

THE GALVESTON COUNTY Master Gardeners

Issue 182 - December 2012 / January 2013

Happy Holly-Days

Holly Resonates Yule Tide Traditions - page 6



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TRANSITIONS

From the Webster Online Dictionary: tran-si-tion (noun)
1. movement, passage, or change from one state, stage, concept, etc., to another 2. a change from one place or state or subject or stage to another

Etymology for the term "transition": From Latin meaning "to go across."

Normally MG Camille Goodwin writes this introductory column for the newsletter but I asked to do so for this issue. You will note that the title heading is "Transitions." I've had the privilege of serving as the County Extension Agent for Horticulture and Master Gardener Program Coordinator for the past 22½ years. As I ruminate over the changes (aka: transitions) that have occurred over those years, I am amazed at how change is constantly taking place, which means people are required to constantly cope with change.

This newsletter is a perfect example of one of the transitions. I am so impressed with how the newsletter has improved over the years. We started out with a simple (but quite adequate for the time) one-page edition prepared with a novel invention known as the typewriter!

What has changed with your newsletter over the 2012 calendar year? Well, we've stopped printing and mailing the newsletter. Some will likely see that as a not-so-good thing, but it has given the Newsletter Team the opportunity to expand the content of your newsletter. No longer limited to a predetermined number of pages (20 pages maximum) due to the cost of postage, more content is available in each edition plus video has been added making the MG Newsletter even more educational and dynamic plus it's now available to our county residents and gardeners worldwide.

Another noteworthy transition is the successful relocation of most of the perennials, shrubs and small trees from the original Horticulture and Research Gardens at the Dickinson location to its present location in Carbide Park. Even the Vitex and Texas Mountain Laurel are re-establishing themselves quite well in their new location. Even more gratifying, we are able to fully serve our primary mission of the Garden: to educate the public and our Master Gardeners. Incidentally, on Thursday, November 29, Master Gardeners hosted garden tours for school youth from Baytown. Master Gardeners set up 11 "learning stations," including a stereoscope "set up" for youth to view aphids and other insects, a taste-root-vegetables session, a pick-press-and-drink session for citrus harvested from the orchard, and many more.

On another note about transitions, we have embraced the digital age. You will be seeing a new addition to the ID labels on plants at the Horticulture and Research Gardens. We are starting with the North End garden with the clumping bamboo. It's amazing how well the bamboo has grown over the past two years. Each of the plant ID labels will now include a QR (Quick Reference) code. Visitors and MGs with smartphones/android phones can simply scan the QR code and immediately access designated pages on the MG website that provide relevant information on the plant. MG Gregory Werth has prepared QR codes with our MG logo. This is not being done to "look cute" or to be in vogue, but to embrace the rapid changes in technology that are dramatically altering the way our audience access information, how they learn and how they live.

Yes, transitions are times of crossing or traveling from something old and familiar to something new and unfamiliar. It has been said that a successful transition begins with successfully letting go of the past. Last but not least, I think that significant transitions should be marked with celebration—this has been and will continue to be a team effort. I'm a proud to be a member of this team known as Galveston County Master Gardeners!

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,
Dr. J**

Editor's Note: I think I can speak for all of the Master Gardeners in saying that the enormous success of this association would not be possible without the talented leadership of Dr. Johnson. Master Gardeners want to become involved because of him. We love his "can do" attitude, his perfection, his patience, his flexibility, his vast knowledge in horticulture and his skill in seeking out and nurturing the talents in people.



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Galveston-County-Master-Gardeners/220088841395231>



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



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Front Cover Photo by MG Margie Jenke

How to Reach Us



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ask a master gardener...



By Pat Forke
MG 2010

Q&A

Hot Line Topics **what's in a name**

Question: Common name, botanical name, family, genus, species, cultivar—what is so important about all these different names and what do they mean?

All currently known living organisms are classified according to various characteristics into six kingdoms. The plant kingdom, Plantae, is divided into 12 different Phyla. The phylum of Angiospermophyta (flowering plants) includes approximately 270,000 plant species and is subdivided into two classes: Dicotyledoneae (two-seed leaf plants which include most trees, shrubs, vines and flowers) and Monocotyledoneae (one-leaf plants which include plants that are a primary source of nutrition such as grains and some fruits).

Plants were divided only into phylum, order, and family until the 18th century. Botanist Carl Linnaeus was first to provide a first name called the genus and a second name called a species to plants. This scientific naming of all living organisms is referred to as binomial nomenclature. These names are usually derived from Greek or Latin roots. This use of Latin which is recognized as a universal language of scholars allows a world-wide consistency in the botanical names of plants.

The names we often see associated with plants are the family, genus and species, followed by forms and varieties. This gives each plant not only a unique name but also identifying characteristics and often a history of that plant.

A family name, such as Asteraceae (aster, daisy, or sunflower family), will group similar plants which are then further divided into genera (plural form of genus), such as *Leucanthemum* (white flower). Each genus is then divided by species, such as *vulgare* (meaning common). Thus we have in the family Asteraceae a plant which was named *Leucanthemum vulgare* by Luther Burbank and means a common white flower or more commonly known as ox-eye daisy. In the same family and genus we have the species *L. maximum* which was hybridized with *L. lacustre* by Luther Burbank to produce *Leucanthemum x superbum* or more commonly known as the Shasta daisy. There are many cultivars from this human intervention to the daisy and one of the cultivars would be written:

Asteraceae *Leucanthemum x superbum* 'Becky.'

From looking at this name, you are able to glean a lot of information. This plant is a member of the aster, daisy, or sunflower family. It is a white flower that has been hybridized (noted by the x) and a cultivar named 'Becky' was developed to "improve" the original plant.

For even more information about a specific plant, you can go to the International Plant Name Index at <http://www.ipni.org/ipni/plantnamesearchpage.do>. This is a database of the associated basic bibliographical details of seed plants, ferns and lycophytes. This site offers interesting information about over one million plants.

Families of plants are broad categories. Genus is a group of species of plants that share certain structural characteristics as determined by botanical study and similar care requirements. The genus name, a noun, may come from mythology, literature, or other sources which refer to something the plant resembles. This is the plant's "surname." After a scientific name is written in full in an article, it is acceptable to abbreviate the genus name by using the first initial followed by a period.

Species is an adjective and often refers to a place, the plant's characteristics or appearance. Species is often abbreviated as sp. (singular) or spp. (plural) and will identify a particular variety of a plant.

A more narrowing of the classification of a plant is defined in the forms or varieties, cultivars, or hybrids. This is listed as a part of the botanical name after the genus and species. A variety is a naturally occurring change, sport or mutation which produces a distinctively different plant in appearance. A cultivar is sometimes abbreviated cv., is in a modern language, and is a variation achieved by human intervention. This is usually done to improve the variegations, growth form and foliage, or flower color. A hybrid is a new cultivar of plant that is also created through human intervention. The pollen of one plant is crossed with the pistil of another. Continued reproduction

may require this same crossing technique as rarely do seed produced from a mature plant created by hybridization reproduce the same desired characteristic.

Now that we better understand what makes up the name of a specific plant, how do we write it?

When the genus and species are written together, the genus is capitalized and written in italics. The species is never capitalized but is also italicized.

A variation (var.), form (f.), or cultivar (cv.) is written following the species, is not capitalized unless it is a proper name which would normally be capitalized, is not italicized and is enclosed in single quotation marks. The proper abbreviation may or may not be used.

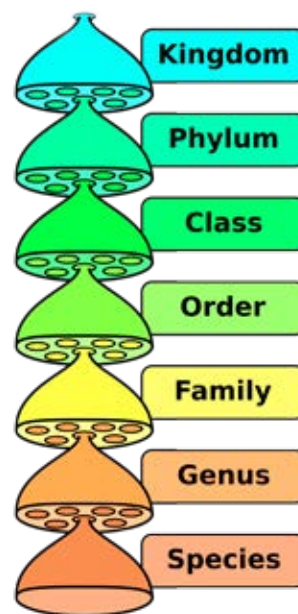
Here are more examples:

Ilex vomitoria – *Ilex* means "holly" and *vomitoria* means "to induce vomiting." Yaupon Holly was used by Native Americans to induce vomiting.

Ilex vomitoria 'Nana' – This is a dwarf form of the holly.

Ilex vomitoria 'Will Fleming' – This holly cultivar was discovered by Will Fleming.

Ilex x attenuate 'Sunny Foster' – This cultivar of a hybrid between *I. opaca* and *I. cassine* and produces yellow leaves on new growth.



GOT RASBERRY CRAZY ANTS??

look for these characteristics



By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008

Rasberry crazy ants haven't been identified to a species or given a common name yet. They are similar to the genus description for the Caribbean crazy ant (*Nylanderia* sp. Nr. *Pubens*). This invasive pest was first spotted in Pasadena, TX in 2002 by exterminator Tom Rasberry for whom they are named. This semi-tropical ant has now spread to more than 22 South Texas counties and into other areas of the Southeastern United States. They reproduce in huge numbers. To recognize Rasberry crazy ants, look for these characteristics: appearance of many (millions) of consistently-sized 1/8" long, reddish-brown ants in the landscape. They are social insects and live in large colonies indistinguishable from one another. Worker ants have long legs and antennae and their bodies have numerous long, coarse hairs. The antenna has 12-segments with no club. Foraging indoors occurs from outside nests. Crazy ants form loose foraging trails as well as forage randomly (non-trailing) and crawl rapidly and erratically in a helter-skelter fashion (hence the "crazy" descriptor). Ant colonies, where queens with brood including whitish larvae and pupae, occur in any void like stumps or the base of a palm tree and under landscape objects, rocks, soil, potted plants, timbers, stacked hardscape, piles of debris, etc. Nests occur under any object that retains moisture. These ants do not build centralized nests, beds or mounds and do not emerge to the surface from nests through central openings as is common with Imported Red Fire Ants. They eat anything and everything. Foraging begins in spring; colonies grow into millions by July-August. Ant numbers remain high through October-November.

Rasberry crazy ants do not have stingers, but worker ants have an acid pore on the end of the abdomen which excretes chemicals for defense or attack. They are

Question: How can I identify Rasberry crazy ants?

capable of biting and cause a sharp pain. They feed on sugary "honeydew" from sucking insects and "tend" these insects. In our area, crazy ant infestations are displacing fire ants and attack beneficial insects like ladybugs. They disturb nesting songbirds, likely affect ground and tree nesting birds and force other small wildlife to move out of the area. A recent report has found they are now going after honeybee hives—not for the honey, but for the bee larvae. Once the hive is destroyed, the ants take over and use it to raise their young. They have the capability to asphyxiate small livestock, like chickens. Large numbers of Rasberry crazy ants have accumulated in electrical equipment in our area, causing short circuits and clogging switching mechanisms resulting in equipment failures. They have been known to short out pipeline valves and swimming pool pumps. When an ant is electrocuted, it releases a chemical alarm pheromone that attracts nest mates, triggering a cascade that results in a buildup of dead worker ants. They invade electrical breaker boxes, gas meters and home PCs. They been known to short out auto stereos and car alarms.

Dr. Bastiaan "Bart" Drees, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service entomologist, says homeowners finding very large numbers of reddish, uniformly sized ants erratically scampering "everywhere" are encouraged to have the ants identified by collecting and sending samples to the Center for Urban and Structural Entomology using the downloadable form available at <http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu>. Identification is essential before treatment.

Control is difficult as most common over-the-counter insecticides have no effect and don't work against these exotic pests. A state-licensed pest control professional has access to effective insecticidal controls that the public does not. The homeowner can help decrease the spread by removing non-essential objects from the ground to discourage nesting. Don't

move infested plants, mulch, soil or other ant-infested items to areas not infested.

The Crazy Ant Task Force made up of representatives from AgriLife Extension and Texas AgriLife Research, Texas A&M University Department of Entomology, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Nursery and Landscape Association and Budget Pest Control of Houston are hoping to land federal and state grants for research to develop more effective control methods that could be widely used.

References:

<http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu/ants/rasberry.html>

<http://www.chron.com/life/gardening/article/Crazy-ants-wreak-havoc-in-Houston-and-they-re-1670878.php>

<http://today.agrilife.org/2011/07/29/rasberry-crazy-ants-are-on-the-move/>





Happy Holly-Days

(Editor's Note: This is a reprint of Tabatha's article from Life Is Good! Magazine)

By Tabatha Holt
MG 2009

As yes—shorter days, cooler evenings and gatherings of families and friends abound. 'Tis the time of the season to give thanks for all that we have, of giving to those in need or ponder the resolution plans for a fresh new year. For thousands of years the human race has celebrated the seasons of fall and winter along with their many diverse customs and holiday traditions. Nothing heralds in the holiday season more than the plants associated with them. Chrysanthemums, Snapdragons, Alyssum from October through November and Pansy, Cyclamen, Rosemary, Mistletoe, Ivy, Poinsettia and Christmas Cactus in December. However, of all the iconic plants related with the winter holidays there is one plant equal in stature as the Noble or Douglas Fir tree that resonates the Yule tide traditions—Holly.

Holly legend and folklore reaches far back through history and depending on your degree of enthusiasm for such stories may seem as prickly as the plant can be. What we do know has been passed on either through oral or written tradition by the ancient Greek, Roman, Asian, Norse and English Isle people.

Best known and recognized during Christian holidays in wreaths, garland, and floral arrangements—the pointed holly leaf symbolizes Christ's crown of thorns and its evergreen leaves represent eternal life.

Prior to Christian conversion, Romans celebrated the festival of Saturnalia in honor of their god Saturn (the God of agriculture) by exchanging holly wreaths adorned with his image. An English adaptation of a Celtic tale speaks of house fairies and elves living in holly bushes. They find great merriment participating in the holiday festivities of their human hosts. In varying regions of Asia, holly is used during New Year celebrations and is revered as a symbol of fertility and divine power.

Like folklore and legends there are hundreds of varieties of *Ilex* 'Holly' genus. Holly can be evergreen or deciduous (loses its leaves leaving just the berries), can be male, female or both depending on the variety selected. Extremely hardy under a variety of conditions, holly will survive in both sun and shade, serve as windbreaks for agricultural crops, provide cover and food for birds, small animals and loads of aesthetic value in an otherwise stark winter landscape.

Varieties that perform well in our area include natives such as deciduous Yaupon (*Ilex deciduas*), Yaupon Holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) and hybrid holly varieties such as East Palatka (*Ilex opaca*), Foster (*Ilex x attenuate* 'Fosteri') and Savannah (*Ilex opaca* 'Savannah'). A very popular residential holly used as hedge named Burford 'cornuta' is an example of a self fruiting hybrid variety that is disease resistant, has showy berries and dark evergreen leaves.

The next time you're standing in line preparing to deck your own boughs of holly, consider the functional use and the great stories told of holly in your landscape.

Have a safe, joyous and very Merry Holly-Day season.
Have questions? Contact Tabatha: faithsgardenshed@yahoo.com



Burford Holly

Photo by MG Margie Jenke



Savannah Holly

Photo by MG Linda Steber



Foster Holly

Photo by MG Linda Steber

The Right Tree for the Right Spot



By Pat Forke
MG 2010

The highest order of plants and an important part of our landscape, trees are a source of habitat and food for many living organisms, increase the value of your property and are a visual asset to your neighborhood. By shading your home from the summer sun, trees help to lessen your air-conditioning expenses. Deciduous trees (those that drop their leaves in the fall), planted on the south or west side of your home, can reduce your air-conditioning expenses by as much as 20-25% during the hottest months of summer. And, when the leaves begin to fall, the winter sun's rays will warm your home.

Fall is the ideal time to plant trees. Our mild winters allow trees to spend those cool months establishing a healthy root system before spring makes any demands for top growth. Moisture is essential to accomplish this, so do not put away the garden hose just because it is winter.

It is important to do the research to determine the right tree for the right place. A great book for learning all about trees is *Trees of Texas* by Carmine Stahl and Ria McElvaney. Not only does this book help you identify trees, but it also gives you valuable information about the growth habits and requirements of trees suitable for Texas. Do not overlook the importance of driving around your neighborhood and taking note of what trees are doing well near you.

Height - What is the expected height of the tree? Will it bump into anything when it is full grown? What about nearby power lines, buildings, or other trees?

Canopy Spread - How wide will the tree grow? Just like with height, what could this full grown tree bump into? How sad it is to see a full-grown tree trimmed through the middle because of power lines; or needing to be removed because it is a source of damage to a nearby building.

Form or Shape - A columnar tree will grow in less space. The round and V-shaped species will provide the most shade. Your tree may also be either columnar or pyramidal shaped.

Growth Rate - How long will it take for your tree to reach its full height? Slow growing species typically live longer than fast growing species.

Soil, Sun and Moisture Requirements - It is important to know the type of soil where you are planting this tree. How about the sun? Will this tree do best in full sun or can it survive in partial shade? Are you planting in a low, moist area of your landscape or is this place high and dry?

Fruit - Are you looking for something to eat from your tree? Do you prefer a flowering, fragrant tree? What will drop from this tree and where will it land? Is there a sidewalk, driveway, swimming pool or building nearby?

Hardiness Zone - Be sure you know the zone you are in and what trees will survive in that zone.

Before heading out to purchase your tree, take the Right Tree in the Right Place quiz at <http://www.arborday.org/trees/rightTreeAndPlace/quiz.cfm>. After doing the research and deciding upon the perfect tree, you are ready to head to your local nursery. Your local nursery will be able to make sure you are getting the perfect tree for the perfect spot.

For more information on planting your tree refer to this article by Dr. Douglas F. Welsh <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earth-kind/landscape/planting-a-tree/>

MG Julie Cartmill offers this information about Live Oaks and other trees you might consider. She says Live Oaks are not as slow growing as some might think. Julie recommends watering regularly and fertilizing each quarter to increase the growth rate for Live Oaks and other trees as well. Julie recommends citrus trees as they are low maintenance. The stone fruit trees will require more spraying in this area.

Water Smart Trees*

For tight spaces: River Birch, Bottlebrush, Texas Redbud, Possumhaw Holly, American Holly, Yaupon Holly, Little Gem Magnolia, Chinese Pistache, Texas Pistache, Eve's Necklace, Vitex.

For shade: Pecan, Texas Persimmon, Black Walnut, Sweetgum, Southern Magnolia, Crabapple, Mulberry, Slash Pine, Loblolly Pine, Mexican Plum, Bur Oak, Water Oak, Shumard Oak, Texas Red Oak, Live Oak, Texas Palmetto, Soapberry, Bald Cypress, Montezuma Baldcypress, Cedar Elm.

*Prepared by Heather McKnight, Arborist, City of League City

To view the video on the moving of the Ghirardi Compton Oak in League City <http://leaguecity.com/index.aspx?nid=1806>



A Mighty Oak

Photo by MG Herman Auer

Basic Spacing Guide from ArborDay.org

	Spacing in a plant massing	Minimum spacing from wall of one-story building	Minimum spacing from corner of one-story building
Small trees 30' or less	6' - 15'	8 - 10'	6' - 8'
Medium trees 30' - 70'	30' - 40'	15'	12'
Large trees 70' or more	40' - 50'	20'	15'



By Donna J. Ward
MG 1996

acorns in abundance

TROWELS & TRIBULATIONS In a Suburban Garden

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

Photos by MG Linda Steber

If acorns were nickels, we should all head to Vegas. Well, actually we wouldn't have to, we would already be rich. This fall was a perfect example of Mother Nature doing what she does best—perpetuating the species. Plants have only one goal in life and that is to procreate. Last summer's drought scared the bejeebers out of our oak trees. They felt certain they were going to die, so they got busy and produced gazillions of acorns. Now if you have a nice manicured front lawn and back yard, your lawn mower is going to pick up the majority of them, but my back yard is a Texas Certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat (read that 'natural')—meaning there's no mowing going on behind the house. It's going to take a lot of 'weeding' this spring to keep the yard from becoming a virtual oak forest when many of those acorns sprout. Oh, by the way, did I mention the pine trees were also scared to death?—a condition much appreciated by the squirrel population, which are looking pretty chubby these days.

It's December, winter officially arrives on the 21st, and it's time to do all those chores you neglected in November. You know what you didn't do—there just wasn't enough time to clean up the flower beds, or add new ones—it's not too late. Keep adding leaves to the compost pile—you've probably noticed they don't all fall at once. Keep turning the pile regularly and keep it moist—you are creating Mother Nature's finest fertilizer and mulch, not to mention it's the cheapest example of both.

If you haven't as yet planted any landscape trees or shrubbery—no excuses, you're not behind schedule. While you're at the nursery making your choices, pick up a bit of floral color to impress the neighbors. Try a few cyclamens, ornamental kale, primroses and pansies. Remember that pansies are heavy feeders. I sprinkle a spoonful of time-release fertilizer into their planting hole before I drop them in, and they perform beautifully for the whole cool-weather season. Much of my research materials recommend blood meal for pansies. I tried that once, much to the delight of raccoons

and/or night-roaming canines—and once there was a similar experience with fish emulsion. Now, I'm not telling you not to use either one of these, just be forewarned if you do.

While at the nursery you might want to check out berry-bearing shrubs that attract birds in winter. Yaupon, possumhaw and Savannah hollies, American beautyberry, pyracantha, wax myrtle and elderberry are just a few. It would be nice if you could also provide water for our feathered friends.

It's not too soon to start preparing for your spring veggie garden. Crank up the old John Deere, dig the bed and till in some of that gorgeous compost you've made, and it wouldn't hurt to turn under some of those green scraps from the kitchen.

There's a good chance that somebody is going to give you an amaryllis as a holiday gift. After the blooms fade, plant them in your garden where you can enjoy repeat performances for years. Plant them with their necks above ground in a well-drained location in a spot that receives full morning sun, but with a bit of respite from the searing afternoon rays.

Speaking of the holidays, deck your halls with branches of holly, juniper, yew magnolias, and ligustrum. A light pruning will be beneficial.

If there's a gardener on your gift list—the number of available gardening paraphernalia is endless. Small hand tools such as pruners ('bypass' type is the best), hand-held cultivators, gardening gloves, decorative planters, sprinkling cans, and how about a non-kinking gardening hose or a gardening book specifically for this locale? As a senior citizen, one of my most appreciated gifts from younger family members is a large bag of potting soil or mulch delivered to my home and placed where I can easily access it. Often we tip the big box store's nursery guy for putting that enormous bag of potting soil into the trunk of our car—but on our arrival home—what then?

I wish you joyful holidays, and look forward to talking to you again in February. Happy Humbug.



American Beautyberry



Ornamental Kale and Pansies

THE ISLAND GARDEN

User Friendly Plants - I, J, K, L & M

Photo by MG Cheryl Armstrong

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



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

Once again as in the last two months, we will explore the world of "User-friendly" plants. This month we will consider I, J, K, L, and M. Some of these plants are ones that you may have used in your garden in the past. Some have remained popular throughout the years, even having been favored by our grandparents in their gardens, some have lost favor and have been replaced by "new" specimens introduced to us by horticulturists who are always searching for the latest and greatest in the plant world.

Ixora - If you are looking for a plant with blooms that keep on comin' on, then the *Ixora* is the plant for you. Also called Flame of the Woods, Jungle Flame or Jungle Geranium, it is native to India and Sri Lanka and named for an Indian god. *Ixora* can be seen grown as a hedge in Puerto Rico, Mexico and Florida where it blooms year-round. Easily grown in pots or in the ground, it does well with full sun and an occasional sprinkling of bone meal. *Ixora* is a member of the Rubiaceae family along with its cousins, the coffee plant and the gardenia. Several colors are available including red, orange, pink, and yellow. It is somewhat salt tolerant and has survived the "dreaded rise of the tide" on numerous occasions. Used as cut flowers, the *Ixora* makes long-lasting vibrant floral arrangements.

Jasmine - *Trachelospermum jasminoides* is a species of flowering plant in the milkweed family, that is native to eastern and southeastern Asia. It is commonly grown as an ornamental plant and houseplant. In gardens, public landscapes, and parks, it may be used as a climbing vine, or a groundcover. Because it is extremely fragrant, it has become a popular potted plant for terraces and patios.

Jasmine is widely planted in California, and in the south-eastern United States in the area of the Confederate States of America where it was given the name "Confederate Jasmine," but it is also known as Star Jasmine.

This is a problem-free plant that is moderately fast growing as a shrub or vine with delightful small white flowers. Try planting jasmine near your house so you can enjoy its intense fragrance. Jasmine prefers full sun to partial shade. It grows well in regular garden soil with moderate levels of fertilizer and moisture. A bonus—hummingbirds and butterflies are drawn to the blooms!

Kalanchoe - This plant is a popular houseplant seen for sale during the late winter and spring months. It is a durable flowering plant that requires very little maintenance as a potted plant in the home. It has dark green, thick waxy leaves with scalloped-edges and clusters of brightly colored blooms. These plants are cultivated as ornamental houseplants but are often used in rock gardens or succulent gardens. Known to the Chinese as "thousands and millions of red and purple" it is a popular plant purchased during the Chinese New Year for decorative accents much like poinsettias at Christmas.

They are not difficult to grow and the flowering varieties are highly rewarding for their colorful and long-lasting blooms. Flowering *Kalanchoes* are available in red, pink, yellow, or white. Some people discard the plants after the flowering phase is over, but it is recommended that one simply cut off the dead bloom head and reduce the amount of watering and patiently enjoy the foliage itself. The *kalanchoe* should flower again naturally in late winter or early spring especially in a mild winter season.

Water moderately throughout the summer and reduce watering in the winter. Let the soil surface dry out between watering. Use any ordinary potting soil mix when re-potting. Plant diseases are rarely a problem. Too much or too little water and insects are the main issues. Root rot usually results from a soil mix that does not drain quickly or from overly frequent watering. Do not let plants sit in water.

Lantana - This excellent low-maintenance specimen can be used as a foundation planting, planted in masses or as a specimen plant. They are also attractive when placed in containers or hanging baskets. Flowers come in several colors, including red, yellow, pink, orange, purple and multi-colors.

Lantana likes a moist, well-drained soil, but will tolerate a variety of conditions. Plant in full sun, fertilize occasionally and you will enjoy a thriving, continuously blooming plant. It has no serious problems with pests or diseases, is very drought resistant, tolerates salt spray and as an added bonus attracts birds and butterflies.

Mandevilla - A native of South America, the *Mandevilla* comes from an area near Rio de Janeiro in southeastern Brazil. Named for an 18th century British diplomat and gardener, Henry Mandeville, it is a woody twining evergreen vine and cousin to the dogbane.

This fuzzy vine climbs well over archways, pergolas, trellises, and walls producing clusters of flared, trumpet-shaped blooms. Becoming more popular every year, the *Mandevilla* can be quite versatile as a screen for hiding eyesores or as an attractive addition to our shoreline gardens as it is somewhat salt tolerant and can be planted behind the first line of dunes.

The *Mandevilla x amoena*

'Alice du Pont' has been described as having "shocking pink flowers that create a real spectacle on a vigorous, dark-leaved tropical vine." It blooms freely from May through October and "creates a dramatic entrance to the home or garden" when climbing on a trellis or arbor. *Mandevilla* is a showstopper by itself but can be used with other tropical plants in your garden such as *Hibiscus*, oleander, or bananas to create a jungle effect." The 'Alice du Pont' also grows well in hanging baskets. Pinch off tips of new stems to encourage dense growth and remember to water slowly so all of the soil gets wet. Water *Mandevilla* regularly and apply fertilizer every two weeks for best results. These plants have proven themselves to be exceptionally trouble-free and undemanding in our complicated environment of drought-ridden or flood-filled summer seasons and have even survived an occasional salt-water swim. Certainly worth a trial in any garden, these specimens are sure to reward you with their impressive and continuing floral productivity and will give your garden a little extra special zing that sets it apart from typical area gardens.

Additional I, J, K, L & M plants include: Ice Plant, Japanese Yew, Mint, and Marigolds.



Kalanchoe

MG BEST SHOTS

Crape Myrtle by Cheryl Armstrong



Loquat from The MG Digital Library



Mexican Orchid Tree from the MG Digital Library



Vitex from the MG Digital Library



Texas Mountain Laurel by Cheryl Armstrong



Bottle Tree by Cheryl Armstrong



...and Narrative

medium size, flowering trees for local landscapes



by Sandra Devall
MG 1998

Have you noticed that some front yards in the newer subdivisions are starting a fad? There are two Live Oak trees in these 30' x 60' front yards. These trees look fine right now. The problem will be when they become mature oaks and are 50 feet tall and 100 feet wide. There will be no room for them without causing roof, foundation or driveway damage. I have a large backyard, but after many years and many hurricanes, all of its wonderful large trees are gone. I began planting medium size trees and now have many of the ones shown in the best shots as well as easy to care varieties of fruit trees. These will grow between 15 to 25 feet tall. They will shade, flower and fruit! Problem solved!

Crape Myrtle (*Langerstroemia indica*)

The first memory I have of a crape myrtle tree came with a spanking. The neighborhood kids had decided to make bows and arrows out of the branches of Grandma Kooi's tree. Back in those days, no one trimmed the crape myrtles because no one usually trimmed trees. If only they would quit trimming them now. One reason you do not have to trim a crape myrtle is you can buy them in just about any height, from a low growing shrub to a 14-foot understory tree. They have an upright spike of flowers and come in a broad variety of colors from white to a deep bright raspberry. They make a lovely line of trees—since their trunks are tall and narrow and they will not break the front view of your home. Crape myrtles are also interesting in the winter when the bark peels and the wood is red. In the summer they are heavy bloomers and add great spots of color to your landscape.

Loquat or Japanese Plum (*Eriobotrya japonica*)

Loquat gets a vote for the best pass-a-long tree. It also gets a vote as a tree that can be planted within 8 feet of the house as their spread is up rather than out. If you want them as part of a defined/formal front yard, they are easy to trim and stay in that shape. Loquat blooms in late fall to early winter and produces fruit later than our citrus. They propagate easily from seeds, some would say, too easy. You may have to pull up the starter trees in the winter or early spring. It is a wonderful tree for the birds. I have two sets of cardinals that stop by to nest and eat. The fruit is also good for humans to eat - skin and all. You will have to spit out the seeds which are very large. That is a fun thing to teach your grandchildren to do or they can help you make jelly from the fruit.

Mexican Orchid Tree (*Bauhinia mexicana*)

I have never see a tree that bloomed non-stop throughout the summer as this one does. The tree fills with showy, delicate blooms that cover at least half of the tree. The flower and the leaf share a similar shape which gives it a delicate look. Because the tree is wider than it is tall, it is like a low floating cloud. Most will grow to be up to 18 feet tall and 25 feet wide. It is a multi-trunked tree, needs partial sun and will be covered in butterflies and hummingbirds. They do not mind being crowded. Since we have few freeze days in Zone 9, they do not have to grow back every season, so they reach their full height quickly. What a pleasure!

Vitex or Lilac Chase (*Vitex agnus-castus*)

This is another tree that blooms throughout the entire summer. The name lilac was added to its common name because of the long upright blooms. *Vitex* prefers full sun, but is not a fussy plant and survives in the variety of soils in Galveston County, as long as it is well-drained. To get the tree to bloom more frequently, just remove the spent blooms. It can be grown to be a large shrub, but with trimming will become a perfect mid-size tree. It has a short trunk and shapes more cup-like than round which mimics the curving growth of the flowers.

Texas Mountain Laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*)

If you are patient, this somewhat slow growing native tree will be quite a prize. Mountain Laurels are multi-trunked and have a narrow 12-foot spread. It performs well in large beds and close to walkways. The grape-cluster blooms last a long time during the summer months. In the winter, this evergreen has long, beautiful seed pods and an interesting dark gray to black bark. They are great for butterfly lovers because they attract caterpillars, which can be removed by hand for light infestations. This is a very hardy tree.

Bottle Tree (*Bottelea humouroso*)

Since Pat discussed scientific names on page 4, I took the liberty of giving this tree an unofficial scientific name! "Seriously though, bottle trees are an important part of Texas landscaping humor. This tree has lots of advantages since it does not require watering, fertilizing or trimming. There is a variety of shapes and sizes and they can add a nice artistic touch to your garden. I enjoy those with multiple colors and shapes. Sunlight enhances their beauty. Their bottle history can be the start of a conversation on a lazy summer day with a large glass of ice tea, surrounded by friends.

The late fall and very early winter season is the ideal time to transplant trees in the landscape since they will have more time to become established before the heat of summer.



Loquat Bloom



each bed features an unusual botanical treasure Talented Gardeners, Amazing Yards

by Cheryl Armstrong
MG 2010

Photos by MG Cheryl Armstrong

This month we visited the gardens of Master Gardener Greg (2011) and Leonore Escamilla. In addition to having a lovely yard at home, Greg maintains a vegetable garden at our Demonstration Gardens. Leonore is also an avid gardener. The Escamilla's have a large suburban, fenced lot, with a lot of tree cover. They chose to reduce their lawn footprint by landscaping with wide, carefully placed flower beds. Leonore is an artist and her love for art bleeds into their garden, as each flower bed displays a unique piece of yard art.

Approaching their home, a kidney shaped, raised bed showcasing seasonal color beckons you to sit on its quaint bench and enjoy its beauty. Nearby a melodic chime sways in the wind announcing that a gardener lives here. Each bed also features an unusual botanical treasure. The Angel Trumpet (*Brugmansia aurea*) in full bloom draws you to come closer. The Staghorn Fern (*Platycerium bifurcatum*) prominently displayed over an arched trellis, begs you to explore the large urn giving balance to the bed in which it resides. Another bed provides cover and water for our feathered friends, invited in by feeders swinging on Shepherds hooks. Along the back fence row, where green dominates, a playful bottle tree tickles your color palette. Even the garden shed is painted a sunny yellow and green. The sweet aroma from Rangoon Creeper (*Quisqualis indica*) delights them all summer long from its perch along the side fence where it was placed to be viewed and enjoyed from the windows on that side of the house.

As wonderful as all these beds are, the back patio is by far the star of their landscape. Protected by the house on three sides, Greg covered the area with a slatted, vaulted cover that creates a perfect environment for delicate tropicals. The spectacular violet bloom of Toad Lily (*Tricyrtis hirta*), caught my eye as I surveyed each planted pot. Of course, the soothing sound coming from the fountain feature compliments the environment and begs you sit and stay a while. When the cold winter winds come, Greg covers this area with plastic, creating a greenhouse effect, and his beloved tropicals never even know the cold has arrived.



Angel Trumpet



Staghorn Fern



Fountain



Rangoon Creeper



Thank you Greg and Leonore for sharing your gardens with us.

insects worthy of our attention

Moths and their Host Plants

In the last newsletter, we learned about moths. We learned they are often beautiful, are sometimes stunning flyers, are amazing pollinators, and serve as important food for wildlife. In this country there are over 10,000 species of moths and in Texas there are approximately 4700 species.

The most significant benefit of moths and their caterpillars is that they serve as food for other insects, spiders, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. For this reason we should work at attracting them to our gardens and protecting them rather than destroying them and their caterpillars.

It is quite easy to garden for moths. Because there are so many species of moths and because many moths have more than one host plant, if you plant native plants, you will be serving moths. Not every plant native to every garden is going to be a host plant, but there will be enough host plants in any group of natives that you plant to support the moths. So begin by planting natives.

Secondly, fuss with your yard as little as possible. Constant raking, blowing, pruning, digging, and working in the soil is going to damage the very things you worked hard to attract. There are caterpillars on the plants and there are pupae and cocoons on the plants, in the leaf litter, and in the ground. If you must rake, try to create a wide ring around each tree, three feet wide or so, and rake the leaves into that ring so that cocoons in the leaf litter can survive. Another option is to plant trees and shrubs in a triangle and leave the center of the triangle as a place for the leaves since the pupae may have a chance of surviving there. Be imaginative about creating areas that are natural so that natural processes, like caterpillars becoming moths, can happen.

Lastly, in order to create a good habitat for moths, use the least toxic insecticides where possible. If you use herbicides, they are transferred from the caterpillars that eat the plants covered with herbicides to the predators that eat the caterpillars or moths. In much the same vein, synthetic pesticides should be avoided due to the detrimental effects they have on so many animals beyond those that are targeted. Even organic pesticides are not good as they kill caterpillars indiscriminately. BT, *Bacillus thuringiensis*, is a natural bacterium found in the soil and many recommend it to kill caterpillars that are pests in one's garden. However, how does one keep the good caterpillars from being killed as well? Those who grow fruits and vegetables may face more threats from pest caterpillars than other gardeners. Growing a few extra plants on which one can place the unwanted caterpillars is a harmless and simple solution.

Gardening for moths is easy and it is the same as gardening for almost any other insect. Plant native plants, allow the plants to be as natural as possible, and lose the chemicals in order to begin building an environment that will attract moths and ultimately all sorts of additional wildlife. This will bring balance and nature back to your yard.

For more information on native plants, contact 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.



Photo from the MG Digital Library

By Pat Forke
MG 2010

Examples of host plants for the silk moths include:

Sweet gums, walnuts, hickories, sumacs, persimmons, and white birches.

Hackberry, blackberry, redbud, hibiscus, clover, willows, mesquite, beech, elm, and oaks.

Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), sassafras, spicebush, maples, dogwoods, box elders, sugar maple, pecans, sumacs.

Sphinx Moths are also called Hawkwing Moths and Hummingbird Moths. The caterpillars are often known as Hornworms.

Examples of Sphinx moths' host plants:

Members of the grape family, including peppervine and Virginia creeper.

Members of the Primrose family, including evening primrose, butterfly gaura, willow weed and members of the *Ludwigia* genus.

Green ash, oak, and privet.

Honeysuckle, plums, and hawthorns.

Examples of Tiger, Lichen and Wasp moths' host plants:

Amaranthus sp., hickory, *Commelina* sp., dandelions, sunflowers, violets, willows, maples, asters, birches, elms, milkweeds, and sycamores

Examples of Lichen Moths' host plants:

Lichens, algae, moss on trees, and climbing hemp vine

Examples of Owlet moths' host plants:

Gaillardia pulchella, butterfly gaura, goldenrod, asters, ragweed, *Liatris*

Examples of the Looper (inchworm is the caterpillar) moths' host plants:

Goldenrods, dogweeds, chickweed, clover, and other low plants.



Redbuds in Bloom

December-January "Things To Do" Video Gardening Calendar



by Cheryl Armstrong MG 2010 by Deane Greer MG 2009 by Jenifer Leonpacher MG 2010 by Gregory Werth MG 2012

Click on the "Play Video" icon at top right to see what a "group effort" can do (by the aforementioned Master Gardeners) to prepare an exceptional "Things to Do" Calendar.



by John Jons
MG 2003

How to grow those great big healthy roses: What you should be doing in December

Throughout the year I get questions on "what should I be doing to my roses, now?" So, to help answer these questions, for every month of this year I have drafted monthly articles for our newsletter that highlighted what you should be doing to keep your roses healthy and floriferous during the coming months. This will be the last article in the series.

During December, you should still be experiencing large blooms with lots of petals and color intensity. Unfortunately, the mildness of our winters, combined with the damp (rain and/or morning fog) tends to favor insects and plant fungus. So, you still need to focus on keeping the roses healthy and (per your needs) manage the insects and diseases. You should also be starting to encourage your roses to rest for the winter by not dead-heading and letting the blooms either fall off the roses or letting the roses form hips.

By now you should have evaluated your roses and be possibly considering the replacement of any roses 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. If you mail order roses, now is the time to do it, as the popular varieties often sell out. Request delivery of the roses just before Valentine's Day. Local nurseries will start receiving their roses between now and February. You will need to visit the nursery early to be assured of the best selection. Remember that these new roses will need to be kept moist and protected from freezing.

Here is a list of suggested things that you should be doing in December.

Fungicide and Insecticide Spray Program: If you have problems use a curative product. If you do not have problems, continue to use a preventative product. You may only need to continue this program until the roses go dormant which is usually after the first freeze or hard frost. As soon as the temperatures start rising (to above 50F) and/or you see new growth, you will need to re-continue your preventative program. If a plant goes into dormancy in a healthy state it will re-emerge much healthier in the spring.

Fertilizer: You can apply a light top dressing of compost (organics only) and then you should mulch your beds to protect the roots of the plants from any freezes. You will begin fertilizing again after you prune your roses (after Valentine's day) in the spring.

Water: Roses will still need to be watered while in dormancy. As previously noted, keeping a good layer of mulch on your rose bed will keep the bed moist and protect the roots of the roses if we have a winter freeze.

General: If you have any dead roses, now is the time to remove them. This also a good time to check the pH of your rose beds (in the root zone) to see if you need to make any adjustments.



Multicolor red and yellow rose hybridized by John Jons



Red seedling hybridized by John Jons

recipe using baby spinach

Seasonal Bites



By Karen Cureton
MG 2008

Spinach Bites

These are delectable, tender little appetizers that can be assembled early in the day or even the day before, kept in the refrigerator (covered with a damp cloth) and baked before serving.

1-1/2 pounds baby spinach, well rinsed, chopped, & wilted in a hot pan, and then wring out all the moisture from it.
1-1/2 cups crumbled feta cheese
1/4 cup toasted pine nuts
1/4 cup golden raisins
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
4 eggs lightly beaten

1 teaspoon minced oregano
1 teaspoon minced lemon basil or substitute another herb of your choice
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
salt and pepper to taste
1 pkg (10 oz.) of frozen puff pastry, thaw in the refrigerator before using.

Make the filling by mixing the cheeses, pine nuts, raisins, eggs and spices into the hot wilted spinach. Let cool slightly.
Roll out the puff pastry 1/8 inch thick on a lightly floured work surface. Cut with a 3 - 4 inch round cookie cutter. Place about 1 tablespoon of filling on one half of each round. Brush the edges with an egg-water wash, fold over and press to seal. Arrange on a baking sheet. Bake in a pre-heated 350° oven until lightly browned. About 15 minutes. Serve warm.



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. The following December 2012 Master Gardener Programs (with the exception of The Urban Farmstead on December 8) are free to the public..

Location: Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park
4102 Main Street (FM 519), La Marque Texas 77568

For course reservations, call 281-534-3413, ext. 12 or email GALV3@wt.net.

Saturday Seminars

Dec. 1, 2012 "Starting Your Own Tomatoes from Seed" - MG Sam Scarcella 9:00 - 11:00 am

Dec. 1, 2012 "Fruit Tree Planting" - MG Herman Auer. 1:00 - 2:30 pm

Dec. 8, 2012 "The Urban Farmstead". 8:00 - 4:00 pm

This is a special presentation provided for homeowners who wish to have a better and more self-sufficient life whether they live on a city lot or small acreage. Topics include intensive vegetable gardening, back yard poultry and small livestock production. Video presentations of urban farmsteads on city lots and small acreages in Galveston County. This seminar is about ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Registration fee of \$12 covers lunch and program handouts; due by December 6. (visit <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/>) for more details.

Project: Demonstration Gardens

Carbide Park



By Tom Fountain MG 2008 *By Jan Fountain MG 2012 Intern*

Over the past few weeks, the days have become shorter, and the mornings cooler in the garden. The MGs finished putting in fall crops which have been flourishing over the past month. Leaves on the trees and bushes around the garden have started turning reds and yellows in anticipation of the changing season.



Henry and crew continue to renew the existing beds. The pole barn is finished on the outside thanks to the nice paint job by Wayne and Tim. A few lights inside will finish off the barn. The pole barn crew will be recycled into "the greenhouse crew". Building a greenhouse and the rainwater recycling projects are the next activities on the agenda, and these have started.



A normal Thursday workday will have 20 to 25 gardeners turn out, but the garden always needs extra hands. There are 5 community beds that are dedicated to producing food for several community food banks along with the excess from the experimental gardens and orchard. It's a great place to visit with other gardeners and maybe pick up a good tip or pass one on. We had a Thanksgiving luncheon at the garden on November 15 with 52 Master Gardeners. The food was good and bountiful thanks to Ira and his cadre. In the garden, we are thankful for all the excellent and talented helpers that we have.

Photos by MG Tom Fountain

MEETING MINUTES

NOVEMBER 13, 2012 MG MEETING



By Pat Forke
MG 2010

Our Association President, Jim Edwards, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The nominating committee, made up of Peg Budny and Laura Bellmore, nominated John Jons for a three-year term as a member of the Board of Directors. He was voted in.

Mary Lou Kelso and Cindy Croft were elected as Co-Secretaries and Terry Cuculis was elected as TMGA State Association Delegate II. Dr. Johnson appointed Chris Anastas, Penny Bessire and Robert Marshall as Vice-Presidents for Programs.

Wes Ruzek, our Treasurer, reported on our bank balance and proceeds from our plant sale.

Dr. Johnson asked that all volunteer hours be reported as soon as possible as we are coming to the end of the year. Bobbie Ivey gave a very thorough update on the Demonstration and Research Gardens at Car-bide Park.

Dr. Johnson then gave a PowerPoint presentation where he thanked all the volunteers for their commitment and hard work over the 2012 calendar year. Some of the many activities that our volunteers support include the Demonstration and Research Garden, the citrus show, two plant sales, Earth Day, working with the Junior Master Gardeners, Home and Garden Show and the fruit tree tour. Our volunteers also work

on the hot line, present seminars, speak to gardening groups, and work on our newsletter.

Dr. Johnson mentioned that we have held 39 seminars in 2012 through October and that our newsletter was downloaded online over 64,000 times for the month of October. Bobbie Ivey provided an update on Libbie's Place, at Moody Methodist in Galveston. Eleven MGs assisted with building new beds and refurbishing the site at Libbie's Place. This is a new community service project.

The meeting was then adjourned.



Photos by MG Herman Auer

SPEAKERS BUREAU

The following are Galveston County Master Gardeners who will be giving local presentations. Please show your support by attending if you are interested in the topic and able to do so.



By Cindy Croft
MG 2009

- Clyde Holt will be speaking on "Bonsai" on December 8, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. at the Rosenberg Library, 2310 Sealy Ave, Galveston.
- Mary Demeny will be speaking on "Vegetable Gardening" on January 9, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. The location will be the Nessler Center, 2010 5th Ave. N (Palmer Hwy) in Texas City. This is a Texas City Garden Club meeting.
- Linda Brown will be speaking on "Fruits, Shoots and Warm Fuzzies" on February 13, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. This is a Texas City Garden Club meeting and will be held at the Nessler Center located at 2010 5th Ave. N in Texas City.
- Linda Brown will also be speaking on "Vermiculture" on January 8, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. at the Brazosport Garden Club in Lake Jackson. The meeting will be held at the Lake Jackson Public Library at 250 Circle Way in Lake Jackson.
- Stewart McAdoo and Robert Marshall will be giving a presentation on "Honeybees" on January 18, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. This will be held at the Rosenberg Library, 2310 Sealy Ave., Galveston.



Clyde Holt
MG 2005



Mary Demeny
MG 2002



Linda Brown
MG 2004



Stewart McAdoo
MG 2012



Robert Marshall
MG 2012

2012 MG Re-certification (Continuing Education) Hours Available Through the AgriLife Extension Office

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 Galveston County	2.5
1/14	Saturday Seminar	Sam Scarcella	Grow Great Tomatoes	2.5
1/14	Saturday Seminar	Jenifer Leonpacher	How to Grow Tomatoes with 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 Fruit Trees	1
1/28	Saturday Seminar	Dr. David Cohen	Growing Blueberries	2
2/10	MG Speaker Training 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	MG Speaker Training Program	O. J. Miller	The Care & Culture of Palms (for MGs only)	2
4/05	MG Speaker Training 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...A Guide to Home Landscaping	2.5
5/19	Saturday Seminar	Loretta Osteen	The Fabulous Fragrant Frangipani	2.5
5/31	Training in the Demo Garden	Herman Auer	Peach & Plum Tree Pruning Demonstration # 1	1.25
5/31	Training in the Demo Garden	Herman Auer	Peach & Plum Tree Pruning Demonstration # 1	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
8/11	Saturday Seminar	Ocal 'O.J.' Miller	The Culture & Care of Palms in Galveston County	2.5
8/21	MGA Meeting	Moody Gardens	Rainforest Tour	1
8/21	MGA Meeting	Moody Gardens	Greenhouse Tour	1
8/25	Saturday Seminar	Sam Scarcella	Growing Onions & Garlic	2.5
8/25	Saturday Seminar	Anna Wygrys	Old Garden Roses - Ageless Beauties	2
9/15	Saturday Seminar	John Jons	Gardening by the Square Foot	2
9/15	Saturday Seminar	Mary Demeny	Kitchen Gardening	2
9/22	Saturday Seminar	Loretta Osteen	The Fabulous Fragrant Frangipani	2.5
9/22	Saturday Seminar	Herman Auer	Fall T-Budding Workshop	2
9/29	Saturday Seminar	Heidi Sheesley	Perennials for the Gulf Coast	2
10/12	MG Speaker Training Program	Sid Kapner	Greenhouse Management (for MGs only)	2
10/27	Saturday Seminar	Heather McKnight	Shade Trees in the Home Landscape	1.5
11/13	MGA Meeting	Dr. William M. Johnson	The GCMG Program...Current and Future Goals	1
11/17	Saturday Seminar	Tish Reustle	A Garden for Butterflies	1.5
11/17	Saturday Seminar	Sid Kapner	Hobby Greenhouse Construction and Management	1.5
Total Approved Hours				91.75

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. Next upcoming events are December 5: "Birds of the Seasons" — Royce Pendergast, Galveston Bay Area Master Naturalist and Harris County Master Gardener, and January 2: "Favorite Plants of the Houston Area" — Tom Leroy, Montgomery County Extension Agent. Check out their 2013 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 go 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. 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 go enjoy them. Their next show will be in the spring of 2013. March 1-3, 2013 @ the Nessler Center. 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. Check out their website <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. For more, please see <http://www.hsstex.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. 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. Their upcoming March Mart Plant Sale is on Friday and Saturday, March 22 and 23, 2013; Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information see <http://www.hcp4.net/mercerc/programs/index.htm>

The **African Violet Society of America** is a worldwide organization dedicated to the distribution of information, and stimulating interest with African Violets. Their upcoming convention date is in Austin, Texas on May 26 – June 2, 2013 at the beautiful Renaissance Hotel. 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 upcoming Region 6 Fall Symposium will be on September 28, 2013, Houston, TX. See site for more information. <http://www.ahsregion6.org/calendar.htm>

Harris County Master Gardeners will continue their lecture series in 2013. Details will come when they are posted on their site, as well as their Green Thumb lecture series. 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: 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 12, or Laurel Stine, ext 16 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

The 2013 International Master Gardener Conference, aptly being called "Alaska; Flowers, Fjords, and Friends," on the Holland America Cruise Ship Westerdam 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. . Please see the website for the entire specific details <http://www.uaex.edu/imgc2013/>.

Texas Master Gardener Conference 2013!

" Blooms, Birds & Butterflies" The conference will be held October 17 - 19, 2013 in McAllen, Tx. It is hosted by the Cameron and Hidalgo Counties Master Gardener Assoc. and will be held at the McAllen Conference Center. The Texas Master Gardener Association website has preliminary information including the host hotel Casa de Palmas and other hotel information, tour information, and speakers which includes our own GCMG Clyde Holt who will be speaking on Bonsai. This looks to be a terrific conference and details will be updated including costs as they become available. I advise you to check the TMGA website frequently for details.

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.

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 February 18-19, 2013. 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.

VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGS

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

the last word . . .

OAK TREES PRODUCING BUMPER CROP OF ACORNS

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



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

Whether it's a small crop or a large crop, oak trees can be expected to start dropping their acorns as the fall season progresses.

Since the arrival of the cool front in late September that signaled the start of the fall season, I have enjoyed sitting in a comfortable chair on my front porch as the sun begins to set and temperatures drop.

This has been an unusual fall, as I now get to also anticipate the crunch-crunch-crunch of acorns being crushed by the tires of my neighbor's vehicle as it enters the driveway directly across my driveway. My neighbor has two large oak trees on both sides of his driveway.

After my neighbor parks his vehicle, he and I get to hear the plunk-plunk-plunk of acorns dropping on his vehicle, especially during windy weather. This has been a daily happening over the past several days. Each evening is replay of the previous evening. My neighbor is beginning to think that the supply of acorns is inexhaustible.

So why are oaks producing such an exceptional crop of acorns this year? Nut trees typically produce in an "on year – off year" pattern (also known as alternate year bearing). Pecan growers, including home growers with one or several pecan trees in the landscape, are well aware of this and use fertilizer and ample irrigation during dry spells to minimize the swings in yield.

Oak trees across Texas are producing huge crops of acorns. Oak trees tend to produce one bumper crop every two to seven years. The more common explanation for this year's heavy crop is the stress brought on by last year's drought conditions and other environmental conditions.

Most authorities indicate the reason is more complicated than

drought conditions alone. Whatever

factors influence a heavy acorn production year, they were at play this year as oaks in other regions of the U.S. (Including the New England area), are producing exceptional loads of acorns.

Yes, walking barefoot in a lawn populated with an overabundance of acorns would be challenging. My neighbor knows the shade provided by his oak trees during the heat of a warm summer more than offset an occasional nuisance such as acorns on the driveway. Most of us have appreciated the cooler temperature and gentle, refreshing breeze under a large shade tree on an otherwise hot, still day.

Trees in the landscape provide numerous aesthetic, environmental, and economic benefits, including increasing the value of a home and reducing air conditioning costs.

The value of trees in the home landscape reminds me of a story about two neighbors. A young father was raking leaves in his yard when he noticed his retired neighbor digging a hole. When asked what he was doing, the elderly gentleman told him he was planting a tree.

The young neighbor just smiled and chuckled to himself as he asked, "Why are you doing that? That tree won't be fully grown for 20 or 30 years, and you'll probably never benefit from it."

To that the elderly gentleman told his neighbor, "I know that, but aren't you glad that someone planted that tree in your front yard years ago so that you could enjoy its shade and so your kids can climb its stately limbs?" A sobering perspective indeed.

Whether you are putting in new trees or caring for existing trees, it's worth the time and effort to provide the proper management needed to produce healthy, vigorous growing trees. Trees can provide the basic framework for any landscape plan.



Oaks are producing an abundance of acorns this fall. Acorns on the driveway and in the beds of pickups are prompting some residents to wonder what's going on.

Photo by William Johnson

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

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

GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION



*You are Invited to the
Annual MGA Christmas Gathering*

Tuesday, December 11, 2012

Arrive 6:30-7:00 pm

Dinner at 7:10 pm

**in the home of
MG Mikey & Allen Isbell**

DETAILS AND DIRECTIONS WILL FOLLOW by E-mail



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