

THE GALVESTON COUNTY Master Gardeners

Time to Plant
Perennials

October-November 2012 - Issue 181



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You might be a Master Gardener if:

You have more pictures of your plants on your phone than you do of your own kids. Your significant other says "you spend more time with your hoe than you do with me." You know exactly how many bags of soil or mulch will fit in your car. If, while picking up yet one more package of seeds, you've said, "This is the last one—I mean it this time!" If your neighbors hide when they see you drive up with those bags of zucchini. If you've ever grabbed a big handful of your compost and thought "man this compost smells good today." You have your own personal concrete mixer to make customized soil blends. If your soil amendments cost more than your car payment. You consider working in the garden better than a gym membership. (Unknown)

Hmmm—I think I could use a concrete mixer! Finally, it's October, that glorious buffer between the final lingering days of our sweltering Gulf Coast summer and the first few days offering the cool breezes of fall. Our GCMGA is currently engaged in setting up and looking forward to our Annual Ornamental and Perennial Sale, scheduled for October 6.

The newsletter team continues to work hard to bring educational, timely and fun articles to you with each new publication. Hopefully you are enjoying the updated format, videos and electronic version of our newsletter. **Please take a moment** to send your comments and suggestions to Linda Steber at steber8@msn.com so that we can continue to improve our newsletter and bring you what you'd like to see.

This month please enjoy the results of the recent perennial survey (Q&A page 4) and some of our GCMG's favorites on page 10 & 11—the Best Shots spread this month describes and shows photos of some of these perennials. Discover how easy and beneficial it is to compost leaves on page 5. The video presentation this month (page 6) describes how to take soil samples.

As protecting the environment becomes more imperative, we are always looking for more ideas to "go green." Ken Steblein's article on page 7 provides 50 easy ways to decrease your carbon footprint. Donna Ward's story this month (page 8) will bring tears to your eyes when you read about what one dedicated GCMG, a small local gardening club and the Galveston County Master Gardeners can do to give back to the community, even when it's outside our Galveston County area.

Jan Brick's article continues through the alphabet of "User Friendly" plants (page 9). Enjoy visiting Deane Greer's yard on page 12. This story begins a new series that will show the beautiful yards and talent of some of our GCMGs. The benefits of butterflies are commonly extolled in literature and on the Internet, but what about moths? Pat Forke's very interesting article on page 13 provides us an education on moths. Dr. Johnson appears on page 21 with a discussion about ornamental grasses.

Catch up on other doings around our MG Association with the Rose Bed Update (page 14) and Carbide Park Update (page 16). Try a new seasonal recipe on page 15. Our Upcoming Events (page 15) and Bulletin Board sections (page 20) have been updated with approaching meetings, seminars, conferences, classes, specialty training, volunteer opportunities and other local & state gardening events (page 19).

Check out more beautiful perennials at the upcoming Ornamental & Perennial Sale on October 6 - see page 22 for details

Photo by Margaret Landers



*By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008*

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Check out page 10 for more
"MG Perennial Favorites."

Front Cover Photo by MG Linda Steber

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ask a master gardener...



By A. Lynette Parsons
MG 2011

Q&A

Hot Line Topics

Question: What are some of Master Gardeners' favorite perennials?

PERENNIALS: THE PLANTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING

Answer: When the heat has gone on far too long, and the rains come far too rarely, it is the perennials in our landscapes that provide us with colorful relief. The late summer and early fall bring out the bloom in many perennials, just in time for those migrating hummingbirds and the butterflies that pop up everywhere. Technically, perennials have a plant life of two or more years. Grass and trees would qualify, but more popular thought endows flowering plants with this designation.

In our most recent survey, several Master Gardeners waxed poetic in their descriptions of favorite perennials. Fond memories of their first plants, from knowledgeable garden centers, or friends, or family, provide an emotional connection. And like all Master Gardeners who wish to share their knowledge and bounty, our contributors divide and give plants, share seeds and cuttings, and promote their favorites to others. As one noted, "easy color, easy care, and easy on the water" make these plants ones to savor.

Melampodium, *Lespedeza*, *Salvias* (*Salvia greggii* and *Salvia leucantha*), Shrimp plant (*Justicia brandegeana*), Cigar plant (*Cuphea micropetala*), Esperanza, *Rudbeckia*, Chenille plant (*Acalypha hispida*), and Naked Ladies (*Lycoris radiata*) are all high on the lists. *Plumbago*, with that lovely blue, graces the hot summer with a cool look, as does Mexican heather (*Cuphea hyssopifolia*), a serious bee attractor. Daylilies (*Hemerocallis* sp.), Pentas, Summer Snapdragon (*Angelonia*),

Gaura lindheimeri, passion vine (*Passiflora incarnata*) and Gingers (*Alpinia zerumbet*) come in for their share of praise.

Even though this is not my story, it well could be: "When I first started planting flowers, I came upon Katie *Ruellia* (Mexican petunia). I bought a couple of plants for their purple shades and its bell shaped flowers. Lo and behold, a few plants multiplied into more than I could stand. I ended up pulling a majority of them to share with friends. I could not give them away fast enough. I no longer own any. I now try not to plant anything invasive if I can help it."

The mallow family is a prominent member of this perennial group. Swamp Mallows (*Hibiscus moscheutos*) and Rock Rose (*Pavonia lasiopetala*) were noted, and Turk's Cap (*Malvaviscus penduliflorus*) was mentioned by several contributors. And of course, Texas Star Hibiscus (*Hibiscus coccineus*) comes in for its share of amusement as well as color in the garden. Several folks, myself among them, have dealt with the shock of neighbors noticing "marijuana" growing in the flower bed! Ya gotta love those leaves—and by the way, how do all these people know what marijuana leaves look like, anyway?

As most of you know, we could go on with the many, many popular perennials that grace our gardens. But a picture is worth much more than these words, so we will leave it to the photos to lure you to love perennials.



Texas Star Hibiscus by Linda Steber



Shrimp Plant by PJ Burkett



Green-Eyed *Rudbeckia* by Margie Jenke

Contributors:

See page 10 for more photos of favorite perennials that work well for our area.



Louise Bell
MG 2010



Sandra Devall
MG 1998



Deb Hale
MG 2003



Carol Jean Hebert
MG 2004



Jenifer Leonpacher
MG 2010



Edda Scott
MG 2010



Michelle Schuibinger
MG 2003



Bettye Solcher
MG 1999



By Chris Anastas
MG Intern 2012

a very valuable addition to your landscape

Question: Can you give me some particulars on leaf composting?

GARDENER'S GOLD - LEAF COMPOST

Answer: One of the inescapable October chores most all of us share is the collection and disposal of the plentiful fall leaves. While our leaves do not acquire the brilliant colors of red and gold as they do in other parts of the country, we can very easily turn our humble brown fall leaves into gardener's gold.

We are of course talking about leaf compost, a very valuable addition to your landscape and garden soil. It is not just an organic additive for our organically-starved clay soils; it also makes the soil more tillable and improves aeration. Leaf compost is a wonderful home for earthworms (worm castings add even more nutrients to the soil) and beneficial soil bacteria. In addition, leaf mold can retain 300 to 500 percent of its weight in water, making it the perfect soil conditioner.

If you have already made the effort to rake them up or blow them into a pile, you are halfway to turning your leaves into gardener's gold. If you have never tried composting, this is the perfect time for you to give it a try. It does not get any easier than leaf composting and you will be well rewarded.

The first step to leaf composting is gathering the leaves into a pile. Smaller pieces break down faster. Shredding the leaves with a shredder, running over the pile with a mower or even using a weed trimmer can accomplish this. You may not want to discourage you children from jumping in the leaf pile as this can aid your efforts. Or, you can skip this step as the whole leaves will break down within a year rather than the three to six months it would take with shredded leaves.

Whole or shredded leaves should be placed in a pile at least 4 feet wide and 3 feet tall. Too small a pile will not retain the heat and moisture needed for composting to take place. Conversely if the pile is more than 5 feet tall, the center of the pile will not get enough oxygen to allow for the

composting microbes to work and will also be harder to turn or manage. The leaf pile can be left loose or contained in an enclosure. The simplest method of enclosure is with woven metal wire or fencing forming a circle around the pile but leaving an opening for turning and removing compost. The pile can also be enclosed with brick or wood but make sure there are many openings for air and moisture to enter and escape. Wooden pallets or plastic fencing held in place with metal rods would work as well.

The next step is to wait. Yes, waiting is the next step! That is the beauty of leaf composting. The layering that is required in most composting is not necessary when composting leaves. If your leaves are all dry and brown you could add a very small amount of grass clippings, coffee grounds or other green vegetative matter to accelerate the composting, but it is definitely not necessary. Most fall leaves contain enough green to compost without additional help.

Turning also speeds up the process, but again is not necessary. If your leaf pile becomes soggy from too much moisture, a little turn now and then with a garden fork or shovel will allow the microbes breaking down the leaves to get oxygen so they can continue their work and keep the leaf compost odor free.

Finished compost should be dark, crumbly and have an earthy odor and may be ready as early as spring. In addition to mixing with soil, the leaf compost can be applied thinly as mulch at a rate of one-quarter to one-half inch on top of soil. Because of the moisture retaining properties, leaf compost may also be used in potting soil with the percentage of compost not to exceed 25%.

By the time the leaves begin to accumulate again next year, you should have experienced your first batch of gardener's gold and will be eager to start your second.



Gather the Leaves



The Leaf Pile Can Be Left Loose



Simple Method of Enclosure



Finished compost

Soil Sampling "How To" Video



by O.J. Miller
MG 2011

by Barbara Hankins
MG 2012 Intern

by Jennifer Leonpacher
MG 2010

by Gregory Werth
MG 2012 Intern

by Kumari Susarla
MG 2008



Editor's Note: The following is a reprint from a previous newsletter on Soil Testing. Check out our video by clicking on the "Play Video" icon to the right for the proper steps to take in obtaining a soil sample. Thanks to our MGs (above) for their work in putting this together.

When homeowners call the Galveston County Master Gardeners hotline with problems such as their plant growth is not good, plant leaves are turning yellow and plants are not producing, Master Gardeners may recommend a soil test.

In the absence of any obvious disease or pest problems, getting a soil test is a good place to start. The benefit of soil testing is you will know what nutrients are lacking in the soil. You are then able to add only the nutrients the soil is lacking and save time and money by not adding unnecessary fertilizers and amendments.

It is also important to know how much fertilizer to add because too much can cause problems as does too little. For example, too much nitrogen can leach out of the soil. Too much foliage but not enough fruiting bodies could be due to excessive nitrogen. Some of the nutrients in fertilizers can be toxic to the plant if added in excess. Many plants are pH sensitive. That means they thrive best at certain soil pH level. If you add an amendment that might raise the soil pH level, you may be hurting acid soil loving plants like Azaleas, Blueberries and others. If the pH is too high, some of the nutrients in the soil become unavailable to the plant.

Routine soil test provides the following information: Soil pH, available nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, calcium, magnesium and sulfur. If needed, you can also ask to test for micronutrients such as iron, manganese, zinc and copper.

Soil test kits are available at the Galveston County Extension office. The kit contains soil sample bag, instructions as to how to collect the sample and mailing information. Collect the samples from several different parts of the yard (approximately 10-15 samples). This is a very important step.

The sample being collected should represent the garden area in which you are growing or will be growing your fruits, flowers, trees or vegetable. Dig at least 6 inches deep to obtain a good soil sample. Then mix all the samples collected in a container and fill up the sample bag with 1 pint of soil.

Once collected, the sample should be mailed right away. Be sure to check which test you would like the laboratory to perform on the sample and explain what you are growing or planning to grow. The soil test results and the recommendation for appropriate fertilizers and the amount to be applied will be mailed back to you.

In most cases, performing a soil test once every three years should be sufficient.



Photos by Margie Jenke

50 Ways to a Greener Life

Ken Steblein has worked at UTMB for more than two decades facilitating many horticulture, recycle, compost and environmental programs. He first wrote the 50 Ways to Live A Greener Life five years ago presenting first to the Galveston County Master Naturalist and more recently at the Rosenberg Library in Galveston. He loves to hear feedback and is working on the next 50 ways to live greener. ksteblei@utmb.edu



By Ken Steblein
MG 1992

1. Bring your own cloth bags when you go shopping. Say NO to plastic bags!
2. Drink filtered water from the tap instead of buying bottled water.
3. Carpool to work or use public transportation.
4. Pack a lunch in reusable containers and lunch bag.
5. Buy in bulk and look for cardboard packaging instead of plastic.
6. Set your thermostat 2 degrees warmer in the summer and 2 degrees cooler in the winter.
7. Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs. Recycle CFL: http://www6.homedepot.com/ecoptions/stage/pdf/cfl_recycle.pdf
8. Plant trees to shade your house from the sun; trees will also filter your air.
9. Don't bag your grass clippings; leave them on the lawn to compost.
10. When you have meetings across campus walk, bike or take the trolley.
11. Buy fruits and vegetables from your local farmers market.
12. Keep a pet guinea pig to eat your vegetable and fruit scraps; use the litter as fertilizer in your garden.
13. Keep a compost pile in the corner of your yard.
14. Whenever possible, buy products that are made from recycled materials.
15. Fix things when they break instead of throwing in the trash.
16. Recycle glass, plastic, paper, cardboard, metals, clothing, cartridges, chemicals ...etc.; visit www.1800cleanup.org. <http://earth911.org/> to find a recycler near you.
17. Turn off lights when you leave a room. Make it a "lights out" night with your family and friends, use candles or oil lamps; tell stories, play games, get romantic...
18. Apply garden fertilizers and chemicals sparingly and according to directions; go organic.
19. Use solar lights for your landscape night lights; add other solar lights with new technology.
20. Collect rain water from your roof to water your garden.
21. Reduce paper at work—please don't print this e-mail unless you really need to! Print double sided and adjust font size and margins to fit on one piece of paper.
22. Taking the stairs instead of the elevator; burns calories not watts!
23. Setup a clothes line to dry your clothes outside and soften in the dryer with NO heat.
24. Wash your clothes in cold water; they will last longer.
25. Instead of traveling out-of-town, teleconference meetings by phone or video.
26. Retrofit your bathroom with low-flow faucets, showerheads, and toilets.
27. Go to your local library instead of buying new books.
28. Unplug your chargers when not in use; use your digital clock radios when you go on vacation.
29. Get off junk mail lists; www.GreenDimes.com can get you started.
30. Consider organic cleaning products like vinegar, borax, and baking soda.
31. Go paperless. Consider reading your newspaper and magazine subscriptions online. Switch to electronic banking and credit card payment, too.
32. Turn your car off if you're going to be idle for more than one minute; park your car and walk in for fast food instead of going through a drive-though.
33. Give away your goods and find new ones at www.FreeCycle.com or Goodwill, Salvation Army, churches, family and friends.
34. Water your landscape wisely in the evening or dawn; better to water deeply and less often.
35. In hot weather, grill outside instead of heating up the kitchen; better yet use oak or pecan branches saved from your trees instead of using propane.
36. When possible cook several things in the oven at once like meals, cakes, cookies, etc.
37. Reuse wrapping paper, bags/baskets, bows/ribbon or use cloth, string, or comics to wrap gifts.
38. Use native plants in your landscape. They usually require less water than exotic plants.
39. Tint your windows; use solar screens, blinds or curtains to keep out the hot afternoon sun.
40. When worn out replace your old equipment with Energy Star rated products. http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=find_a_product.
41. Adjust your hot water heater to a lower temperature around 130 degrees F.
42. Change your air filters about once a month for your heating and air-conditioning; remember to check filters when you pay your electric bill.
43. Use fans in your house; air movement will make you feel cooler.
44. By keeping animal litter, landscape debris, trash, etc. out of the storm drains we have cleaner water in our creeks, lakes, and bays.
45. Use less water by taking shorter showers and not leaving the water running while brushing teeth.
46. Grow your own fruits, vegetables or herbs and share extras with friends.
47. Thaw food from the freezer out slowly in your fridge.
48. Eat less meat; energy is needed to cook food and more resources to produce meat.
49. Keep cars and equipment tuned up, they run more efficiently and last longer.
50. Save money on fountain drinks by refilling your mug/cups at coffee shops or gas stations.



giving a helping hand Reaching Out

By Donna J. Ward
MG 1996

My phone rang the other day, and at “Hello” I was greeted by the sounds of a woman between sniffles, saying “Thank you, thank you” and then she identified herself. This was a woman with whom I had never spoken, but had exchanged several emails. Let me tell you how this all came about. In early December, 2011, in my capacity as the email contact for my garden club, I received a request from a teacher in a close-by county. She was appealing to garden clubs for assistance in helping to teach her students the basics of gardening.

Well, we all know that most garden clubs are made up of many women like me—senior citizens—and many of us are past the ‘shoveling’ stage! I advised her that her best bet was to contact her county’s AgriLife Extension Office as their Master Gardener Association had youth programs to help young folks in this regard. I gave her their address and phone number, and she responded with a sincere “thank you.” End of story?—not quite.

In April of this year, I decided to follow up via email, and see what assistance she had received from her county’s Extension Office. Very little as it turned out—she had to make several phone calls to their MG office and they eventually turned her over to their 4-H and Youth Development and Cooperative Extension program. They sent some seeds, cylinders and fertilizer—period.

As a 16-year Galveston County MG, and knowing the extent to which our MG Association will go to give a helping hand to young folks, I perceived their minuscule cooperation as an affront to Master Gardeners everywhere. We have all become Master Gardeners not only for our love of gardening, but for our desire to assist the general public in many different areas of horticulture, and I was very disappointed that they had not done more.

At this stage in my story I need to tell you that I did some research. This woman is a Special Education teacher (can you imagine a more difficult, frustrating job?), teaching Kindergarten thru 5th grade in one of the poorest schools in her district. This school consists primarily of minority students and 73.3% of them qualify for discounted or no-cost lunches. Earlier this year she was honored as first runner-up in a Teacher of the Year competition. I was determined to provide her with any help possible within my capability.

My first step was to call the not-to-be-identified county’s MG office and requested their vegetable planting schedule and recommended variety fact sheets, which (in their defense) they immediately emailed to me. My next step was to present this project to my Dig ‘n’ Design Garden club members, and many of the ladies individually stepped up to the plate, donated seeds and generous monetary contributions. I purchased the basics—trowels, hand-held cultivators, watering cans, plant markers, net trellises, fertilizer, etc., but I lacked any printed documentation or instructions for the beginning gardener.

Next stop—our Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in La Marque. Laura B. took time out from her busy schedule and printed out a large stack of Easy Gardening pamphlets for every vegetable imaginable, and various other documents to assist the

beginning gardener. While she was busy printing, I went over to the Demonstration Garden where I found Dr. Johnson and a few MG’s relaxing after a morning of working in the garden. Again, I presented my project—they donated seeds, abandoned gardening implements, mosquito repellant and at least two dozen brand-new (still in the package) pairs of gardening gloves.

Next stop was my dining room table where gardening paraphernalia, printed materials and bubble wrap came together. Last stop was my local FedEx drop-off location where I had to ask for assistance in getting two large boxes out of the trunk of my car.

Dr. J requested that I share this story with you in order to point out something that you probably already know—Master Gardeners do reach out—even across county lines.



Photo by Donna Ward

THE ISLAND GARDEN

User Friendly Plants - E,F,G,H

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

Photos by Herman Auer
& Loretta Osteen



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

In the last issue of The Islander Magazine, I stated my intention to write a continuing series on plants that I consider user-friendly—plants that I have found particularly easy to grow and maintain while exerting a minimum of effort and time. 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 much more than watering and occasional feeding!” This month we will examine E, F, G and H.

E - The Empress Tree

The empress tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*) is native to western and central China. Cultivated centuries ago in Japan, it is valued for its many traditional uses and has been grown in plantations and harvested for export. Large trees with straight, solid trunks can be worth several thousands of dollars each for their wood, which is prized for the construction of ceremonial wedding chests and other specialty items. It was introduced into the United States as an ornamental and landscape tree in the mid 1800s and has since become naturalized in many areas.

An empress tree may grow thirty to sixty feet in height with a canopy of equal breadth. Rounded or heart-shaped at the base and pointed at the tip, the leaves of the empress tree are conspicuously sizeable attaining a length of up to two feet and are especially large on young offshoots. Both upper

and under surfaces of the leaves are hairy and very soft to the touch. In the fall these leaves turn yellow or brown. Inch and a half long fuzzy brown egg-shaped flower buds are evident throughout the winter season. The tree explodes with huge tubular upright clusters of showy, fragrant pinkish/lavender blooms in the spring.

The fragrance is incredible—a cross between gardenia and jasmine. This tree grows from Canada to Mexico—has no significant insect problems—tolerates drought—and grows in all kinds of soil.

There are a number of empress trees on the east end of Galveston Island. You can purchase this plant from several Internet websites.

F-Frangipani (*Plumeria*)

This plant is a genus of flowering plants of the family that includes dogbane and several species of deciduous shrubs and small trees. They are native to New Zealand, Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean, and South America but have been cultivated throughout the world's tropics.

When protected from frost, they will thrive in our area rewarding even the novice gardener with an unparalleled feeling of success. There are gardens in Galveston where the frangipani has grown to record heights as they are protected from the elements of wind and salt spray. Frangipani can be grown in the ground or in containers. They prefer at least six hours of full sun, generous

watering with good drainage and the use of fertilizers high in phosphorus.

Very little care is needed in the winter months of dormancy—some gardeners remove their plants from the ground or the pots and store them in the garage well away from the possibility of cold or wind damage. Be sure the area is well ventilated to avoid developing the chance of fungal problems. An occasional watering at this “resting” time is all that need be done. The plant will take care of itself. In the spring, when nighttime temperatures remain above 50 degrees, the frangipani can be placed or planted in a sunny location. There may be some shriveling of the limbs but when they are planted and watered they should recover.

G - *Gaillardia* - Indian Blanket

Gaillardia is a genus of annual and perennial plants from the sunflower family (Asteraceae) that are native to North and South America. The common name of Indian Blanket refers to the blooms' resemblance to brightly patterned blankets made by native Americans. *Gaillardia* will grow one to two feet tall, with bright, daisy-like blooms vividly colored with red, orange and yellow with hues from cream to red or brown. *Gaillardia* will grow under very harsh and dry conditions and fortunately for us, will even bloom in sand along a seashore.

This is a hardy plant—not picky about soil—has a high drought tolerance and does best

with a dry, hot climate in full sun. Its vibrant-colored flowers can be seen growing freely across fields and the sides of highways for miles in the summer to late fall.

H - Mexican Heather

Mexican Heather (*Cuphea hyssopifolia*) a summer survivor in our area is also called “a summer thriver.” Known as False Heather, Mexican Heather, Hawaiian Heather or Elfin Herb it is a small shrub that is native to Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras. With purple, lavender or white colored flowers and fine foliage, heather adapts to a range of soils in sunny or partially shaded locations with good drainage. Mexican Heather will grow to about eighteen inches high, making it a very attractive small shrub or ground cover. It can be trimmed easily at any time during the growing season. The plants will seed freely, and new seedlings that appear may be easily transplanted.

Except for the empress tree, 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. Enjoy!

Additional “user-friendly” plants in the E,F,G,H category might include:

Esperanza
Elephant Ears
Firecracker fern
Honeysuckle



Empress Tree



Frangipani - *Plumeria*



Gaillardia - Indian Blanket



Mexican Heather

MG BEST SHOTS

Wild Petunia by Margaret Landers



Passion Vine by Herman Auer



Turk's Cap by Sandra Devall



Cuphea by Margaret Canavan



Ginger by Judithe Savely



Plumbago by Kathleen Crabb



...and Narrative

perennials that never quit giving



by Sandra Devall
MG 1998

You can really see some beautiful perennials blooming right now. They are the center of our "best shots" article this month and focus of this issue. Drive around with your camera and get a few shots to take to your nursery for your wish list. Be sure to choose a time of day when the sun is not so bright. Think about perennials for some of the places you usually plant annuals. Unlike annuals, you don't have to replant these every year and many on this page are great passalongs. And if you don't have time to care for a bird or hummingbird feeder, the perennials will take care of all that for you!

Wild Petunia (*Ruellia brittoniana*)

This dwarf version of *Ruellia* grows in a bunch and has been given the designation of a Texas Superstar by Texas A&M University. The most common color is purple but they also come in pink, white and red. My grandmother had the tall *ruellia* in her beds that circled her house. The ground was hard and dry and shaded but they grew. That tells you how tough they are. They are good around trees or in front of hedges where not much else will grow.

HINT: Plant them in a space with room to grow because they 'pop' their seeds and spread easily. They also pull up easily if you get them during their first year. Great passalong!

Passion Vine (*Passiflora* sp.)

This is one of the most intriguing flowers—a beauty to behold. Purple is the color most commonly found, but they also are white, red, lavender blue and various shades of these colors. The flower is followed by a fruit for the birds. They are evergreen, vigorous growers in full sun and part shade. The one in the photo is somewhat frost-tender, but you will find outshoots to enjoy the next year. Others are not frost tender. They enjoy sun and regular watering. Another must for attracting butterflies. Many have fruit as a winter gift to birds.

HINT: Passalongs can be made from cuttings, layering or seeds. A good time for cuttings is in the summer when it grows vigorously (you may need to trim them anyway).

Turk's Cap (*Malvaviscus drummondii*)

Turk's cap is a mallow and a 2011 Texas Superstar. It can be found around older homes in our area and in hummingbird and butterfly gardens. In this area, it grows to a two to three feet shrub-like evergreen. It is another very hardy plant in our native soil even in the hottest full sun or shade. Some Turk's Cap will develop mildew in full sun. The flower itself is not very showy but makes up for that with the ease of care and the marble-sized red fruit in the winter. Several new varieties of Turk's Cap have been introduced by Texas A&M. A white Turk's Cap named 'Big Mama' is white and the shrub grows five to six feet tall. They also developed a pink one that is short and bushy and full of flowers.

HINT: Passalongs can be made from cuttings, layering or seeds. Fall is the best time to move Turk's Cap and the owner of them can usually find a few extras that have come up in their beds.

Ginger (*Curcuma* 'Purple Prince')

There are six genera of ginger that grow in Galveston County. You may know some of the genera from common names like cone gingers, butterfly gingers. The ginger pictured is a *Curcuma* ginger, one of the hardiest. The leaf-stalk reaches six feet, but the cone grows close to the base.

Gingers spread by underground rhizomes and love semi-sun through semi-shade. They work well under large trees or with shrubs. Everyone should have a ginger to love.

HINT: Passalongs are easy to acquire from ginger gardeners because there are usually a few extra rhizomes on the edge of their plantings.

Cuphea (*Cuphea lanceolata*)

Cupheas are probably the least known of those shown in the best shots. This one is a pink cigar plant. It blooms on and on throughout the summer. And as you can see, it is popular with insects and also hummingbirds love them and help with pollination. There are over 200 species of *Cupheas*, some are upright and others are low growing. Those which grow well in our climate are the cigar plant *Cuphea platycentra*, orange flowers; bat-faced *Cuphea llavea*, red; and *Cuphea micropetala*, yellows to oranges. *Cupheas* only need to be protected through our few days of freezing weather in Zone 9.

HINT: The bat-face is a must for grandmothers, you'll get a few giggles if you show your grandkids that it really looks like the face of a bat.

Plumbago (*Plumbago auriculata*)

The first plant in my first home was a plumbago, recommended by a wonderful retired couple who had started a nursery nearby. I had a planter box in front of the house in the scorching heat and the plumbago thrived and cascaded down the planter like the champion that it is. After several wonderful summers with the plumbago blooming the entire summer, it became a loved plant.

Plumbago grows low and spreading. They attract birds and butterflies. Plumbago varieties are white, powder blue and a bright light blue. They are dormant in the winter, so don't throw them away. Just trim them back and they come back quickly and will continue their very long bloom cycle—from fall until early spring. They can easily be propagated by division.

HINT: Plumbago works well in beds needing 'levels' of bushes, such as in front of roses or evergreens or behind an annual.



a healthy beautiful landscape Talented Gardeners, Amazing Yards

by Cheryl Armstrong
MG 2010

Photos by MG Cheryl Armstrong

blending beautiful landscape with yard activities

Is it possible to maintain an amazing landscape and still have room to entertain family and friends with outdoor activities? The answer is yes and Master Gardener Deane Greer (Class of 2009) does it very well. When planning the landscape for her yard, Deane took into careful consideration the three things that are important to her. She maintains a healthy, beautiful landscape and still has places for the family pooch, places for the children to play and places for the adults to congregate.

As I wandered in Deane's yard, the careful attention to her plants is revealed by their beauty. She explained that some beds were just a smattering of plants that were interesting to her, while others had special meaning. The Rubber Plant (*Ficus elastica*), was named Belle, and was tucked away in a jungle of tropicals, named after the friend that asked her to bring life back into it, only to lose her own, way back in 1963! Her Orchid Tree, *Bauhinia fabaceae*, is one of her favorites, also given to her by a now deceased friend.

When you walk into this amazing yard, you enter onto a covered patio that gives way to several sitting areas. These areas are designed to promote comfortable conversation, all decorated with pots brimming with texture and color helping to create their own little rooms. The pool and hot tub sit centered in the yard. The volleyball net stretched across the pool was barely noticeable as my eyes traveled to the beds on either side of the pool. These beds are filled with fragrant *Plumeria* reaching heights over six feet nestled and protected by the lush green foliage of her white Bird of Paradise *Strelitzia reginae*. The patches of lawn designed for places to play, are cleverly concealed by the careful placement of group plantings along the fence-line drawing your eye away from the lawn and into the beauty of the beds.

As every Master Gardener knows, you must have a plant hospital. Deane's hospital is tucked away on the side of her yard, reached by meandering along the rock path between two interesting beds. These beds are designed to give shade and privacy to the patio. "Wow" is all I could manage to blurt out as I took in the vibrant color of *Bougainvillea* spilling over its pots to pull it all together. I asked Deane which plant is her favorite. She said without hesitation, that if she lost her Birds Nest Fern *Asplenium nidus*, she would be devastated.

Thank you, Deane, for sharing your amazing yard with us. You are indeed a talented gardener—an impressive task of creating spaces so that when you are in them, you are absorbed by your surroundings, but standing back, it all blends and comes together.



Seating Area with Overall View



Decorative Fencing with Pots
Separate Play Areas



Mixing Textures in Interesting
Pots



Bougainvillea in Pots



Deane with *Plumeria*



Areas Reflect Their Own
Personality



Pool Area Separated by Palms
& *Plumeria*



A Striking Border of Bird of
Paradise and *Plumeria*



insects worthy of our attention

Moths

For the last few years gardeners have begun focusing on gardening for butterflies and for pollinators, which is a wonderful step forward in efforts to help wildlife. However, we need to broaden our ideas about gardening, as there are additional groups of insects that are worthy of our attention and one of those groups is moths. They are often beautiful, are sometimes stunning flyers, and are an important part of a natural habitat.

Moths and butterflies are both in the insect order Lepidoptera – which is Greek for scaly-winged - and in the United States Lepidopterans represent over 50 percent of all insect herbivores. In this country there are over 10,000 species of moths and less than 800 species of butterflies, and in Texas there are approximately 4700 moth species and less than 500 species of butterflies.

Although there are ten times as many moths as butterflies, many moths are either nocturnal (active primarily at night) or lack bright coloring and therefore often go unnoticed and unappreciated. Some moths serve as important pollinators, most serve as important food for wildlife, and some are stunningly beautiful insects that bring us joy. Some of the more prominent groups are the Silk Moths, the Sphinx Moths, the Owlet Moths, and the Tiger Moths.

Silk Moths are members of the Saturniidae family and are some of the largest and most beautiful moths found in Texas. The silk moth caterpillars spin a cocoon of silk in which they pupate.

Sphinx Moths are members of the Sphingidae family. These moths are also called Hawkwing Moths and Hummingbird Moths because when they are flying and hovering over a flower they resemble hummingbirds. The caterpillars are often known as Hornworms. Check our MG website for more information on hornworms on tomatoes. <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/Gardening-Handbook/PDF-files/GH-014--tomato-hornworm.pdf>

Tiger, Lichen, and Wasp moths are members of the Arctiinae subfamily. This is a rather diverse group of moths that has several different looks. The caterpillars of the Tiger Moth group are usually called Woolly Bears because they are very bristly. Check our MG website for more information on woolly bears. <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/Gardening-Handbook/PDF-files/GH-044--wooly-bear-caterpillar.pdf>

The Owlet Moths are members of the Erebidae family. This is the largest family. There are over 2900 species in North America alone and for that reason, they are very important in a variety of ecosystems. Owlet Moths typically feed on flower nectar so they assist in pollination; there are some whose caterpillars assist in decomposition due to eating wood, leaf litter, and other organic

Photos by Margaret Landers



*By Pat Forke
MG 2010*

matter; and there are many whose life cycles and caterpillars coincide with birds and their nesting so they serve as an important food source for those birds and their young. There are some very colorful moths in this group.

There are a few basic differences between moths and butterflies. Butterflies are brightly colored and the majority of moths are brown or gray. Butterflies fly during the day and most moths are active at night. Butterflies usually rest with their wings held vertically over their bodies and moths usually rest with their wings flat against their bodies. Butterflies usually have simple antennae with clubs at the tips, whereas moths generally have feathery antennae. Butterflies generally have slender bodies and moths generally have bodies that are fatter and hairier. Lastly, butterflies pupate in a chrysalis and moths sometimes pupate in a cocoon.

Moths are a very important part our environment as they serve three important functions as pollinators, as natural controls for some plants, and as food for everything from insects to small mammals.

As far as being a pollinator goes, moths are not quite as efficient as bees. Since most moths are nocturnal, they do most of the pollinating at night; that is, pollinating flowers that open in the afternoon and evening and pollinating flowers that may have a deep tubular shape.

The natural control of plants is done mainly by many of the moth caterpillars. As caterpillars eat their host plants (insect herbivores), they do kill some plants and thus keep diversity up and monocultures down. When they eat the leaves of trees, they thin the canopy and allow more sunlight through and, therefore, allow new plants to grow.

The last and probably most significant benefit of moths and their caterpillars is that they are an important part of the food chain. Since almost moths and caterpillars eat only plants, they are at the very bottom of the food chain; everything from insects, spiders, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals eats them.

For these reasons we should work at attracting them to our gardens and protecting them rather than destroying the moths and their caterpillars. Our December 2012 newsletter will have suggestions for host plants to plant in your garden to attract more moths.

Katy Emde, 6033 Glen Cove, Houston, Texas 77007, 713-880-872, Ktart2001@yahoo.com. Katy is the chairperson of the Native Plant Conservation committee and a Board Member of the Houston Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas.



Sphinx Moth



Polyphemus Moth



by John Jons
MG 2003

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

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.

During October and November, you should be experiencing a good healthy flush of larger blooms with more petals and color intensity. We still need to focus on keeping the roses healthy as insects and diseases are still with us. In Galveston county, we typically get a flush of rose blooms in the early spring and late fall. Roses slowdown in the heat of the summer and hopefully rest during the winter. After October, consider leaving the blooms on the bush and avoid grooming the bush (until mid-February), to encourage the rose to rest.

This also is the time of year to evaluate your roses and consider replacing any that did not perform as expected or appeared to be weak and unhealthy. If you are like me, you will need the space for a new rose that you hope will be a better flower producer next year.

Here is a list of suggested things that you should be doing in October and November.

Fungicide and Insecticide Spray Program: If you have problems, use a curative product. If you do not have problems, use a preventative product.

Fertilizer: Only use liquid fertilizer to the end of October and then give your plants a feeding rest. You do not want to encourage new growth in the winter as the new growth may not be able to withstand any freezes that we may have.

Water: Water per your roses' needs. If you have a sprinkler system, be aware of how much rain we are getting as you do not want to over water your roses. Remember to keep a good layer of mulch on your rose bed as it will keep the bed moist and protect the roots of the roses if we have a winter freeze.



Pink Stripe



Yellow & Red Edge

Photos - Multicolored roses hybridized by John Jons.

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

"Best" Palms for Galveston County Recommended by O.J. Miller (MG 2011)

- **Mexican Fan Palm** (*Washingtonia robusta*)
- **California Fan Palm** (*Washingtonia filifera*)
- **Sabal Palm** (*Sabal palmetto*)
- **Texas Palmetto - Texas Sabal Palm** (*Sabal mexicana*)
- **Chinese Fan Palm** (*Livistona chinensis*)
- **Windmill Palm** (*Trachycarpus fortunei*)
- **European / Mediterranean Fan Palm** (*Chamaerops humilis*)
- **Canary Island Date Palm** (*Phoenix canariensis*)
- **Jelly or Pindo Palm** (*Butia capitata*)
- **Dwarf Palmetto** (*Sabal minor*)

vegetables at their best

Seasonal Bites

Photo by MG Karen Cureton



By Karen Cureton
MG 2008

VEGETABLE CASSEROLE

2 medium zucchini, sliced medium lengthwise, roasted
1 medium eggplant, sliced medium lengthwise, roasted
1 red bell pepper, sliced lengthwise, roasted
1/2 large white onion, sliced medium crosswise, roasted,
3 cloves of garlic, minced
3 tablespoons pine nuts, lightly pan toasted

1 bunch spinach, cleaned, stemmed and chopped
1 cup sliced mushrooms (optional)
1/2 cup of shredded Italian cheeses (your choice of types)
1 fifteen-ounce container low fat Ricotta cheese
2 cups of cooked brown rice
1 can of diced tomatoes, drain and reserve liquid
Seasonings: salt, pepper, Italian seasoning, basil

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Lightly spray first four ingredients with olive oil, season with salt pepper and Italian seasonings. Roast for 20 minutes. In sauté pan heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the garlic, mushrooms, and spinach. Stir just until spinach is wilted down. Add the tomatoes. Stir and let simmer for 3 minutes. Lightly coat a casserole dish with olive oil. In a bowl mix warm rice with 1/4 cup of Italian cheeses, the pine nuts and 1-1/2 tablespoons of olive oil. Season with salt, pepper, and Italian cheeses. Press into casserole dish and spread out. Bake in 350 degree oven 15 minutes. Place eggplant slices to cover on top of the rice. Spread 2/3 of ricotta cheese on top. Place the bell pepper and onion on next, sprinkle lightly with Italian cheese—add on the Spinach mixture. Top with dollops of ricotta cheese and the remaining Italian cheese. Pour the reserved tomato juice over the casserole. Bake in a 350 degree oven 20-30 minutes. Top with shredded basil.



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

Sept 15, 2012 "Square Foot Gardening" - MG John Jons	9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office
Sept 15, 2012 "Kitchen Gardening" - MG Mary Demeny	1:00 - 3:00 pm - Extension Office
Sept 22, 2012 "Fragrant Frangipanis" - MG Loretta Osteen	9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office
Sept 22, 2012 "T-Bud Grafting" - MG Herman Auer	1:00 - 3:00 pm - Extension Office
Oct 27, 2012 "Shade Trees" - Heather McKnight, City Arborist for League City	9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office
Nov 17, 2012 "A Garden for Butterflies" - MG Anna Wygrys	9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office
Nov 17, 2012 "Greenhouse Management", Sid Kapner, Harris County MG Pct2	1:00 - 3:00 pm - Extension Office
Dec 1, 2012 "Starting Your Own Tomatoes from Seed" - MG Sam Scarcella	9:00 - 11:00 am - Extension Office
Dec 1, 2012 "Tree Planting" - MG Herman Auer	1:00 - 2:30 pm - Extension Office

Project: Demonstration Gardens

Carbide Park



by Tom Fountain
MG 2008



The past few weeks have been very busy in the garden. The MGs have been trying to finish harvesting the summer crops and preparing beds to get them ready for fall planting.



The trees and bushes in the orchard and in the serenity garden have been trimmed. During a normal workday in the garden there are between 20 and 25 MGs who come out to Carbide Park. The cooler weather and light rain this past week brought over 30 gardeners out to play.

Henry and Crew are continuing to renew the existing beds, which were getting in bad need of repair. The pole barn crew suspended work on the pole barn because of the rain this past week. However, the project is nearing completion and should be finished in the next few weeks.



Upcoming tasks around the garden will be finishing up bed preparation and planting potatoes and onions. Bed renewal will be an ongoing project for a few more months. After the pole barn is finished, the next project on the horizon will be building a greenhouse.

MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 12 - MG MEETING AT MOODY GARDENS

Photos by Helle Brown, Dan Payne & Keith Stine



*By Mary Lou Kelso
MG 2000*

The Galveston County Master Gardener Association meeting was called to order by President Jim Edwards. The August 12 meeting started with a Colonel Paddlewheeler ride on Offat's Bayou, followed by the newly renovated Rainforest Pyramid with Donita Brannon as Rainforest curator and ending at the newly built Moody Gardens Greenhouses with Donita as host!

Over 140 Master Gardeners and guests had an opportunity to tour the venues and at 6:00 p.m. a dinner was provided in the Garden Restaurant of the Visitor Center. Garvin O'Neil, GM of the Moody Gardens Hotel, Spa and Convention Center discussed the possibility of the MG State meeting being held on the premise in 2015. Additionally, Garvin donated super door prizes for the event as did Donita from the greenhouses. Bill Pushak, Moody Garden Golf Course Manager, called the tickets for his door prize gifts with all three joining everyone for dinner.

After the door prizes were completed, Garvin hosted a reception on the top floor of the Hotel at the Viewfinders Room where everyone enjoyed the rest of the evening with Garvin giving tours of an Executive Suite.

My sincere thanks to MG Intern Judy Anderson for all her efforts in my absence, while I was out of town for a close friend's funeral and Jackie Auer for her attention to the minutes.



Colonel Paddlewheeler ride on Offat's Bayou



Rainforest Pyramid



Greenhouse Tour



Dinner in Garden Restaurant



Door Prizes



Dessert with a View

SATURDAY SEMINAR A SUCCESS FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING

Luke Stripling, MG 1991, experienced a full house at his recent "Fall Vegetable Gardening" seminar held last month at our new Extension Office. Extra chairs from other rooms were brought in to facilitate the crowd.

Our MG group has many talented Master Gardener speakers with interesting and informative topics. Take a look at the future list of seminars under Upcoming Events on page 15.

Photo by Herman Auer



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
8/11	Saturday Seminar	Luke Stripling	Fall Vegetable Gardening	2.5

other local & state gardening events



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. They have listed their upcoming programs on their website, check out their 2012-13 GBTB Calendar. <http://gbtb.org/>

Texas City Garden Club meets at the Nessler Center in Texas City off Palmer Highway on the second Tuesday of the month at 9:30am. Master Gardeners from our Speaker's Bureau will present the following programs: MG Deborah Repasz is speaking on Tropical Plants on October 10; MG Mary Demeny is speaking on Vegetable Gardening on January 9, 2013; MG Linda Brown is speaking on Fruits, Shoots and Warm Fuzzies on February 13, 2013.

Arborage Nursery showcases the best in perennials, herbs, roses and native plants. They have many great programs each Saturday. Upcoming classes have been posted, be sure to sign in so you can enjoy them. Check their website for more information <http://www.arborage.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. Upcoming classes have been posted, be sure to sign in so you can enjoy them. 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 pm on the third Tuesday of the month at the Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, TX 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. Their Fall show and sale is on October 6 & 7. 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. The Houston Rose Show is proud to sponsor the 2012 Advanced Rose Horticulture Conference & Consulting Rosarian School on November 10, 2012, in the Garrett Townes Auditorium of the South Texas College of Law, 1303 San Jacinto Street, Houston, Texas. 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. Their Lunch Bunch meets on the second Wednesday of the month from noon to 2 pm Bring a lunch to enjoy while listening to a lecture on a variety of gardening topics. For more information see <http://www.hcp4.net/mercercorps/index.htm>

The **African Violet Society of America** is a worldwide organization dedicated to the distribution of 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. Their next club meeting is on October 27th and is titled "Bulbs that naturalize in the Houston area" presented by Margaret Cherry from Abbott-Ipco. See site for more information.

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

Harris County Master Gardeners They continue their lecture series with Fall Vegetable gardening, Daylilies, and Bats through out the month of October. the October Green Thumb lecture will be "Selecting and Planting Best Trees for Houston. For more information on these programs, and others listed see this link <http://hcmga.tamu.edu/Public/urban/docs/jul2012.pdf> Finally, Jo McGinnis from Houston Pct. 2 has shared with us their **Harris County Master Gardeners** Field Trip schedule for 2012-2013 The dates are as noted:

Nov. 9—Arbor Gate Gardens; Jan. 25—Tree Search Farms; March 15—Enchanted Gardens, Richmond TX; May 10—Nelson Water Gardens & Beyond Paradise Gardens, Katy TX.

The Harris County PCT 2 group will be first served, and if any seats are available, and you have given notice of your interest in going, then you will be contacted if there is room available for you to go. If you are interested, please contact Jo McGinnis at jmcginnis7@sbcglobal.net

by Yvonne Enos
MG 2008

bulletin board

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Phone Lines: Master Gardeners are always needed to answer the public's questions. This is done at the Extension Office and time slots are available for every day of the week. Contact Laura Bellmore at galv3@wt.net or 281-534-3413, ext 1-2, or Laurel Stine, ext 1-6 or gcmgs@wt.net.

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

It is hot outside. September 2013 you could be cooler and be having fun with fellow MGs at the 2013 International Master Gardener Conference, aptly being called "Alaska; Flowers, Fjords, and Friends," on the Holland America Cruise Ship Westerdam. The conference will run from 9/7/2013 - 9/14/2013. The cruise ship will depart Seattle on the 7th and the ports of call will be Juneau; Glacier Bay; Sitka; Ketchikan; Victoria, British Columbia; and return to Seattle. The sponsor of the conference is the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture, Research and Extension. They have planned a full slate of keynote speakers and seminars (all to be given when the ship is at sea) on subjects ranging from ornamentals to vegetables, wildlife to conservation of water resources, native plants to herbs. It looks to be a fabulous conference and if you have never cruised before get ready for a beautiful and luxurious experience. Room costs range from \$899 - \$2749 and are per person, based on double occupancy. That does not include certain fees and taxes. There will also be a conference registration fee. Please see the website for the entire specific details <http://www.uaex.edu/imgc2013/>.

VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGS

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

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.

MG Specialist - Greenhouse Management Training. Date: Monday, October 8, 2012 - Wednesday October 10, 2012. Location: Walker County Storm Shelter and Conference Center, 455 SH 75 N, Huntsville, TX. Cost is \$175 and the deadline is 9/21/2012. Sponsored by Texas AgriLife Extension Service Walker County.

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. 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".

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 fmabmab@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) evergreentreesinc@gmail.com. The Work Teams meet every Thursday morning. Go out and lend a hand.

the last word . . .

ORNAMENTAL GRASSES—A VISUAL IMPACT ON LANDSCAPES

(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*

A quiet revolution of sorts has been gradually taking place during the last few years. Wildflowers and native plants became vogue, and formal, squared-off landscape designs gave way to more naturalistic curves and flowing lines.

One of the newest trends in landscape design and plant materials is the use of ornamental grasses in the landscape. More than ever before, gardeners are realizing the fine accent and architectural effect this group of plants contributes to a garden.

As one applies the principles of good design—repetition, variety, balance, emphasis, sequence and scale—along with the design qualities of color, texture, line and form, one appreciates the many uses and functions of ornamental grasses.

This trend follows along with the continued exploding popularity of perennial flowering plants. Besides bamboo—a grass that knows no bounds—and pampas grass, a huge, billowy, sharp-edged grass with attractive white plumes, ornamental grasses have been relatively ignored in American landscapes.

Not so in Europe, where for years many different types of grasses have been finding homes in landscapes and where there are many nurseries devoted solely to the culture of grasses. Landscape architects on both sides of the ocean have long used grasses for their striking architectural qualities and rhythm, but gardeners have been slower to adopt the widespread use of grass for the landscape design.

In part, this might be because we're so used to thinking of landscape plants as round to oval to even squared-off balls of green matter. Grass, after all, is what we walk on and is so commonly seen in meadows and pastures in the countryside.

Ornamental grasses make very striking accents, and thus it might be more difficult to imagine using them in a more formal landscape setting. But use of ornamental grasses is increasing, and more varieties are available.

Not only do ornamental grasses look attractive in the landscape, but they are very easy to grow, hardy and many make excellent cutting plants for flower arrangements. The striking architectural forms of ornamental grasses are so bold they naturally draw the eye.

Ornamental grasses can provide height, color, contrast, wildlife shelter, spiky accents, feathery waves, and low-growing clumps to gardens and landscapes. They can be grown in beds or in pots. Many grasses retain their shape and foliage structure through the winter, giving added texture to the garden.

Ornamental grasses provide a natural transition from formal plantings around the home to less formal surroundings of the native landscape. Ornamental grasses can be arranged in masses as you would shrubbery or flower borders. Blend and weave with wildflowers to intensify seasonal transitions. Plant them in containers and use them as you would potted flowers or foliage on the deck or terrace.

Ornamental grasses come in an amazingly broad assortment of colors, sizes and forms. They also come in a variety of hues ranging from burgundy, red, yellow and green and their growth characteristics are just as varied, with some hugging the ground at six inches

while others can tower several feet toward the sky. They can billow out, weep over gracefully or stand upright in a tight, perky clump.

While ornamental grasses have to add beauty to the garden to justify their space and care, they have the added bonus of being very low maintenance and very insect and disease free. Best of all, while the lawn needs to be mowed weekly, ornamental grasses need little care to look great—no weekly mowing here.

Ornamental grasses can be used in the landscape just like perennials, but their usefulness extends far beyond that of a normal perennial. With ornamental grasses, looks aren't everything—they can add the dimensions of sound and movement to the garden as wind catches and rustles the leaves. The gentle waving motion of the grasses and the accompanying sounds, create a very peaceful atmosphere within your garden.

Ornamental grasses add an air of elegance and character to a yard. Whether it is included in elaborate landscaping or nestled among garden flowers, it is sure to add a special flair to the surroundings. Ornamental grasses can add lasting beauty, and provide a wonderful asset to the home landscape.

Now is the time to select and plant ornamental grasses in your landscape and enjoy their graceful upright foliage and delicate flower plumes during the coming year.

Just about any ornamental grass will add fall and winter interest to the landscape as the foliage goes dormant and the plumes dry.

And if that doesn't provide enough incentive, be sure to make a notation on your gardening calendar to attend the Galveston County Master Gardener volunteers' Ornamental and Perennial Plant Sale on Oct. 6, at the Wayne Johnson Community Center in Carbide Park, 4102 FM 519, in La Marque. There will be a wide array of adapted landscape plants will be for sale including a limited selection of ornamental grasses.



Graceful, flowing plumes produced by purple fountain grass make it one of the most popular ornamental grasses.

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

Moody Gardens
Time 3:00 pm
Galveston Island

September 29, 2012 (SATURDAY 9am-11 am)

Fall Plant Sale Preview - Open to Public
Heidi Sheesley of TreeSearch Farms
Wayne Johnson Community Center at Carbide Park

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

2012 ORNAMENTAL & PERENNIAL seminar & sale

Sponsored by GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION: 4102 Main Street - FM519, La Marque, TX 77568

seminar date



Saturday, September 29

9:00 am til 11:00 am

Johnson Community Center
Carbide Park

sale date



Saturday, October 6

9:00 am til 1:00 pm

Johnson Community Center
Carbide Park

two different
DATES

VARIETY OF PLANTS suitable for Galveston County including heat-tolerant perennials, shade-loving plants, tropicals, gingers, plants for butterfly or hummingbird gardens, hard-to-find varieties...especially hardy ones!

ATTENDANCE AT THE Saturday, September 29 SEMINAR is not required for entrance into The October 6 Sale. However those attending the seminar will be allowed to line-up for the sale in a 'reserved' line.

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>
281-534-3413, ext. 12



If special program accommodations by participants are needed, please contact the County Agent at the Extension Office no later than five days before the program. Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.



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