according to Texas A&M University, is effective on the psyllids for 6 to 8 weeks. They advise applying it in the early summer, after bloom, to coincide with the biggest flush of new growth.

Here is a chart of plants which are host to Citrus Greening and Asian Citrus Psyllids: <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/pi/chrp/greening/hostlist.pdf>

Orange Jasmine, Chinese Box Orange and the spice Curry are hosts.

Here is a website which can help you determine whether you have Citrus Greening or some other problem: <http://texascitrusgreening.org/>.

If you wish, you can bring a sample to the Extension Office.

If you wish to be absolutely sure that your tree does not have Citrus Greening, you can submit a sample to the Plant Pathology Lab at Texas A&M. Here is the website: [http://texas-citrusgreening.org/college\\_station.php](http://texas-citrusgreening.org/college_station.php).

Is there any hopeful news? Here is what the A&M Extension Citrus Specialist (Monte Nesbitt, Extension Specialist in Pecans, Fruit and Citrus) has to say: "We remain hopeful that the finding of HLB in Rio Grande Valley will be contained there. It is more important than ever throughout Texas to manage psyllids and continue to attempt to prevent introduction of the problem. The longer we can forestall the problem, the more likely that research will find a cure before we have infected trees to contend with. No cure is known to date, but one focus to delaying tree decline (still an area of research) is use of foliar fertilizers and plant hormones to keep the trees very, very healthy."

It is up to us, one homeowner at a time, to control the spread of Citrus Greening. Is it life threatening to humanity? No. But anyone who has eaten sweet, luscious citrus fresh from the tree would give a resounding "yes!" to the question of whether it is worth the effort to control this deadly disease.



By Rachel Montemayor  
MG 2012 Intern

## Asiatic Hawksbeard

**Q**uestion: Can you identify a weed that has small 1/2 inch lemon-yellow flowers with multiple petals and with no leaves on a two-foot stem?

Asiatic Hawksbeard weed is from the Asteraceae family. It is a non-native herbaceous annual, develops a short tap root, and is erect and slender up to two feet tall. The multiple branches of the Asiatic Hawksbeard rise from a basal rosette. Flowering stalks usually branch in the uppermost part of the plant. Flowers are smaller than the common dandelion. Flowers are about 1/2 inch wide, yellow to orange-yellow with five tiny teeth at the end of the outermost petals. More flowering occurs in fall and spring. The leaves may appear similar to dandelion leaves, but they are spatulate, long and narrow at the base with a broader rounded apex. There are few or no leaves on the stems and the edges are slightly lobed.

Asiatic Hawksbeard is predominately found in flower beds, but will also grow well in other sites such as turf grass, potted plants, cultivated fields, and road sites. It is typically found in non-wetlands in well-drained soils but can also be a problem on poorly drained soils.

This weed grows from Pennsylvania to Florida, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Texas. It also grows in Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Hawaii and the West Indies. It is native to Japan and South East Asia. This invasive weed is now found around the world. It is also known as *Crepis Japonica* and Japanese Hawkweed.

Asiatic Hawksbeard usually survives most winters and blooms year round in our growing area. Reproduction is by seed. If you can pull the weed before it produces a flower and keep it from reproducing, you will then have a better chance of keeping it in control. You can also keep the yard mowed or use a weed eater or a hoe to keep the weed from spreading. A properly maintained landscape that is not stressed by disease, insects, or is not nutritionally imbalanced will go a long way in keeping weeds at bay.



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### SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Youngia japonica*

Family: Asteraceae

Group: Dicot

Season: Cool Season

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### OTHER COMMON NAMES

Japanese hawkweed, Oriental false hawkbeard



Photos by GCMGA



# salsa garden - edible theme gardening fun by the square foot - *third in series*

(Editor's Note: This graphic is republished with permission of The Greer Education Foundation)



By Camille Goodwin  
MG 2008

## Salsa Garden

Who doesn't love a great fresh salsa sauce? As recently as a generation or so ago, Americans had not heard of salsa. Now, whether smooth or chunky, salsa once used only as a dip for chips, has become one of the most popular condiments used to flavor or compliment all kinds of dishes today. You can have your own fresh salsa in a matter of minutes when you plant a salsa theme garden. The Salsa Garden featured here is only one of many ways to incorporate salsa ingredients into your square foot plan for fresh salsa whenever you desire it. Exchange any of the plants to meet your personal taste. When designing your garden consider what you like in your salsa, do you like it hot, mild, tangy or sweet? If you need a plant that's not on this design plan, research it to figure out how many you can plant per square. Your garden needs to be in a location that receives 6 to 8 hours of sun per day.

Salsa gardens have visual appeal with large plants heavy with tomatoes and brightly colored hot peppers standing tall while cilantro, shallots, garlic and onion nestle into the soil among them. A salsa garden is a great garden to grow with your kids and grand kids.

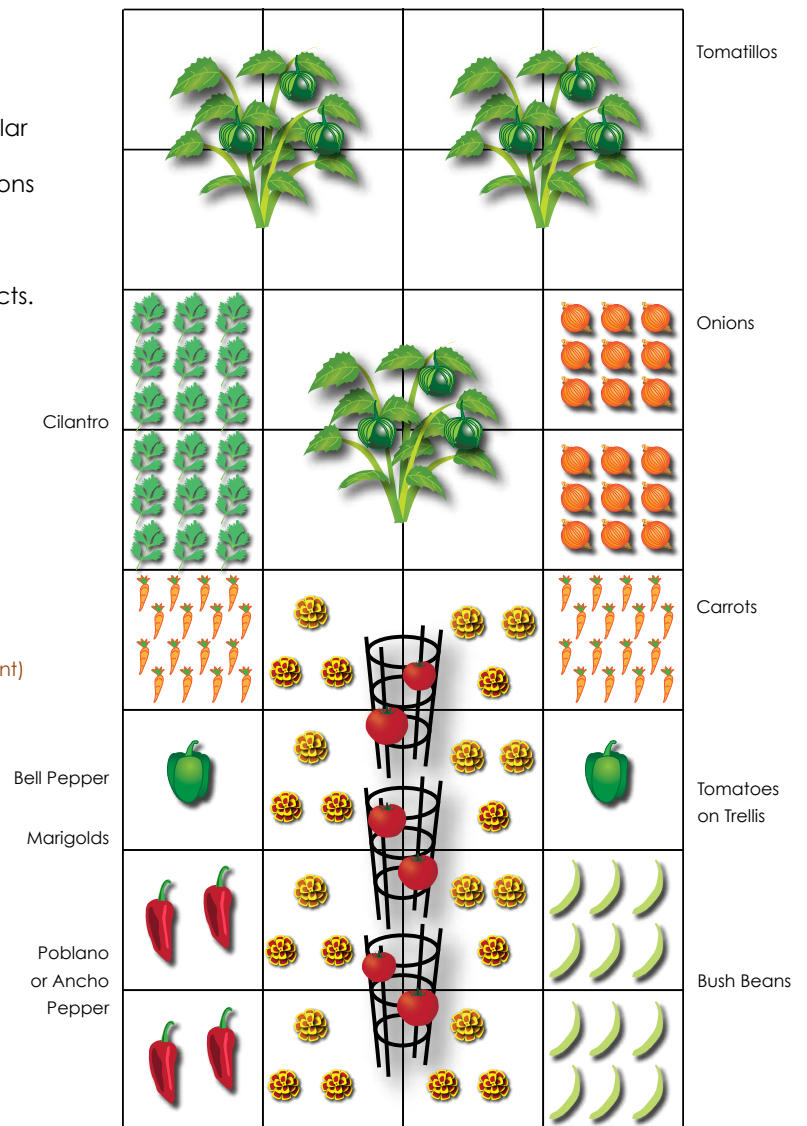
The tomatillo plant, native to Mexico, is a type of ground cherry. It has a fresh, tangy flavor that is delicious in homemade salsas. Cilantro, peppers, and onions also adds color, taste and texture to this popular dish.

### Gardening Tips:

Tomatillos have some similar needs as tomatoes - they require plenty of space, tons of sun and the support of tomato cages. Planting marigolds around these plants repels harmful insects. Including flowers among vegetable beds also encourages pollination.

### Plant List:

- 3 tomatillo (transplant)
- 18 onion (seed)
- 18 cilantro (transplant)
- 32 carrot (seed)
- 1 bell pepper (transplant)
- 1 jalapeño pepper (transplant)
- 1 poblano or ancho pepper (transplant)
- 12 bush beans (seed)
- 2 celery (seed)
- 32 marigolds (transplant)
- 3 tomato (transplant)



Key: 1 inch square = 1 foot

# weeding advice from the masters

## A survey conducted among galveston county MGs



by A. Lynette Parsons  
MG 2011 Intern

### WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE TOOLS FOR WEEDING?

For some gardeners either bare or gloved hands work best. Some other favorite tools include a dandelion tool, Cobra Head, circle hoe (both long and short handles), a scuffle hoe, a Ken-ho surface weeder; long two-pronged fork, short fork, sharpshooter; Garden Claw; 3-pronged rake and, for really tough weeds, a small hatchet. The knives preferred include a kitchen knife, a Japanese garden knife, and a butcher's knife. One choice was a flat head screwdriver. Another effective tool can be the two-gallon pump spray bottle with Roundup or Stop Weed.

### DO YOU PREFER THE CHEMICAL OR ORGANIC APPROACH?

Those taking an organic approach offer numerous suggestions. When starting a new bed, be sure to remove all weedy growth from the top layer. Be sure to inspect soil, compost, mulch, and plants that you add to your beds. Mulch, mulch, then mulch some more. Make lawn care services clean the blades of their tools before entering your yard. Non-chemical approaches also include turning over the beds often. Keep the bed so full of plants that weeds do not have space to develop. Pull weeds when soil is wet. Use organic sprays with cinnamon, vinegar, or clove oil. For large areas, use clear plastic to cover weeds thus letting solar energy kill the weeds and pasteurize the soil. Pour boiling water on cracks in driveway and sidewalk.

For a chemical approach, apply Roundup with a q-tip or a paint brush. Be careful to not use Roundup when there is wind. Some prefer to only use chemicals on poison ivy and poison oak. The bucket/glyphosate method involves coiling the weed inside a bucket; spraying with glyphosate, removing the bucket and leaving the weed coated. Another preferred weed killer is Amaze by Green Light.

### DO YOU HAVE A WEEDING SCHEDULE?

The preferred approach is to attack in the spring or at the seedling stage before seeds are produced and have a chance to spread. Some gardeners weed as they see the weeds developing. You might also try setting a weekly time. Or, once the clover shows up, you might prefer daily. Set certain areas for certain days, such as the front on Monday and Friday, and the back on Tuesday and Thursday. Every couple of days you might check out your vegetable garden and then attack your flower beds monthly. Just a few minutes consistently each day should help.

### DO YOU USE DIFFERENT METHODS FOR SMALL BEDS, GARDENS, LAWNS?

Use newspapers around plants and several organic mulch layers in the garden. Limit the soil turning in your garden as it may bring more weeds to the surface. Be sure to mulch small beds. Roundup can be used in beds. Under shrubs, paint weeds with undiluted herbicide. Repeated mowing in lawn should help eliminate weeds. Bag the weedy grass and dispose. Stop Weed or Wipe Out can be used on the lawn.

### DO YOU HAVE ADVICE ABOUT WHAT NOT TO DO?

Do not stress about weeds. They are an on-going challenge. Do not turn the weeds over into the soil; this binds nitrogen while they rot. Do not plant what you cannot eat. Do not plant invasive plants. Make sure you get the whole root when pulling weeds. Be cautious with synthetic chemicals as the residues have a long-term effect on the natural soil life. Do not neglect the garden. Even if nothing is growing right then, mulch or cover to keep the weeds at bay. Mix chemicals carefully. Be sure to read and follow the directions.

### ANYTHING ELSE?

A question was asked: When will they develop a pre-emergent for vegetable gardens? Weeding is the least favorite of garden activities! It is an exercise in patience and perseverance and helps you to decide what is truly undesirable. Amendments, fertilizers, and soil builders keep the plants you want strong to compete with the weeds. Dense ground covers help to control weeds. Have the right attitude and enjoy the beauty when the weeds are gone. God gave us weeds so we would go outside and play, doing what we love...working in the garden! Weeding is mostly therapy. Listen to the birds, talk to your neighbors or put on your iPod and enjoy the outdoors! Read the entire chapter on Dandelions in [All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten](#) by Robert Fulghum which says that in the end, Mother Nature wins!

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Dr. J's advice: "The best thing to put on your garden is your shadow - good way to keep an eye out for those pesty weeds".



Photos by GCMGA





By Donna J. Ward  
MG 1996

## taking care of new plantings

# TROWELS & TRIBULATIONS In a Suburban Garden

*(Editor's Note: This is a reprint of Donna's article for La Ventana Del Lago, the City of El Lago's neighborhood newspaper.)*

**R**emember how much time and money you spent at the nursery last month and how many hours you spent digging, planting and fertilizing? Don't let all of that effort go to waste - all of those newly planted colorful additions to your landscape need to be well-watered in order to become established. If you have planted in containers, each time you water some of the nutrients will be flushed out, so you'll have to fertilize more often with a liquid fertilizer or take the easy way out and dig in some of the many time-release formulations on the market.

Our mild winter encouraged the azaleas to blossom a bit earlier than usual, so by now you've probably fed them and given them their first haircut. Prune again in 30 days and then again in another 30 days. Try not to prune after the first week or so of June, otherwise you'll cut off developing bloom wood. When the flowers have faded on your climbing roses - give them a haircut along with any other spring-blooming shrubs.

Most flowering plants like to be fed with that high middle number (phosphorus) on the fertilizer bag - but not hibiscus. Give them a hibiscus formulation created especially for them, or a low phosphorus fertilizer. Too much phosphorus prevents key nutrients such as iron from reaching the plant's roots. A phosphorus level of 5-7 on a fertilizer bag is ideal for hibiscus - save that high middle number for your other spring and summer bloomers.

This may be the year you want to add a little motion and texture to your landscape. This is easily accomplished with ornamental grasses. Each grass species has its own distinctive shape. Some form low compact mounds, tall screens, or densely spreading mats. Ornamental grasses can be used to fill in a bare spot, block a view or they can be grown as container plants on your patio or deck. My Mexican Feather Grass forms compact (1-2 foot) clumps of fine, thread-like green foliage that drapes gracefully over the rim of the pot, and moves with the slightest breeze. All summer long its feather-like yellowish green flower panicles rise above the cascading foliage. Perhaps you prefer something with a more sturdy texture - then Purple Fountain Grass may suit your garden décor. Its arching form has short, rigid stems topped by long (18 inch) bronze colored blades of grass. Purplish pink flower spikes make a nice addition to dried arrangements. Both of these grasses either potted or in the ground prefer full sun, and once established are drought-tolerant, but benefit from regular watering. Aztec grass is a clumping, (12-18 inches) variegated, evergreen perennial best used as a ground cover rather than a border edging plant. It spreads rapidly by underground rhizomes, and will soon take over a flower bed. Its variegated blades and purple flowers will tolerate sun, but prefers some shade. Once established it is drought-tolerant, but like the aforementioned, benefits from regular watering.

I noticed during the latter weeks of March while perusing a local nursery that they were extensively stocked with geraniums, which I found strange. I purchased mine in November - they love our cool winters and perform beautifully the whole season. If you purchased any in March, don't take it personally when they suddenly up and

die. It's nothing you did or didn't do - they just don't like the heat of our Gulf Coast. I have nothing against geraniums, it just that I'm a tightwad by nature, and have no plan on purchasing a hanging basket of geraniums that is going to crater when the inevitable hot weather appears. There are plenty of other annuals that will give you that pop of color all summer.

It's still time to add to your veggie plot this month - transplants of peppers and eggplants, seeds of green and wax beans, limas, cucumbers, southern peas, summer squash if you hurry, and that gumbo standby - okra. Get digging before 'sweat season' arrives.



*Photos by Donna Ward*



## THE ISLAND GARDEN

# Is This Your Grandmother's Tomato?



By Jan Brick  
MG 2001

(Editor's Note: This is a reprint from Jan's article in "The Islander" magazine.)

Spring one day, winter the next! The capricious temperament of Mother Nature causes angst among gardeners who are planning their "spring" garden. Upon visiting a local nursery and purchasing several beautiful healthy vegetable plants for my garden, my sentiment was "let's get this done" Plant! Plant! Plant! The following day the temperature dropped to the forties...what is this? Is it not March? Has not Spring sprung? Apparently not so, I thought, but fortunately my plants survived not only the drop in temperature, but also the accompanying high winds and torrential rains as well!

Growing tomatoes is probably the most popular gardening activity...not only among experienced seasoned gardeners but those who dabble with a small plot or a container garden. Most of us have our favorite varieties, the ones we plant year after year, again and again. Perhaps it is out of habit, because "my neighbor recommended it" or it was all the nursery had left. Have you ever considered trying something new or something "old" actually...the "Heirloom" tomatoes that have become increasingly popular and more readily available in recent years?

According to Greenmarket Heirloom Tomatoes, "The definition of the use of the word heirloom to describe plants is highly debated. One school of thought places an age or date point on the cultivars. For instance, one school says that the seeds must be over 100 years old, others 50 years...another way of defining heirloom cultivars is to use the definition of the word "heirloom" in its truest sense. Under this interpretation, a true heirloom is a cultivar that has been nurtured, selected, and handed down from one family member to another for many generations. Additionally, there is another category of cultivars that could be classified as "commercial heirlooms," cultivars that were introduced many generations ago and were of such merit that they have been saved, maintained and handed down - even if the seed company has gone out of business or otherwise dropped the line. Additionally, many old commercial releases have actually been family heirlooms that a seed company obtained and introduced."

The main appeal of heirloom tomatoes is their taste... they are eating tomatoes, pure and simple. An interesting aspect of heirloom tomatoes is their color, a rainbow spectrum including stripes and blushes. Each one is different...some are meatier, some have fewer seeds and some taste a bit salty or spicy. These types of tomatoes can be found in a variety of colors, shapes, flavors and sizes.

Other intriguing tomatoes of the heirloom varieties consist of additional black or purple selections like the Purple Cherokee tomatoes that are beefsteak in style, with green "shoulders" across the top. This variety is over 100 years old and was originally grown by the Cherokee Indians. It has a rich flavor and is considered one of the best of the heirlooms. Another black/purple choice may be the Blac Russian. These black tomatoes have a rich flavor and turn to dark reddish black when mature. The Blac Russian is one of the best of the black varieties on the market.

If you favor lighter colors in your tomato collection, select the

Oxacan Jewel: A bicolor tomato that ripens to a golden yellow, with streaks of red and orange. The flavor is rich and fruity, with a hint of melon. The Hillibilly is an heirloom variety that comes to us from West Virginia. It has an orange color with dark red streaking. The fruit is sweet and fruity with a high sugar content.

Surely, with as many varieties as this from which to select a new "old favorite" for our tomato beds, we will find ourselves exchanging the exotic-looking and tasting fruits with our neighbors and friends in the soon-to-be harvest!

Strolling through your garden...picking a sample tomato...eating it on the spot ...what bliss!

Some recommended varieties are listed in the publication, "*Common Sense Vegetable Gardening for the South*" by William D. Adams and Thomas LeRoy. Among those suggested are:

**Calabash:** Purple color, flavor is sweet, medium to large fruit, vigorous and productive

**Costoluto Genovese:** Red color, flavorful Italian adapted to hot weather, strong-growing

**Eva Purple Ball:** From the Black Forest Region of Germany, mid-size, great flavor

**Garden Peach:** Yellow/pink, fuzzy skin, mild flavor

**Green Grape:** Green in color, quarter-size fruit, sweet and juicy, compact plant

**Green Zebra:** Striped with yellow and green, gourmet quality, small to medium fruit

**Persimmon:** Rose/orange in color, large fruit, high rating in taste tests

**White Wonder:** White in color, medium sized fruit

# MG BEST SHOTS

Coral Vine by Judithe Savely



Passionflower by Mona Ray



Bougainvillea by Helle Brown



Confederate Star Jasmine by Margie Jenke



Carolina Jasmine by Herman Auer



Rangoon Creeper by Linda Steber





# ...and Narrative

## grow with vertical vivid vines



By Deane Greer  
MG 2009

**N**eed to add some vertical interest to your otherwise horizontal landscape? Need to cover that boring gray, brown or chain length fence? Need to provide a windbreak and want something fast growing and relatively pest free? Have an arbor, patio roof, gazebo, or stone wall that needs covering? Want to add some pizzazz with brilliant color but don't have much lateral land space to spare? Well, blooming vines provide the answer. A sunny exposure, soil amended with a bit of compost, peat moss, or other organic material, and a trellis, fence, post, or wall for support are all that's needed to provide beautiful blooming vines. The following vines are proven winners for Southeast Texas and the Gulf Coastal areas.

**Coral Vine (Queen's Wreath) *Aligonia leptopus*** - Native to Mexico this perennial tropical evergreen vine will grow in partial sun, is fast growing and will reach 35 to 40 feet if happy. It isn't picky about soil but does require good drainage. Its lacy pink, dark rose pink, or white clusters of blooms are very showy and appear summer through fall. Since it climbs with tendrils, it needs support from a trellis, fence, or tree and makes a good cover for a patio and a great wind break. While drought tolerant, it puts on its best show after first rains of late summer. A hard freeze will decimate the top foliage; however, it rebounds from the roots. Propagation is thru division or seeds.

**Passionflower *Passiflora x alatoeacruen*** - Native to Brazil this vine gets its name from symbolism associated with the Crucifixion. It requires full sun to partial shade in the afternoon on hot summer days. A fast grower that can reach 10 to 20 feet, its tendrils require a trellis or some other support, and it is good for trellises and over fences and walls. While it grows in average soil, it does require good drainage and regular watering is needed to keep it in bloom. It is often grown for its unusual violet-blue multi-petalled flowers. The vine will die back in the winter but will return from the shallow roots if they have been well mulched. Harvest the seeds for propagation.

**Bougainvillea *Bougainvillea spectabilis*** - Native to Brazil this tropical woody evergreen vine with spines grows in sun to bright light, can reach fifteen to eighteen feet in height, and needs a trellis, fence or some type support. A fast grower, its small white tubular flowers surrounded by three large paper-like bracts bloom best on eighteen to twenty inch branches and provide a spectacular display of color year round with a mild winter. Since it blooms on new growth, pruning is required. Regular applications during the growing season of a half strength balanced water soluble fertilizer or hibiscus food will increase blooms. Water this drought tolerant vine sparingly because it blooms best when under stress and root bound. Propagation is thru cuttings.

**Confederate (Star) Jasmine *Trachelospermum jasminoides*** - Native to China this popular evergreen vine produces fragrant bright white small pinwheel shaped flowers spring thru summer. It requires sun to part sun, well draining soil, and regular pruning for thicker plants and to keep this vigorous vine in check. This vine is a "twiner" and great for covering fences, arbors, patio roofs or as an eighteen inch ground cover. Many homeowners grow it near their residence because of the fragrant flowers it produces. It is drought tolerant and can be propagated thru tip cuttings.

**Carolina Jasmine *Gelsemium sempervirens*** - Native to Tropical America this perennial evergreen vine can reach ten to twenty-five feet. It is prized for its lanceolate, deep glossy green foliage and its showy display of bright yellow singular tubular flowers grown in clusters which appear in early spring. It grows in sun, part sun, or shade in acidic or alkaline soil. It is most happy in moist soil but does not like to be over watered. Since it climbs via twines, it is great on fences, patio covers, and rock walls. Some gardeners also use it as a mounding ground cover. Propagate thru seeds, stem cuttings, or air layering.

**Rangoon Creeper *Quisqualis indica*** - Native to Burma, New Guinea, and the Philippine Islands this tropical perennial vine

grows in sun to part sun and is a vigorous growing, free branching vine which needs support. With a length range from six to thirty feet it is a good climber over fences, trellises, patio covers, arbors, etc. This ornamental vine prefers soil amended with fertile humus and some sand and requires moderate but regular watering until established. Once established it is fairly drought tolerant. Foliage is generally lush and green; however, the blooms steal the show from summer thru fall. The beautifully colored flower clusters with pendulous trumpet-shaped blooms open white, then turn pink and end deep pink, bright red or reddish purple over a three day period. Foliage will die back if subjected to a low of thirty degrees, but the vine will grow back from the roots. Regular pruning will increase blooms since it blooms on new wood. Propagate thru seeds, cuttings, or layering.

Other flowering vines which perform well in Zones 8/9 include Sweet Autumn Clematis *Clematis temiflora*, Black-Eyed Susan *Thunbergia alata*, Mandevilla *Mandevilla splendens*, Hyacinth Bean Vine *Dolichos lablab*, and Trumpet Vine *Campsis radicans*. All of the vines discussed above may also be grown in containers and as a ground cover. In addition, their trailing, branching habit makes them good candidates for hanging baskets. While all vines, especially flowering vines, require some pruning to keep them in check and a bit of care, the rewards are worth the "blooming" effort.



Mandevilla by Margie Jenke



## meet a master gardener

*Dick Carter*

By Pat Forke  
MG 2010

The newest Board of Directors member of our Galveston County Master Gardener Association is Dick Carter. Dick joined the Master Gardener class of 2006 because he has enjoyed gardening since childhood and enjoys sharing knowledge and getting others interested in gardening. Dick joined the board of directors for a two-year term in January 2012 as the result of a request from other Master Gardeners.

Dick moved from Kansas City to Houston in search of a warmer climate. Prior to retiring two years ago, Dick worked as a civil engineer in the greater Houston area. He lives in League City with his wife, Sharon, who is supportive of his gardening. Dick comes from a family of gardeners. Both sets of grandparents were farmers with large gardens. His parents always had a vegetable garden and flowers blooming around the yard. Dick enjoys continuing the family tradition as he encourages all of his 11 grandchildren to help him with the planting and picking in his garden.

In addition to serving on the Board of Directors, Dick works at Carbide Park each Thursday. He also participates in plant sales and other GCMG activities. He has designed, constructed and now maintains the landscaping around his home which includes a koi and water lily pond and a cabana. Dick likes to attend the Master Gardener seminars for education. He also visits other gardens and nurseries for ideas to use in his own landscape. He chooses to order seeds from any number of seed companies but buys plants locally. He finds different plants and water garden ideas from Lynn's Landscaping.

Dick's gardens contain a large variety of plants. He does not focus on any particular plant but enjoys the variety. He has about 20 citrus trees, several palms, and is currently picking cabbage, sugar snap peas, beets, carrots, radishes and spinach from his vegetable garden where he continually rotates vegetables. And, his neighbors are enjoying the bluebonnets he has planted in his yard.

Boating and photography are also hobbies that Dick enjoys. Dick and Sharon enjoy traveling around the United States and Caribbean and any area where a grandchild might be located. Dick has been interested in hot air balloons for a number of years, owns his own balloon and has crewed with other pilots. He attends several hot air balloon events in various states each year.

Galveston County Master Gardeners are indeed fortunate to have such a diversified gardener as a part of our program and as a board member. He certainly personifies the saying "if you want something done, give it to a busy person."



## *Favorites*

**Favorite MG activity:** Thursday's at Carbide Park

**Favorite local nursery:** Lynn's

**Favorite Garden visited:** Water garden tours by Houston Pond Society

**Garden reference books:** Mostly Internet Aggie horticulture





## meet the gcmga board of directors *by Pat Forke*

If you are interested in an overview of what is happening within our Galveston County Master Gardeners Association, you might consider attending the quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors meetings are held the first Wednesday of March, June, September and December at 4 p.m. at the Extension Office. Anyone may attend and anyone may request to be put on the agenda through Laura. We are very fortunate to have within our organization volunteers who make decisions as to the direction we take to be consistently improving and supporting our goals. We have five elected board of director members, a president and numerous vice-presidents and committee chairpersons that, along with Dr. Johnson, comprise the leadership of our organization.

The Galveston County Master Gardener Association is an incorporated voluntary, non-profit, educational, literary and charitable organization. Our goals are to support local Master Gardener volunteers in Galveston County and surrounding areas, to provide a centralized base for information exchange among the members of the Corporation, and to organize and support the distribution of horticultural information and assistance provided to the general public.



Pictured left to right: Ken Steblein, Frank Resch, John Jons, and Dick Carter. Not pictured is Camille Goodwin.

The Board of Directors consists of five members elected for three-year staggered terms. Our current Board of Directors consists of John Jons (Chair), Frank Resch, Ken Steblein, Camille Goodwin (Secretary) and our newest member, Dick Carter. The purpose of our Board of Directors is to advise and guide the organization through the elected officers. The Board is also responsible for the annual audit of financial records. The current elected officers consist of Jim Edwards, President; Herman Auer and Yvonne Enos, Vice-Presidents of Educational Programs, Clyde Holt, Vice-President of Raised Beds; Julie Cartmill, Vice-President of The Orchards; Ira Gervais, Vice-President of Media, and Wes Ruzek, Treasurer. Dr. Johnson serves as Master Gardener Program Coordinator.

Consider attending one of the meetings to find out what is happening in our organization or perhaps volunteer to serve in some capacity and help guide our organization.

## NEW JUNIOR MG PROGRAM AT GRETA OPPE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN GALVESTON

Mary Lou Kelso MG 2000 and Katie Pistone Blaser, a Science Specialist teacher, established a Junior Master Gardener Program in August 2011 at Greta Oppe Elementary in Galveston. Mary Lou retired from Oppe in 2001 after working there as librarian for over 10 years. Approximately 60 third and fourth grade students participate in the program.

This was not the first initiative to start a gardening program at Oppe. In 2006 after attending a workshop, veteran kindergarten teacher Karen Heuman wanted to establish an outdoor classroom for all grades. Fundraising was not an easy task—it took two years of writing grants, sending letters and contacting organizations to raise the money necessary to build the garden. While a multitude of box stores, civic organizations, and Galveston benefactors listened, they made no donations so the Oppe PTO and generous friends and parents came together to raise the money required for the garden area to be constructed. It was dedicated May 22, 2008 which coincided with the School's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

A few months later, Ike struck and the garden was destroyed—all of the landscape timbers were found on 81<sup>st</sup> Street. They floated over the four foot chain linked fence. After several months, the garden area once again had raised beds in place and last year a Galveston Garden club member helped the children and teachers get the beds underway. Unfortunately over the summer the irrigation system failed resulting in the beds suffering again.

Over the years, Mary Lou has kept in touch with her Oppe friends and Karen asked her to come on board with a more structured garden program. Then in March 2011 Mary Lou and Katie connected and decided to launch Oppe Elementary Junior Master Gardener Certified Program in the fall.

Since August, Mary Lou and Katie meet twice a month with their students on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month after school. They start their program with a classroom session and then go out in the garden to work. In October they held a Saturday morning Garden Day and parents and children of all grade levels came and worked in the garden and contributed bedding plants, mulch, and perennials. On Saturday, March 31 they are hosting another Garden Day from 9AM to 12PM with MG Herman Auer speaking on Gardening 101. MG Ken Steblein and Herman Auer have been speakers during the year and Herman has worked with the students, Mary Lou and Katie in the garden.





by John Jons  
MG 2003

# Galveston Master Gardener Gardens: Rose Root Stock Study Project – 2011 End of Year Update

St. Patrick



Veterans Honor



**Study Objectives 1:** The intent of this study was to compare two hybrid tea rose varieties grafted on to two different root stocks to determine which root stock produced (a) the most growth and (b) the highest number of blooms. The rationale for the study is that rose growers, primarily north of Galveston County, claim that the Fortuniana roots stock produces more robust growth and more floriferous roses, than roses grafted onto other root stocks. The rose varieties selected were St. Patrick (yellow) and Veteran's Honor (red) grafted onto both Dr. Huey and Fortuniana root stock. The roses were planted in March of 2012. These roses were regularly dead-headed to increase bloom production.

**Update:** The table below lists the data for the first nine months of rose growth. With the exception of rose #1 – Veteran's Honor on Dr. Huey root stock, there is not much difference in the growth between the two root stocks. The Veteran's Honor on Fortuniana may have ended up having the same growth size as the variety on Dr. Huey, but several large canes were broken-off the bush, as a result of wind damage. You

Variety	Root Stock	Total Booms		Planted Size	12/28/11 Size	Growth Inches
1) Veteran's Honor	Dr. Huey	135.0	Height	15	72	57
			Width	15	60	45
2) Veteran's Honor	Fortuniana	157.0	Height	25	53	28
			Width	17	53	36
3) St. Patrick	Dr. Huey	236.0	Height	20	48	28
			Width	18	51	33
4) St. Patrick	Fortuniana	220.0	Height	24	60	36
			Width	10	42	32

would expect a difference in bloom product between the two rose varieties as indicated but there appears to be minimal difference in bloom production between the two different root stocks. Some of the rose blooms on Veteran's Honor, on both root stocks, exceeded six inches in diameter. A difference in the impact of the roots stock may be noticed as the roses mature.

**Other:** As the study roses are "hybrid teas" – which are the kind of roses you buy in a flower shop and are rumored to be difficult to grow - a high maintenance program of fertilization, fungicide and insecticide treatment was planned for these study roses. The roses were initially treated with the 'cides shortly after being planted, primarily to clean the roses and prevent chilli thrips. As the roses appeared to be growing very healthy in April, the maintenance program was modified to a low or no maintenance program; to only

treat with 'cides if a "significant" problem occurred. For the rest of 2012 the roses were not treated with any 'cides. Some minor black-spot was noticed in late December. Minimal to no insect damage was noted on the roses. This illustrates that if you select the right varieties of roses (grow good locally and proven to be disease resistant) and you provide the optimal cultural conditions (full sun, lots of air movement, good drained soil and water) most roses can exist with minimal or no care.

**Study Objective 2:** To determine (a) how successful an application of a pre-emergent herbicide on a rose bed would be in preventing weeds and (b) if it would have any impact on the roses. In March of 2012, half the rose bed was treated with a pre-emergent herbicide per the instructions on herbicide's label and half the rose bed was untreated.

**Update:** The study was discontinued in July of 2012 as many different types of weeds grew aggressively all over the bed, in both the treated and untreated areas.

**Summary:** The herbicide application did not appear to work. The reason it did not work may have been because there was a large amount of weed seeds in the mulch, or in the existing soil and/or the soil used in the construction of the rose bed, and/or due to the constant high level of air movement (wind) in the GMG gardens area that may have been constantly blowing new aggressive weed seeds onto the bed. Since July, a routine of regular hand-weeding and mulch replenishment on the bed has proven to be very successful in reducing the weed impact on the rose beds.

**T**hroughout the year I get questions on "what should I be doing to my roses, now?" So, to help answer these questions, I have drafted a bunch of monthly articles for our newsletter that will highlight what you should be doing to your roses during the coming month.

By April your roses should be flush with new growth. We no longer have to worry about frost (south of I-10). The cool spring weather tends to produce both numerous very large rose blooms. Typically, this is the best time of the year for rose blooms. Except, for last year where the cool fall and early winter produced the best growth of the year. Here is a list of things you should be doing in April.

**Fungicide and Insecticide Spray Program:** If you have problems, use a curative product. If you do not have problems, use a preventative product. For the last two years, roses (and other ornamental plants) have been plagued by chili-thrips that destroy new foliage. If not controlled, this damage may significantly impact the bush all summer long. The damage is often mistaken for herbicide damage – crinkled and deformed new growth. If you see any signs of these nasty little guys, you may want to consider using the appropriate insecticide to thwart their attempt to devastate your roses (and/or other plants). I always suggest that you only spray for insects if it's a problem that you cannot tolerate.

**Fertilizing:** Use a good granular fertilizer. Also consider using organics they are slow acting but effective. Water after fertilizing. You can fertilize roses with a granular every month and a good quality rose will reward you with growth and blooms, but be careful not to over-fertilize.

**Water:** Now is the time to figure out how much water you need to provide to your roses to produce the bloom growth you desire and establish a watering program to meet the roses and your needs. In theory, the average rose needs about 2" of water per week. You can help conserve water by having a mulch 3-4" deep.



# Seasonal Bites



By Karen Cureton  
MG 2008

It is finally Spring. It has already felt that way for a few weeks. Celebrate by making some cookies using fresh herbs. Herbs add flavor and flair to so many things. The following recipe calls for rosemary, but let your imagination run wild. Yvonne Enos and I tried many different combinations including lemon thyme with a little lemon juice, cardamom and ginger, and cocoa with a little cayenne. In the past I have also done them with basil and lemon. Try different combinations and increase or decrease the amount of herb to your taste. You might try adding herbs crushed into a favorite drink or to a lemonade or plain water.

## ROSEMARY SHORTBREAD COOKIES

### Ingredients

1 1/2 cups unsalted butter	2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
2/3 cup white sugar	1/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary	2 teaspoons white sugar for decoration

### Directions

In a bowl cream together the butter and sugar until slightly fluffy. Add the salt and rosemary until well blended. The dough will be somewhat soft. If you want to do slices instead of rectangles then form the dough into logs and wrap in waxed paper before refrigerating. If you want to do rectangles then simply pat the dough into a flat disc and cover and refrigerate for 1-2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.

On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough out to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut into rectangles 1 1/2 x 2

inches in size. Place cookies 1 inch apart on the lined cookie sheets. Sprinkle the remaining sugar over the tops. If you have formed them into logs, cut them into slices then place on the baking sheet and sprinkle the tops with the sugar, with herbs, or forget sprinkling anything on top. After baking, let them cool then store in an airtight container at room temperature.



# Upcoming Events

(Please be sure and register for the programs you want to attend. Accurate attendance counts are needed so that program materials may be on hand for attendees.)

## Saturday Seminars

Apr 14, 2012	"Propagation" - MG Anna Wygrys & Ann Lyon	9:00 - Noon - Extension Office
Apr 14, 2012	"T-Bud Grafting" - MG Herman Auer	1:00 - 3:00 pm - Extension Office
Apr 21, 2012	"Palm Trees" - MG Intern O.J. Miller	9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office
May 19, 2012	"Landscape Design; A hands on approach" - MG Karen Lehr	9:00 - 11:30 am - Extension Office
Aug 11, 2012	"Fall Vegetable Gardening" - MG Luke Stripling	9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office
Aug 25, 2012	"Growing Onions and Garlic" - MG Sam Scarcella	9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office
Sep 15, 2012	"Square Foot Gardening" - MG John Jons	9:00 - Noon - Extension Office
Sep 15, 2012	"Kitchen Gardening" - MG Mary Demeny	1:00 - 3:00 pm - Extension Office
Sep 22, 2012	"T-Bud Grafting" - MG Herman Auer	9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office

## Project: Demonstration Gardens

# Carbide Park



By Sandra Gervias  
MG Intern 2011

*Photos by Ira Gervias, Julie Cartmill & Tom Fountain*

With such a mild winter, work at the Demonstration Gardens at Carbide Park slowed only slightly. Mid-February saw another workshop from Sam Scarcella, this time on planting tomatoes and peppers. Valentine's Day is his reminder date for planting them and he gave a hands-on demonstration of his methods. He also showed gardeners how to make mini greenhouses for the tender plants, using tomato cages and disposable plastic barrel liners. These protect young plants from late frost and strong wind and keep the temperature inside the mini tents elevated, promoting faster growth.

The warmer weather and spring rains have many plants budding and blooming earlier than normal. Garlic planted in the November workshop is happy and robust. The pink and white blooms on the various fruit trees in the orchard put on a show to almost rival the "Cherry Blossom Festival" in Washington, D.C. Hopefully this year they will produce a bumper crop of stone fruit that will make Julie Cartmill's watering, pruning, spraying and fertilizing worthwhile. But this is spring in Texas, so nothing is certain.

March saw John Jons give a hands-on workshop on pruning roses. Besides showing gardeners how to properly prune them, it also resulted in needed haircuts for the regular roses and shaping for Don Juan and the other climbers around the gazebo. Across the fence on private property, the blooms of the wild Macartney rose were putting on a seductive spring show. Though lovely in spring, farmers, cattlemen and gardeners rightly treat this rose with contempt; it is invasive, easily spread and almost impossible to control or eradicate.

The Elbon grass experiment continues. Elbon was planted to manage root-knot nematodes by trapping them in the plant itself. After cutting the grass and disposing of it to avoid reinfection of the area, the beds were tilled for crops to be planted. If these crops are free of nematodes, the Elbon grass will have proved its usefulness in the fight against nematodes. Only time will tell.

Work on other projects for Carbide Park continues. The pole barn is about to get its roof. Electricity is on its way to the Master Gardeners building and hopefully will be turned on soon. A walkway to the Asian Garden is being installed. Wayne Elliott built simple but decorative trellises for the grapevines that Peggy Budny tends. Her various muscadine and Mortenson grapes will have room to spread out and produce. Everyone is busy putting in plants and seeds for the usual favorites: tomato varieties from Celebrity and Big Boy to various heirlooms, peppers of all types and strengths, and beans both bush and pole. Let's hope the Texas weather smiles on these hopeful signs of spring.

The entrance to the Asian Garden is being reworked to reflect a more minimalist theme. The grass will be removed and mulch and pea gravel will surround the new entrance walkway to the garden's interior. A few additional plants will be added to replace those that didn't make it through the winter. Carine has expertly trimmed most of the bamboo specimens to better show the beautiful canes of the various species and Tish has restyled the grass plants with recent spring haircuts. Tish has also updated her front entry garden near the arbor with fresh spring color. The Asian Garden Team, along with one of our favorite garden guys, Joe Fisher, recently rescued a heirloom "Old Blush" rose bush from another garden at the Park that was being repurposed. The rose looks great near the garden's chimes. We really appreciate Joe's assistance moving this large rose. The team is also pleased to note that Alisa Rasmussen has joined the Asian Garden team; her passion, enthusiasm and spirit has provided immeasurable assistance to the team and we're thrilled to have her. The team has decided they will also maintain the trees in the north end of the garden. We could use help with spring weeding and mulching at the base of the trees. If you have some time and can assist, please come on any Thursday. If you haven't visited the Asian Garden recently come see it!



Early Blooms in the Orchard



Peach Blossom



Grapevine Trellises



Raising the Roof



Asian Garden

Spring is Coming





# re-certification (continuing education) hours for MGs 2012

Date	Event	Speaker	Topic	Cont Educ Hrs
1/07	Saturday Seminar	Jerry Hurlbert	Growing Avocados & Papaya	3
1/07	Saturday Seminar	Herman Auer	Successfully Growing Peaches in GC	2.5
1/14	Saturday Seminar	Sam Scarcella	Grow Great Tomatoes	2.5
1/14	Saturday Seminar	Jenifer Leonpacher	How to Grow Tomatoes w/ an Aeroponic System	1
1/14	Saturday Seminar	Gene Speller	Peppers from the Sweetest to the Hottest	2
1/21	Saturday Seminar	Luke Stripling	Successful Spring Vegetable Gardening	2.5
1/21	Saturday Seminar	Herman Auer	Growing Citrus in the Home Landscape	2
1/28	Saturday Seminar	Heidi Sheesley	Fruit & Citrus Trees for the Gulf Coast	2
1/28	Saturday Seminar	Herman Auer	How to Plant Your New Trees	1
1/28	Saturday Seminar	Dr. David Cohen	Growing Blueberries	2
2/10	Pilot Program	Karen Lehr	Plan Before You Plant	2.5
2/11	Saturday Seminar	John Jons	Gardening by the Square Foot	2
2/11	Saturday Seminar	Mary Demeny	Kitchen Gardening	2
2/25	Saturday Seminar	John Jons	Anyone Can Grow Roses	2
3/03	Saturday Seminar	Sam Scarcella	Tomato Stress Management	2
				31

Last updated: March 19, 2012

## other local & state gardening events

Please see our complete list that appears on each E-Dirt edition.

Gardeners by the Bay Garden Club will be holding their annual plant Sale on April 4, 9:00 am - 12:30 pm this year. It will be located at the University Baptist Church in Clear Lake <http://gbtb.org/>

Arborgate Nursery showcases the best in perennials, herbs, roses and native plants. Lots of awesome programs in April with more good ones in May. If I only had the thyme to drive out there and see the wise sage with his skullcap, parlaying his parsley for parsnips! <http://www.arborgate.com/classes.phpin>

If you feel like a trip to Austin, the Heart O' Texas Orchid Society is having their 41<sup>st</sup> annual orchid show and sale at the Zilker Botanical Gardens/Austin area garden center on April 28 thru the 29. See <http://www.hotos.org/> for more information.

Mercer Arboretum's annual Garden Party and Auction, will be held on Saturday, May 5, 2012 beginning at 5 pm. At this event, party-goers dine under the stars while bidding on unique and extraordinary treasures. A silent auction with a wine and beer reception kicks off the evening, followed by dinner and a live auction. Proceeds benefit special garden projects and programs at Mercer. For more information see <http://www.hcp4.net/mercer/programs/index.htm>

Bonsai is a rewarding and fulfilling pursuit that can provide many years of artistic expression, a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction, camaraderie with other practitioners, and can teach patience, love of nature, and calmness of mind The Houston Bonsai Society meets regularly in the Houston Garden Center. Their State Convention will be held in Dallas, Texas on April 27 - 29. If any of you are interested see <http://www.houstonbonsai.com/>

Houston Cactus and Succulent Society is a group of people interested in the study, cultivation, conservation, and just plain enjoyment of desert plants. Their spring sale will be May 12 and 13 at the Houston Arboretum. <http://www.hcsstex.org/>

International Oleander Society will have its Spring Oleander Festival, April 27, 28 & 29 held at Moody Gardens Visitor Center. More details to come... Check out their site <http://www.oleander.org>

The SFA Gardens at Stephen F. Austin State University will host its annual Garden Gala Day from 9 am until 2 pm, Saturday, April 21, 2012 at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St. , their Native plant conference on May 18 and 19, and finally, the Theresa and Les Reeves Lecture series continue throughout the months at 6:30 pm. For more information visit <http://www.sfagardens.sfasu.edu/>

Houston Hemerocallis & Houston Area Daylily Society Flower show is on May 12, 2012 at the Gethsemane Lutheran Church, 4040 Wadsworth Houston, Texas. <http://www.ahsregion6.org/calendar.htm>

Plumeria Show and Sale will be on Saturday June 9, 2012, 5002 Nasa Rd 1, Seabrook (Clear Lake), Texas at the Bay Area Community Center. Hundreds of registered Plumeria cultivars, as well as rare plants, will be for sale. Expert growers will answer questions, and there will be a gorgeous bloom display of all the flowers being sold. ARRIVE EARLY for the best selection. Hours are 9:30 am til 3:00 pm for more info, see <http://www.theplumeriasociety.org/>



by Yvonne Enos  
MG 2008



# bulletin board



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**Phone Lines:** Master Gardeners are always needed to answer the public's questions. This is done at the Extension Office and time slots are available for every day of the week. Contact Laura Bellmore at <galv3@wt.net> or 281-534-3413, ext 1-2, or Laurel Stine, ext 1-6 or <gcmgs@wt.net>. See your last e-Dirt newsletter for more details regarding volunteer opportunities.

Program VPs Yvonne Enos and Herman Auer are asking for volunteers to host backyard meetings. You may contact Yvonne at VJEnos@comcast.net or Herman Auer at hauersmga@comcast.net. Please volunteer.

## IMAGE SEEKERS

**Image Seekers** meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 1:30 pm at the Extension Office at Carbide Park. This photography group is open to all Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists for fun, learning and practice of photography. Pictures are submitted to the MG/MN database for use in publications and lectures.

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

**Texas State Master Gardener Conference** will be held May 3-5, 2012 in San Antonio, TX. It is being hosted by the Bexar County Master Gardeners and Texas AgriLife Extension. Seminars will take place at the Norris Convention Center at IH-10 and Loop 410. There will be a welcome dinner on Thursday night, May 3, 2012. Tours will be on May 5, 2012 and include but are not limited to garden centers, a Farmers Market, Sandy Oaks Olive Orchard, Botanical Gardens, Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, and the Rose Emporium and Gardenville. Please see Bexar County Master Gardener website [www.bexarcountymastergardeners.org](http://www.bexarcountymastergardeners.org) for more details on the programs, registration, and hotel information.

**The International Master Gardener Conference** will be held September 7-14 on board a Holland America Cruise Ship. It will depart from Seattle and sail to places like Glacier Bay, Sitka, Ketchikan, and Vancouver. It will return to Seattle on the 14th of September. See the Texas Master Gardener Website under future events for information on this.

## GARDEN TEAM SCHEDULE

The gardens around the Extension Office are maintained under the team leadership of Peggy Budny who may be contacted at 281-334-7997 or e-mail her at <fmbmab@verizon.net>. Come out and have a good time while learning more about ornamentals. Peggy's team meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month at 9:00 a.m.

Volunteer at the Demonstration and Research Garden at Carbide Park at 4102 Main St., La Marque. This can involve planning, planting, weeding, construction, and orchard upkeep. Contacts are James C. Edwards <jcejwe@msn.com>, Clyde Holt (vegetable beds) <cmholt11@comcast.net> and Julie Cartmill (orchards) <pcartmill@comcast.net>. The Work Teams meet every Thursday morning. Go out and lend a hand.

## SPECIALIST & OTHER MG RELATED TRAINING

Please see the Texas Master Gardeners Website for details. <http://www.texasmastergardeners.com>. You may download the application forms from that website. Note that all applications for the Specialist Training courses must be approved by Dr. William Johnson. **Note that fees do not include lodging.**

**MG Specialist-Irrigation Efficiency Training.** Dates to be held: March 26, 2012 - March 28, 2012. Place: San Antonio Botanical Gardens. 555 Funston Place, San Antonio, TX 78209. Cost is \$200.00. Ph# 210-467-6575. Forms may be downloaded from the TMGA website

**MG Specialist-Citriculture Training.** This has become a hot topic because of Citrus Greening Disease (CG). This will be a comprehensive educational program aimed at preparing Master Gardeners to grow citrus in the home orchard successfully and manage the challenging complex of associated insects and diseases, including CG. Dates to be held April 12, 2012 - April 13, 2012. Place: Montgomery County Extension Center at 9020 Airport Road in Conroe, TX. Phone #936-539-7824. Registration Fee is \$100.00. Participants must be pre-registered by their County MG Coordinator/Agent (Dr. William Johnson in our case) and approved by the MG Specialist Training Coordinator (Monte Nesbitt, Extension Program Specialist). Form and required authorizations may be obtained by contacting Dr. Johnson.

**MG Specialist-Plant Propagation Training.** Date: May 18, 2012 - May 19, 2012 at the Montgomery County Extension Center at 9020 Airport Road in Conroe, TX. Ph# 936-539-7824. Registration fee is \$180.00. Form may be downloaded from the TMGA website under Specialist Training.

**MG Specialist-Composter Training.** Class III. Date: June 13, 2012- June 15, 2012. Place: San Antonio Botanical Gardens at 555 Funston Place in San Antonio, TX 78209. Ph# 210-467-6575. Fee is \$225.00. Form may be downloaded from the TMGA website.

**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.

**MGTV-TEXAS** — The goal of MGTV Texas is to train MG volunteers in the use of these tools to assist in supporting County, Regional and State Extension educational programs. As the number of trained volunteers increases, we will soon have a network of web communicators, sharing information on key programs and activities throughout Texas and beyond.

**CENTRA** — To see a listing of public events available for video playback on AgriLife Extension's Centra Symposium, on the Centra page select "Public Events" (top left) and in the search box type "Master Gardener".



# the last word . . .

## FIG IVY CAN BE A MIXED BLESSING IN LANDSCAPE

*(Editor's Note: This article is a reprint of Dr. Johnson's Weekly Gardening Column in The Galveston County Daily News)*

*Photo by GCMGA*



*By Dr. William M. Johnson  
CEA-HORT & MG  
Program Coordinator*

One of the more intriguing inquiries made at our information booth at the recent Galveston Home and Garden Show regarded the identification of a vine with numerous but rather strange clusters of fruits.

The vine in question is commonly known as fig ivy but I refer to it as the Vine from Hades. I have amassed quite a lot of knowledge about this vine. Unfortunately, for me, my knowledge was gained the hard route, i.e., through exasperating experiences.

Many years back, my neighbor brought a small container of fig ivy from a local nursery. It was growing on a wooden stake and presented a rather attractive set of contrasting dark and light green leaves.

I knew it to be fig ivy but was not prepared for the battle I would become engaged in trying to keep the vine from trespassing onto my property line. First, the vine took over the wood fence and became top heavy as the vine's growth soon reached the top of the fence.

Apparently, fig ivy does not understand nor respect property rights as it managed to nose dive below ground only to send up stems along my home's foundation and brick wall a few feet away from the wood fence.

The fig ivy managed to grow up to the top of the chimney. The straw that broke the camel's back came when fig ivy vines reached the Hardie plank siding. I had just painted the siding and the fig ivy was positioning itself to undo all the paint work since each stem produces a maze of roots that spell trouble for paint jobs if you try to remove the growth.

So, it was finally time for the fig ivy to go, but I was to soon find out the fig ivy was not going down without a fight. I pulled and cut vines back to remove them from the brick wall and the fig ivy would sprout out a flurry of new growth to replace the growth I took away.

Now, you have to understand my neighbor thinks the vine is cute growing on the fence. I grudgingly admit the fig ivy was attractive and added texture — when it stayed on the fence.

My neighbor soon adopted my battle-hardened attitude against the fig ivy when the rascally vine decided to take another underground route eastward toward her house and promptly started scaling the brick wall of her home. Sadly, fig ivy will start to grow onto a roof, which definitely would lead to moisture penetration problems.

So, when neighbors can agree on the eradication of pesky vine, the battle becomes easier and less clandestine. It took a while, but I'm happy to report our properties are now fig ivy free.

So, it should not be surprising that I empathized with the frustration in dealing with fig ivy. One inquirer stated that his fig ivy had managed to climb up nearly to the top of his very tall pecan.

Because the growth of fig ivy was so dense, the pecan tree had started to decline. In fact, a 10-inch diameter limb had died back because of excessive growth from fig ivy and subsequently broke off.

Fortunately, no damage to the nearby garage was incurred but it signaled that walking through the backyard soon could become a high stakes, life-threatening activity.

How does fig ivy become established in home landscapes? In most instances, the property owner actually voluntarily brings it in after purchasing it from a nursery.

Fig ivy is considered invasive and very aggressive by some authorities, while others point to its positive attributes of being low maintenance — if you ignore the time needed to keep it within set boundaries.

How common is it for fig ivy to produce figs? The lemon-sized fruits are not often seen because the vine is — or should be — frequently pruned to contain the aggressive growth.

However, mature, horizontal-growing stems might produce pale-green 3-inch long fruit. Fig ivy — botanical name: *Ficus pumila* (repens) — is related to edible figs (*Ficus carliaca*).

Some reports state fig ivy fruits are edible, while some report it to be inedible. Given these contradictions, I am not about to personally find out which is correct. After all, it would be shameful to end up in an emergency room and have to explain I ate the fruit of the Vine from Hades on which I had issued multiple declarations of war.

Is fig ivy parasitic? No, as fig ivy does not derive any nourishment from the tree — or a brick wall — but its rampant growth can create an unhealthy situation for a tree. If fig ivy becomes well-established on the trunk of a tree, its leaves and vines can spread into the tree's canopy.

This can prevent adequate sunlight from reaching the leaves of a tree in addition to reducing air movement within the canopy of the tree. There also is the added risk to the tree being blown over by high winds because of increased wind resistance. Struggling trees might produce so little new growth that the ivy shades out the remaining part of the canopy.

Residents are probably more familiar than they suspect with this plant. It is frequently used to give distinctive appeal to topiaries in home landscapes as well as commercial landscapes. It can be seen along highways growing up concrete walls.

If you want a plant that's tough, is evergreen and can take a licking and keep on ticking, then fig ivy is your plant. But please, let me know if you plan on moving into my neighborhood beforehand!



Program VPs Yvonne Enos and Herman Auer are asking for volunteers to [host backyard meetings](#). You may contact Yvonne at [VJEnos@comcast.net](mailto:VJEnos@comcast.net) or Herman Auer at [hauersrmga@comcast.net](mailto:hauersrmga@comcast.net). Please volunteer.

# 2012 MGA MONTHLY MEETINGS

## January 28, 2012 (Saturday)

Heidi Sheesley - TreeSearch Farms  
Pre-Fruit Tree Sale Presentation  
9:00 am - Extension Office  
La Marque

## February 10, 2012

Landscape Design by MG Karen Lehr  
Friday - 9:30 am - 12 Noon - Extension Office  
La Marque

## March 13, 2012

A combined March & April meeting  
will be held. See April Meeting Date

## April 10, 2012

Pam & Mile Gilbert - Backyard Meeting  
1601 Ball Street **SEE INVITATION BELOW**  
Galveston Island

## May 8, 2012

Karen & Tom Morris - Backyard Meeting  
5:30 pm - 2910 Bayshore  
Bacliff

## June 12, 2011

Graduation at Mikey and Allen Isbell's  
7:00 pm - 1715 - 35<sup>th</sup> Street  
Galveston Island

## July 10, 2012

Meeting at Extension Office  
4:00 pm - 4102 B Main St  
Carbode Park - La Marque

## August 21, 2012 NOTICE CHANGE IN DATE

Moody Gardens  
Time TBA  
Galveston Island

## September 11, 2012

TBA

## October 9, 2012

B.J. Logan - Backyard Meeting  
Jamaica Beach

## November 13, 2012

Annual Meeting, Election of GCMGA Officers  
7:00 pm - Extension Office at Carbide Park  
La Marque

## December 11, 2012

Holiday Meeting - Mikey and Allen Isbell  
6:00 pm - 1715 - 35<sup>th</sup> Street  
Galveston Island



## GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

### APRIL BACKYARD MG MEETING

**TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2012**

**5:30 PM**

Master Gardeners and their guests are invited  
to a backyard meeting at the home of

**PAM & MIKE GILBERT**

**1601 BALL STREET, GALVESTON ISLAND**

**409-771-5620 (cell)**

Bring your lawn chairs and a pot luck to share. If bringing guests, adjust your  
pot luck accordingly.

DIRECTIONS: Take I-45 South, which will end in Galveston and become Broadway. Stay on Broadway until 17th Street (3 miles). Make a  
left on 17th Street and go two blocks to Ball Street, make a right on Ball and go to the end of that block. The house is located on the SW  
corner of 16th and Ball. **Parking is on the street, either Ball or 16th Street.**



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