

THE GALVESTON COUNTY Master Gardeners

WaterSmart Gardening

August-September 2012 - Issue 180

Yards Without Grass



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If you missed David Letterman's "Late Show" on June 5, First Lady Michelle Obama read Dave's Top 10 List for the evening show called "Fun Gardening Facts:"

No. 10: Gardening was invented in 1822 by Albert Gardener. No. 9: Plant avocados, tomatoes, onions and cilantro together and grow a guacamole tree. No. 8: Eggplants were originally cultivated for use as doorstops. No. 7: In his lifetime, the average American will eat half a radish. No. 6: The largest zucchini ever grown contained a Starbucks. No. 5: Later this year the Supreme Court will finally rule on "tomato" vs. "tomahto." No. 4: If you have an actual green thumb, it might be scurvy. No. 3: Lettuce is 96% water and 4% lettuce. No. 2: The White House tool shed contains shovels, trowels and Weed Whacker One and the No.1 reason: With enough care and effort you can grow your own Barack-oli."

My personal favorites are #'s 9 & 7! Mrs. Obama's list was related to her new book, *American Grown: The Story of the White House Kitchen Garden and Gardens Across America*. The book describes her concern that the garden might be a failure and the success it has become. It also offers seasonal growing advice and recipes developed by White House chefs. Produce from the garden is used for White House luncheons, the family meals and state dinners. A third of the produce is given to a local food bank.

A plentiful supply of water is sometimes taken for granted. We need water more than we need oil. Did you know that less than 1% of all the water on Earth can be used by people? The rest is salt water (the kind you find in the ocean) or is frozen. Scarcity of potable water has become an economic constraint not only in major economies of the world but in the US where several states share common water sources, as well in Texas where recent droughts have significantly impacted our access to and availability of fresh water. Additionally, battles are beginning between farming needs and recreational desires. Communities across the country are starting to face challenges in maintaining healthy and affordable water supplies; that's why it's more important than ever to use our water wisely and not waste it. In addition, it takes large amounts of energy to produce and transport clean water and to process waste water. This August-September edition of our newsletter features many educational articles on ways to conserve this high priority commodity. Our Q&A topics this month address where our water actually comes from (page 4), and how to measure our sprinkler output in order to wisely use water in our landscapes (page 5). Please read the intro information and then take the interactive survey on residential water use on page 18. You can take this survey right on your computer screen and submit it when you are done. The Best Shots story (page 8) continues the water conservation theme with some interesting ideas for yards without grass. Chris Lachance, WaterSmart Coordinator for Texas AgriLife Extension and Texas SeaGrant, discusses WaterSmart Gardening on page 6. Chris is also a Galveston County Master Gardener.

In our continuing series, Edible Theme Gardening Fun by the Square Foot, one final design plan for a Pizza Garden appears on page 15. Donna Ward offers wonderful memories of her Grandma's garden on page 12. If you are looking to add some easy to grow, carefree plants to your landscape, check out Jan Brick's piece on page 7. For the budding beekeeper, page 10 helps you determine the best location for your hives. Please enjoy reading about the Voodoo Lily (21). This was the captivating mysterious plant seen in Mickey Isbell's yard during our June MG Graduation ceremony. Dr. Johnson stars on page 27 with an article on Fairy Rings Appearing on Area Lawns. The Monthly Rose Bed Update along with advice on what you should be doing for your roses right now (page 16), the Carbide Park Update is highlighted on page 22 and an article on page 23 on Summer Heat Survival Tips from Laura Bellmore.

A great big "thank you" goes to our MG Intern Gregory Werth for his tremendous efforts in establishing a RSS feed for MG members and for the general public to subscribe with Feed Burner to our current MG magazine. He has also agreed to manage our newly created team to include videos in our magazine. Obviously, this will take some time and organization to get this team operational and we encourage more MGs to become involved in subject matter, videoing, scripting, etc. The obvious reason for doing this is so that we can reach more than just our MG association members since our newsletters contain so many educational articles which should be shared with the general public.



*By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008*

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"Yards Without Grass."

Front Cover Photo by MG Deane Greer

How to Reach Us



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ask a master gardener...



By Julie Massey
MG 1996

CEA-Coastal & Marine Resources

Texas AgriLife Extension Service

Texas Sea Grant College Program

Q&A

Photo by MG Yvonne Enos

Hot Line Topics

Question: Where Does Our Water Come From?

This sounds like an easy question - the faucet, of course! Our perhaps you might even think of the water cycle. You remember learning the water cycle jingle in 4th grade - *evaporation . . . condensation . . . precipitation . . . and collection - that's how the water cycle works!*

Earth is called the "Blue Planet." From space, it appears as a blue and green orb because it is covered with water! Seventy two percent of the Earth's surface is water. Ninety seven percent of this water is salty while 2% is frozen. That leaves 1% of the water on the planet for our use - a drop in the bucket of all the water on the Earth!

Well, the drought of 2011 has us thinking more and more about water. Do we have enough? Where does it come from? Texas' population is expected to double in the next 50 years. Our water supplies will not be adequate to meet the needs of this growing population without changes in use patterns and attitudes towards water.

According to the Texas Water Development Board, people in Dallas use 213 gallons of water per person per day, in San Antonio the usage is 149 gallons while Houston has a rate of 134 gallons per day. In 2012, the small town of Spicewood ran out of water. To alleviate the crisis, the Lower Colorado River Authority trucked water in for Spicewood's 1100 residents.

Back to our question - Where does our water come from? The water supply for Houston and much of our area comes from Lake Houston, followed by Lake Conroe and then Lake Livingston in dry times. During the 2011 drought, all three of these sources dropped to an average capacity of 73%.

Local governments are looking at ways to address water issues for the future. The City of Houston has a new task force to identify how to conserve water and diversify water supply. Ideas include the use of recycled water for irrigation, rainwater harvesting, desalinization and use of gray water. The City of League City is educating its citizens on water wise practices with rain collection displays and Water Wise tips on the city's website.

Water conservation is even being considered by developers. The Houston Advanced Research Team (HARC) reported that some developers are building subdivisions with two sets of piping - one for drinking water and one for water suitable for washing cars and watering lawns. Jim Lester of HARC pointed out "Why would you take very expensive, treated water and pour it on your grass?"

In 2013, Texas AgriLife Extension Service county offices across the state will implement programs on water and water resource conservation. The staff of the Galveston County Extension Office looks forward to working with you as we plan and implement these water conservation programs for the residents of Galveston County.

Join us as we work to conserve water for Texans today and tomorrow!



How can you help with water conservation in Texas? Take the 40 Gallon Challenge and save an additional 40 gallons of water each day! Check out the website to make a pledge.

<http://www.40gallonchallenge.org>

For a Water Conservation List for the Home, check out this link:



http://fcs.tamu.edu/housing/efficient_housing/water_management/water_conservation_checklist/pdf/waterconschecklist.pdf

Editor's note: In answer to our question, below is an excerpt from Dr. David R. Chalmers article in our September 2011 issue entitled "How Much Water is Enough." Also click on the icon to the right to see a video on the subject.



By Pat Forke
MG 2010

how much water does your grass need

Question: I want to water my lawn enough to keep it healthy, but am also interested in conserving water. How much water is enough for turf in Galveston, Texas, and how do I measure my sprinkler output to prevent over-watering?

The table below shows approximate weekly water requirements (replacement by rainfall or irrigation) by month for Galveston, Texas, to maintain warm season turf Without Stress (WS) or a turf that will persist under Moderate Tolerable Stress (MTS) for conserving water and/or savings on water bills during periods of drought. Table assumes optimal irrigation system distribution uniformity. Adapted from historical evapotranspiration data (<http://texaset.tamu.edu/pet.php>).

How to measure your sprinkler's output.

- Place five to eight straight sided open-top cans or cups (cat food cans, tuna cans, etc.) throughout each irrigation zone.
- An alternative is to use the Aggie Catch Cans available from the Texas AgriLife Extension Bookstore (<https://agrilifebookstore.org/>). Item # SP-424 is the Homeowner Aggie Irrigation Catch Can Kit and includes 5 catch cans and stands. The Aggie Catch Can is cone-shaped and has graduated markings in both inches and millimeters. Unlike tuna cans, catch volumes may be read directly without the need for rulers.
- Run the irrigation system for preplanned time; 10-minute or 15-minutes is a starting point.
- Then measure the depth of water in each can (with a ruler in tuna cans or the like).
- To determine the precipitation rate for each zone, add all measurements from all containers divide the total number of inches by the total number of containers used, multiply by six for 10-minutes or by four for 15 minutes.
- This will provide the average precipitation rate for each irrigation zone in inches per hour.
- The weekly run time for each zone can then be determined by dividing the weekly turf water requirement by the calculated precipitation rate (in/hr). Irrigation run times for each zone should be short enough that no runoff occurs.



Photo by GCMGA

Water Savings Summary

- Run the irrigation system on a set schedule and adjust the runtime incrementally to water just enough to avoid visual signs of turf grass stress.
- Have your irrigation system checked out for problems such as broken heads, leaking valves, heads not popping up properly, etc. All these problems will result in more water being applied than is actually required.
- Water in early morning hours.
- Use best management practices (fertilization, mowing and aeration) to avoid plant stress conditions.

City	Irrigation Program	-----Water Need (inches absorbed by the soil) Per Week-----											
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Galveston	WS	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.8	0.9	1	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.2
Galveston	MTS	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.1



conserving water

Rein in Thirsty Landscapes

Chris LaChance is WaterSmart Coordinator for Texas AgriLife Extension and Texas Sea Grant, part of the Texas A&M University System. WaterSmart is funded by a grant from Houston Endowment, Inc. Contact Chris at c-lachance@tamu.edu

By Chris LaChance
MG 2000

Photo by MG Herman Auer



Steaming compost pile

“There are two ways to face the rainless weeks. One is to water, and the other is merely not to,” by Elizabeth Lawrence, a Southern gardener.

Perhaps this is a bit too simplified, but we do have to face the fact that in a world of overburdened water supplies and weather extremes, conserving water in the landscape whenever and however we can has never been more critical. During July, August, and September, Texans increase their water use by as much as 58%, with half of what is used to irrigate landscapes being wasted due to over-watering or runoff. The projection for the Houston area is that the population will double by the year 2030, but our water supplies are finite leading us to realize that even though we may get all the rain we need, more people means water shortages.

With 2011's drought and the possibility of another one looming for 2012, we have the opportunity to rethink how water is used or misused in the landscape. Conserving just 25% of outdoor water use, municipalities could see a decrease of many millions of gallons of water per day—17 million gallons for Houston alone, according to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Texas Water Development Board. Twenty-five percent is an achievable goal, if we prepare now and become “WaterSmart” about this precious natural resource. With some forethought, it is possible to have a beautiful

landscape despite what Mother Nature sends our way.

THINK COMPOST:

Compost (organic matter) added to soil increases the soil's water holding capability while adding important nutrients. More compost equals less runoff. Backyard composting not only saves yard and kitchen waste from ending up in the landfill, but is virtually free. There is no better time than the present to start your own composting program. Good quality compost can also be purchased. Both sandy and clayey soil can be greatly improved by the addition of compost. The particles of compost act as sponges between large sand particles, greatly increasing moisture retention. Clayey soils benefit from the addition of coarse organic matter which helps to aerate the soil and increase drainage.

THINK PLANT SELECTION:

Plants that can tolerate periods of droughts and floods can be found in native and non-invasive adapted plant categories. Once established, native plants require less water and need no chemical fertilizers or pesticides to flourish. As more native plants are added to the landscape, there will be the added bonus of song birds, butterflies and other beneficial insects. Native wildlife and native plants evolve together. While it is tempting during the threat of drought to run out and purchase drought tolerant plants, unless they are placed in raised beds, they will not survive when our normal

winter rains come. Plants that enjoy dry conditions in their native habitat will not tolerate over-watering. Keep in mind these species need at least two growing seasons to become established before the water can be drastically cut back. Notice “cut back” not stopped. Even water thrifty plants may need supplemental watering during extended periods of drought.

THINK ZONES:

When designing the landscape, step back and evaluate the site elevation (low spots and high spots) and how the property drains. Install plants that need the same water requirements together. Also, larger, more established shrubs and perennials will not require the same amount of water as annuals might.

RETHINK THE LAWN:

Lawns planted with typical turf grasses are normally water guzzlers. In fact, turf grass is America's largest irrigated crop. Reducing the size of the lawn by increasing planting beds can reduce water need and offers a space to incorporate more interesting plantings—perhaps a butterfly or hummingbird garden. Drought tolerant ground covers are another option. Native clumping grasses can add structural and textural interest to the landscape and, with their extensive root systems, can withstand periods of drought.

Creating permeable surfaces that allow water to penetrate into the soil can also reduce water requirements. For example, a patio might be designed using brick pavers set into sand rather than being a solid concrete pad.

There are many products now available that can improve permeability in the landscape and along sidewalks and driveways.

In general, we over-manage our lawns with too much water, fertilizers and pesticides. Much of the nitrogen applied to keep lawns green ends up running off and polluting our bays and bays. St. Augustine is quite tolerant of drying out. By raising the mowing height to 3 ½ to 4 inches the extra height will provide a bit of shade and reduce evaporation. Fertilize in the spring and fall with ¼ to ½ inch of screened compost to maintain the soils ability to retain moisture.

THINK MULCH:

Adding two inches of mulch twice a year to planting beds and around trees helps conserve moisture while adding organic matter as the mulch decomposes. Just be sure to pull back mulch from the crown area of perennials and shrubs. When mulching around trees, avoid piling it up against the bark. The flare (curved area at the base of the tree) should always be visible. Mulch also helps keep weeds down, reduces soil compaction and keeps temperatures even around fragile root systems.

THINK MAINTENANCE:

Be proactive by removing weeds that compete with desirable plants for water and nutrients. Prune broken and dead branches on trees and shrubs as these can harbor plant pests and diseases. Inspect plants for pests.

User Friendly Plants - A to Z

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



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

Photos by GCMGA

In an earlier issue, I wrote an article entitled *The User-Friendly Garden* in which I listed plants that I have found particularly easy to grow and maintain while exerting a minimum of effort and time. I stated that in order to qualify as user-friendly, "they must be hardy, easy to grow, pest free, and nearly carefree or they are out of here! These plants must not need more than watering and occasional feeding!"

In this month's article, my goal is to begin a series of commentaries highlighting some of what I like to call the "user-friendly" plants. All of these selections should be available locally at nurseries and the big box stores, easily grown and sustainable in zone 9 and suitable for our climate conditions. Keep in mind that these are only a few of my favorites; there are many others that are favorites of other local gardeners as well. This month, let's consider plants A, B, C, and D. **A - ALTHEA (ROSE OF SHARON)**

A native to Asia, the althea (*Hibiscus Syriacus*), also known as Rose of Sharon, has become so popular that one might think of it as a native. Grown in southern gardens for years, it has become a time-honored cornerstone of perennial gardens and cuttings have passed from one generation to another. It has been said, "The carefree Rose of Sharon usually

grows with no attention at all, and probably does better that way!" Preferring full sun to partial shade, moist but well drained soil, the althea comes in white, red, purple, violet and blue and will bloom continuously from spring through fall.

B - THE BLEEDING HEART (DUTCHMAN'S TROUSERS)

Tiny white or pink heart-shaped flowers that appear to have drops of blood falling from them is a striking characteristic of the bleeding heart plant. Native to Siberia and Japan, the bleeding heart will thrive in zones 3 to 9 and is a welcome addition to the perennial garden. The foliage may die back in the fall after a summer of spectacular blooms then return once again when temperatures rise in the spring. Bleeding heart is easily grown in containers and requires very little care. Keep it well drained and in partial shade for best results. Very few insect or disease problems make the bleeding heart a preferred plant of gardeners worldwide.

C - CROWN OF THORNS

The Crown of Thorns (*Euphorbia milii*) is a multi-stemmed, succulent shrub from Madagascar that will produce flowers nearly all year, but in particular during the winter months. The tiny flowers appear just above brightly colored red or yellow bracts. When this

plant becomes stressed due to over watering or under watering, humidity or temperature changes, it may quickly drop all of its leaves; normally, once the cause of stress is resolved, fresh foliage will quickly return. Crown of Thorns plants should have some direct sun each day, even if it just an hour or two. If used inside as a houseplant place in a sunny window where it gets about four hours of direct sun every day.

D - DAISY

There are three popular daisies in this category:

The Oxeyed Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) also known as the marguerite, the moon daisy or the dog daisy is a typical wild flower, growing in fields and meadows, but enjoyed by the home gardener in informal settings like cottage gardens.

The Shasta Daisy (*Chrysanthemum maximum*) was developed by Luther Burbank and has become one of America's most beloved garden flowers. The drought-tolerant characteristic of this perennial flower makes it a good Xeriscape plant in hot regions, where many plants have difficulty holding up under the summer heat.

The Gerbera daisy is an ornamental plant from the sunflower family Asteraceae. The Gerbera, also called the African Daisy is very popular and widely used as a decorative garden plant or as cut flowers. It boasts large blooms with a yellowish center

surrounded by colorful rays in yellow, red or orange although white, pink and violet varieties have become available in recent years. The Gerbera daisy will attract bees, butterflies and birds to your garden.

Comments such as "I have a black thumb when it comes to gardening" and "I kill everything that I try to grow" are puzzling to my gardening friends and me. There are so many plants that are attractive even magnificent and yet easy to grow and maintain with few pest or disease problems—many plants that have few requirements other than sun and water—plants that you too, even with your "black" thumb, can grow and enjoy!

I have often thought that there should be labels attached to the selections offered at nurseries stating "Gardening skill level 1, 2 or 3" or "plants for the novice gardener" and "plants for the experienced gardener."

Perhaps one or more of these plants that we will discuss in the coming months may intrigue you and encourage you to include them among your favorites as well!

Additional "user-friendly" plants in the A, B, C, & D category might include:

Agapanthus	Caladium
Alpinia	Croton
Bottlebrush	Day Lily
Bougainvillea	Duranta



Althea



Bleeding Heart



African Daisy



Crown of Thorns

MG BEST SHOTS

A Garden of Natives - Keith & Laurel Stine



From Pool with Lawn to Garden Oasis - Richard & Sallie Langseth



A Cottage Rose Garden - Kim Westerlage



Golfer's Delight - Gary & Teri McGregor



A Walk in the Park. . . .



. . . .in a Backyard - Dorian & Anne Coppenhaver



...and Narrative

weed instead of mow + mulch instead of water = more free time

Photos by MG Pat Forke, MG Sandra Devall & MG Deane Greer



By Pat Forke
MG 2010



by Sandra Devall
MG 1998



By Deane Greer
MG 2009

Gardens without grass have come a long way since Xeriscaping. Galveston County residents have found other design principals to save water and create beautiful yards. This is a good time to try a grassless yard. Below you will find some advice on a variety of grass-free lawns from people who have them.

A Native Garden

Keith and Laurel Stine, 1502 Harbour Estates Circle, Taylor Lake Village

This newer home belongs to Laurel Stine, MG 2002. Keith was the builder for this home and Laurel was the 'architect' of the lawn. Laurel works at the Galveston County Extension Office on plant questions, so you can be sure that her garden has a balanced environment for beneficial insects and healthy soil included in her choice of plants.

Plants included in the large bed in front of the circle drive includes Dahoon Hollies (the trees), Dwarf Yaupons, Cherry Bomb Holly, Compact Jatropa, Bottlebrush 'Callistemon subulatus', Standard Barbados Cherry, Nandina, Chinese Ferns, Standard Fortnight Lily, Dwarf Fortnight Lily, Eyelash Salvia, Silver Leafed Stenodia (ground cover), Rudbeckia 'Goldsturm', Lindheimer Muehl Cherry Bomb Hollies, Dwarf Barbados Cherries, Mexican Sedum, and Texas Mountain Laurel. Laurel uses an Irritrol Rain Dial because of its flexible programming. In a drought or winter it runs every 9 days to keep raised beds from drying out. In the heat of summer, it runs every 5 days. She fertilizes everything in early spring and fall with Microlife. The strongest plant is the succulent in the urns called Dyckias. Repotting, neglect, nothing seems to bother it!

From Pool & Lawn to a Garden Oasis

Tired of maintaining a pool and a lawn, homeowners Richard and Sallie Langseth filled in the pool, removed the grass, and set about transforming their backyard into a garden oasis that would conserve water and indulge Sallie's passion for gardening. The garden is designed around a large circular bed filled with Azaleas, Roses, Society Garlic, Loropetalum, Gerbera Daisies, Foxtail Fern, Japanese Maples, and seasonal annuals. Height and interest is provided by cascading Asparagus Fern in containers placed on pedestals, columns and statuary. The round bed is bisected by a stone pathway and benches invite lingering. The beds on each side of the pathway are home to Sago Palms, Crape Myrtles, Azaleas and annuals that provide color. Fig Ivy covering the back fence provides a perfect backdrop for the varied colors and textures. An irrigation system provides water in times of severe drought.

A Cottage Rose Garden

Kim Westerlage, 3702 Roylen Court, Dickinson

No space is too small to create a romantic cottage garden. Each bed is filled with roses and complimentary plants and bulbs blooming in syncopation never without beauty or surprises. There are twenty rose bushes from nine varieties filling this cottage garden. Martha Gonzales Roses edge the circular bed which is filled with Amaryllis, Crinum and African Iris.

Red Knock-Out Roses greet you in the front with a large red Bat-Face Cupea, a pot of overflowing succulents and a red firecracker bush. This is edged with Stella Del Oro Iris and filled with a scattering of herbs, straw flowers and native violets. The kitchen bed showcases a large Cecile Brunner Rose surrounded by white Plumbago,

Lipstick Salvia, Blue Daze, purple Wandering Jew and Coleus.

Although it has a built-in watering system it is seldom used. Because the builder gave the yard a slight slant, rainwater flows to a half-circle bed whose high side is circled with Martha Gonzales Roses and the low side is full of water-loving bulbs. Water drainage also flows in a dry river crossing made with creek rocks which adds contrast and division to the beds (and makes it easy to pull weeds). Six major weed-pulling sessions a year have been made even easier by mulching with pine needles, oak leaves and purchased mulch several times a year.

Golfers' Delight

Gary and Teri McGregor, 5129 Oak Street, Dickinson

This lawn is an example of sustainability, low maintenance and entertainment all in one yard. Function and design are in complete balance. What looks like grass are field turf and putting cloth. This front yard was installed about ten years ago. Except for some re-mounding after Ike, it has maintained itself. The owner became interested in this artificial grass after it was installed in Reliant Station. Another local sample of its use is League City's Athletic Field of Dreams on the corner of Calder Road and I-45.

The bed in front of the house creates lines of color from Bulbines and Cannas and texture from Foxtail Ferns, Feather Grass, and a Sago Palm. When we stopped by this house, the owner was sitting in the shade relaxing, which I think was probably the best example of how effective this yard has been!

'A Walk in the Park' in a Backyard

Anne and Dorian Coppenhaver, 1309 Plantation Dr., Dickinson

The setting for this beautiful backyard is a small wooded section of Dickinson with homes on 90' wide and 200' deep lot. This project began with the front yard, removing part of the grass and covering it with Roses and Caladiums for summer color. That sparked this larger project of rebuilding the backyard into a park without grass.

The plants were chosen to need a minimum amount of watering. Watering is 20 minutes twice a week between 4-5 a.m. An above ground system runs in beds which are designed to be removed when this garden gets established.

When asked what her favorite plants are, Anne said, "Well, the Knockout Roses, the Cannas, and the Lilies are the backbone of color, but I love the 'produce' almost the best: Meyer Lemon, Figs, Kumquats, and the Asparagus, as well as my Herbs."

Their number one pride of this garden is Black Bamboo which grows along the back fence. The bamboo came from a small clump planted five years ago. It is not a fast grower but under planting it with white plumbago this year has resulted in a stunning contrast of colors.

The birds in the garden were happy, too. They love the Champagne Grapes which were planted just for them on one of the fence trellises!

locating and setting your hives in place



By Deborah K. Rankin
MG 2007

Choosing a location for your apiary

Photos by MG Deborah Rankin

For the novice beekeeper, locating his/her hives in an area that is conducive to regular visits is very important for two reasons—watching the activity of the bees in and around each hive is part of the learning process; it helps to differentiate between what is normal bee hive activity and what is not. This is essential to successful beekeeping!

Additionally, new hives will require regular monitoring to ensure the queen bee has been released, (as is the case with “package bees”), the queen is present in the hive and laying eggs, and the overall population and health of the colony is progressing as expected.

The following information is designed to aid in the decision-making process in choosing the location of and setting your hives in place. Here are some things to consider when selecting a location for your apiary:

CHECK OUT LOCAL LAWS AND RESTRICTIONS

This is absolutely the first step in your plan for beekeeping! The location of your apiary may be limited by local ordinances and other restrictions, including homeowner association rules and regulations. Additionally, permits may be required. It is best to be aware of and deal with these issues early in the decision making process or you may find yourself on the nasty end of a lawsuit.

LOCATE THE HIVES NEAR A CLEAN SOURCE OF WATER

Bees use a lot of water, not only for satisfying their own thirst, but to help cool the hive during the heat of our long, hot Texas summers. Do not place the hive in a gully—the air will be damp and still thus creating an unhealthy environment. If there is not a nearby source of clean water, you will need to provide one for them.

Placing a bird bath or other shallow water source near your hives with some small rocks above water level for the bees to safely land on and drink will provide adequate water. If you will not be able to check on your bee's water source daily, a 5-gallon bucket will suffice. Drill some small drainage holes a few inches from the top of the bucket. Fill the bucket to just below the drainage holes and drop some styrofoam packing kernels in the bucket. The rain will help to renew the water in the bucket, the packing kernels provide “landing pads” for the bees to perch on and avoid drowning while drinking, and the drain holes keep the bucket from filling up and dumping the packing kernels out of the bucket. In the best case scenario, the rain will keep it filled, but check on it regularly, and keep the bucket filled, clean, and sanitary. You can also buy commercially available watering devices for your bees.

THE APIARY MUST BE ACCESSIBLE BY VEHICLE

Bee hives, when filled with bees and honey, can be very heavy. Make sure you can easily get a vehicle into and out of the apiary for hive setup and maintenance. Save your back, make sure you can park directly behind or beside your hives! Having your vehicle on



Choosing a location for your hives is essential to successful beekeeping

hand is convenient for accessing tools and equipment parts as needed while inspecting your hives or pulling honey supers from the hive for honey extraction.

Keep in mind relocation of your hives may be required during emergency situations, such as forest fires or rising tides from an approaching tropical storm. Have a plan for emergency evacuation of your hives!

PROVIDE SOME SECURITY & PRIVACY FOR YOUR BEES

It is advisable to place your hives in a fenced, locked area so they are less apt to be seen by passersby. Beekeepers have had their hives destroyed by vandals and even stolen. Fencing will additionally keep small children, pets, and livestock away from the hives, as well as known “hive raiders,” such as skunks.

PLACE YOUR HIVE ON FIRM GROUND WITH GOOD DRAINAGE

If placed on ground that has poor drainage or very loose soil, you run the risk of the hive becoming unstable. As it sinks into the soil, it may collapse and kill your bees. Beekeepers placing their hives in areas with poor drainage risk vehicles becoming bemired in mud as well, and the area may become totally inaccessible, even by foot, during certain times of the year.

ADEQUATE SUNLIGHT AND SHADE

The hives should have southern or eastern exposure to provide adequate sunlight. Place the hives facing southeast, so the sun pours

Provide windbreaks in the direction of prevailing winds

into the hive entrance and serves as an alarm clock to wake up your bees. Avoid placing the hives in deep shade from trees or structures. Your hives will do well with non-evergreen trees located to the west and southwest of their position as they will receive afternoon shade during the summer's peak temperatures, and benefit from the sun's warming rays during the late fall and winter.

PROVIDE WINDBREAKS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE PREVAILING WINDS

Placing your hives behind a windbreak—and additionally wrapping each hive if the winter is extremely cold and/or windy—will help the bees maintain required heat levels during severe weather and reduce consumption of winter food stores in the hive. **DO NOT BLOCK THE HIVE ENTRANCE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!**

Avoid placing the hive on a hilltop where it can be buffeted by winter winds or in gullies where the air will be damp and still.

SETTING THE HIVE IN PLACE

Do not set the hive in contact with the ground. To minimize damp conditions and reduce deterioration of the hive's woodenware, the bottom board of the hive should not be set directly on the ground. Any number of solutions to this issue is available from commercially offered hive stands to placing the hive on concrete blocks, or homemade tables, etc. As the colony grows and additional brood boxes/honey supers are added to the hive, the stand upon which the hive has been placed must be sturdy enough to support the added weight and remain stable or the hive may collapse. Some beekeepers in areas prone to raids by skunks place their hives on stands at least

18 inches off the ground—as the “raiders” stretch to reach the hive entrance, their underbelly is exposed to the bees’ sting. Bears are a whole different challenge!

Further deterring of unwanted visitors can be achieved by placing a board with protruding tacks in front of the hive—it will be extremely uncomfortable footing. As an alternative, a small roll of barbed or other wire that will not block access by the bees, but keep predators from reaching the hive entrance, may be employed.

Mulch or old carpet placed around the hive will keep down weeds and tall grasses, so the hive is easily accessible by bees in flight. If using a screened bottom board—clear, accessible space beneath the hive will enhance keeping the area clean of debris.

TILT HIVE AND FACE AWAY FROM PREVAILING WINDS

The hive, when set in place, is best facing away from prevailing winds to aid the bees in keeping the hive warm during inclement weather. Tilt the hive very slightly forward. Inevitably rain will blow inside the hive, by tilting the hive slightly forward the water will automatically drain once the storm has passed. This will keep the hive's bottom board and entrance dry and free from mildew and mold.

PLACE A SMALL WEIGHT ON OUTER HIVE COVER

High winds can easily blow the cover off your hive and expose the bees to rain, wind, and chilling temperatures thus killing your bees. Reduce the chance of this happening by placing some weight on the hive cover—a small rock or two will usually be sufficient. Small, flat concrete garden border blocks work well.



Place your hives behind a windbreak and additionally wrap each hive in extreme cold and/or windy weather



grandma's garden

GARDEN at the end of the dirt road

By Donna J. Ward
MG 1996

Recently a friend asked me to relay to her any memories I have of my grandma's garden, as she knows that wonderful woman of my childhood had a great influence on me and my eventual adult interests. Her question caused me to summon reminiscences that have been resting in the recesses of my mind for such a long time. I thought that I might share my response with you:

"Thank you for asking. I have wonderful memories of my grandma's garden. She lived on the edge of Wellsville, a small, rural Missouri town—pop. 1,314 in the early 1940's. Grandma and grandpa lived in a little two-story, 5 room house on a small patch of land. It was the second-to-last house on the dirt road that led out of town.

The old wooden frame house had a kitchen with a wood-burning cook stove, a modest parlor containing grandpa's rocker, a two-person settee, pot-bellied stove, small table, a radio, and Victorian, ancestral framed photos. I can remember where each piece of furniture was located as I so loved that house and the people in it.

There was a bedroom on the first floor with a foot-pedal sewing machine and the mirrored dresser held a Kewpie doll—a carnival-won gift from one of her five sons. There were two small rooms upstairs, and the first room one entered after climbing the enclosed narrow wooden stairway contained a single piece of furniture, a standard-sized bed with a feather mattress and comforter. The adjoining room was empty; as the wooden floor was so rickety I was forbidden to enter.

The building was the first school house built in Wellsville (the second school house having already been condemned), and as you can well imagine the old house creaked. When the necessity arose, we walked through the small barn to the outhouse built behind it. When I visited with my parents we always brought toilet tissue with us from the city, as the Sears & Roebuck catalog was standard fare in grandma's outhouse. Even though WWII was in full swing at the time and money was practically non-existent, my mother always managed to take more tissue than we would need for a short stay. Her intention being to leave some extra in the outhouse when we were gone.



Green Beans

Photos by MG Donna Ward and MG Linda Steber

But since you asked about grandma's garden — you first need to picture a very slightly built (skinny, actually) old woman with her long grey hair twisted into a knot on the back of her head, wearing a real honest-to-goodness sun bonnet, and an ankle length dress, both of which she sewed herself. At the time she was much, much younger than I am now, but to this young child she was old.

My love of gardening I think came from her. I don't know that she loved it—it wasn't a hobby—it was a necessity. My mother was her oldest daughter, and I lived with my parents in the city in a second-floor, cold-water flat with no garden space to call their own. Each year my mother would send seeds, and all by herself, my grandma, this tiny woman turned the soil, planted and cared for a very large vegetable garden.

Although I dearly loved my grandpa, as a little girl it seemed to me that grandma did most of the work both inside and out. She was responsible for the keeping of the house and all it entailed, caring for the chickens, planting and harvesting the garden and of course all of the cooking. Although it was rumored that grandpa had once been employed by the County, I don't recall ever seeing or hearing anything connected with his 'job' other than it had something to do with a horse-drawn wagon. Actually, he never in his whole life drove anything that wasn't powered by a horse. Most of my memories of grandpa are of him sitting in his high-backed rocking chair, reading the newspaper or listening to the radio. From his chair he would occasionally lean forward to toss a split log into a black pot-bellied stove. I also recall seeing him twisting the neck of chickens—one head in each hand, twirling them, giving them a 'snap'—and they would go running headless around the chicken yard until their nerves realized the disconnect.

When grandma's garden was ready for harvest, my mother and I would ride a milk train (read that 'slow') from Union Station in St. Louis to the Wellsville Depot, where one of my mother's brothers not presently involved in rousting Nazi soldiers out of European villages would gather us into his truck and take us to the second-to-last little house on the dirt road that led out of town—where the job of canning was about to begin.

Grandma had planted 'string' beans at the base of tripods she fashioned from sturdy wood branches, and I loved helping her pick the slim, gloriously green pods. But I was warned that no picking was done when the vines were still wet with dew or rain. They needed to dry so that the "rusty sickness" wouldn't kill the vines. How she managed to calmly without gagging, flick the corn worms with her thumbnail from the yellow kernels never ceased to amaze me.

And the tomatoes—OMG—the tomatoes! In their peak of production we would pick two or three full buckets every day. Later, on the front porch swing there sat an old man with silver-streaked dark hair and a red mustache sitting beside a skinny little blonde girl, a bowl of ripe red tomatoes between them. They shared the saltshaker and tomato juice occasionally dripping from their chins brought forth giggles from the little blonde girl.

My mother and grandma canned for days on end, or so it seemed, and I loved every minute of it. It was during those years that I

learned a lot—the very basics of gardening, cooking and canning. Skinning tomatoes was as easy as a dip in boiling water, then into a bowl of cold well water. After the kernels had been cut off, corn ‘milk’ was scraped from the cob with the back of a large sturdy knife. Pickles had to sit in a jar for weeks before you could eat them. Thinly-sliced cabbage turned into sauerkraut if it sat in a crock long enough in a cool cellar, and getting the lima beans out of the pod was difficult and hard on little fingers.

When the canning was completed my father would make the drive in our old second-hand Plymouth coupe to retrieve me, my mother, a small portion of the jarred vegetables and we’d make the drive back to the city. It was a long drive—no eight lane concrete highway—just the McAdam blacktop and dirt roads that connected the city to the country.

As you probably know, nothing, but nothing grows in a chicken yard—if it’s green—they eat it. Imagine my surprise when at age thirty-six I moved to Texas and discovered that people actually ate Swiss chard. Grandma had always grown chard, but it was for the chickens—people didn’t eat it. Maybe Missourians do now, but they didn’t back then—and I still don’t. It’s chicken feed for gosh sakes!

There are a few things that will grow in a chicken yard—damson plum, peach and apple trees. I’m pretty sure that commercially prepared jellies and jams were on grocer’s shelves when I was a kid, but they never appeared on our breakfast table. We had plenty of peach preserves, damson plum jelly and apple butter on our morning toast, and they were all canned from fruit grown in the chicken yard of the second-to-last house on the dirt road that led out of town. My favorite though is home-made apple butter that I have canned every year



Grandma's Home Made Bread

and purple ‘speckled’ ones that bloomed every spring outside her back door along side the short pathway between the house and the water well.

I mentioned that the old house didn’t have a bathroom, but did I mention it also didn’t have running water? I was always warned to not unnecessarily pump the well’s handle unless we needed to carry water into the house—it was unforgivable to waste any. Also, grandma had an ice box. I have one too in my breakfast room, but it mostly holds table cloths and unused telephone books. She loved brightly colored flowers, and on the sunny side of the house she would let me pick all of the brilliant orange Chinese lanterns I wanted to put in a Mason jar on the kitchen table. I think she only planted them once, and they reseeded each year. But my favorite was the cypress vine that grew at each end of the front porch. Grandpa had nailed fence wire from the floor of the porch up to its roof, and we would sit on the porch swing and hear the hum of hummingbird wings as they darted back and forth at the small bright red blossoms.

Grandma’s been gone for almost 50 years, and her daughter, my mother, for almost 60, but they left me with a precious legacy of gardening and cooking for which I’ll be forever grateful. Gee, I’m glad you asked—resurrecting those joyful childhood memories has given me much pleasure. One of my most treasured childhood memories is being in the garden at the second-to-last house on the dirt road that led out of town. Thank you again for asking.”



Apple Butter

for I don’t recall how long. I’m picky though, and will only use Jonathan apples as my grandma and my mother did. In my opinion they are the very best for cooking or eating out of hand. Sometimes I have to look from store to store to find them, but several of my friends are on alert and let me know when they discover some. There’s nothing better for breakfast than a toasted slice of homemade bread slathered with homemade apple butter – as standard in my kitchen as they were in grandma’s.

But there was something grandma did love about the garden – the flowers. Wood violets were one of her favorites and I remember white



Cypress Vine



By Chris Anastas
MG Intern 2012

WATERING EFFICIENTLY watering systems

We have all driven past turf areas with automatic sprinkler systems going full blast during a pouring rain. And, how about those watered sidewalks, driveways, streets and mini rivers trickling down drain sewers? According to the EPA, the typical landscape soaks up more than 10,000 gallons of water a year not including rainwater and snowmelt runoff. Fresh water is becoming a more precious and scarce commodity each year. How we choose to water our lawns and gardens is now an important decision. Over-watering not only wastes money but can contribute to the development of fungus, diseases and cause soil erosion. The runoff can pollute our fresh water resources.

The watering of turf, trees and gardens should be considered separately. Grass lawns with dense foliage and roots require the most amount of moisture. To help determine how much to water turf, Texas A&M has developed an online calculator that will allow you to determine within 1/10 of an inch how much water your lawns need. The calculator takes into consideration what type of grass you have, how much sun it gets and the average rainfall and temperature in your area. This calculator is available at <http://texaset.tamu.edu/index.php>. Pick the weather station listed nearest you, choose Home Watering and proceed from there.

Sprinklers are the best way to water lawns but vary greatly in efficiency. According to the AWWA (American Water Works Association), households with in-ground sprinkler systems used 35% more water than households that watered manually with a hose-end sprinkler. Those households having in-ground systems with automatic timers used 47% more water. To make the sprinkler systems more efficient, there are now smart controllers that will activate sprinklers when soil moisture drops below a programmed amount or can tie into local weather stations. There are also inexpensive rain sensors that will turn off the system after a designated amount of rain has fallen.

Even without any of these devices, simply turning off the system after a rain and changing the settings to more infrequent watering during fall and winter will make watering much more efficient.

For hose draggers, the most efficient sprinklers are the ones that spray large drops low and parallel to the ground avoiding either being evaporated quickly or blown by the wind. The sprinklers that wave beautiful arcs of water back and forth high into the air are the least efficient. The best hose-end sprinklers are the old fashioned impact or impulse head that shoots water out in a pulsating action. They are known for their *chk, chk, chk* sound. Regardless of type, broken or leaky sprinkler systems are never efficient. Routine checks and maintenance are necessary.

Watering landscapes, vegetable gardens, shrubs and trees are not efficiently watered by sprinkler systems. Beds, trees and shrubs are not as shallow rooted or closely planted together as turf. The two most efficient means of watering these areas are first drip irrigation and second soaker hoses. Drip irrigation systems are very user friendly and relatively easy and inexpensive to set up. They work by very slowly dripping or bubbling water over the root zone. There are many types of emitters so the water requirement of different plants can be met along the same drip line. The water drops are pulled slowly through the ground by gravity but also sideways by capillary action through the soil. A small circle of wet soil

is like the tip of an iceberg with the cone of moist soil just beneath the surface. This is even more important for those of us with clay soils as these are the slowest to allow the passage of water. The only time we need really to have wet surface soil is when we are germinating seeds.

Soaker hoses work very similar to drip irrigation but slowly drip the entire length of the hose. These work well with trees, shrubs and plants spaced closely together that have similar water needs.

The other option to watering is by hand. An unmodified hose is not efficient as so much water runs off taking soil with it and exposing roots. The most efficient hand watering tool is the water wand followed by the old fashioned but cumbersome watering can.

Regardless of your watering method, the best time to water is as early in the morning as possible. This is when it is generally coolest and with the least amount of wind allowing for more soil absorption and less evaporation. While watering in the evening would seem equally as efficient, foliage could remain wet for 10 hours greatly increasing chances of disease problems.

With less than 1% of all freshwater available for human consumption, watering our landscapes efficiently will help ensure there will continue to be enough water for our landscapes in the coming years. It is important to supply our landscape with the water it requires and do this in an efficient and effective manner.



Photo by GCMGA

pizza garden - edible theme gardening fun by the square foot - *fifth in series*

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



By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008

Pizza is one of our most popular foods—just about everyone likes pizza! What could be more fun than growing your own pizza toppings in your backyard? Our garden design this month helps you do just that.

Did you know: Americans eat approximately 100 acres of pizza each day, or 350 slices per second. Each man, woman and child in America eats an average of 46 slices (23 pounds) of pizza a year. (source: Packaged Facts, New York)

Approximately 3 billion pizzas are sold in the U.S. each year.

Sixty-two percent of Americans prefer meat toppings on their pizza, while 38% prefer vegetarian. (source: Bolla wines)

Women are twice as likely as men to order vegetable toppings on their pizza. (Source: Bolla wines)

Three of the top 10 weeks of pizza consumption occur in January. More pizza is consumed during Super Bowl week than any other week of the year. (Source: Kraft Foods, Northfield, Ill.)

Over the past five years, pizza has outpaced the growth rate of all other food service items, averaging about 11 percent a year and making it the Number 2 item in foodservice (after burgers). (Source: Food Industry News)

Planting a pizza garden is a great way to get kids involved in gardening -- try one in your yard!

Pizza Garden



























The vegetables planted in this garden provide ingredients that can be used to make one of America's favorite foods--pizza!

Gardening Tips:

Eggplant and zucchini require a lot of space because their vines sprawl throughout the growing season. Spinach is in the middle of the garden to help provide shade for the plant, which is a cool season vegetable.

Plant List:

- 4 basil (transplant)
- 4 tomato (transplant)
- 4 bell pepper (transplant)
- 8 onion (seed)
- 3 eggplant (transplant)
- 12 spinach (transplant)
- 4 zucchini (transplant)
- 4 broccoli (transplant)
- 8 chard (seed)

				Basil & Tomatoes
				Bell Pepper & Tomatoes
				Onions & Bell Peppers
				Eggplant
				Spinach
				Zucchini & Broccoli
				Swiss Chard

Key: 1 inch square = 1 foot



by John Jons
MG 2003

How to grow those great big healthy roses: What you should be doing in August & September

Throughout 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 collection of monthly articles for our newsletter that will highlight what you should be doing to your roses over the coming month.



The summer is here. Keep an eye on your roses to ensure they are getting enough water (as last year, but maybe not this year). The amount of water you give them will directly impact the growth and the number and size of the blooms. The summer blooms will be smaller than the spring and fall blooms. You may also notice that your deep red roses may be getting "burned" by the sun. Here is a list of suggested things you should be doing in August and September.

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 others plants) have been plagued by chili-thrips that destroy new foliage. If not controlled, this damage may significantly impact the rose (and other plants in your garden) for the rest of the growing season. 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 attempts to devastate your roses (and other plants). Another pest that may appear in the heat of the summer is the red-spider mite. These little pests can defoliate a plant. You can often control them by simply blasting them off your rose with a strong spray of water, every other day, for about a week and by removing the lowest leaves on the bush and from the center of the plant. Typically, blackspot control is also critical at this time of the year. If you have blackspot you will have to use a blackspot curative spray to eliminate the problem. Only spray for insects and diseases if it's a problem that you cannot tolerate.

Fertilizer: If your area had a lot of rain, then the fertilizer you may have put out may have leached out of the soil. This will be evident by your roses looking pale and weak. Continue to fertilize until about the middle of September, and then give you plants a feeding rest, as the fertilizer may take about six weeks to become effective, as your plants will be hit with the nutrients resulting in new growth about the time you want them to slow down for the winter.

Water: Water per your roses' needs. You can help conserve water by having a mulch of 3-4" deep.

Photo Above: A white rose (0730) hybridized by John Jons and currently on display in the Galveston Master Gardener Gardens.

Galveston County's "Top Ten" Plant Series by MG John Jons

"Best" Herbs for Galveston County

Recommended by Elayne Kouzounis (MG 1998)

- Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)
- Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*)
- Cilantro / Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*)
- Dill (*Anethum graveolens*)
- Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare dulce*)
- Garlic (*Allium sativum*)
- Oregano (*Origanum* spp.)
- Parsley (*Petroselinum sativum*)
- Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
- Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)

Note: The intent of this series of the "best" plants for Galveston County articles is to begin to develop a listing of plants that a Galveston Master County Gardener can use as reference for themselves or in recommending what plants do well in Galveston County, to a resident of Galveston County. These listings will be provided by MGs based upon their own personal experience in growing the particular plants. Due to the limited space in the newsletter, we will primarily just provide the plant's name. More data on a particular plant can be found on the Internet or by contacting the MG source for the data. The listing was limited to the best few (e.g. ten) vs. everything. Understandably, if you ask ten MGs for an opinion, you may get fifteen different but excellent opinions. If you would like to provide a listing of "best plants" please send your input to John Jons. He will continue to update and maintain the listings.



Basil

Photo by Billy Jenke

Seasonal Bites

Photo by MG Karen Cureton

By Karen Cureton
MG 2008

We all had a wonderful time at the Graduation/Monthly Meeting held at Mikey and Allen Isbell's home in Galveston. It was a beautiful evening, the landscaping was a wonder, and the food was delicious. I cannot include all the wonderful recipes for which I am sorry. By some sort of consensus the Bread Pudding brought by Tim Jahnke will be the representative of that fine evening. Tim sent me several links for bread pudding. I am including them. He referenced the bread pudding in the 'Prudhomme Family Cookbook' and a link to Allie Prudhomme Fontenot's Bread Pudding at <http://baking.about.com/od/puddingsandgelatins/r/breadpud1.htm> - He also referenced Emeril Lagasse's fabulous whiskey sauce recipe which may be found on the Food Network website. I decided after much internal debate to adapt a recipe that would include components from both the Prudhomme family recipe, Emeril Lagasse's recipe, and my mother's recipe. Here it goes. Calorie counters beware. This makes a very large casserole dish. Serve with whiskey sauce, ice cream, or whipped cream.

BREAD PUDDING

Butter a deep 9 x 13 inch (or larger) casserole dish. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1-1/2 pound loaf of good quality French style bread (or 11 cups), cubed and lightly toasted in the oven. | 2 teaspoons of vanilla flavoring |
| 2 cups of heavy cream | 2 teaspoons of cinnamon |
| 1-1/2 cups of half and half | 2 teaspoons of ginger |
| 2 cups milk | 1-1/2 teaspoons freshly grated nutmeg |
| 6 eggs | 1/4 teaspoon salt |
| 1-1/4 cups brown sugar | 1 apple peeled and finely chopped, 1/4 cup raisins chopped, 1/4 cup cranberries chopped. |
| 1/4 cup white sugar | 1/2 cup chopped pecans |
| 2 tablespoon maple syrup | |



Prepare your bread and place in a very large bowl. Put the chopped fruit in a small bowl with a small amount of bourbon, rum or fruit juice to soak. Drain before adding to the mixture. In another large bowl mix all the remaining ingredients and beat well. Mix the bread and custard together. Soak for at least 45 minutes to an hour. Add in the fruit and the pecans. Mix well and then pour into the casserole dish. Bake until the pudding is set. About 60 minutes or so. Mine took just about 65 minutes.

The Whiskey Sauce is Mr. Lagasse's recipe and is 2 cups heavy cream, 1/2 cup milk, 1/2 cup white sugar, 2 tablespoons cornstarch, 3/4 cup bourbon, pinch of salt, 2 tablespoons of butter. Using a 1 quart saucepan on medium heat combine the cream, milk, and sugar. Mix the cornstarch and 1/4 cup of the bourbon in a bowl and whisk well. Pour the slurry into the heated cream mixture and bring to a boil. Once it starts to boil, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add the salt, butter, and remaining whiskey. Stir. Serve on whatever you please.

This turned out heavenly. Feel free to change up the fruits, the type of liquor, no liquor, increase spices or reduce spices. Enjoy.

Upcoming Events

(Please be sure to 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

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Aug 11, 2012 "Fall Vegetable Gardening" - MG Luke Stripling | 9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office |
| Aug 11, 2012 "Culture and Care of Palms in Galveston County" - MG OJ Miller | 1:00 - 3:00 pm - Extension Office |
| Aug 25, 2012 "Growing Onions and Garlic" - MG Sam Scarcella | 9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office |
| Aug 25, 2012 "Old Garden Roses - Ageless Beauties" - MG Anna Wygrys . . | 1:00 - 3:00 pm - Extension Office |
| Sept 15, 2012 "Square Foot Gardening" - MG John Jons | 9:00 - Noon - Extension Office |
| Sept 15, 2012 "Kitchen Gardening" - MG Mary Demeny | 1:00 - 3:00 pm - Extension Office |
| Sept 22, 2012 "T-Bud Grafting" - MG Herman Auer | 9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office |
| Oct 27, 2012 "Shade Trees" - Heather McKnight, City Arborist for League City | 9:00 - 10:00 am - Extension Office |
| Nov 17, 2012 "Butterflies" - MG Anna Wygrys | 9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office |
| Dec 1, 2012 "Starting Your Own Tomatoes from Seed" - MG Sam Scarcella | 9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office |



Improving Lives. Improving Texas.

By Julie Massey
MG 1996
CEA-Coastal &
Marine Resources

Residential Questionnaire

How have our lawn and home care practices changed since the 1990's? Would you like to learn ways to reduce your landscape/lawn care maintenance costs while conserving water and protecting Galveston Bay? If so, please complete the Residential Questionnaire attached! The questionnaire results will help the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Galveston County plan educational programs and demonstration projects for the residents of the county in 2013. The results from this questionnaire are confidential and will only be used for program development and education.

This same questionnaire was conducted in the mid-1990's with over 1000 residents from the Galveston County area providing insight into their home and lawn care practices.

If you have any questions, please contact Julie Massey, Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Sea Grant College Program at jk-massey@tamu.edu or 281-309-5063. Many thanks for your help in developing programs for 2013!

LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

1. Who maintains you landscape?
(Please check all that apply)
☐ You or a family member
☐ Property management or association
☐ Lawn care service
☐ Other (Please specify)

2. Approximately what percent of your landscape is lawn (turf grass)?
☐ 0 - 25%
☐ 26 - 50%
☐ 51 - 75%
☐ 76 - 90%
☐ 91 - 100%
3. Do you have fruit trees?
☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Do you have a vegetable garden?
☐ Yes ☐ No
5. How do you dispose of yard waste, such as lawn clippings and leaves from your landscape?
Please check all that apply.
☐ Bag and discard in trash
☐ Backyard compost
☐ Use as mulch
☐ Leave clippings on lawn
☐ Recycling/Drop-off Center
☐ Other (Please describe)

6. Have you utilized native plants for use in your landscape?
☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Is your landscape mulched?
☐ Yes ☐ No

8. If yes, what kind of mulch do you use?
(Please check all that apply.)

☐ Recycled yard waste
☐ Pine needles (Pine Straw)
☐ Yard leaves
☐ Pine bark
☐ Composed materials
☐ Other (Please specify)

FERTILIZATION

9. Please check all practices list below that you currently use:
☐ Choose plants that provide food or shelter for wildlife
☐ Group plants by water needs
☐ Shade western and eastern walls of your home
☐ Design low-moisture areas in the landscape (natural areas, ground covers and mulched areas)
10. How often is your lawn fertilized?
☐ Twice a Year
☐ Three Times a Year
☐ Monthly
11. About how often are areas other than lawns fertilized (e.g., shrubs, trees, planted beds)?

12. Please check all practices that apply to you:
☐ Use fertilizers with slow release nutrients
☐ Fertilize routinely
☐ Fertilize only on an "as-needed" basis
☐ Fertilize sparingly to avoid excessive lawn and plant growth
☐ Avoid routine fertilizer application for established trees and shrubs

PEST CONTROL

13. Do you use a professional pest control service to maintain your yard?
☐ Yes ☐ No
14. Are you familiar with the practice of Integrated Pest Management (IPM)?
☐ Yes ☐ No
15. Have you ever tried non-toxic solutions to treat common yard pests?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

WATERING

16. Please check all watering practices that apply:
☐ Use a hose or movable sprinkler
☐ Permanent irrigation system
☐ Water in the morning
☐ Water in the evening
☐ Water only when grass begins to wilt
☐ Rely on natural rainfall
17. Approximately how much water is applied each time your lawn is watered?
☐ inches ☐ Not sure

HOME PRACTICES

18. Are water-conserving shower heads or faucet aerators presently installed in your home?
☐ Faucet only
☐ Shower only
☐ Both
☐ Neither
☐ Not sure
19. Do you presently have a displacement device in your toilet tank to reduce water use?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure
20. Do you have a water-conserving toilet?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure
21. Do you routinely recycle household waste?
☐ Yes ☐ No
22. If yes, to Question 21 above, what items:
☐ Paper
☐ Plastic
☐ Glass
☐ Aluminum/metal
☐ Other
-

23. Have you or anyone in your family changed your car's motor oil at home in the past year?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure
24. If yes, how was the used motor oil disposed of?
☐ Oil recycling center (e.g., gas station)
☐ Other
-
25. How do you dispose of household hazardous waste, such as cleaning products or paint?
☐ Curbside trash pick up
☐ Hazardous waste collection day
☐ Other
-

DEMOGRAPHICS

26. What is the size of your property (check answer that best fits):
☐ 1/4 acre or less
☐ 1/3 acre
☐ 1/2 acre
☐ Over 1 acre (specify)
27. Do you rent or own your home?
☐ Rent ☐ Own
28. How many years have you lived in your present home?
☐ Years
29. What is your zip code?
-

COMMENTS

30. What do you consider to be the leading environmental issues or problems facing your neighborhood? How can we help you address those issues?

recertification (continuing education) hours for MGs 2012

Date	Event	Speaker	Topic	Cont Educ Hours
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 (For MGs only)	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
3/16	Pilot Program	O. J. Miller	The Care & Culture of Palms (For MGs only)	2
4/05	Pilot Program	Ann Lyons	Bulb Chipping & Rose Propagation (For MGs only)	2
4/05	Pecan Field Day	Jim Hall	Pecan tree grafting workshop	1.5
4/14	Saturday Seminar	Propagation Team	The ABCs of Propagation	3
4/14	Saturday Seminar	Herman Auer	How to Graft Your Own Fruit & Nut Trees	2.5
5/19	Saturday Seminar	Karen Lehr	Plan Before You Plant	2.5
5/19	Saturday Seminar	Loretta Osteen	The Fabulous Fragrant Frangipani	2.5
5/31	In-Field Training	Herman Auer	Peach & Plum Tree Pruning Demonstration (1)	1.25
5/31	In-Field Training	Herman Auer	Peach & Plum Tree Pruning Demonstration (2)	1.25
6/09	Saturday Program	Terry Cuclis & Gene Speller	Tomato & Pepper Taste Evaluation & Tasting	3
7/10	MGA Meeting	Dr. William Johnson	State of the Master Gardener Association	1
7/13	Hands-on Workshop	Robert Marshall	Honey Extraction Demonstration (9 a.m.)	3
7/13	Hands-on Workshop	Robert Marshall	Honey Extraction Demonstration (1 p.m.)	3
7/14	Saturday Seminar	Anna Wygrys	A Homeowner's Guide to Weed Control	2.75
				62.25

Last updated: July 19, 2012

MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 12 - MG GRADUATION IN THE HOME OF MIKEY & ALLEN ISBELL



Photos by MG Mikey Isbell & MG Ken Steblein

By Mary Lou Kelso
MG 2000

The June MG Graduation, Certification & Recognition Meeting took place at the home and garden of Mikey and Allen Isbell on Tuesday, June 12. The 2011 MG class completed the necessary hours to become Certified Master Gardeners and were presented with their certificates. Additionally the 2012 class of MGs were introduced and they are on their way to acquiring their volunteer hour commitments. Special awards were presented to Master Gardeners who helped in a variety of ways over the past year. The meeting was adjourned and everyone enjoyed dinner and talking to classmates and friends.

Below is a followup from MG Ken Steblein on "the mystery plant"

For the second year in a row the talk of the Galveston County Master Gardener summer celebration hosted by Allen & Mikey Isbell has been *Amorphophallus paeoniifolius*, or more commonly known as Voodoo Lily.

If you are lucky enough to have your Voodoo Lily flower, you will be in for a big surprise; the odorous mauve flower attracts flies and smells of rotting meat and last less than a week. It is followed by the solitary leaf umbrella which is comprised of leaflets on a long stem that is covered by a coarse and abrasive protection that can cause skin irritations. The unique flower and giant leaf look like something right out of the mind of Dr. Seuss.

The perennial tropical arum is well suited as a containerized plant growing in rich organic soil mixed with sand. It grows in partial shade to bright light and it is best to avoid the Texas direct sun. Keep soils moist when in full leaf and on the dry side during the dormancy. The corm, often called the elephant yam is edible and

grown as a food crop in several Asian countries. Propagation is by seed or Mikey has had good luck with dividing her corms, thus has been able to spread the wealth of this exotic plant.



The corm or elephant yam



Mikey's Voodoo Lily

MEETING MINUTES

JULY MGA MEETING (2012)

Photo by MG Tom Fountain

The July meeting of the Master Gardener Association took place Tuesday, July 10, at the new Galveston County Extension Office at Carbide Park.

This meeting was the "State of the Galveston County Master Gardeners Address" by Dr. William Johnson. The present and past Presidents of the organization were introduced to everyone present. Dr. J. then discussed the demographics of the members as to where they live, their gender in pie charts and bar graphs to illustrate.

He discussed the move to the new Extension building, statistics on speakers and programs that the Master Gardeners participate in and their success.

The Aggie Horticulture website was part of the program showing the numbers of visitors and downloads that take place. The Galveston County Master Gardeners have five of the top ten downloads.

The Demonstration Garden was another topic along with its evolution and growth. Soon the gardens will be opened to visitors once a month with docents needed to help with this mission.

The Newsletter is presently done electronically with hard copies available at the Extension Office. The focus for the Newsletter this coming month will be water conservation.

A potluck dinner was then hosted.

The August Meeting of the MG's will be held Tuesday, August 21, at Moody Gardens on Galveston Island. This event which is widely attended will start with complimentary venues for members and their guests with a 3 pm cruise of the Colonel Paddle Wheeler on Offatt's Bayou, a 4 pm visit of the newly renovated Rainforest followed by a tour of the new Greenhouses at Moody Gardens. Dinner will follow in the Garden Restaurant with door prizes after the event. Then the members will move to the top floor of the Moody Gardens Hotel with a sunset viewing, reception in Shearn's Room and tour of the Executive Suites, by General Manager, Garvin O'Neil. This event is planned each year by MG 2000, Mary Lou Kelso.



Project: Demonstration Gardens

Carbide Park



By Sandra Gervias
MG 2011

Photos by MGs Jan & Tom Fountain

Bliss! More rain at the gardens of Carbide Park meant happy plants and less hand watering for the Master Gardeners. After last summer's record-setting drought, there were few complaints about the rain.

Instead, it proved that the downspouts will easily fill the new storage tank with rainwater for use during dry spells. The rain also gave time for the Master Gardeners to visit, compare notes and discuss future plans for the gardens. Dr. Johnson came out and reviewed the aims and rules of the gardens for all of the members, new and old. The rain even helped him to plan the contouring of the drainage swale near the building.

The plants responded happily to the weather. Tomatoes produced a bumper crop—until the stinkbugs invaded, flying in and damaging the tomato fruit itself, leaving it spotted, dry and sometimes bitter. After battling them with TAF (Thumb-And-Forefinger smashing) and chemicals, the Master Gardeners conceded defeat and pulled up the remaining tomato plants. Round 1 to the stinkbugs.

One of the larger projects in the gardens involved moving the forty-foot metal container that had been used for storage. It was moved out of the pole barn which was then floored with crushed cement so that the whole barn can now be used for storage. Other improvements to the Carbide Gardens included the running of electricity to the building which allows the refrigerator and freezer to be used and an HVAC unit to be installed. The building will serve as a haven from the cold or heat for the Master Gardeners and also can be used as a classroom in the future.

Work continues on repairing the flower beds themselves. Just look for the huge white sombrero; you'll find Henry Harrison III under it, building the new beds with the help of his friend Clarence Paul. Another new bed is under construction in front of the Asian Gardens. Heavy duty metal edging is in place and dirt has been added. The work and planning continue.

The gardens bountifully rewarded the Master Gardens this season. Lovely ripe figs had to be picked, even in the rain—and sampled, of course. Master Gardeners still prefer the Celeste fig over the LSU Purple. Black Diamond watermelons planted in the orchard between the fruit trees were a pleasure to eat. Some were served at the Master Gardeners July meeting. Another good producer was Peggy Bundy's various grapes, some of which Wayne Elliot turned into grape juice for all to taste.

Wildlife continues to share in the bounty of the Carbide Gardens, reminding us that they were there first. The bird's nest among the pole beans is a charming example of this living side by side. And since gardeners are a generous bunch, no one really objects.

Dr. J discussing future plans for the gardens



Downspout for future rainwater collection



Henry & Clarence



Crushed cement flooring in pole barn



Picking figs in the rain



New bed is under construction in front of the Asian Gardens



Honey extraction demonstration



Black Diamond watermelon from the garden



Beans aren't the only thing growing in the garden!



Making Grape Juice by John Jons, MG 2003

Photos by MG John Jons

It was obvious that the Mortenson (green) grapes were ready to be harvested, as Peggy Budny and Wayne Elliott were making grape juice. Wayne used a Nutri Steamer juicer to produce the white grape juice to share with the Master Gardener team working in the gardens. To-date, (on June 22 and 28) about forty-nine pounds of Mortenson grapes have been harvested, which has produced about four-and-a-half gallons of juice. The two grape vines were planted in February of 2007. No pesticides or fertilizers have been used on the vines.

Saving Carbide Park's 'Santa Fe' Rose Bush

In the mid-90's I attended a number of Union Carbide business meetings at the building next to the front entrance of Carbide park and often noticed and admired the really beautiful red and apparently maintenance free, rather large rose shrub, on the east side of the park road just past the park's entrance.

The rose is Cramoisi Superieur. It is an everblooming 'china rose' and it has very round, double cupped, velvety, rich unfading red (crimson) flowers with a silvery reverse and a deliciously fruity (raspberry) fragrance. It was hybridized in 1832, by a man called Coquereau, in France. The rose is rated as an 8.7 (out of 10—with 7.8 being very good) in the "American Rose Society Handbook for Selecting Roses." The rose is also known to rose enthusiasts worldwide as the 'old Bermuda red rose' as it naturalized itself on that island, which proves it can live quite well in adverse conditions. It is also known locally as the 'Sante Fe rose' (Texas) as it was found all over the local area, growing without care and doing quite well.

Recently, Bill Cummins (Class of 2012) noticed that this rose had been covered by a thick-leafy canopy of a mustang grape (considered an invasive plant) and from the center of the rose shrub was a rapidly growing sugar hackberry (considered a trash tree). In the few spaces between the leaves of the grape vine and the hackberry tree, you could still, surprisingly, find stems of the rose poking out with its red flowers. It was very apparent that soon the grape and the hackberry would smother the rose out of existence.

Bill offered to rescue the rose by removing the grape vine and the hackberry tree. The park's landscaping crew offered to remove the trash. After a number of work days cutting, chopping and herbicide treatments, we will now continue to have this beautiful rose adorning the entrance road to the park—and on another note—not only is this rose very carefree, it also grows quite easily from cuttings.

Work Smart & Be Cool - Summer Heat Survival Tips

by MG Laura Bellmore, MG1992

Summer's here and it's HOT! The heat is taking its toll across the nation in heat-related deaths and illnesses, so below are a few reminders to get us through the summer heat safely:

Stay hydrated! Drink as many liquids as possible. Don't wait until you are thirsty to have a drink, as thirst is an indicator that your body is already dehydrated. Water is preferred, however flavored beverages, such as fruit juices, iced tea and lemonade, as long as their sugar and salt content is low, are good water substitutes if they encourage large quantity consumption. The drink's temperature should be cool, not cold. Drink whether you're thirsty or not, drink 16 to 32 ounces of water or fruit juice per hour while gardening in hot weather. AVOID caffeine, alcohol, and high-sugar drinks while working in hot weather; these speed up fluid loss and make you feel hotter.

Perhaps one of the easiest ways to reduce heat stress is to dress appropriately. Though tempting, do not work in the garden in a tank top or without a shirt due to the potential for sunburn. Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light colored clothing made of natural fibers such as cotton or linen. Neckbands, headbands, wristbands can increase evaporation to keep the body cool.

ALWAYS wear a hat with a brim. This will protect not only the top of your head, but shade your face and neck. Body heat escapes through the scalp, so try to find a light-weight or vented sunhat to help keep your head cool. Sunglasses will protect your eyes from both glare and dust.

Work a little slower. Take frequent breaks to reduce the amount of time spent in the sun or heat. After working for an hour, take a break to cool down and have a drink in the shade to reduce the build-up of heat stress on your body. Consider carrying a bandana to dip into some water and place it around your neck to cool you.

My Personal Tip: When working in the yard at home, I take a kitchen timer outside with me. As the day gets hotter, I may not recognize that I'm getting overheated, so before I start working I set the timer to remind myself to take a break after an hour. At each break, I sit in the shade and drink a full glass of lightly sweetened, homemade limeade. I use a mister to spritz myself to help keep me cool. Break time is about 5 minutes, then I set the timer and get back to work. As the day gets longer/hotter, the breaks become more frequent, 15-20 minutes apart.

Our gardens aren't the only things that suffer from high temperatures and suffocating humidity. Be aware of how the heat can affect YOU while carrying out your gardening chores. Work smart and be cool Master Gardeners.



Peggy and Wayne



Before Pruning



After Pruning



Cramoisi Superieur Rose Bloom



Wear a Hat With a Brim



what bugs plants

By A. Lynette Parsons
MG 2011

What bugs plants? That is always an interesting question, but given the time of the year, we're thinking of the bugs and caterpillars we see feasting on plants in our landscapes and gardens. So we're going to ignore soil nutrition and concentrate on those squirmy little things, the bugs.

It doesn't matter whether you are talking flowers, fruit trees, or vegetables, but the first decision you need to make is if you like moths and butterflies. It's those same pretty, winged creatures that started out as little crawly caterpillars, and their voracious appetites can do immense damage to a host plant.

So if you plant a "butterfly garden," expect that the butterfly larvae will take up your kind invitation and lay their eggs all over those pretty plants with pretty flowers. The result won't be pretty, but you will have butterflies.

Of course, not all plant damage is inflicted by butterfly and moth larvae. About a month ago, our Master Gardener Hot-Line at the Extension Office was inundated with calls about these "red worms with lots of legs" all over tomatoes. They were typically described as all bunched up, but scattered at the approach of human fingers. Those are the immature version (nymphal stage) of the leaf-footed bug, a real vampire type when it comes to tomatoes.

Between the leaf-footed bug and the stinkbug, your tomatoes begin to change from gorgeous looking red things to red things with weird splotches. The splotches are where those two bugs have done their job, sucking juices from the fruit.

Then there are the "worms" that you find in sweet corn (corn earworm larvae), or the "worms" you find inside the stems of squash (squash vine borer). And the snails and slugs—how do you deal with these guys? You can try the time-tested method of banging two bricks together with the critters inside, but you might also want to consider the current catch-phrase, "Integrated Pest Management" or IPM for short. IPM is what the folks at AgriLife Extension consider a multi-pronged approach to any pest problem, whether it's in the house or outside. In the yard and garden situation, it hopefully starts with fertile soil. If plants are not stressed from a lack of (or an excessive amount of) nutrients and water, they are less likely to be a target for attack. It's that lagging elk that gets caught by the wolves, for example, not the fleet of foot.

Another early approach at ground level is to make sure that leaf litter and other homes to snails and slugs are cleaned up around your plants. Cleaning your beds in the fall and early spring gives you an opportunity to provide your plants with a fresh start, and that spring sunlight makes it hard for the snails to hide from the heat. After the plants are warmed up and sprouting away, is the time to add new mulch.

A third approach involves sprays of various types. Bt, the shorthand for *Bacillus thuringiensis*, is a biological control that is sprayed to control the caterpillar stage of a wide array of butterflies and moths. Insecticidal sprays such as neem oil are also used, and good old sprays from the water hose can sometimes be just as effective. What you need to know is what spray you're using is actually effective

Photos by MG Billy Jenke

against, and when it is best to use it. Spray at the wrong time, and you might lose those fruits and vegetables you so long to eat. They write those instructions on the labels for a reason.

Then there are the critters that prey in turn on the bugs that prey upon the plants. If you see an infestation of one kind of bug that seems to be causing problems, you may begin to see other, even uglier bugs around. Big-eyed bugs (yes, that's their name), lady beetles (not ladybugs, it's a misnomer), assassin bugs, wasps, and even fire ants will attack other bugs, usually the plant feeders. It's like those wolves attacking the elk again. So before you start swatting, make sure you identify the bug you are aiming for. You might slaughter your new best friend.

And that brings me to another great resource. In addition to lots of gardening books at your local libraries, there are websites that may be of help in identifying your bugs. Be sure to check our Galveston County Master Gardener website, which has a great section on beneficial insects (really great photos), those predators we just mentioned. Also, check out the Problem Solver Guides for Gardeners. That address is

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/>

And finally, there's always your local AgriLife Extension Office, conveniently located at Carbide Park in La Marque (phone 281-534-3413).



Above: Leaf-Footed Bug/Below: Nymphal Stage Leaf-Footed Bug



other local & state gardening events



by Yvonne Enos
MG 2008

Hey everybody! Did you know there are lots of other opportunities to learn? Here are some of the non-Master Gardener events coming up. There is something for everyone.

Gardeners by the Bay Garden Club hold monthly meetings. Members of this association strive to meet the challenges of successful gardening on the Upper Texas Gulf Coast while also focusing on environmental conservation and recycling. <http://gbtb.org/>

Arborgate Nursery showcases the best in perennials, herbs, roses and native plants. They have many great programs each Saturday. Only 2 more through August. Butterflies and Hummingbirds on August 9, and Mighty Mato on August 10. Check their website for more information <http://www.arborgate.com/classes.php>

Native Plant Society or NPSOT has been established to promote research, conservation and utilization of native plants and plant habitats of Texas through education, outreach and example. Their annual Fall Symposium will be in Kerrville on October 5 – 7. Headquarters will be the historic YO Ranch Motel and the theme will be the changing landscape of the Hill Country. More details will be coming soon. Go to <http://npsot.org/>

Galveston Orchid Society strives to stimulate interest and educate the public in orchids, their cultivation, conservation and culture through the presentation of lectures, exhibits, workshops and similar study groups. The GOS currently holds a show every 18 months at the Nessler Community Center and their next monthly meeting is in the Alamo room. See link <http://www.galvestonorchidsociety.org/>

For those that enjoyed a taste of our own honey at the demonstration with Robert Marshall, and would like to know more about bees, or even are interested in being a backyard beekeeper, check out the **Houston Beekeepers Association**. They meet at 7:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month at the Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, Texas 77027. See their website for more information <http://www.houstonbeekeepers.org/>

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 on Herman Drive. 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. Monthly meetings are located at the Houston Garden Center on Herman Drive. Their next show and sale is on September 8 & 9. For more, please see <http://www.hcsstex.org/>

Houston Rose Society, a local chapter of the American Rose Society, exists to promote the culture and appreciation of the rose, through education and research, to members, to local rose societies

and their members, and to the public. They hold a regular monthly meeting in the Garden Center in Hermann Park. Admission is free. For more information go to <http://www.houstonrose.org/>

If you are interested in knowing more about the **Gulf Coast Fruit Study Group**, check them out. It is a chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers. The membership includes fruit enthusiasts from around the world, with collective experience growing everything from familiar fruits to the exotic and rare. Their regular meetings are located at the Texas Agrilife Extension Service building located in Bear Creek. Their website address is <http://gcfsg.weebly.com>

Mercer Arboretum holds several popular events and programs annually. They will hold their Garden Faire & Fall Festival Saturday and Sunday, September 22 and 23 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Garden Faire is held the fourth Saturday and Sunday in September on Mercer's west side at the picnic area. Kid's Korner provides families with free nature activities and crafts. The event features regional plant societies, local artists and crafts people who specialize in garden art. Garden-related arts and crafts and plants are available for purchase. There is no charge to attend and parking is free. For more information see <http://www.hcp4.net/mercercorner/index.htm>

The **African Violet Society of America** is a worldwide organization dedicated to the distribution information, and stimulating interest with African Violets. For more information see <http://www.avsa.org/events/spring-branch-african-violet-club>.

Houston Hemerocallis & Houston Area Daylily Society - You will find friends in the local clubs who share your enthusiasm for daylilies and who will probably share some daylilies with you when they divide. They have a great group of people who are anxious to help newcomers learn more about their favorite flower.

<http://www.ahsregion6.org/calendar.htm>

Harris County Master Gardeners have released their list for events. They include programs for children on August 5 at Genoa Friendship Garden, and tool care and sharpening for adults. Skip Richter leads a hands-on workshop titled "Vegetable Gardening and Healthy Eating" on August 14 at Clear Lake Park, and Eulas Stafford will give a lecture on plumerias on August 15. For more information on these programs, and others listed in their Urban Dirt Newsletter, see this link

<http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/urban/docs/jul2012.pdf>



Texas Master Gardeners Association

To take a look at what is going on in our Texas Master Gardeners Association, check out the following website:

THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE - <http://txmg.org/>



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 hauersrmga@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

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.



VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGS

To report volunteer hours send your log sheets to <mghours@wt.net>.



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. Please note that if you go to the website you can find up to date information on Specialist Programs that were added in between editions of the newsletter. <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 or food unless specified otherwise.

MG Specialist-Irrigation Efficiency Training. Date: Wednesday - Friday, October 24-26, 2012 Location: Tarrant County Extension Office, 200 Taylor, Fort Worth, TX 76102. Cost is \$200. Please see the TMGA website for additional details.

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. Please see the TMGA website under training for more information. The next course will be held September 10-11, 2012. They are generally 6 months apart.

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".



NEED A GIFT?

The following Master Gardener award-winning publications are on sale. Stop by the Extension Office to pick them up for yourself or for gift-giving.

The Butterflies of Galveston County

Thumbnail Guide to Gardening for New Gardeners

Ambrosia from Your Back Yard

Bilingual Guide to Yard Care

Herbs for the Upper Gulf Coast of Texas

Our Edible Landscape

Creating the Tropical Look

the last word . . .

FAIRY RINGS APPEARING ON AREA LAWNS

(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*

I was giving serious thought last Saturday to changing my usual work-time footwear from dress shoes to tennis shoes. After getting out of my car to go into a local store last Saturday, I decided to bring along my umbrella as the sky was turning darker and darker even though it was midday.

While I was in the store, I could hear the downpour of rain on the roof and the sound of thunder. I was thoroughly drenched by the time I traversed the parking lot to get to my car. I don't think I could have been more drenched had I made the walk back without an umbrella.

The squish-squish of wet dress shoes was not pleasant. Even though it was midday in mid-July in Texas, I drove home with the car heater turned on as the temperature had cooled and I was wet!

I was not elated by the circumstance. But then I thought about what it was like this time one year ago.

What a difference a year can make. The memory of week after week of record hot temperatures and record drought conditions during 2012 has a way of putting things in a more rational perspective.

The generous rainfall has also had other impacts in the landscape. Mushrooms have been suddenly appearing in lawns and they have caught the attention of concerned homeowners. Some mushrooms enlarge to dinner plate-size behemoths!

Magic Or Fairies?

They're known as fairy rings. Some types of mushrooms in lawns occur in a here-and-there random pattern; however, fairy ring mushrooms occur in a distinctive circular (or semicircular) pattern. The question is, "Are they the result of magic or fairies?"

During the Middle Ages, the period when blood letting was common practice and flies were thought to arise from rotting meat, people had various ideas about where circles of mushrooms or other large fungal structures came from.

Some people thought the devil churned butter in the middle of the ring, while other folks thought fairies danced in the center. Despite such stories, some considered it lucky to have fairy rings in a field near their house. You might, however, get a strong counter-argument from today's homeowners and turf managers who have fairy rings in their turf.

Mystery and mythology aside, fairy rings are caused by fungi. More precisely, we now know that fairy rings aren't made by fairies or the devil. They are the fruiting structures of underground fungi.

Several species of mushrooms or puffballs can form into fairy rings. Mushrooms or puffballs are the reproductive part that forms from fungal threads that live and grow in the soil or thatch — the layer of dead and living plant parts that develops between the grass and the soil surface.

A Common Thread

Fairy rings are typically seen from August through October, but that's not a hard and fast rule as this year has demonstrated. In some years, they're more common than others because they're sensitive to moisture, heat and other environmental conditions.

An obvious question is why do they grow in circles? The whole phenomenon begins with one small piece of fungal thread or a spore. From that tiny particle, a mass of threads radiates in all directions like the spokes on a wagon wheel. The fungus will keep growing, hidden from sight, until it runs out of a food source or the environment becomes unfavorable.

Fairy ring fungi don't directly infect lawns, but cause damage by interfering with water movement to the roots of grass plants. In order for the fungus to absorb nutrients, certain materials in the soil must be dissolved by the fungus into a usable form.

The grass is essentially fertilized by the byproducts of this process. The most active part of the fungus is at the outer edge of the ring, so that's where the fruiting bodies form and thus forming a circular pattern.

The common appearance of mushrooms in lawns and landscapes after significant rain can pose a potential hazard if eaten.

Mushrooms growing in the wild should not be eaten unless a responsible person recognizes them as safe. There is no safe rule-of-thumb to differentiate a poisonous mushroom from an edible mushroom.

So, what can you do if you want to get rid of a fairy ring? Fairy rings, as with other nuisance mushrooms or puffballs, are difficult to control since there are no effective and simple chemical procedures available to homeowners. Most fairy rings are only present for a few years and eventually outgrow themselves.

If mushrooms in the lawn make you happy or provide a National Geographic moment to teach your children, or you're at least agreeable to letting Mother Nature take her course, then sit back, relax and enjoy the show. Watching mushrooms grow tends to be faster than watching grass grow.



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 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
Galveston Island

May 8, 2012

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

June 12, 2012

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

July 10, 2012

Meeting at Extension Office
4:00 pm - 4102 B Main St
Carbide 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 - 35th Street
Galveston Island



NOTE THE CHANGE IN DATE - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

You And Your Guests Are Invited To Attend

The Galveston County Master Gardeners

Tuesday, August 21, Meeting
An Afternoon & Evening Of Dinner & Festivities
At Moody Gardens - Visitors Center
1 Hope Boulevard
Galveston, TX 77554
Tuesday, August 21, 2012

Arrival time is 2:00 pm - check in begins at the Moody Gardens Visitor Center and lasts into the evening. Details will follow by invitation for Master Gardeners and their guests, to include a Colonel Cruise, Greenhouse tour, NEW Rainforest tour, dinner at the Garden Restaurant, and Shearn's Sunset viewing and reception and tour of Executive Suites on 9th floor of the Moody Gardens Hotel.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW: Meeting details will be sent out on Tuesday, August 7 and RSVPs will be needed for each event that you and your guests intend to participate.