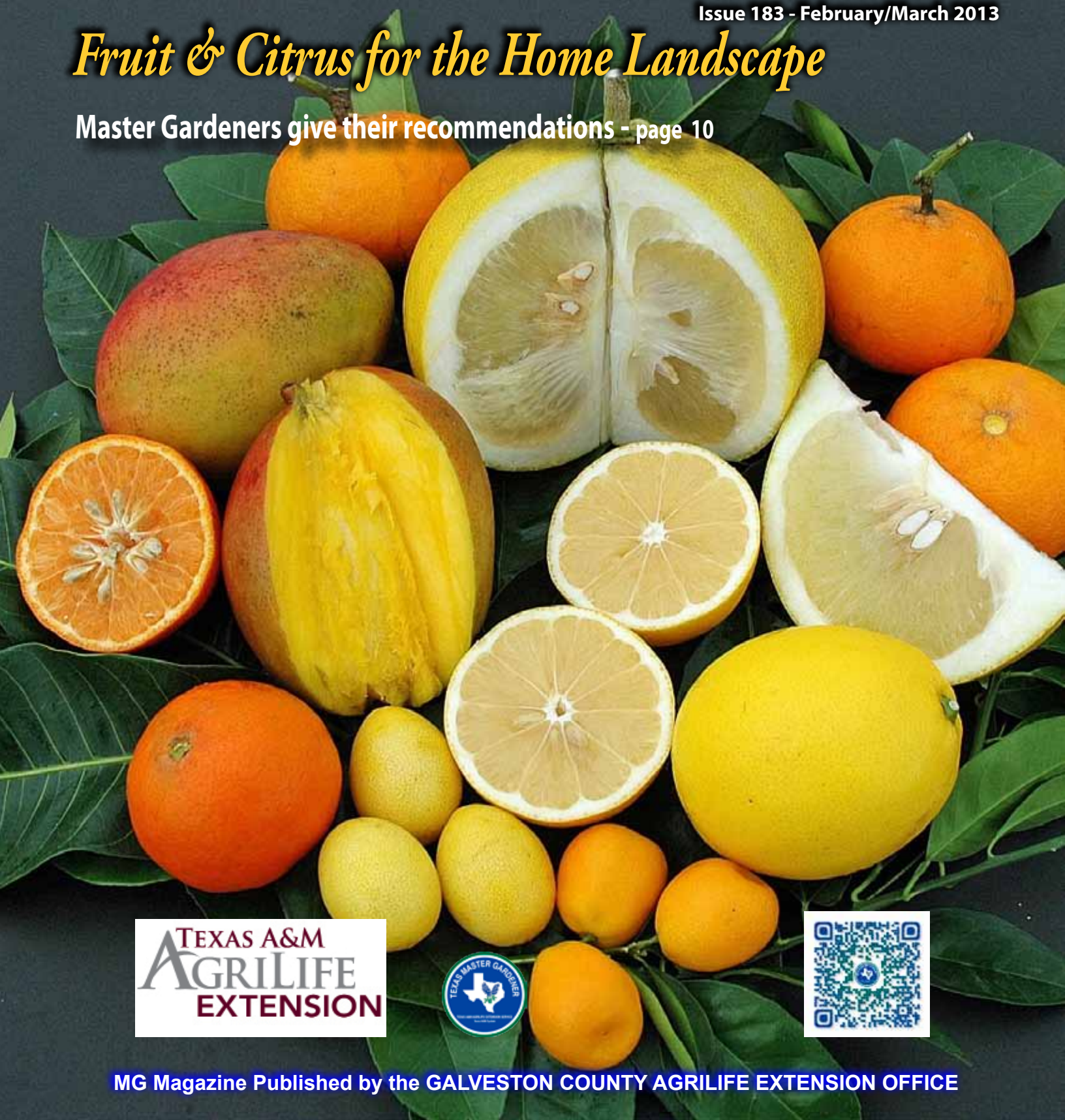


# THE GALVESTON COUNTY Master Gardeners

Issue 183 - February/March 2013

## *Fruit & Citrus for the Home Landscape*

Master Gardeners give their recommendations - page 10



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*"I wandered lonely as a cloud, that floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd, a host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees, fluttering and dancing in the breeze."*  
—William Wordsworth, Daffodils



By Camille Goodwin  
MG 2008

Wordsworth's melodic poem celebrates the happiness of nature which I think resonates in every one of the Galveston Country Master Gardeners that I've met. Lately most of us are eager to shake off the short Gulf Coast "winter" and get busy planning or working our spring gardens. In early February we kicked off the coming spring with our popular annual fruit tree seminar & sale. Our sales bring out most of our membership to volunteer and we get to visit with friends we may not see regularly. It's a time when we trade success and failure stories and many new and old ideas. This always seems to energize everyone into figuring out how to improve something currently in their gardens or try something never done before. We never seem to stop perfecting, changing or experimenting!

With this notion in mind, our newsletter this month features several educational articles that we hope you'll find will add to your 2013 spring gardening inspiration and wisdom. The Q&As this month (pages 4 and 5) deal with fruit tree pruning and those sometimes puzzling horticultural oils. We've gotten lots of questions regarding how to prune our peach trees at planting. The pictures in this article should provide the answers for peach and any other recently purchased fruit trees. Our new video calendar feature on page 14 has many timely tips for what you should be doing now to prepare, plant, defend or feed your landscapes during February and March.

Luke Stripling & Pat Forke present some learned guidance (page 7) about spring vegetable gardening, including what to plant now along with specific tips for potatoes and onion plants. Donna Ward proposes yet more ideas for getting ready for spring and what we can be doing this month to gear up for the growing season (page 8). Jan Brick offers information on the variety of fertilizers that are available to us (page 9). Our popular Best Shots (pages 10 and 11) highlight some of the fabulous fruit trees that we are so lucky to be able to grow in our coastal region along with some suggestions for beginners wishing to grow citrus. In addition, don't miss the video on harvesting your citrus on page 14. Bob McPherson is our Association's greenhouse expert and the article on page 12 showcases his remarkable yard.

Thinking of getting a rain barrel to conserve water or have water available during droughts? Take a look at the article on page 13 by BJ Logan for some current, up-to-date essentials. For the gastronomes in our group, the recipe for this month sounds fantastic (page 15). Dr. Johnson is featured on page 21. The latest news from our demonstration garden is contained in the Carbide Park Update on page 16. If you haven't been to the demonstration garden in a while, you are missing all the new construction, renovated garden beds, the Asian Garden and the peacefulness of the landscape there. It's really exciting and inspirational to see how hard the demonstration garden team works to continually enhance this beautiful place. The Thursday workday in the garden is a lot of fun, with some very dynamic GCMGs. There is always something that needs to be done. Please come visit, or better yet, volunteer and come out and mingle with us!

Don't forget to explore our updated calendar and bulletin board sections where upcoming meetings, seminars, conferences, classes, specialty training and volunteer opportunities appear.

The newsletter team hopes you are enjoying the new electronic format of our newsletter, the links for easy access to additional detailed information and the videos. We'd love to hear feedback from our members so that we can continue to improve the newsletter. Please send your thoughts and comments to Linda Steber at: [steber8@msn.com](mailto:steber8@msn.com)



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Front Cover Photo by Heidi Sheesley

Check out pages 10 & 11 for more about "easy to grow" fruit & citrus

## How to Reach Us



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# ask a master gardener...



By Herman Auer  
MG 1983

## Q&A

### Hot Line Topics

### pruning fruit trees

**Q**uestion: I recently purchased a fruit tree. Can you give me some advice as to pruning?

*Photos by Herman Auer*

**Photo 1** – Newly planted and not yet pruned. This is the hardest part of planting a tree for many people. Just do it. It has to be done. Gerry Gafka of Harris County, Precinct II Master Gardeners tackles the pruning.



**Answer:** Now that you have purchased and planted your new fruit tree for your orchard, you are ready to prune. When your bare root tree was dug from the nursery row, many of its roots were left in that soil. Your tree, in its new home, is now out of balance. It is important to have an adequate root system to supply the top of your tree. If there is too much demand for water and nutrients than the root system can supply, the tree may die.

By reducing the top of your newly planted tree by at least 30 percent, you increase the chances for a successful planting. To ensure success, I reduce the top by 50 percent or more. I want my tree to be in balance. I want enough root system to supply the top. Commercial fruit growers, when planting their orchards, reduce the top of their trees by 50 percent. They are in the business of making money from successful planting and plentiful production. Properly pruning newly planted trees ensures maximum survival of trees.

**Photo 4** – This is the same tree one year later. Notice the success of one year's growth of this Tropic White Flesh Peach. The wood trunk is about 24 inches tall with limbs growing from it, covered with blooms.



**Photo 2** – You have done it! Your tree will flourish!



**Photo 3** – Pruned tree with the top portion removed and standing at the side



**Photo 5** – What a beautiful tree! This is midsummer of the second year after planting.





# HORTICULTURAL OILS

## not well understood by most users



By Camille Goodwin  
MG 2008

**Q**uestion: I am confused with the use of dormant oil, Neem oil, etc. What do I use, where and when?

Answer: Horticultural oil insecticides can be paraffinic oils from highly refined petroleum crude or are oils extracted from plants and animals that are used to protect plants from insects and even some diseases. Most oil based pesticides are used for insect control, but many also have fungicidal properties. Gardeners have used oils to control pests for ages.

Horticultural oils are not well understood by most users. Product labels can be confusing and until recent years, little developmental research on pests of ornamentals has been conducted. Most of the research and technology focused only on tree fruits in Florida, California, Texas and New York. Adding to the confusion are the many names: spray oil, petroleum oil, paraffinic oil, insecticidal oil, dormant oil, summer oil, all season oil, narrow-range, supreme or superior oil, Neem oil, fish oil. These names usually refer to specific oil types, uses or brands. Oils are some of the safest pesticides for humans, wildlife and pets. They are active for only a short time as they evaporate quickly and do not contaminate the soil or groundwater sources. They have little impact on beneficial insects.

There are two types of oils, dormant and summer. Their use depends on the life stage of the pest you're treating and their names refer to the timing and rate of the application, not the type of oil product. Dormant oils are applied to trees during their dormant stage (after leaf drop) in the winter season to kill overwintering insect pests or pathogens. They are generally thicker and have more impurities than the more modern, purified summer oils and are therefore, more toxic to plants. Highly refined summer oils are applied to foliated plants during the growing season and are less likely to burn the foliage when properly applied. Some oils are intended only for dormant use, but today, modern horticultural oils can be used during both growing seasons. Many can be used for house plants, flowers, vegetables and other herbaceous plants. Some oils

reduce the spread of many mosaic viruses and control powdery mildew. Final formulations of oils contain emulsifying agents that allow the oil to mix with water for easy spray application.

**Petroleum (Mineral) Oils**—Most horticultural oils are refined from crude oil and contain paraffin compounds that are toxic to insects but less toxic to plants. Oils may also contain sulfur, another plant-damaging compound. The unsulfonated residue (UR) rating indicates sulfur content—most horticultural oils have a UR rating of 90 or above. Viscosity or thickness is a measure of an oil's effectiveness and safety. Lighter and thinner oils are more desirable. Narrow-range oil is a light oil graded according to the range of temperatures over which it evaporates. Lighter oils evaporate over a narrower range of temperatures than other oils, making the term synonymous with superior or supreme oil. Oils that evaporate quickly have greater margins of safety. Summer oils are the same as narrow-range, superior, and supreme oils. Today all horticultural oils are superior-type oils with labels specifying varying application rates for use during dormancy and growing seasons.

**Plant Oils**—include oils extracted from plant seeds, leaves, stems or flowers. Neem oil is extracted from the neem tree and is used as both an insecticide and a fungicide. It is effective at killing insect eggs, immature, soft-bodied insects, certain mite eggs, and also prevents powdery mildew and black spot. Canola, soybean and cottonseed oils are extracted from plants.

**Fish Oils** are by-products of the fish processing industry and are often combined with plant oils.

Irrespective of the source or type, all oils (except Neem) kill insects on contact by suffocation and disruption of their feeding surfaces. Oils may also smother fungal growth and reduce spore germination on treated surfaces. Neem contains sulfur compounds and may possess additional fungicidal qualities as compared to petroleum oils. Neem

suffocates, but also causes hormonal changes that effect the insects eating and reproductive systems.

Primary targets of oil sprays include spider mites, scale insects, mealybugs, aphids, whiteflies, some caterpillar pests and a number of fruit tree pests. Dormant treatments are directed primarily at mites, mite eggs, scale insects and eggs of overwintering aphids. Summer treatments are effective against other active life stages. Timing of the application is critical for success. Oil sprays are effective only against exposed eggs and insects that are coated with a layer of oil.

Generally, modern oil products are very safe to use on plants when applied properly. Some plants including maples, cedar, evergreen, redbud, juniper, spruce, hibiscus, azalea and others are sensitive to oils and injury can occur from dormant or summer oil applications. It's extremely important to read labels for acceptable application temperature ranges. Avoid applying when temperatures and humidity are high or when plants are under drought or other stress and irrigate the day before application. Do not apply oil in combination with other certain pesticides or when shoots emerge in spring. Make sure mixture remains emulsified by shaking tank during use.





## Galveston County MG 2012 Hybrid Tea Rose Study

by John Jons  
MG 2003

Photo/Chart by MG John Jons

**H**ybrid Tea roses are the roses that typically have the shape and form of florist type roses. They are the type of roses used for arrangements and as floral gifts. They tend to survive well in a vase for a week or more. They are what most people think a rose should look like. Most homeowners in Galveston and Harris Counties do not select these roses for their gardens as they believe that these type of roses are hard to grow successfully. Consequently, most gardeners elect to grow the type of roses that may look good on the bush but not look good in a floral display, or arrangement, or last long in a vase.

So we are conducting a study on growing florist type (Hybrid Tea) roses in Galveston County. The intent of this study was to see if a Hybrid Tea rose could consistently produce flowers that could be good enough for a “vase on the kitchen table” with minimal to no care, in Galveston County. We selected two varieties of Hybrid Tea Roses—Veterans' Honor, a red rose with 25-30 petals and St. Patrick, a yellow rose with 30-35 petals. These two Hybrid Tea rose varieties are considered to be “show” (can grow with perfect form) quality roses. As these roses are available of two different rootstocks in our area, Dr. Huey and Fortuniana, we acquired a rose on each rootstock.

The roses were purchased on 2/15/12 and planted in rose beds two weeks later. To replicate the gardening practices of the typical homeowner, these roses were provided with minimal care that only included watering and fertilizing in July and September. They were never sprayed for diseases or insects. The blooms were harvested weekly and arranged in a floral bouquet and donated to a charity or given to a Master Gardener who was working in the gardens. The number of blooms on each plant and, the size and overall health of the plant were documented weekly.

**Summary:** The Table illustrates some of the key data points. This data are not comprehensive enough to draw any significant conclusions but it illustrates how well these four Hybrid Tea rose plants performed in Galveston County. These roses did experience attacks of Botrytis in April (due to the large number of petals on the blooms) and varying degrees of Black Spot in May, July, November and December, resulting in some defoliation. There was no noticeable insect damage. It was expected (based upon my own experience) that there would be a difference between the roses on different rootstocks. The roses grafted on Dr. Huey did appear to be more susceptible to Black Spot. The Veterans' Honor rose grafted on Fortuniana outperformed the Veterans' Honor rose on the Dr. Huey rootstock in bloom production. There was minimal bloom production difference between the St. Patrick roses on different rootstocks. For this first year of growth, there was minimal growth size difference between all four roses on the two different rootstocks. This may be attributable to the fact that the plants have only been in the rose bed less than a year and were pruned each week when the blooms were harvested. An interesting point for consideration: Florists usually sell Hybrid Tea type rose blooms for about a \$1 (- \$3.99) or more a bloom (or \$12.99 a dozen). These four Hybrid Tea roses produced (1520 blooms) or \$1520 worth of roses.

Dr. Huey	Fortuniana	Dr. Huey	Fortuniana	Rootstock
Vetrans' Honor	Vetrans' Honor	St. Patrick	St. Patrick	Variety
362	433	364	361	Total Number of Blooms for 2012
10	11	10	10	Average Number of Blooms (2/15-12/27)
23	34	29	28	Most Blooms in one week



The weekly bouquets of roses. The red roses are Veterans' Honor and the yellow roses are St. Patrick.



## remember to put color on your plate

### Spring Gardening



*By Luke Stripling  
MG 1991*

*Edited by Pat Forke*

Let us begin by saying hello spring and welcome the possibility of a good gardening season. We can start the New Year with some new life style changes. I really believe we can improve our chances of a longer and happier life by doing just a few things differently. Most have a good bit to do with gardening. Outside, the sunshine helps provide needed vitamin D. A good workout with spade, turning fork, rake or other simple tools will provide the exercise we need. Eat less and move more.

Remember to put color on your plate. This is simple as a gardener loves to plant those things that have color. Purchase fruits and vegetables that give color to your plate. It is not too late to pick a good spot for a garden. Just remember, plants require lots of sunshine. Morning sun is really best. Try to stay away from trees, fences and other sun blocking objects. Have you noticed whether water stands in this area? If this is the case, I would suggest building a raised bed. The bed should be twelve to fifteen inches tall, four feet wide and as long as your space will allow. Soil and all the material will cost according to the size about \$2 to \$3 per square foot. This is not a bad investment considering you can harvest lots of fresh fruits and vegetables for ten to twelve years.

With the sun, soil and water source nearby you are close to ready to start. What do you want to plant? Make sure your choice will grow in our area. Soil temperature is very important for seeds to germinate. Too much moisture and your seeds will rot. This January we have had lots of rain so we may have to wait a while before we can plant.

Let's start with potatoes. Varieties for our area are red skinned La Soda and white skinned Kennebec. Seed potatoes are available now at local feed stores. Cut the seed potato so you have one eye or two on each section. Take a two inch spud cut so you have four pieces with at least one eye per piece. Sprinkling some fungicide in the cut surface is a useful trick. Common sulfur dust is very effective and is available in most garden stores in the three or four pound bag. You should plant potatoes in a furrow about three inches deep. Seed pieces should be firmed in the furrow and covered with soil. I always push the pieces firmly into the bottom of the furrow. It makes no

difference whether the eyes are up or down. Just make sure they are firm in the furrow. Later when the plant is about five or six inches tall dirt them. That is rake soil up around plant stem so only the leaves are above ground. The tubers grow above the planted piece extending out from the stem on stolons. Side dressing has little effect.

Onion transplants when they are available can be set out at this time. Only short day varieties will bulb in our area. The 1015Y variety is popular, also the white Bermuda grows well and keeps a little better than the 1015Y. Transplants should not be set too deep. Trim some of the roots off. Make a hole about an inch deep. Set the plant and firm the soil. Later, when the tops are about six inches tall, side dress with nitrogen 21-0-0. One-half cup should be divided on each side of a ten-foot row. Use a nitrogen fertilizer that does not contain sulfur. Other micronutrients are fine but exclude sulfur. Sulfur will make the onion hot.

Hopefully the soil will dry some and will warm up so we can plant other vegetables soon. The soil must warm before planting many kinds of seed. Bean seed will rot if the soil is below sixty five degrees. Here is a list of the vegetables that can be planted during late January and February: beets, broccoli transplants, collards, kale, and corn. Later in February plant kohlrabi and lettuce. I like butter crunch and black leaf Simpson. Remember lettuce seed need light to sprout. The English pea and snap pea can also be planted at this time. Radish is a quick grower and can be planted now. Spinach is a cool grower and can be planted now. I have a hint about planting spinach. Come to one of my talks and I will tell all.

Remember to check at the AgriLife Office for full information on any of these or any other vegetable variety that you would like more information about. I am buying all new seed this year. I have experimented with old seed for several seasons now and it is time for a fresh start. I am waiting for March when we can go full force in the garden.

Remember soil is what you have in your garden, dirt is what you have under your finger nails. Be kind to everyone, grow and enjoy a bountiful harvest this year.



Beets by MG Luke Stripling



Potato Blooms - by MG Herman Auer



By Donna J. Ward  
MG 1996

## prime planting time

# 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.)

It's February—and you know what that means—'LEMONADE.' Well, OK, that's not the first thing that comes to mind—but to a gardener looking to plant citrus trees, it means prime planting time. And plenty of citrus varieties can happily grow in our neighborhood. For instance, we can successfully grow lemons, grapefruit, limes, kumquats, loquats and oranges. Now you don't need acreage to plant a few citrus trees, but they do need their own space. They need adequate drainage, and that doesn't mean a high spot in your yard. They prefer a raised bed—12 inches high would make them happy, and of course in a sunny spot. Do a bit of research before you plant any fruit tree. If you neglect to purchase the right variety for your location, it will take three to five years before you realize that it is the wrong variety—and look at the time and work you've wasted! When shopping for citrus, don't seek out the one bearing fruit. These small trees are forced into bearing to the detriment of foliage and roots. This is done strictly to look good to you—the prospective purchaser. If you have to purchase a potted plant already bearing fruit, remove it immediately. Don't sap its strength trying to produce fruit, let it concentrate its strength on developing a good root system and healthy foliage. And if you really want a healthy, heavily bearing citrus tree, remove the fruit—it may produce its first season in your 'orchard.' After that, get ready to increase your Vitamin C intake! There's enough lemon (Improved Meyer) juice in my freezer to last through the summer.

I know you're thinking 'spring' but don't jump the gun and get out the lawn fertilizer. Even though the lawn might be showing green, if you look close, you're seeing cool weather weeds. Fertilizing now will only make them healthier! Your St. Augustine doesn't even think about growing until the weather warms. After you've had to mow a couple of times drag out the bag of 15-5-10. I know in the past I've touted 13-13-13, but current thinking on that subject has changed somewhat. Phosphorus (the middle number) tends to build up in our coastal soils, so go easy with it. Oh, and you might want to have the lawn mower sharpened. A dull blade tears instead of cutting.

Valentine's Day is traditional for pruning roses. Take out any dead or crossed canes. They like air circulation, so five canes are plenty, and prune them on a slant just above an outward facing bud. Climbing roses are the exception—hold off with their haircut until after they've bloomed. This would be a good time to take rose cuttings for propagation purposes. While you're in the garden you might notice the fading leaves of naturalizing bulbs—you may have to force yourself, but if you can—leave them alone. They use the dying foliage to reload for next year's blooms. Just pretend you don't see brown leaves.

Those plumerias that you stashed in the garage when cold weather approached would like to come outside on warm days, but remember to move them back inside during cool nights.

Old McDonald (your alter ego) is raring to go. Dig out your overalls and straw hat—your time has come. You've already purchased seeds of kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, turnip, spinach, radish, English

and snap peas, collards and beets. Traditionally corn seed goes in the ground on February 14 on this 'farm.' Oh, I know, some folks say that's too early, but you'll be picking corn before the weather gets warm and those succulent ears are discovered by corn worms. It is a little too early for cabbage transplants, but broccoli transplants are looking for a home right now. Speaking of transplants—did you start some tomato seeds indoors last month or even earlier? It's too soon to put them in the ground but they'd appreciate getting out for a bit of fresh air and sunshine on a warm day. Kick the dirt off of that shovel—you might want to sharpen its edge a bit, no point in making 'farming' any harder than it has to be. Mmmm, can't you almost taste those collard greens that have snuggled up against those ham hocks? Yum. Pass the cornbread.



Orange Tree by MG Herman Auer



# Fertilizer—Food For Thought

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



By Jan Brick  
MG 2001

Use a balanced fertilizer, Use a high middle number—organic or inorganic. Terms such as these may be confusing to some gardeners especially the novices among us, so let's explore the world of fertilization. "To survive and grow, plants need soil with balanced amounts of phosphorous, nitrogen and potassium. To thrive, they need small amounts of a number of other nutrients. Both organic and inorganic fertilizers supplement the soil and provide plants with nutrients. However, organic and inorganic fertilizers supply nutrients to soil in different ways."

Most organic fertilizers contain insoluble nitrogen and act as a slow-release fertilizer. This action reduces risks of over-fertilization. Use of inorganic fertilizers regularly in ever increasing quantities can cause the runoff of soluble nitrogen and phosphorus into our water systems—whether our drinking supply or our bays—which in turn can cause fish kills and damage to the delicate and fragile eco-system. Remember, it does not always follow true that if a little of something is good then surely more of it should be better. Consider the amounts of fertilizer you use in regard to its effect on the environment.

Organic fertilizers are composed of natural ingredients from plants or animals that help create a healthy environment for the soil over a long period of time. Inorganic fertilizers are manufactured from minerals or synthetic chemicals. Inorganic fertilizers work much more quickly, but fail to create a sustainable environment. When considering which fits your gardening needs, you might decide that a combination of both organic and inorganic may give you the best of both options.

There are three types of organic fertilizers—mineral based, plant based, and animal based.

Mineral based fertilizers slowly decompose into the soil. Listed among this group would be magnesium sulfate (Epsom salt) and glauconite (Green-sand).

**Plant based fertilizers** that break down easily to serve quickly as a good source of nutrients include:

**Compost**—gardeners are encouraged to create their own fertilizer source with a compost bin. This actually incurs little expense and a moderate amount of effort. The organic matter in compost has been slowly and carefully broken down into its basic elements. According to the Food and Fertilizer Technology Center, regardless of the source material, mature composts offer a steady and slow release of all of the nutrients plants need, including phosphorous, potassium, nitrogen and calcium, as well as micronutrients and trace elements.

**Cottonseed meal**—high in nitrogen that promotes leafy green growth

**Seaweed**—high amounts of potassium and micronutrients, as well as hormones that regulate plant growth

**Animal based fertilizers** have high nitrogen levels. The most popular types of animal based fertilizers are:

**Manures**—nitrogen, phosphorous and micronutrients, as well as organic carbon for healthy soil

**Blood meal**—highly soluble, mixes readily with soil, giving plants a fast shot of nitrogen

**Bone meal**—slow-acting, making it safe, especially for new or delicate plants

**Fish emulsion**—concentrated liquid that is rich in micronutrients

Recently, I watched a program that highlighted the use of organic versus inorganic sources of fertilizer on the coral reefs off the coast of Cuba. Those reefs had been affected by the use of chemicals over many years as have coral reefs throughout the world. The revolution in that country and the following embargo caused a lack of available imported goods including commercial fertilizers. Cuban farmers and

gardeners were forced to use natural or organic sources. As a result, it has been discovered, many of the endangered coral reefs have become reborn and are actually thriving, with some species that were thought to be extinct alive and well and growing. These facts seem to be a testament to the use of organic fertilizers or at the least to the reduced use of chemicals.

According to North Carolina State University, "There are benefits and what some may consider disadvantages of organic and inorganic fertilizers. Deciding which kind to use may depend on your horticultural situation. Organic matter in natural fertilizers promotes an environment conducive for earthworms and increases the capacity for holding water and nutrients. Organic fertilizers release nutrients slowly, relying on soil organisms to break down organic matter. A slow-release scenario decreases the risk of nutrient leaching but takes time to supply nutrients to plants.

Inorganic fertilizers contain a higher percentage of nutrients and provide them more quickly than organic fertilizers. This is a benefit for plants with a short life span, such as bedding plants, but the concentrated form increases the risk of burning the plant if applied incorrectly, and the quick-release of nutrients may result in soil leaching.

It does not have to be either organic or inorganic fertilizer. An integrated approach blends the use of both. A study published in 2009 described the benefits of an integrated system on rice fields in India. The authors found that a combination of organic and synthetic fertilizers resulted in yields that increased over five years. They concluded that an integrated approach improved the capacity of the soil to supply nutrients. A blend of both organic and inorganic fertilizers may suit your landscape."

Macronutrient—those nutrients that plants require in large amounts—include nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium and are listed as percentages on the fertilizer bag. Gardener, Mike Rhino explains in the following article.

Many gardeners use some type of fertilizer as a beneficial amendment to the soil for their plants. All fertilizers have a three number code on the package, such as 14-10-4 or 10-10-6. This code contains a lot of useful information for gardeners, once they understand what it means.

Each number of the three number code represents the percentage of the contents that are made up of one of three minerals beneficial to growing plants. These three substances are nitrogen, phosphate (phosphorus) and potash (potassium). For example, if the package code is 12-18-6, this means the product inside is 12% nitrogen, 18% phosphate and 6% potash. The other 64% of the contents will be listed in the ingredients section on the label.

Nitrogen helps plants to grow foliage, leaves and stems. If a plant doesn't have enough nitrogen, its growth may be stunted. If it gets too much nitrogen, the plant will die from the nitrogen burning its roots. Phosphate or phosphorus benefits root development. A healthy root system is important for strong, healthy plants. Potash aids a plant to bloom and fruit. Vegetable plants will have better yields and flowers will bloom more profusely when provided with the right amount of potash.

Often, the fertilizer is purchased based on the label stating that the product is "for roses" or "for citrus" or some other plant type. Some products are more general and can be used on a wide array of plants. Most plants respond well to moderate amounts of balanced fertilizers, such as 10-10-10 or 6-8-6. Certain plants, such as roses or orchids, have more specific needs. Fertilizer companies supply a wide range of products to cover most types of specialty plants.



# MG BEST SHOTS

Satsumas by Luke Stripling



Celeste Fig from The MG Digital Library



Kumquats from the MG Digital Library



Mustang Grapes from the MG Digital Library



Blackberries by Mary Demeny



Improved Meyer Lemon by Herman Auer





# ...and Narrative

## easy to grow plants



by Sandra Devall  
MG 1998

**B**est Shots' for this issue is directed at new gardeners who are looking for fruit that will give them the 'best chance' at success when growing and producing.

I am really excited that this issue is focused on fruit in general because I would have loved to have this kind of information when I first added fruits to my garden. My first tree was a Meyer Lemon and its first fruiting was wonderful, I was proud! The next year, there was nothing but thorns. It was like a teenager going through puberty! Dr. Johnson showed me that I had covered up the graft on the lower trunk with soil, mulch and leaves. Who knew? I hope you find a set of planting instructions before you plant your first fruit or citrus and I hope you will find some good suggestions from this section of our newsletter. Good production comes with immediate bragging rights as we hand out our produce to others!

**Satsumas** seem to be tops on the list of most Master Gardeners as the easiest to grow. This fruit is not only recommended by our local Master Gardeners but also by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service as the best fruit statewide. If you have not heard of a satsuma, you are in for a delicious surprise. They are popular with most Master Gardeners because they rarely suffer from insect or diseases and have a long fruiting season. After the first few years, I have not watered or fertilized my tree and it is always loaded with fruit. They do need eight to ten hours of full sun for heavy fruiting. They have a weeping shape and do not get any taller than 4-6 feet. The fruit taste like a cross between oranges and nectarine and peels like a nectarine. Be sure not to wait for the peel to turn orange, instead, begin to test the flavor after the first chilled day in the Fall. I cut bunches for gifts, which give the tree a small haircut, too. But I leave enough on the tree so I can go out every morning a pick three to eat as I slowly walk my garden (also that gives me an easy way to get rid of their seeds). Satumas are also successful potted.

It was hard to get a consensus on which satsuma was the best, everyone thought the one they had was the best. If you want a recommendation, one of the Master Gardeners that works in the demonstration garden recommended Miho Satsuma. She said it has excellent productivity and the fruit flesh has a lovely peach color as well as quite sweet and juicy.

**Figs, Celeste.** If you are a fig lover, you are living in the right area. When this area was established, Dickinson and League City were covered in fig orchards and also had a fig processing plant. Unfortunately, residential communities now fill those fig farms. But it does let us know that figs grow easily in this area. A fig tree is a multiple trunk tree and so will need a lot of room around them as they spread to 16 feet wide by 20 feet tall. Varieties with an open "fruit eye" will be susceptible to disease. They like well drained soils, including heavy clay (our soil).

Figs only tolerate light pruning and prefer not to be crowded.

The Celeste fig is our most popular fig tree with small brownish purple fruit and can be a pass-along from dormant root cuttings. As we become more health conscious, people are eating more figs, which is about the best way to serve them—just off the tree.

**Kumquats** are a hands down favorite in local gardens. I must admit that I am sitting here eating a kumquat right now, and that means skin and all (well, not the seeds). Love the sweet taste of the rind which contrasts with the sweet tang of the flesh—thanks to our warmer climate. Because they are slow growing, and are a quite proper shaped tree they would work well in a front or backyard or potted.

Our kumquat, once established, took freezing weather to at least 18 degrees without any protection. Second year in production you have a fair amount of fruit and the third year and the tree is usually loaded. We threw some fertilizer on them and that was the extent of the care they required. No bug problem. One of our experts says, *"Once they get their feet under them (about three years old and have established), they will not need fertilizer or watering."*

**Grapes, Mustang.** What a surprise to find out that grapes grow well in Zone 9, Galveston County. The Mustang grape is native to Texas and there is quite a contrast between the growing of native Mustang grapes and commercial grapes in this area. Most others are difficult to grow.

Both green and purple Mustangs are edible. They are good for jelly, wine and to eat. One plant will grow vines up to 40 feet long. They need to be trellised. You may prune them or not. There are Mustang grapes in the Master Gardener Demonstration and Experimental garden and we can give you some information about these. After three years of growth, the garden harvested 20 pounds of grapes from three to four vines.

**Blackberries.** There is nothing that will make me put aside my diet than two cups of fresh berries in a cobbler served hot and covered with Blue Bell Homemade Vanilla Ice Cream. Unfortunately, the best berries to use are usually those with thorns on them; if you can overlook that, these berries will give you a crop the first or second year. The only caution with blackberries is that you must keep the area around them clear of runners or they will move out of the bed. Put them on a simple trellis like fence post with wire or even a pole or stake. Then get everything ready for making jelly, wine, a quick snack and of course at least one blackberry cobbler.

**Improved Meyer Lemon** is another great fruit to grow in Zone 9. These lemons are much larger and milder than the lemon you find in the grocery store. I love to take one and cut it in half, squeeze in through my fingers into a glass filled with ice and water and drink it just like that, no sugar. You can also squeeze them into an ice tray and save the cubes in your freezer for lemonade all year round. I season a lot with them, too. You will have to cover your lemon tree on the few freeze days that we have so plant it in a place that will make it easy to cover. In the fall, it's a great idea to make a teepee like build-up of leaves and that will be enough protection for most winters here.



## Bob grows tomatoes year round Talented Gardeners, Amazing Yards

by Cheryl Armstrong  
MG 2010

Photos by MG Cheryl Armstrong

At the writing of this article, we are coming out of a wet, dreary winter. The cold winds have whipped our yards around and the light frosts have wilted our winter color. What a pleasant treat it was to visit the greenhouses of Master Gardener, Bob McPherson. Bob grows tomatoes, year round, and by this time of the year, he has tomato plants in all stages of growth, including yummy, brilliant red ones, ready to eat!

As I approached his "grow house," he opened the door and I inhaled the musty, wonderful smell of earth. His tomatoes, *Costoluto Genovese*, were colorful and fragrant. He begins his seed indoors, in the optimum temperature setting, then moves them into his greenhouse, re-pots them and moves them into the grow house until the soil is warm enough to put them into the ground. As I visited the greenhouse, I noticed he was also growing basil through these winter months. With his tomatoes and basil, he likes to make his own, flavorful pesto. When Bob shared with me why he prefers to grow his own tomatoes, I learned something I did not know. The reason home grown tomatoes actually taste better, is because during the process of

developing a variety that looked so round and perfect for our kitchen tables, the bland breeders dulled the taste gene.

Bob has a variety of raised beds that he was bent over working in, pulling up the winter weeds and preparing the beds for the spring planting. When I asked him if I could photograph him working in his garden, he said "I'm not working, I'm playing." Bob also has a good sized fall garden, with some of his crops still producing. His cauliflower was so pretty in contrast to the grey of leafless trees. He grows greens to feed to his "girls" (chickens). By the looks of it, they are well fed. Back behind his gardens sits a pond, where he raises catfish. As I look from the greenhouse to the grow house to the pond, I ask "Bob, do you have a problem with snakes?" "No, he says with a smile. The girls take care of the snakes."

With the sun warming my back and the fragrance of fresh tomatoes and basil still warming my senses, I felt rejuvenated and ready for Spring. Armed with Bob's favorite pesto recipe, I walked past his antique tractors and pulled away. If you can't eat it, he doesn't grow it. Thank you, Bob, for sharing your greenhouses with us.



The Grow House



Tomato Seedlings



The Garden



Cabbage in the Garden



Antique Tractor



Tomatoes in the Greenhouse



Basil in the Greenhouse



Bob Playing in His Garden



## water collection

# Rain Barrels

*Photos by MGs Cheryl Armstrong and Loretta Osteen*



*By BJ Logan  
MG 2009*

Collecting rain water is an old and time honored practice. For over 4000 years, people from India, Egypt, Israel, Greece, and Thailand were putting their clay pots outside in the rain for water harvesting.

With the 2011 year record drought still fresh in our minds, Texas gardeners know just how scarce and valuable a resource water is to our present and for our future. Watching rainwater run down the driveways into the street is a reminder of that fact every time it rains.

The benefits of rain barrels are numerous. Plants love it. Rainwater is a soft water without minerals or chemicals such as fluorine or chlorine. Rainwater is also free from debris and contaminants. Not only do plants and yards love rainwater, it is useful in the house too. Indoor plants love the water too. Those of us in Jamaica Beach know how often the city works on the water lines and we have no water for 6 to 8 hours at a time. So it's good for flushing too. Each time the garden is watered from a rain barrel or a toilet is flushed with rainwater from the barrel the monthly budget is happier and so is the environment.

An amazing amount of water can be collected during a rainfall. For every inch of rain that falls into a collection area of 1000 square feet you can expect to generate about 600 gallons of rain water. That is a lot of water! A roof catchment area is equal to the total square feet of the house plus the extensions of the eaves. The angle of the roof does not need to be considered because rain falls evenly over the roof. If you want to measure your house, just measure the outside walls, then include the overhang of the eaves. For example if your home dimensions are 36 feet by 46 feet and your eaves are 2 feet, you need to add 4 feet to each wall. Two eaves of 2 feet equals 4 feet per wall.

Multiply 40 feet by 50 feet (length by width) to get your catchment area, then 36 feet by 4 feet times 46 feet plus 4 feet equals 2000 square feet. Since one inch of rainfall provides approximately 600 gallons for a 1000 square foot catchment area, for a 2000 square foot house, this house would have a 2000 square foot catchment area, you would multiply 600 gallons times 2. Then 600 gallons times 2 equals 1200 gallons. That is a significant amount to supplement your water supply. However, rainwater collection is not 100 percent. All systems lose some water. Some water will spill out of the gutters and the wind may also blow some away. Evaporation also affects the collection rate. Rain barrels should all be covered which will diminish the evaporation rate.

There are many different kinds of barrels and many different places to buy them. They are readily available at home supply stores such as Lowes and Home Depot or Sams stores. They can be bought from many sources on the Internet and also from catalogs such as Gardeners Supply. Or, if you are handy you can build your own barrels. Home Depot and Lowes offer classes in building barrels and they also supply the needed parts. The Internet has classes and parts for building barrels too.

The simplest way to collect water is to attach the barrel directly to a downspout. Hubs, which can be bought on the internet, is another way to collect. They attach to an outside wall adjacent to the downspout then are connected to one or more barrels. Some barrels are to be used individually while others can be connected to other barrels by pipes or hoses. Of course the more barrels you have the more water will be collected. All barrels should be covered and filtered to protect from wind and debris. Also roofs should be swept occasionally. Hoses can be attached to the barrel's spigot then placed to wherever the water is needed.

Rain barrels can be bought in many different sizes and shapes and colors. There are numerous styles to choose from to fit all styles of houses. I highly recommend them. Happy water collecting!



Barrel Directly Under Downspout



Barrels Connected With Pipe



Rain Barrel with Rain Chain



Why Not Google building rain barrels for even more ideas. plus check out the websites below:

[http://www.emmitsburg.net/gardens/about\\_us.htm](http://www.emmitsburg.net/gardens/about_us.htm)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGFDlkJOdaM>

<http://www.instructables.com/id/Need-Free-Water%3f-Build-a-Rain-Barrel/step7/Enjoy-Free-Water/>



Rain Barrels for Sale at HEB

## February-March "Things To Do" Gardening Calendar Video



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.



## Harvesting Your Citrus Citrus Video



By Herman Auer MG 1983    By Barbara Hankins MG 2012    by Jenifer Leonpacher MG 2010    by Gregory Werth MG 2012

Here's another video "group effort" to learn when and how to harvest your citrus - just click on the "Play Video" icon to the right.



## FAQs on Recertification of Master Gardeners

by Dr. William M. Johnson

**I**n order to retain the Texas Master Gardener title, individuals are required each year to participate in a minimum of 6 hours of recertification (i.e., educational) training and provide an additional 12 hours of volunteer service through the local Extension office.

The title of Texas Master Gardener is valid only when the volunteer is participating in a Master Gardener program approved by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. When an individual ceases active participation in the Master Gardener program and/or does not meet recertification requirements, the individual's certification as a Texas Master Gardener becomes void. The County Extension Agents, serving as Master Gardener Coordinators, are charged to maintain this guideline.

### What are Continuing Education Hours?

Continuing education hours are hours you have spent learning new horticultural information for yourself. Educational programs offered through our Saturday Seminar Series, many (but not all) of our monthly MG meetings, and many (but not all) garden clubs and plant societies are a few examples of where you can obtain 6 education hours a year.

### What are Volunteer Service Hours?

County Extension Agents/Master Gardener Coordinators employed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service make the final determination on what volunteer service hours are accepted to meet requirements for Master Gardener certification and recertification.

Volunteer service hours are approved for activities that are: 1.) Supportive of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's mission and objectives and 2.) Identified as sponsored (or co-sponsored) by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Examples of Volunteer Service Hours include support efforts toward the Demonstration Garden, Seminar series, digital photography database, Speakers Bureau, Junior Master Gardener programs, etc

### What is the Reporting Period?

Our reporting period is for January 1 to December 31 for a given year.

How can we assist Wayne Elliott (the MG Hours Recorder)?

You can help Wayne by NOT changing the original file name of your Volunteer Hour Log when submitting your logs. This is not a major issue, just one where Wayne has to change any log sent back to him with an altered file name back to the original file name!



MG Wayne Elliott - Adding Up MG Hours at the Extension Office





By Karen Cureton  
MG 2008

## Yvonne's Fabulous Asian Oysters

12 oysters on the half shell  
8-10 oz of Mixed Asian Greens (e.g. Bok choy, fine leaf mustard, mizuna)  
3 Tbsp minced onion  
3 Tbsp minced celery  
1 garlic clove, minced

1 Tbsp chili oil  
1 Tbsp grape seed lime oil  
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce  
1/4 cup sake  
Grated Romano cheese

Sauté the greens in a dry pan until wilted. Remove from pan. Heat the oils in the pan and sauté the onion, celery, and garlic. Add the mixed sautéed greens and mix well. Add the Worcestershire sauce. Heat well. Add 1/4 cup of sake and heat until it evaporates. Chop in food processor or blender until roughly chopped; not emulsified. Top the oysters on the half shell with the mixture. Top that with grated Romano cheese to cover. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Slide under the broiler until lightly browned. Serve immediately.



## 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 Master Gardener Programs 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.

Fruit Tree Sale on February 2, 2013. Remember to volunteer to help. Office help the week prior to the sale. Set-up, unloading, and placing of the plants needed Friday February 1, 2013. Contact Laurel Stine or Laura Bellmore at the Extension Office for details and to sign up.

### Tuesday Night & Saturday Seminars

Jan. 22, 2013 (Tuesday Night)	"Growing Citrus in the Home Landscape" - MG Herman Auer	6:30 pm - 8:00 pm
Jan. 26, 2013 (Saturday)	"Successful Spring Vegetable Gardening" - MG Luke Stripling	9:30 am - 11:30 am
Jan. 26, 2013 (Saturday)	"Anyone Can Grow Roses" - MG John Jons . . . . .	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Jan. 29, 2013 (Tuesday Night)	"Growing Blueberries" - Dr. David Cohen . . .	6:30 pm - 8:00 pm
Feb. 2, 2013 (Saturday)	"Fruit and Citrus Trees for the Gulf Coast - Plant Sale Preview"	
	. . . . . Heidi Sheesley, TreeSearch Farms	8:00 am - 9:00 am
Feb. 9, 2013 (Saturday)	"Tomato Stress Management" - MG Sam Scarcella .	9:00 am - 11:30 am
Feb. 9, 2013 (Saturday)	"Kitchen Gardening" - MG Mary Demeny . . . . .	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Feb 16, 2013 (Saturday)	"Hummingbirds - The Fluttering Jewels in our Gardens" -	
	. . . . . MG Elayne Kouzounis	9:00 am - 11:30 am
Feb. 16, 2013 (Saturday)	"Honey Bees Around the Garden" - MGs Stewart McAdoo	
	. . . . . & Robert Marshall	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

# Project: Demonstration Gardens

## Carbide Park



It has been another good season at the garden. The fall and winter vegetable production has been very good. The bounty of vegetables; colorful Swiss chard, cabbage, Brussels sprout, cauliflower, eggplant and other greens has been amazing. We filled many bags for community centers during November and December. See chart below prepared by John Jons.

By Tom Fountain MG 2008  
By Jan Fountain MG 2012 Intern



The wet cooler weather of December and January left the grounds at the garden a little muddy. This wet weather and gusty winds made a few of our garden workdays almost impossible. A time or two only a handful of gardeners appeared and then were only able to work outside for a little while.

Henry and crew are slowly continuing to renew the existing beds. The greenhouse crew's project has almost halted due to wet cold weather. They were unable to pour concrete in the cold wet weather.

The gusty winds in December uprooted one of the Anna Apple trees, so it had to be reset and given an emergency pruning. Our normal Thursday garden workgroup has had a strong turnout despite the cold weather. They are cleaning dead plants out of the beds and helping to keep the garden looking good.

Produce sent to Senior Citizens - December 2013				
	12-6	12-13	12-20	Total
Turnips	82	9	3	94 Lbs.
Turnip greens	23			23 Lbs.
Mustard Greens	11			11 Lbs.
Carrots	2	8	3.5	13.5 Lbs.
Cauliflower	30	6	10.5	46.5 Lbs.
Cabbage	25	24.5	6.5	56 Lbs.
Brussels Sprouts				0 Lbs.
Broccoli	5.7	1	4	10.7 Lbs.
Satsuma's	22			22 Lbs.
Red Beets	7.5	7.5	2	17 Lbs.
Longhorn Pepper	3			3 Lbs.
Figs	1			1 Lbs.
Egg Plants	273	2	8	283 Lbs.
Pepper's		2		2 Lbs.
Red Cabbage		13		13 Lbs.
Green Tomatoes			5.5	5.5 Lbs.
Grapefruit		7.5		7.5 Lbs.
Red Potatoes		40.5		40.5 Lbs.
				643.7 Lbs.



Herman Auer gave a demonstration on grafting peach trees in January. Check our web page to find upcoming demonstrations. We have a lot of talent. The garden is a great place to visit with other gardeners. Come out and maybe pick up a good tip or pass one on. Have a great New Year!

Photos by MG Tom Fountain



## MEETING MINUTES

### DECEMBER 11, 2012 MG MEETING

The December meeting of the Master Gardener Association was held at the home of Mikey and Allen Isbell on Tuesday, December 11, 2012. Jim Edwards and Dr. Johnson wished everyone a happy holiday and commented this was a very good year! Since it was Jim's birthday everyone sang "Happy Birthday" to him. Without any other business, MG Luke Stripling gave the grace before the meal.



By Mary Lou Kelso  
MG 2000

### JANUARY 17, 2013 MG MEETING

The January 2013 Master Gardener Association meeting was held at 1:30 pm for Heidi Scheesley to give her Fruit Tree Sale presentation to the Master Gardeners. Dr. Johnson had a few comments before Heidi began talking. He commented the demonstration gardens at Carbide Park were opened to the public last week and this past Thursday, a pruning demo was given and they had several folks in attendance. He also pointed out that on February 14, a fig tree pruning demo would be held.

Nine seminars have already been held this month for the public. In addition to the presentations being held on Saturday, they are also having Tuesday evening talks.

Monday, February 11, the 2013 Master Gardener intern class will be at the Extension Office.

MG Clyde Holt remarked that at the demo garden the ornamental plants by the gazebo need two volunteers to maintain them. Clyde asked if anyone was interested to contact him.

Heidi started her talk and asked if everyone would fill out the survey after she was finished and hand it in. Jim remarked that this year a new rule was in place. Unless you worked the Fruit Tree sale either before, or during, you were not able to get the Master Gardener discount. Jim, also commented, that if you do not pick up your plants on Friday after the inventory is completed, they would be put back into the yard for sale.

Dr. Johnson gave kudos to Linda Steber and the newsletter team. The Aggie horticulture website, which is the largest in the U.S., stats showed the GCMGA newsletter took first and second place for the most downloads in December.

Laurel Stine at the completion of the meeting discussed the execution of the upcoming sale from start to finish for the intern class and to update anyone else. Pre orders must be submitted by Wednesday, Jan. 23.



## UPCOMING CONFERENCES



### 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 Association 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.

### The International Master Gardener Conference

It may not seem like it, but summer is quickly coming and temperatures will be rising. September 2013 you could be cooler and having fun with fellow MG's 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 \$899.00 - \$2749.00 and are per person and 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/>.

## 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 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 Cuculis & 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	Pilot 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 Johnson	Giving Thanks for 2012 Programs	1
11/17	Saturday Seminar	Tish Reustle	A Garden for Butterflies	1.5
11/17	Saturday Seminar	Sid Kapner	Greenhouse Management	1.5
11/29	Citrus Show	Monte Nesbitt	Citrus Orchard Establishment, Care of Trees and IPM	2
11/30	Pilot Program	Stewart McAdoo	Honey Bees Around the Garden	2
12/01	Saturday Seminar	Sam Scarcella	Growing Tomatoes from Seed	2
12/01	Saturday Seminar	Herman Auer	Fruit Tree Planting	1.5
12/08	Saturday Seminar	various	The Urban Farmstead	7
				106.25

Last updated: January 15, 2013



## other local & state gardening events



**H**ey 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 February 6: "Designing for Small Beds & Containers" —Carol Brouwer, Ph.D., recently retired Harris County extension agent, and March 6: "The Rose – America's true native" —Gaye Hammond, past president of the Houston Rose Society. 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 Linda Brown is speaking on Fruits, Shoots and Warm Fuzzies on February 13, 2013.

**Arborgate 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.arborgate.com/classes.php>

**Native Plant Society** or NPSOT has been established to promote research, conservation and utilization of native plants and plant habitats of Texas through education, outreach and example. 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. They have a Beekeepers' Booth at the 2013 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo: March 1, 2013 to March 20, 2013. 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.hcsstex.org/>

**Houston Rose Society**, a local chapter of the American Rose Society, exists to promote the culture and appreciation of the rose, through education and research, to members, to local rose societies and their members, and to the public. They hold a regular monthly meeting in the Garden Center in Hermann Park. Admission is free. For more information go to <http://www.houstonrose.org/>

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

**Mercer Arboretum** holds several popular events and programs annually. 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/mercercorps/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 2013. The dates are as noted: 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](mailto:jmcginnis7@sbcglobal.net)

by Yvonne Enos  
MG 2008




# bulletin board



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

To volunteer for the **MG Phone Desk** contact Laura Bellmore by e-mail at [galv3@wt.net](mailto:galv3@wt.net) or by calling the office at 281-534- 3413, ext 1.

**Libbie's Place Adult Day Care** has been designated as a Demonstration Garden for the Master Gardener Association. It is located at 5402 Avenue U in Galveston and is part of Moody Methodist Church outreach ministries (<http://www.moody.org/libbies-place-senior-day-program>). A crew is needed to maintain and upgrade the garden as needed with your time spent counting towards MG volunteer hours. MG Pam Gilbert is heading up the crew and will determine the day, time and frequency of the work days. If you are interested, or have any questions, please contact Pam at 409-771-5620 or by email at [DrPGilbert@aol.com](mailto:DrPGilbert@aol.com) to let her know the day/times (AM/PM) that would work best for you. Thank you for your time and consideration in this great new endeavor for the Master Gardeners.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Tour Guides for "First-Thursday-in-a-Month" Public Access & Tour of our Demonstration Garden**

Long-winded title but it says what we will be doing. Our Demonstration Garden will be open for touring by the general public on the first Thursday of each month from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. MGs are needed to serve as tour guides for our demonstration Garden. Contact MG Julie Cartmill at 281-932-8896 or email [evergreentreesinc@gmail.com](mailto:evergreentreesinc@gmail.com) or MG Bobbie Ivey at 713-748-8564 or email at [blivey@sbcglobal.net](mailto:blivey@sbcglobal.net) to volunteer.

**Master Gardener Digital Photo Library Committee**

Do not be alarmed/dissuaded with the name of "committee!" If you like to organize things—join our newest volunteer endeavor known as the Master Gardener Digital Photo Library Committee. The current weekly time schedule for this activity is every Thursday from 10 a.m.-12 noon. MG Sandra Devall will be providing leadership for this. Volunteers will be adding photographers' names to digital photos for cataloging/sorting, sorting photos, or looking up botanical names. If any of those tasks fit your interest—just show up and get with Sandra (281-534-3413, Ext. 17 or [sandra.devall@co.galveston.tx.us](mailto:sandra.devall@co.galveston.tx.us))! The Photo Library has been the primary source for photos used in PowerPoint programs, website, publications, newsletters, etc.

**Volunteers are needed to help with the Saturday programs and the Tuesday evening programs.** If you can help please contact Christine Anastas (281) 468-3787 or Robert Marshall e-mail [rbrtm01@att.net](mailto:rbrtm01@att.net)

**AgriLife Extension Office Demonstration Garden needs volunteers!** The gardens around the AgriLife Extension Office are maintained by Master Gardeners under the team leadership of MG Peggy Budny. This is an opportunity to make a good impression on the many visitors to the AgriLife Extension Office. Come out and have a good time while learning more about ornamentals. Please contact Peggy at 281-334-7997 or by email at [fmbmab@verizon.net](mailto:fmbmab@verizon.net) to find out the schedule and join her team.

**The Fabulous Front Gate Garden**—Have you ever noticed the landscape beds as you enter into the park from FM 519? That space is maintained by MG Solveig Cornille. She is in need of two committed volunteers to train and to assist her in the upkeep of this focal-point garden. Please contact Solveig at 281-534-7469 or [sc726@comcast.net](mailto:sc726@comcast.net) to volunteer.

## 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.

**MASTER GARDENER SPECIALIST TRAINING PLANT**

**PROPAGATION**—April 26-27, 2013. This will be held at the Resource Connection, 2300 Circle Dr., Ft. Worth, TX 76119. The cost is \$195.00 and the registration form can be found on the Texas Master Gardener Website. Registration must be completed by April 1, 2013.

**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".


## 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.



## VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGS

To report volunteer hours send your log sheets to [mghours@wt.net](mailto:mghours@wt.net)





# the last word . . .

## GARDENING RESOLUTIONS FOR 2013

*(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

**I**t's hard to believe that another year has arrived. One redeeming value of growing older is the fact that we also get to grow wiser.

At the very least, we are provided ample opportunities to learn from our experiences. Learning from your mistakes can provide an insightful means toward gaining wisdom, but I am rather partial to acquiring as much wisdom as I can by adhering to the following expression: A wise man learns by the mistakes of others.

Since 2013 is only a month old, let us make a list of gardening resolutions for the New Year that will help ensure bountiful and healthy harvests of vegetables and fruits for the upcoming seasons.

We will amend our gumbo clay soil with ample compost and other sources of organic matter. Our heavy gumbo clay soil has an image problem—it can be difficult to work, but they are quite fertile. Adding organic matter to gumbo clay soil on a regular basis will “tame” any clay soil and produce a very workable and productive garden soil.

We will not plant vegetables and fruit trees in the shade. In general, lack of direct sunlight—less than eight continuous hours—reduces productivity.

We will plant the right plant at the appropriate time in the proper manner. We will not try to “cheat” and plant too early in an overly fertilized soil. Plant growth is governed by certain physiological limitations.

We can provide optimum conditions and take certain cold protection measures for early plantings to ensure maximum growth and yield, but there is a limit to how fast we can hurry plants without damaging them.

We will endeavor to increase our understanding of what insect pests we really are trying to control. We will not employ any “spray and pray” or “live in dread until it's dead” philosophy of action.

We will not spray our plants with pesticides mixed to double-and triple-strength solutions. Don't subscribe to the philosophy of “if a little does some good, then a lot will do better.”

Don't laugh, you might be surprised at the number of calls I get about using “extra strength” sprays. Spraying extra strength solutions can be dangerous for many reasons, including rendering vegetables and fruits unfit for consumption.

We will exercise a prudent eye on “weekend specials” or “almanac ads” which will supposedly make plants perform unrealistic feats. Think twice if they claim to make plants bloom in the dark, grow 40 feet per year, forever rid your lawn of all pests or produce miniature oranges in your living room. Again, don't laugh. I recently saw an ad in an almanac promoting a “miracle hormone” that will make “rose bushes grow three times their normal height” and “young trees double or triple in size in three weeks.”

We will not believe everything we read in seed catalogs. All varieties in seed catalogs are naturally described in somewhat glorious terms. However, not all of the varieties in any given catalog (especially nationally distributed ones) will likely be well-suited for our growing conditions.

Varieties must be evaluated for several growing seasons before such determinations can be safely made. Professionals of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service continuously conduct such trials

and recommend to you only those varieties which are tried and proven.

Rely on these as your primary source of fruit and vegetable varieties but do experiment with other varieties. Some might work for you and your particular growing practices and conditions but you should base such assessments on several growing seasons.

We will not be taken in by miracles. Real miracles are too precious to be sold in plastic containers. Any product which has such “secrets” that cannot be listed on package labels should be suspect. While more improvements will definitely be made, there exists today very little original thought in the world of plant production.

Those who are fortunate enough to have secret and miracle products should be allowed to keep them and those products which claim to contain such. We can bring about a respectable level of “miracles” through our own efforts with sound plant production techniques.

We will be prudently wary of sales. Sales occur for reasons—most are good, but some may be bad. Bad sales can be caused by excess supplies of unadapted plants (Concord Grape, Bartlett pear, Red Delicious Apple, Elberta Peach—none of these will do well for most of us here), of untimely items (spring plants of cauliflower), of overstocked items (fruit trees in May, bluebonnets after March, tomato transplants in May) and of poor quality plants (a dying or dead plant is not a good deal at any price).

We will learn to recognize a mistake and take positive action to correct it. At times, this may be the best course of action, rather than trying to adjust or modify the situation. Such instances which need drastic measures to correct an intolerable, remediless situation include planting a pecan tree beneath a power line and hoping the tree will be a dwarf, or planting small shrubs which turn into monstrous bushes in front of a living room window. Sometimes the only remedy to these situations is action—the action of a chain saw!

We will attend horticultural seminars offered by the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office. Nine excellent gardening programs were offered this month. Take advantage of the expertise of our speakers to sharpen your skills and expand your gardening savvy (visit my website for more information on upcoming programs). Remember that the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office, located in Carbine Park (4102-B Main Street in La Marque), has an oasis of free informative publications on almost any gardening subject.

There are many more resolutions which we could all make, but these few will give you some ideas.

Happy New Year and good gardening.



Newly Transplanted Tree - Properly Staked

MG Judy Anderson is asking for volunteers to host backyard meetings. You may contact Judy at [jande10198@aol.com](mailto:jande10198@aol.com) if you would like to volunteer.

# 2013 MGA MONTHLY MEETINGS

## January 17, 2013

Heidi Sheesley - TreeSearch Farms  
Pre-Fruit Tree Sale Presentation  
1:30 pm - Extension Office  
Carbide Park - La Marque

## July 9 2013

TBA

## February 12, 2013

Elayne Kouzounis - Hummingbirds  
6:30 pm - Extension Office  
Carbide Park - La Marque

## August 13, 2013

TBA

## March 12, 2013

TBA

## September 10, 2013

TBA

## April 9, 2013

Karen Morris - Backyard Meeting  
2910 Bayshore  
Bacliff

## October 8, 2013

TBA Backyard Meeting

## May 14, 2013

Barbara Hankins - Backyard Meeting  
12030 Sportsman Road  
Galveston Island

## November 12, 2013

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

## June 11, 2013

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

## December 10, 2013

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

## GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

The February meeting of the Galveston County Master Gardener Association will be held  
Tuesday, February 12, at 6:30 p.m.  
at the AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park.

After a short business meeting, all MGs are welcome to attend a special presentation on  
"Hummingbirds - The Jewels of the Garden"  
by MG Elayne Kouzounis.

This is a "FOR MGs ONLY" program. This is a preliminary presentation and Elayne would like MG feedback on the presentation before she presents it as a Saturday Seminar for the general public. This program will qualify for recertification hours.

No dinner will be served, but light snacks and desserts are welcome.



*Photo by MG Debrah Repasz*

