

THE GALVESTON COUNTY Master Gardeners

Issue 187 - October/November 2013

Most-Loved Vines

more beautiful,
easy to grow vines - page 10-11

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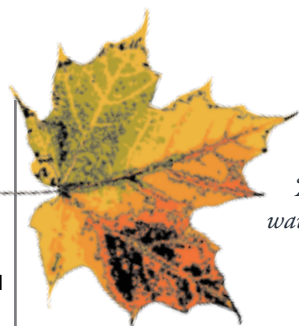
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*'A fallen leaf is nothing more than summers'
wave goodbye'*



*By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008*

Fall must be getting closer as the heat of our 2013 summer seems to be slowly waning. The next few months offer some of our best Gulf Coast weather to get out and do something in the garden—especially in our educational Galveston County Demonstration Garden! At a recent quarterly BOD meeting, I learned that there is a great need for volunteers to help in several areas at our demonstration garden. Often MGs ask me where they can help, or how they can get involved? Please consider volunteering to assist at the Demonstration Garden. Go on any Thursday to get started. Once you've picked your assignment, if Thursday is not a good day for you to get to the garden, you can come on other days to work your area. Many MGs are in the garden on Monday, too. Here are some activities that could use immediate assistance: (1) community garden beds—these are the beds where we grow produce for local community food banks. These gardens support a great need in our community for fresh, seasonal vegetables. Volunteers are needed to take stewardship and maintenance of these gardens. There is no expense involved for the volunteer—seeds and plants are provided by our MG Association. Without additional help, these gardens cannot be successful. See Clyde Holt or Bobbie Ivey to sign up. (2) Orchard—the orchard has a need for additional volunteers to help with seasonal jobs including mulching, trimming, thinning, spraying, etc. See Robert Marshall or Rod Mize to sign up. (3) Serenity Garden and Earth-Kind Gardens—both of these stunningly lovely gardens areas could use a volunteer or two to help with the normal maintenance of the gardens. See Tish Reustle and Alisa Rasmussen to get involved. We have many Master Gardeners in our Association, surely we can find motivated volunteers to assist a few hours a week in these areas. Just consider: WHAT IF NO ONE VOLUNTEERED? What kind of a world would this be? Please help make our community a better place to live and learn about horticulture by paying it forward and volunteering in our Demonstration Garden. It's fun and it's a really great group of people to get to know—those who support our Demonstration Garden. A fabulous lunch is provided for volunteers on the Thursday workdays. Come join us at the garden, have some fun, enhance your community and do something very worthwhile.

The newsletter team continues to work hard each month to create an educational and entertaining publication for our membership and our community. We hope you enjoy this month's topics. Q&As will describe the best strawberries to grow in our region (page 5) and discuss ornamental sweet potato vines (page 4). On page 7 learn how vertical gardening increases yields and reduces diseases. Pat Forke interviewed Chris Wiesinger (better known as The Bulb Hunter) on page 6, and the article on page 13 gives tips on designing pathways in your landscape. One Donna Ward article (page 14) this month is on the *Salaginella*, a type of fern or not? A second article by Donna on page 8 describes several fall gardening activities to do now. Don't miss our Best Shots story this month (page 11) it features several flowering vines that you might find a special place for in your own landscape.

Our Upcoming Events (page 18) and Bulletin Board sections (page 20) have been updated with approaching meetings, seminars, conferences, classes, specialty trainings, volunteer opportunities and some great gift ideas. Check out the Gardening Calendar video (page 15) for things to do in your garden this month.



Photo by M?G Linda Steber

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Check out pages 10 & 11 to learn more about beautiful and easy to grow vines

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ask a master gardener

Hot Line Topics

ornamental sweet potato is a true sweet potato

By Kaye Corey
MG 2002

Question: Does the Ornamental Sweet Potato Vine Produce Edible Sweet Potatoes?

I have the pleasure of growing ornamental sweet potato in my home landscape. The most commonly grown variety in our area is known as 'Marguerite' whose foliage is a striking chartreuse or lime green color. Another variety is called 'Blackie' which produces deep purple to a nearly black foliage with large, deep cut leaves.

Ornamental sweet potato, *Ipomoea batatas*, is a true sweet potato complete with tubers, but has bolder, more colorful foliage than its vegetable sibling grown in vegetable gardens. It is grown for its decorative foliage and vigorous growth habit. Ornamental sweet potato vines produce a tuberous root that resembles a sweet potato but the quality is so bad they are not suitable for eating.

Originating from the tropics, Marguerite and Blackie's growth is very vigorous and probably not the best choice for small beds, pots and hanging baskets since they will outgrow those situations quickly. I find another variety known as 'Tricolor,' with light green, pink and white foliage, provides a pleasant softening in the landscape when grown with the bright chartreuse and purple of 'Marguerite' and 'Blackie'.

There are new cultivars in nurseries with new characteristics making ornamental sweet potatoes more versatile than before. The Sweet Caroline series of ornamental sweet potato has five colors in the series; green-yellow, purple, red, light green and bronze. All have deeply lobed, heart-shaped leaves similar to Blackie. They are more suitable for smaller beds, hanging baskets, pots and arbors.

The ornamental sweet potato's big show

will continue until the first frost when the plant will go dormant. It usually will return from the roots in the spring. They thrive in our hot weather and need at least six hours of sun. Average soil and water requirements will keep these plants happy. They will grow in the shade but the colors are not as bright. If you are using these vines as a groundcover, consider planting other, sun loving bloomers such as lantana (*Lantana* sp.), penta (*Penta lanceolata*), butterfly weed (*Asclepias curassavica*) or even red yucca (*Hesperaloe parvifolia*) with them in the same landscaped bed.

As always, there are some pest problems. The sweet potato looper is a caterpillar that chews holes in the leaves. Also watch for the sweet potato whitefly. Control the looper with occasional applications of pyrethroid or Sevin. The whitefly can be controlled with Year Round Spray Oil applied under the leaves in early morning.

There are about 6500 varieties of sweet potato vines that do produce edible sweet potatoes world-wide. In our Master Gardener Horticulture Demonstration & Research Garden at Carbide Park, Master Gardener Ken Steblein is growing nine varieties of sweet potatoes in bed #12. It is a beautiful bed of leaf varieties in both color and shape with some pepper plants added in for interest. You will find varieties such as Purple Delight, Ginseng Orange, Carolina Ruby, Cordner's Red and orange skin Beauregard. Ken hopes for a good harvest in November. The cold makes the leaves less attractive and they will stop growing. He says the potatoes are supposed to be sweeter and last longer when they naturally die back. Did you

know you can eat the leaves raw, stir fried or steamed? For a variety of sweet potatoes, check out <http://www.duckcreekfarms.com/sweetpotato.html>.

Propagation of sweet potatoes is very simple. As a child, I remember putting a sweet potato in a jar of water and before long I had a beautiful vine. To move forward in this rooting process, remove those green sprouts from the sweet potato in the jar of water before they make the vine. Put the sprouts into water to grow roots, then simply plant those rooted cuttings in soil in pots or into the garden. Another way is to cut ten to twelve inch sections from a sweet potato vine with nodes and plant those into soil. You can watch demonstrations of propagation and planting techniques on YouTube at Rooting Sweet Potatoes. Learn everything you ever wanted to know about sweet potato production including growing the slips.

If you are wondering what is the difference between a sweet potato and a yam, today the terms are generally used interchangeably. However the U.S. Department of Agriculture requires the label "yam" always be accompanied by sweet potato. Decades ago the growers of the orange fleshed sweet potato wanted to distinguish it from the dry, starchy white-colored flesh of the edible tuber of the genus *Dioscorea* from Africa called nyami. The name yam was adapted from the word nyami. Go to <http://www.all-about-sweet-potatoes.com/sweet-potato-yam.html> for a chart of the differences between the two plants.



Photo by MG Linda Steber

Ornamental Sweet Potato Vines

Plant the right berry strawberries are annual crops in our area



By Robert Marshall
MG 2012

Question: Can strawberries be grown in Galveston County?

Growing strawberries in Galveston County certainly presents a variety of challenges. In order to be successful with your strawberries you must take into account the various pests (insects and disease), the humidity, the heat, and the composition of the soil.

It is very important to have the right cultivar and to plant it at the right time. While every year might not result in a large crop, you can work toward improving your crop by selecting a recommended strawberry variety for this area, improving the soil, planting at the correct time, applying the correct amount of water, fertilizing on a regular basis and protecting your crop of berries from pests.

Strawberries generally fall into two fruit bearing categories: June-bearers primarily develop flowers in the early spring from buds that were developed during the previous fall, or under short-day conditions. June-bearing cultivars usually produce more fruit per plant than other types.

Ever-bearing strawberries usually produce fruit under long-day conditions. However, they do not produce a lot of runners, and therefore will not spread easily. Day-neutral cultivars will produce under any day-length though temperatures above 70 degrees F. will usually decrease flowering.

When should strawberries be planted?

Along the Texas Gulf Coast strawberries are annual crops which need to be planted in the fall the end of September through mid-October.

What is the right berry to plant?

Look for June or Spring Bearing varieties of berries which are planted in the fall. This variety should be protected through

the winter season and will start their growth season in January or February. They should begin producing a crop of berries around March. These berries will produce one good crop of berries within a three or four-week period. There may be another smaller second crop but the berries will become progressively smaller and not as sweet. All your plants should be removed once you have decided they have finished the season.

The Day Neutral and Everbearing, which are also sold in this area, are planted in February and will bloom in March. They will produce a few berries at a time into early summer but probably not survive the summer. Because of our heat and humidity, these are not a good choice for Galveston County.

Which variety of June Bearing is best for Galveston County?

'Sunrise,' 'Chandler,' 'Allstar,' 'Tioga,' 'Sweet Charles,' and 'Festival' are some proven varieties of June Bearing strawberries that perform well in our growing area. If you cannot find a local source, these varieties are available on-line.

Dr. Larry Stein (State Extension Horticulturist with Texas A&M) says Chandler is a good choice for our Texas Gulf Coast growing area. One member of the Texas Fruit Growers forum tried both Chandler and Sweet Charlie and reported that both grew well but the Sweet Charles was sweeter. Froberg Farms (located in nearby Alvin, TX) plant Festival strawberries which are a good-sized sweet berry. Try several varieties and decide for yourself which variety does best in your location and conditions.

How should I plant my strawberry plants?

It is highly recommended that strawberries be grown in a raised bed of sandy soil built in rows and covered with black plastic. Avoid mulch or straw as these provide a hiding place for snails and slugs waiting to enjoy your strawberries. Plant the berries one foot apart and make sure you plant with the bottom of the crown just touching the ground. A drip irrigation system works well as you need to provide one inch of water per week to your plants during dry weather spells. You will treat these plants as annuals so you should remove all runners to provide better fruiting. However, if you want the runners, you can thin to three runners per plant. Lightly fertilize with a balanced fertilizer (such as 13-13-13). It is better to under fertilize as too much nitrogen during berry growth provides a less-than-choice berry. Strawberries prefer an acid soil pH 5.5 to 6.8 but will produce in more neutral soil. Provide cover for freezing weather and netting to keep out birds once berries start to produce.

Strawberries can also be container planted. Just remember to water and fertilize with an all-purpose water soluble fertilizer every two weeks until berries are ready to bloom.

You can find other varieties of strawberries, where to order them, and a wealth of information about berries at: <http://strawberryplants.org>



Photo by MG Margie Jenke



Photo by MG Linda Steber



better known as The Bulb Hunter

Meet Chris Wiesinger

By Pat Forke
MG 2010

You might ask why a young man would develop a passion for digging bulbs out of the soil, learning and sharing their history and helping and encouraging others to plant bulbs.

Chris says it started when he was about eight years old and his family lived in Bakersfield, California. He noticed a bag at the local nursery filled with what he thought was brown rocks but showed a picture of a beautiful red tulip. He talked his mother into buying the bag and he planted the bulbs in the garden. Sure enough, he soon had a beautiful tulip from an ugly brown thing. Chris wanted to know how that could happen.

When it came time to go to college, Chris knew he wanted to be a horticulturist and the list of classes available at Texas A&M was the deciding factor for him to head back to the South. Chris was born in Lafayette, Louisiana, and also lived in Houston.

Chris graduated from Texas A&M in 2004 with his horticulture degree and also with a business plan. That plan included finding heirloom bulbs, educating gardeners on the importance of these bulbs and on how to be successful with these bulbs, and selling these heirloom and sometimes rare bulbs. Since 2004, Chris has been the subject of a feature article in the New York Times, has spoken to over 100 gardeners and other groups (including many Master Gardeners), has written numerous articles and three books, and maintains a thriving business of selling bulbs complete with a website and monthly e-mails. Chris' website can be seen at <http://www.southern-bulbs.com/>.

Chris' first two books are out of print but his third book, *The Bulb Hunter*, published by Texas A&M University Press, can be ordered from his website. Chris says this latest book, co-authored by Dr. William Welch, includes Chris' personal and historical stories about his bulbs and plenty of how-to's for being successful with bulbs. In his spare time, Chris travels the Texas countryside looking for bulbs. He particularly enjoys visiting Galveston. And, he always asks permission before digging on someone's property.

When I asked Chris "Why he thought bulbs are important to the gardener?", he had three interesting points. Chris sees bulbs as a beautiful historic solution to our many of our gardening problems. With the right bulb in the right place, little care is required and success is attainable. The right bulb will come back each year, thus becoming a perennial in your garden. Chris says the perennial aspect of most bulbs eliminates the costs and time required for replanting each year.

Bulbs also offer seasonal color. With the correct planting, you can enjoy the flowers from your bulbs year-round. Heirloom bulbs, in particular, have proven themselves through years of surviving and flourishing with little care under sometimes extreme conditions. Bulbs not only can be grown outside to add beauty to your garden, but they can also be forced inside and then planted outside.

When I asked Chris to sum up his thoughts on why he does this, his mission statement so to speak, he told me a story. The story was about driving down a Texas road under construction and noticing a clump of blooming narcissus along this two-lane road that was soon

to become a four-lane road. He stopped and asked the contractor if he could dig up the narcissus bulbs.

The contractor told him that everything in the way of the new road—including the plants—would be destroyed within the next couple of days and he could have anything he wanted. The next day Chris was back with his shovel digging up the narcissus when the contractor appeared and stood around kicking the dirt for a bit.

The contractor finally told Chris that he had shared with his wife what Chris was doing. She got very excited and told him to ask Chris if he would dig up some bulbs for her. Then the contractor told Chris about another clump of flowers down the road and offered to show them to Chris. Chris realized that he had been able to introduce the contractor to a narcissus and to the beauty that surrounds him and each of us every day!

Notes from Chris:

All-time favorites: For something unconventional and that can be planted in fall or spring, I like pink rain lilies (*Zephyranthes grandiflora*). They will bloom as early as April and all the way into early fall. Chris also recommends Red Spider-Lily Southern Heirloom Triploid.

New and notable: I am holding my breath this year to see another repeat performance of *Tulipa clusiana* 'Lady Jane'. For Southerners, it's proof that we have some success with the right kinds of tulip bulbs.

Fail-safes: *Narcissus tazetta* selections 'Grand Primo' and 'Golden Dawn' bloom most reliably. They have many small flowers and a fragrance that few complain about. Avoid: I won't grow *Crocasmia*. It sends up gobs of foliage with very little bloom.

Gift idea: Order bulbs for friends who are getting married or are about to have a baby. You will be the hero every single year they bloom.



there are many advantages to keeping plants off the ground **Vertical Gardening**



By Ken Steblein
MG 1992

Gardeners are very creative in figuring out different ways to maximize their garden's potential by using less ground space and growing their plants vertically. There are many advantages to keeping plants off the ground because it often increases plant yields, reduces plant diseases by lifting the plant foliage off the damp ground and improves air circulation. Supported plants are easier to monitor for insects plus birds feel safer to perch and hunt for six-legged pests (i.e., insects) when the plants are off the ground. Food crops are easier to monitor at eye level and some fruits and vegetables become perfect in shape and color from not laying on the soil. Many times you can use vertical gardens to screen things, draw your eye to a focal point or create an arch to take you from one garden to another.

I find vertical gardens give you a grand opportunity to repurpose materials in your garden and extend their useful life.

I have seen vertical gardening accomplished in four different ways: trellis, cages, growing walls and hanging gardens. Each type is unique and often is chosen because of the plants natural habit of growth.

Trellis or support gardening is usually the first way that comes to mind when we talk about vertical gardening. A trellis, arch, tunnel, and teepee all offer a structural support that plants can grow on. Usually the plants are vines with tendrils (root-like structures) or the new growth likes to wind around its support. If a trellis is not offered for support, the plants usually will climb on trees or shrubs for the support. Some examples of these plants are pole beans, cucumbers, melons, mini pumpkins, grapes, kiwi, clematis, passion fruit, wisteria, honeysuckle and star jasmine. Common materials that are used for offering the plant support are wire panels, wood, bamboo,

freshly trimmed woody plants and rope. Some recycled supports are cyclone fence panels and cribs. I have seen both the wire panels at the bottom of cribs and the wooden railings being used. Shutters and step ladders can also be used. I am currently collecting discarded wooden crutches as I have figured out a way to start using these.

Another good option is the plant cages used for tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and perennials. You can use most anything that gives a vertically growing weaker plants support when they are laden with fruits, vegetables or flowers.

Growing walls have been around for a longtime. It is good to see they are making a comeback. You create soil pockets in walls that could be made of wood, barrels, or metal framing. Plants are then either planted directly in the wall or pots are attached so they can be slipped in and plants rotated out. These vertical walls are becoming popular with interior plant designers. We, however, are focusing on exterior plants. Many of your leafy veggies like kale, lettuce, spinach, chard along with herbs like mint, parsley or basil work well in wall gardens. Wall gardens are also a great way to hide things you do not want visible.

Hanging gardens could also be considered a vertical garden as they are a good way to grow more plants if you have limited ground space. I say hanging gardens because I believe there is an opportunity to mix different species of plants in one planter. They could be a planter mounted on a fence or one that sits on a broken bird bath pedestal. I am sure most people have seen the photo of a strawberry crop in peak production growing in hanging gutters.

Companion plants are a must for all gardens. Always be on the lookout for ways to incorporate your companion plants in your vertical garden plantings.



Photo by MG Judy Anderson



Photo by MG John Jones



By Donna J. Ward
MG 1996

the autumnal equinox has arrived

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.)

I could tell from the sounds I was hearing that fall had apparently crept in pretty much unnoticed. Officially the Autumnal Equinox arrived in our neighborhood on September 22 at 3:44 P.M. I wasn't watching the calendar or the clock, but I could tell from the 'hum' of the hummingbird wings and the 'plunk' of acorns hitting the deck, the 'hiss' of the air brakes on the big yellow bus as it stopped at the corner—all these sounds hinted that summer was over—thank goodness. I couldn't be more sick of summer—the constant lugging around of the garden hose, the weeds that don't seem to be affected by drought, the ever present mosquitoes (rain or not—mostly not) and the A/C bills. Every summer I wonder why folks live here on purpose. But in truth, I do know why—because we don't want to put up with snow, ice, sleet, and the biting cold wind that seems to slice right through that heavy winter coat in spite of the fact that it's buttoned up to your neck. Instead, we prefer to put on a long-sleeved shirt, grab our trowels and get ready to plant.

It's time to put in perennials for spring bloom. They need to spend the winter in our still warm soil in order to set strong root systems for a spring explosion of color. For early spring bloom, plant seeds of hollyhock, larkspur, stock and snapdragons. We all start thinking about the old reliable pansy about this time of year, but I'd wait until next month. November seems to be a bit more agreeable to those cool weather smiley faces. November is also bloom time for the Sasanqua camellia, and some of its blooms always grace our Thanksgiving table. I know we'll have them again this year as the buds are growing fatter and fatter.

Before you put on that Halloween costume plant a few anemone, Dutch iris, ranunculus and freesia bulbs—not in rows mind you,

toss them by the handful and plant where they land. Nurseries will have primroses, ornamental kale and cabbage, plus cyclamens to give your landscape some winter color. Dianthus and calendulas will bloom all winter if it doesn't get terribly cold.

Move your more delicate patio plants closer to the house. When you least expect it the weather man is going to predict a chilly night, and you don't want to have to carry them too far.

Unlike the cooler climes that many of us previously called home, we can put in a fall garden from which we can harvest all winter long. Now is the time to plant seeds of turnips, radish, spinach, mustard, lettuce, pumpkin, beets, English and snap peas—transplants of broccoli and cabbage.

There are some herbs that love cooler weather, and it's less expensive and more rewarding to cut your own all winter than to pay the grocery store. Plant chives, oregano, dill, cilantro and parsley this month.

Looking out past the deck, I can see a wax myrtle and a small oak sapling whose leaves have turned crisp and brown, a good indication that they are totally dead. Trees and shrubs will drop leaves to protect themselves from heat and drought, but when leaves still on the branches are brown, you can be pretty sure that there is no life left in them.

The next month or two is an ideal time to replace those shrubs and trees that have perished. It's better to plant now than in spring. Fall and winter plantings have time to establish healthy root systems before spring makes demands to bloom or leaf out, and helps to prepare them for the inevitable scorching summer. As far as winter is concerned I say—"Bring it on."



Photo by MG Donna Ward

Sasanqua Camellia and Friend

THE ISLAND GARDEN

Flowering Vines

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



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

Do you have a fence that needs a little something to make it more attractive? Do you have a bare trellis, arbor or garden arch? Is there an eyesore in your yard? Flowering vines may be just what you need to enhance the beauty of that space. What could be prettier than trailing vines with intermittent colorful blooms making their way across an expanse however large or small—even better if those blooms emit wafts of sweet fragrance! There are hundreds of such vines available to us.

Consider the types of vines that you can use and what your needs are:

Evergreen perennial vines may be used to camouflage unsightly buildings or structures, add privacy or create shade under arbors or other garden supports. Evergreen vines bloom with flowers in a variety of colors, while also adding year-round visual interest.

Deciduous perennial vines offer shade in summer but let the light come through in winter, after shedding their leaves.

Annual vines grow quickly and provide flowers all season long. For summer color and fragrance, they cannot be beat.

Vines grow in different ways: by tendrils, by twining or by clinging. Vines that climb by tendrils or by twining are better used to cover trellises or arbors. Clinging vines are ideal for climbing on masonry, but may damage wood.

Two of my favorite flowering vines are Confederate Jasmine, also called Star Jasmine and Passion Flower Vine.

Star Jasmine or Confederate Jasmine is a species of flowering plant in the milkweed family and is native to eastern and southeastern Asia. It is grown as an ornamental plant and used as a climbing vine, a groundcover or as a fragrant potted plant on terraces, patios or in gardens. It is widely planted in the South especially in the area of the Confederate States of America, thus its name—'Confederate Jasmine.'

This is a "user-friendly" plant requiring little maintenance and presenting few pest or disease issues. Jasmine prefers full sun to partial shade, grows well in regular garden soil with occasional feeding and moderate moisture. Plan to plant your jasmine near the entrances to your home or near a walk-way so its intense fragrance can be enjoyed and you can see the hummingbirds and butterflies gathering the sweet nectar from the blooms.

Passion Flower vines came originally from the tropical regions of South America, Central America and Mexico. The passion flower is a perennial vine with lacy, twining foliage and large showy flowers. There are four to five hundred different species of this magnificent vine. The flower comes in many different colors and shapes ranging in size up to six inches across. One reference states that, "the flowers are lemon-musk scented. Light green fruits have a tart apricot flavor and can be made into a delicious drink with the unmistakable passion fruit flavor (Hawaiian Punch). Eat whole when they are 'fall into your hand' ripe. Leaves can be cooked or eaten raw in salad."

Passionflower vines require very little care once established. They are very hardy and if frozen back to the ground in winter, will still grow vigorously from the base when temperatures rise. The many at-

tributes of the passion flower vine, aside from the amazingly striking blooms and the edible fruit, include its qualities of pest and disease resistance, its heat and salt tolerance and its adaptability to various soil conditions. Plant your passion flower vine where it will receive full sun or light shade. More sunlight tends to produce more flowers.

Make that fence more attractive. Dress up that bare trellis, arbor or garden arch. Hide that eyesore in your yard. Enhance the beauty of your space with the trailing vines and the colorful scented blooms of a few flowering vines. There are hundreds of them! Enjoy!

Using Ornamental Vines

Hide an unattractive view or eyesore:

Place a trellis that hides the view of the eyesore and grow vines to limit that line of sight, replacing the unattractive with beautiful greenery and vibrant flowers.

Build or buy supports or use existing features:

Colorful vines expand your gardening space without requiring a larger footprint, so weeding and watering needs often don't increase...good supporting candidates may be fences, old tree trunks, and porch pillars. Simple trellises are available in many sizes and shapes at most garden centers.

Create a secret garden:

Coax vines into a colorful, woven canopy that produces shade and privacy. The space need not be big and elaborate...perhaps large enough for a small bench or table and chair.



Photo by MG Kathleen Crabb

Passion Flower Vine

MG BEST SHOTS



Aster Climbing Caroline by MG Digital Library



Hyacinth Bean by MG Judy Poorman



Coral Vine by MG Judithe Savely



Cypress Vine by MG Linda Steber



Mexican Flame Vine by MG Margie Jenke



Rangoon Creeper by MG Judithe Savely

...and Narrative

most-loved vines



By Sandra Devall
MG 1998



By Kaye Corey
MG 2002



By Pat Forke
MG 2010



by Donna Ward
MG 1996

Vines for the Landscape is the topic chosen for the this edition's Best Shots section and the choices focus on two attributes that gardeners' commonly demand: beauty and 'easy to grow.' Some may call vines aggressive, but we say, "great for covering fences—wooden or chain link."

Vines also work well in small areas because they only require vertical space. They are real beauties on trellises, gazebos, and pergolas. They also serve as the problem solvers to hiding unsightly posts, buildings and neighbor's yards.

It was very easy for the newsletter committee to choose best vines, but was difficult to narrow it down to just six vines. We hope that many of you who have not tried vines will be encouraged by these photographs and articles and learn to love them like all of us have.

Aster Climbing Caroline (*Ampelaster carolinianus*) by Sandra Devall, MG 1997

I became a Master Gardener over ten years ago and the aster vine was my first plant purchased at the Annual Master Gardener Ornamental & Perennial Plant Sale held in October. I was encouraged to plant one after seeing it in bloom.

I treated it terribly. No raised bed or amended soil—just stuck it in the ground. That poor plant was magnificent for the first season and every season after. I like that it is evergreen. It was covered with blooms and had it not been for a hurricane attacking it, I would still have it today. It is still my favorite vine. I'll have to buy one at the next O&P sale.

Hyacinth Bean - (*Dolichos labla*) by Sandra Devall, MG 1997

Because children are the gardeners of our future, we always try to include a choice that is especially suited for children. The Hyacinth Bean vine fits that description. It is also called the Jack in the Beanstalk Vine because of how it grows. Its growth pattern is the 'grow slowly' at first and then it just explodes into a fast pace.

Hyacinth Bean is an annual in our growing area but is easy to grow from seeds that are saved each year, or seeds can be purchased on the Internet. It is not a trailing vine, but grows upright (6-to-8 feet on a trellis or fence) and spreads about three feet. Try to plant it where the sun backlights it. It will show off the translucent purple bean pods, the purple stems and the back side of the leaves which are also purple.

Coral Vine - (*Antigonon leptopus*) by Sandra Devall, MG 1997

I was always amazed at the Coral Vine at the home of Anna Marie Wagner, a gardening friend who also lives in Dickinson. There was a small place on her driveway that was no larger than four inches square. In the winter, nothing was in the small section of dirt, but suddenly when spring began, the coral vine began growing. This phenomenon is called 'root hardy' which means it comes back each summer after dying back to the root over winter.

From such a small beginning, this vine would climb on a wire

across the top of her garage doors, across the length of the patio and across to a pagoda!

Cypress Vine (*Ipomoea quamoclit*) by Donna Ward, MG 1996

Cypress vine is a showy member of the morning glory family (Convolvulaceae) with delicate feathery foliage covered with tiny, red-tubular, star-shaped flowers. This vine is a magnet for hummingbirds. My grandfather grew them on wooden trellises that he had nailed to each end of his front porch. They climbed to the porch's roof and up to the second story of the old farmhouse. We would spend summer afternoons sitting on the porch swing between the trellises mesmerized by the multitude of flying jewels (i.e., hummingbirds) whizzing about and just barely missing us. Although an annual, it reseeds so freely that once planted it is yours forever.

Mexican Flame Vine (*Pseudogynoxys chenopodioides*) by Pat Forke, MG 2010

This showy orange and yellow vine flowers best in full sun and is a great butterfly attraction. This vine may need some help climbing in the beginning but will then grow rapidly and may need some trimming to keep it under control. It can be trimmed any time without any harm to the plant. The flame vine does not require a lot of water and will flourish with a small amount of fertilizer.

When I lost a very tall Mexican palm to Hurricane Ike in 2008, I had the palm trimmed at the five-foot height the water covered my property, then surrounded the five-foot stump of the palm with wire and planted the Mexican Flame to surround the palm. The first winter the vine froze back to the ground, so I planted another one only to have the original vine sprout out shortly thereafter. It now surrounds the palm and weaves through the surrounding oleanders.

Rangoon Creeper - (*Quisqualis indica*) by Kaye Corey, MG 2001

The glorious Rangoon Creeper vine is a show-stopper in my garden. Give this free-branching perennial climber plenty of room in a mostly sunny location because it will reach up to 70 feet! After returning from vacation this year, I found my Rangoon Creeper had crept into our queen palm. I left the Rangoon Creeper alone because it's so colorful with its intensely fragrant white, pink and finally red star-like blooms. I will prune the vine back to a fence trellis in a protected area in late fall. My Rangoon Creeper receives morning sun and the roots grow in a fern bed. I fertilize the ferns and the Rangoon Creeper with fish emulsion in the spring and the bed is watered about once a week during dry spells.

Propagation is easy since new plants will sprout from the roots. I pot the new plants for pass-along plant exchanges. The Rangoon Creeper is cold hardy in the Gulf Coast growing region even in the coldest winters. Mulch the roots and the plant will come back in the spring. After a really hard winter, I painted the dead vine on the trellis yellow and attached the new growth to the bright yellow vine. It made some interesting garden art.



like no other **Apple Bananas**

By Bill Cummins
MG 2012

Have you ever eaten a banana and been surprised by the tangy flavor of an apple and/or the sweet taste of a strawberry?

If so, you have just eaten the Apple Banana or Candy Apple Banana, a dessert type banana with an apple flavor when fully ripe. This banana is one of the most popular among the people living in the Hawaiian Islands. The fruit is typically 4 to 6 inches in length. The banana plant will grow to a height of 10 to 12 feet. This particular banana is considered to be the world's best eating and dessert banana and like no other. This is Hawaii's favorite banana!

The two major groups of dessert bananas in Hawaii are the Cavendish (commonly sold by grocery stores) and Brazilians. The Brazilian bananas are often incorrectly referred to as apple bananas in Hawaii. I prefer the Apple Banana name, since it describes the flavor of this banana. This banana (botanical name: *Musa paradisiacal*) takes a mere fifteen months from planting to harvest. A member of the Musaceae family, new varieties of small bananas are being cultivated and are now available in American markets.

The Apple Bananas are short, fatter and chunkier than other small varieties and its flavor, once ripe, is both tangy and sweet displaying hints of apple and strawberry. Although they can be enjoyed when their skin is yellow, Apple Bananas are at their sweetest when the

peel has turned near black. The Apple Banana is nutritious, tasty and sweet, high in potassium, low in calories and a good source of Vitamin B6 and fiber. These bananas are naturally sweet with fructose, sucrose and glucose. They have three times more Vitamin C and 1 ½ times more Vitamin A than a traditional banana.

I prefer to eat the Apple Banana when it is yellow with no traces of green rather than letting the peeling turn almost black. They have an outstanding shelf life and the meat will remain firm as the banana ripens. These bananas do not oxidize (turn brown in color when exposed to air) so they are great for fruit salads and snacks.

About 15 years ago, I was fortunate to receive two of these plants from a co-worker whose family lives on the Big Island of Hawaii. They were planted in different locations, Friendswood and Bayou Vista. The plant in Bayou Vista is doing well, the plant in Friendswood died. The plants in Bayou Vista have produced numerous stalks of the Apple Bananas over the years and even managed to survive the 6 feet of salt water from Hurricane Ike. They did not survive the cold weather that followed and died back to the ground level.

I am happy to say that they did recover from those events and appear as healthy as they were before the events of that year. The current bananas should ripen within the next 2 to 3 months.



Photo by MG Bill Cummins

Pathways for Your Yard or Garden

paved surfaces are the workhorse of a yard or garden



By Barbara Markey
MG Intern 2013

Dr. Seuss said, “Think left, think right, and think low and think high. Oh, the things you can think up, if only you try.” The same can be said about pathways that can take you to “The Places You’ll Go” in the beauty of a garden full of Mother Nature’s surprises.

Paved surfaces are the workhorse of a yard or garden. They set the stage for the plants you choose and should be designed first. These surfaces will define the structure and organization of the garden.

When planning a yard or garden, start by putting your ideas on paper, and then sketch a design before you pick up a shovel. It is much easier and cheaper to erase mistakes on paper. Go to your local library and check out some books on garden design and landscape architecture. You will find many selections, and you can choose the ones that best suit your needs.

Pathways through the yard or garden can be created with three major elements: natural stone, gravel or concrete. These elements can be used alone or in any combination that the designer and user see fit for the space available and for the intended use of the path.

Each of the three pathway elements offers different enhancements for the aesthetics of the garden and the architectural elements that compliment the space. In order to determine which element is right for your space, you must first determine the purpose of your path and whether the path will be used by a cart with wheels or perhaps by a person with disabilities.

When designing the path-

ways, you must decide if you will create an open-ended system or a loop system. Open-ended pathways tend to take the user to another outdoor space, such as a lawn area or patio or possibly to a sculptural element in the garden. Whichever design you choose, always remember to never create a dead end in your garden design.

Natural stone comes in a variety of shapes, sizes and colors. To determine which stone is right for your space, you must first decide the feel you want the space to create for the user. For example, an irregular-shaped flagstone pathway will create a more relaxed look in a native, informal garden or a more tropical feel in a lush, large, leafy garden. If you want to create a more formal space, you can opt for cut stone in a rectangular shape. Cut stone can be laid in random patterns or in patterns with a set guide. It is important to think about the colors of the plants you intend to install and the color of any architectural elements that surround the space. Choose a stone color that compliments all of your outdoor elements.

Gravel comes in small, medium and large aggregate sizes. In garden design, gravel paths can be more cost effective than stone and still provide a warm, rustic feeling to the overall design. If you do not plan to install stepping stones within the gravel bed, you must choose gravel that will compact and allow heavy foot traffic and possible wheeled circulation. Decomposed granite and black-star gravel are great path options because they will compact and create ADA-compliant pathways. The granite will cre-

ate a soft, earthy, orange hue in the landscape, while black-star gravel gives a gray, shimmery, rich feel to the space. If you are on a tight budget, go for a plain gravel path. If you have a few extra dollars, combine the gravel with natural stepping stones or concrete stepping stones.

Do not count out concrete which can also create beautiful garden pathways. When designed, properly, concrete pathways can be just as elegant as natural stone, yet at half the cost. You can purchase precast concrete materials, such as pavers, which will be installed on a cement stabilized base. Or you can use a ready-mixed, pour-in-place concrete for a more permanent path. To capture the look and feel of elegance, try mixing color additives or a stain into the raw concrete. Choose colors and textures you can live with, as it is not easy to finish your project and then decide the color is wrong. Re-dos are an option, but they are costly. Always remember to install a plastic moisture barrier (available at most gardening centers)

under the path if you plan to apply a stain or acid wash.

Saw-cutting patterns into the concrete can add another attractive and elegant detail to the path. For example, take a plain concrete path and, using a saw blade, cut a diamond pattern into the surface before the concrete hardens.

If you are thinking about a terrace for your garden, it should be conveniently placed and well-lit to prevent nighttime accidents. Place it conveniently close to the house to encourage more frequent use.

Do not rule out a bridge, boardwalk or deck. A boardwalk can provide a pathway from place to place and allow you to see the garden from a new perspective. These are things to think about as the finishing touches to your project.

Happy Digging!

Note: Raegan Markey, Landscape Architect with Tom’s Thumb Nursery & Landscaping in Galveston, was interviewed for this article. The quotation is from the Dr. Seuss book, “Oh, the Things You Can Think!”



Photo by MG Sandra Devall



enjoy this most unusual plant This Isn't Your Grandma's Parlor Fern

by Donna Ward
MG 1996

There's nothing I like better than a big pot of *Selaginella*. No, I'm not talking about a spicy Italian pasta dish, but a prehistoric fern ally that propagated rapidly long before plants developed the ability to produce seeds. There are approximately 700 species of these evergreen, rhizomatous perennials, some found in semi-deserts but mostly in tropical regions. It's estimated that they have been around for 300 to 400 million years. If I close my eyes I can almost see dinosaurs in a steamy prehistoric forest grazing on these low-growing, mossy ground covers. But they didn't always keep to the soil level; sometimes they crept up the bark of trees or along a rocky ledge. Their long, branched stems root along their length, and their leaves are small and scale-like. Not a seed producer, they form spores in their terminal spikes. They're best grown in bright filtered light whether directly on your garden soil surface, in a pot or hanging basket.

I have grown several varieties, but my favorite is *Selaginella kraussiana* called trailing spikemoss or African clubmoss. It is low-growing (1" - 2") and will form a virtual mat as it creeps along the ground. It is bright chartreuse green in color and finds a nice home in a moist spot in your garden, or in a pot or hanging basket of potting mix amended with some leaf mold. Its luminous color and close-leaved creeping stems are what I find so attractive.

But when it comes to color, *Selaginella uncinata* is hard to beat. Peacock moss and blue spikemoss are its common names, and that should give you a clue as to its color. It has an iridescent, metallic blue sheen and is one of the most striking plants you will ever see. I have some planted in a north-facing flower bed and much to my surprise it came back wonderfully after a damaging summer drought. Considering the watering restrictions it had to live under I wasn't sure that it would survive, as like most *Selaginellas* it prefers a moist location.

And then there's *Selaginella pallescens*, not as delicate in appearance as the aforementioned, but with thicker leaves and much divided branches. Arbovitae fern or moss fern as it's commonly called has leaves of a light yellow-green and will grow 6" tall and twice as wide. It is not a ground cover but has densely tufted stems branching upward from the base.

If conditions are right, and Mother Nature is smiling on your landscape, you may have some *Selaginella lepidophylla*, a/k/a resur-

rection fern or rose of Jericho. A neighbor has a lovely old live oak on her front lawn that is home to thousands, maybe millions of these delicate plants all along its far-reaching branches. As you can imagine it is quite a sight to see after a rain. Last year I had to have a wooden gate replaced. The old gate had one plank that was host to this amazing plant. After a shower this dehydrated, brown stringy cluster unfurled into a beautiful green fern that lasted until the weather dried, and then retreated back to its original parched state. It curls with the underside of its fronds facing upward in order to catch the first raindrops. Not wanting to lose my prize, I had the carpenter attach the old plank to the new gate in the same exact spot where it had been originally – under the drip line of the roof. I might mention that I have tried on several occasions to transplant one of these mysterious ferns – but I was unsuccessful each time. Mother Nature is unquestionably the Master Gardener.

With the exception of the resurrection fern, nurseries may occasionally stock a variety or two of *Selaginella* - take them home and enjoy some of the most unusual plants you'll ever have in your garden.



Selaginella uncinata



Photos by MG Donna Ward

Selaginella kraussiana



Selaginella pallescens



Selaginella lepidophylla,

members request

Seasonal Bites

Kaye brought this salad to the October MG Meeting and members requested her recipe, so here it is!



*by Kaye Corey
MG 2001*

Corn and Chip Salad

Prep Time: 10 minutes

2 - 15 oz. cans whole kernel corn, drained
1/2 green bell pepper, chopped
1/2 red bell pepper, chopped
1/2 purple onion, finely chopped
1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
3/4 cup mayonaise (increase to 1 cup, if desired)
2 cups crushed chili cheese flavored corn chips.



Mix all ingredients together.

Crush corn chips in a ziplock bag. If serving salad the same day, cover top of salad with the crushed chips and toss just before serving. If making ahead, wait to put chips on salad until ready to serve. You want the crunch.

Enjoy

November/December "Things To Do"

Gardening Calendar Video



*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.

Project: Demonstration Gardens

Carbide Park



By Tom Fountain
MG 2008



There are two things most Gulf Coast gardeners do, curse the weather and curse the bugs. This summer was no different, we have had some long stretches of stifling heat and dry weather. Then, the spotty showers started and have continued almost daily over the past month. This makes it hard to keep the bugs under control. Mosquitos also love this weather and gardeners, so always remember to bring your mosquito spray with you when you come out to the garden. Our volunteer gardeners work hard and produce an amazing harvest. A large percentage of it goes to community centers around Galveston County.

Henry and Stewart along with the other members of the bedding renewal group are moving along productively. They have finished more than a half-dozen beds in the past month, thanks to a larger crew and a few workflow adjustments. The greenhouse crew has at last finished the greenhouse foundation and had it poured. Next on that project will be to skin the frame, put in doors, and add lighting, water and workbenches. Robert and a good size group mulched the orchard area. Like in any garden, there is always something to do. If any of these projects sound interesting, come join in. I know from experience at times it is hard to commit to every Thursday at the garden, but if you can, come and help out from time to time—you are welcome. The community beds and the orchard can always use the extra help.

The visitor entrance beds have been reworked and look inviting. Other special beds including the memorial bed, rose garden, and herb garden all have new plantings. The lower right picture is of Ira and the magical kitchen staff (O.J. & Ed) that keep us coming back for more.



MINUTES

AUGUST MG MEETINGS



By Mary Lou Kelso
MG 2000

The Galveston County Master Gardener August Monthly Meeting was held at Moody Gardens on August 13. This meeting was quite different from our last meeting at Moody Gardens. The day started as early as 9:15 a.m. with MGs purchasing tickets from MG Mary Lou Kelso to go to the venues of their choice over the entire day. Over 300 venue tickets were sold to all the excited guests. At 2:30 p.m., Donita Brannen hosted a Moody Gardens Greenhouse tour followed by a group tour of the magnificent Rainforest in the Visitor Center.

Most Master Gardeners then proceeded to attend the afternoon showing of the 3D *Amazing Butterflies* movie. Andres Castaneda, Garden Restaurant Chef and Manager, presented a bountiful buffet for MG's and guests which numbered over 120! A huge assortment of door prizes was given by Dr. Johnson, Mary Lou and Patsy Jewell with Luke Speller, MG Gene and Martha Speller's grandson, presenting to the winners.

The evening celebration continued at the Moody Gardens Hotel with Garvin O'Neil hosting a sunset reception on the 9th floor of the Hotel with over 100 attendees. Garvin took several groups into one of the newly remodeled hotel rooms that are undergoing renovations.

Our thanks and appreciation go to John Zendt, President, Moody Gardens; Robert Callies, General Manager, Moody Gardens Attractions; Garvin O'Neil, General Manager, Moody Gardens Hotel, Spa and Convention Center; Donita Brannen, Rainforest Curator; Bill Pushak, General Manager, Moody Gardens Golf; and Cindi Smith, Corporate Sales Manager!



THE PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP - WHO WE ARE

This photography group, formerly known as *Image Seekers* but now looking for a new name to better describe its function, is open to all Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists. It meets at 1:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at the Galveston County Extension Office.

The main objective of this group is to provide photographs for the Master Gardeners' and Master Naturalists' Digital Library. These photographs are used for presentations, seminars, newsletters or other publications. If the Digital Library doesn't have a photo that is needed, this group will try to provide the needed photos.

The secondary objective is to promote better understanding of each individual's camera as well as learn how to use both the artistic and the technical side of photography for creating that perfect shot. The group is fortunate to find a Master Naturalist who is also a professional photographer. Scott Buckel heads this group and presents lectures or gives tips and advice during outings where we get familiar with the various settings on our cameras.

At the October meeting the class toured the Demonstration Garden at Carbide Park (see photo at right) and received tips on how to tone down the bright sun or brighten the shadows using diffusers and various types of reflectors. On November 13, we plan to take advantage of the cooler days and go outside again and practice using various settings with Scott's guidance.

Any Master Gardener or Master Naturalist that wishes to learn more about their cameras and contribute to the Digital Library can become a member of this photography group simply by attending a meeting or asking to be placed on the e-mail list for announcements by contacting Helle Brown, hellebrown@msn.com.



Photo by MG Helle Brown

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 AgriLife Extension 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

Tuesday Night & Saturday Seminars

Landscape Design I - Analyzing your Landscape

Tuesday Oct 22, 2013

6:30-8:00 p.m.

Presented by Master Gardener. landscape designer Karen Lehr, MLA This first in series of three programs will give you the tools to analyze your own site and assess your landscape needs. It is suggested all three programs in the series be registered for and attended as the information advances through each program and will not be repeated. Dates of Landscape Design II and III are Oct 29 and Nov 5.

Landscape Design II - Design Principles

Tuesday Oct 29, 2013

6:30-8:00 p.m.

Presented by Master Gardener landscape designer Karen Lehr, MLA. In this second in a series of three programs you will have hands on examples and will start to plan your own landscape. It is suggested all three programs in the series be registered for and attended as the information advances through each program and will not be repeated. Date for Landscape Design III is Nov 5.

The Chile Pepper Extravaganza - Seminar & Tasting

Saturday Nov 2, 2013

9:00 a.m.- noon

The event presented by Master Gardener Gene Speller will start with a period of observation and/or tasting of pepper samples. Attendees are encouraged to bring in their own Chile Peppers – especially any unusual or special varieties. Samples need to be brought in plastic zip-lock bags with your name, the pepper name and “heat level” (Scoville units, if known). The presentation will follow with topics that include background and origin of pepper plants; how to start from seed; culture and growing tips; recommended varieties; insect and disease control; and pepper uses & recipes. Peppers discussed come from all four ‘heat’ groups: mild, medium, very hot and extremely hot.

Landscape Design III - Design Principles

Tuesday Nov 5, 2013

6:30 -8:00 p.m.

This program is presented by Galveston County Master Gardener and Landscape Designer Karen Lehr. In this last in a series of three programs you will learn more design principles and how to organize your landscape plans and designs. It is suggested all three programs in the series be registered for and attended as the information advances through each program and will not be repeated. Dates of Landscape Design I and II are October 22 and October 29.

Texas Upper Gulf Coast Citrus Show

Thursday Nov 21, 2013

6:30 to 7:00 p.m. - Citrus grown by local gardeners will be on display for the general public. Rosettes and ribbons will be awarded to the best quality entries.

7:00 p.m. Educational program

A presentation by Monte L. Nesbitt, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Program Specialist, will cover the topics of citrus variety selection and establishment, production, pest problems, and an update on Citrus Greening and other serious threats. Pre-registration for this program is not necessary.

Home citrus growers are encouraged to enter any type of citrus fruit for judging. Details on doing so, including dates and times for entry submission will be available at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/>

highly invasive weed

Pepper Vine



By Marian Kimbrough
MG 2007

Peppervine (*Ampelopsis arborea*) is native in the regions of Northeast Asia such as China, Korea, Japan, and the Russian Far East. It was introduced to the United States in the early 1800s and, at that time, was a much desired bedding plant because it could be used as a bush if kept trimmed, or could be trellis trained (Figure 1) for a beautiful, showy display of color from 15 to 30+ feet in height.

The desirable characteristics of its colorful berries, good ground coverage, trellis climbing ability, pest resistance and tolerance of adverse weather conditions are the same characteristics which make it extremely undesirable in the United States as an invader, today. It will quickly overtake "gardens" and kill out any desirable smaller plants that happen to be in its path. In the wild, as peppervine spreads, it can kill out native plants, which is detrimental to a natural habitat environment.

Peppervine produces an abundance of colorful berries, with each berry containing two to four seeds. The fruit is attractive food for birds and large mammals as a minor food, and for smaller mammals as a food lower on their choice of items. Wherever the feasting birds and mammals go, peppervine seeds go, too—the seeds are dispersed in their droppings, increasing the spread of this highly invasive plant.

This vine is often mistaken for poison ivy—make that commonly mistaken. Laurel Stine (MG 2002) stated that we get numerous submissions each year of peppervine from residents thinking they have poison ivy. The specific characteristics of this plant are a deciduous woody stalk and vine, with

non-adhesive tendrils that occur opposite and closely resemble native grapes. Newly emerged leaves are purple-red and change to a light green to dark green as they reach mature size (Figure 2).

Peppervine has inconspicuous greenish-white flowers opposite the leaves from June through August, and the berries appear from September into late fall. As a cluster of berries mature, their coloration gradually changes from green to white (Figure 3) to red to shiny blue-black (Figure 4). Berries on a given cluster mature at different rates; thus, clusters will typically consist of differently colored berries.

Management options of the peppervine plant must be both consistent and persistent over two or more years for whichever management approach is utilized. The best management option for most gardeners is hand pulling, especially during the spring season to prevent flower buds from forming. However, since it has a very deep tap root, often, an older more developed plant stalk should be cut near the ground, treating the cut stems with a broadleaf herbicide. Some broadleaf herbicides which have proven successful are those with triclopyr as an active ingredient (e.g., Brush-B-Gon and Brush Killer) and glyphosate (i.e., Roundup and Eraser). For foliar application, the use of triclopyr formulations are effective.

It is advisable to check with your local County Extension Office if you are unsure whether you are dealing with peppervine or poison ivy as neither is desirable! Be sure to take proper precautions when preparing to control the spread of plants/weeds by the use of chemical methods—Happy weeding!

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Ampelopsis arborea (L.) Koehne

Family: Vitaceae

Group: Dicot

OTHER COMMON NAMES

Buckvine

Cow Itch



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 4



Figure 3

Photos by MG Herman Auer & MG Margie Jenke

bulletin board

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

To volunteer for the **MG Phone Desk** contact Laura Bellmore by e-mail at 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 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 or MG Bobbie Ivey at 713-748-8564 or email at 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)! 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

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 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 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 and signed by Dr. William Johnson. Note that fees do not include lodging or food unless specified otherwise.

Educational Tour with Doug Welsh to SOUTH AFRICA

February 15-26, 2014

Join Doug Welsh and explore the lush gardens of Johannesburg, South Africa's stunning national parks and the gorgeous flora of Cape Town. In addition, you'll discover the dramatic landscape of the Cape of Good Hope, sip wines in South Africa's premier wine region, and stay in the Dutch colonial town of Stellenbosch. Your journey will culminate at the Bakubung Bush Lodge where you'll ride into the bush in an open safari vehicle with Swazi trackers and African rangers for an intimate viewing of South Africa's lions, leopards, rhinos and elephants.

For more information, call Earthbound Expeditions at 800-723-8454, email at info@earthboundexpeditions.com, or visit <http://www.earthboundexpeditions.com/february-2014-south-africa-with-doug-welsh>

NEED A GIFT?

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

The Butterflies of Galveston County
Thumbnail Guide to Gardening for New Gardeners
Ambrosia from Your Back Yard
Bilingual Guide to Yard Care
Herbs for the Upper Gulf Coast of Texas
Our Edible Landscape
Creating the Tropical Look

VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGS

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

the last word . . .

LANDSCAPE TREES PROVIDE GLINT OF FALL COLOR

(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

Each fall, a glorious spectrum of colors blankets the hardwood forests in many areas of the United States. In Colorado, it's the gold of aspen trees that catches the eye. In New England, it's the brilliant oranges and yellows of the sugar maples. And in the South, it's the deep scarlet of the red oaks, the reddish orange of sumac and the multicolors of sweet gum.

Despite appearances, Mother Nature doesn't paint with broad brush strokes. Paint-by numbers would be a better analogy because each tree has its own fall color bound up in the chemical composition of the sap, which provides the "instructions" on what color to turn.

Tree leaves change colors according to complex chemical formulas. Depending on how much iron, magnesium, phosphorus or sodium is present in leaves and the acidity of tree sap, leaves might turn amber, gold, red, orange or just fade from green to brown. Scarlet oaks, red maples and sumacs, for instance, have a slightly acidic sap that causes the leaves to turn bright red. The leaves of some varieties of ash, growing in areas where limestone is present, will turn a regal purplish-blue.

What prompts the change? Although many people believe that a mischievous Jack Frost is responsible for the color change, the weather conditions are just one factor at play. As the days grow shorter and the nights longer, a chemical clock inside the trees starts up, releasing a hormone which restricts the flow of sap to each leaf.

As the autumn season progresses, the sap flows more slowly and chlorophyll, which gives most leaves their basic green color over the spring and summer seasons, starts to disappear. The residual sap

becomes more concentrated as it dries, creating the colors of fall. In other words, the colors are always there, but as the predominant green fades, other colors become enhanced and begin to show through.

Sunlight, nutrients and moisture enhance the process, and cool weather seems to slow things down to bring out the full effect. A long, cool, sunny and moderately moist fall seems to provide the best color show in a given year. Well, we missed out on the cool part during the time needed for ideal color as the 2013 fall season has been a bit warm at times. Obviously, this area is not a hot spot for fall color along the roadways as we don't have the aspens of Colorado nor the sugar maples of New England. Along the highways in Galveston County — well, it's basically the orange, yellow and red hues of the maligned Chinese tallow tree.

Even though fall color in our urban trees has been a bit muted this fall even for our area, I was pleasantly surprised to see one tree species providing unexpected burst of fall color. Last week while walking back to my office from the horticulture demonstration garden in Carbide Park in La Marque, I noticed a colorful layer of fallen leaves below the canopy of a Texas ash (*Fraxinus texensis*). The leaves from this tree were a striking yellow-gold in color but leaf colors in the fall also range from gold, orange and purple depending on local conditions.

Yes, fall colors in our urban forests along the Texas Gulf Coast do not hold a candle to those in many other areas of the nation. However, it seems that life is often about trade-offs — in this case, I find ample solace and much happiness in living in an area with very mild and pleasant winters.



Photo by Dr. William M. Johnson

Even though fall color in our urban trees has been a bit muted this year for the area, a few tree species such as Texas ash are providing residents with eye-catching displays of color.

MG Judy Anderson is asking for volunteers to host backyard meetings. You may contact Judy at 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

February 12, 2013

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

March 12, 2013

Cindy Croft - Herbs
6:30 pm - Extension Office
Carbide Park - La Marque

April 9, 2013

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

May 14, 2013

Barbara & Gary Hankins - Backyard Meeting
5:30 pm - 12030 Sportsman Road
Galveston Island

June 11, 2013

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

July 9 2013

Pat Forke & Cheryl Armstrong
7:00 pm Extension Office
Greenhouses
Carbide Park - La Marque

August 13, 2013

Moody Gardens
Galveston Island
Venues from 9:30 am, Meal @ 5:30 pm

September 28, 2013 - (Saturday)

Heidi Sheesley - Annual & Perennial Pre-Sale Meeting
9:00 - 11:30 am - Wayne Johnson Community Center
Carbide Park - La Marque

October 8, 2013

Rose Marie & Charlie Smith - Backyard Meeting
5:30 pm - 11 Lakeview Drive
Galveston Island

November 12, 2013

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

December 10, 2013

Holiday Meeting - Mikey and Allen Isbell
6:30 pm - 1715 - 35th Street
Galveston Island



*By Judy Anderson
MG 2012*

GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION



2013 Master Garden Monthly Meetings

November

The Annual Meeting and Election of Officers will be held Tuesday, 6:00 p.m., November 12 at the AgriLife Extension Office. This will be a potluck dinner and we will recognize the service of retiring officers. The officers have been a steady guide through the many changes of the Galveston County Master Gardener Association during the past term. This is an opportunity to thank them for their commitment.

December

The Galveston County Master Gardener's Annual Holiday Party will be held at the home of Mikey and Allen Isbell, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., December 10. Save this date for an early holiday celebration.

