

THE GALVESTON COUNTY Master Gardeners

Issue 191 - June/July 2014

Seed Producers Birds Love
special treats for birds

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sweltering, sizzling days ahead Summer is here!

You might be a Master Gardener if you:

Own one too many floppy straw hats; you sport one of those sexy "farmer tans" instead of a swim suit tan; have a mountain of plastic pots squirreled away; won't let anyone else prune the fruit trees; you have more pairs of gardening gloves than earrings; you drive by any lawn and think -- that could be a garden!; you wake up in the middle of a cold night and wonder if you should run outside and cover your succulents; you're in a national park and you have to resist the urge to pull weeds; and you say, out loud, at least once during the growing season "I don't remember planting that!"



*By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008*

Our longest season and my favorite is here, Summer! I like summer, even though I know there are sweltering, sizzling Gulf Coast days ahead and always more mosquitoes than I care to hear whine. I like the longer daylight hours and especially the peaceful very early morning hours where the elusive promise of doing something I want to do waits; before, almost immediately, my chaotic schedule is redirected by something out of my control. At least summer on our Gulf Coast (discounting the calendar definition/actual dates of summer) is long where there is the possibility of days less hectic. The newsletter team hopes you'll have some downtime to enjoy our current newsletter.

In this month's Q&A section you can learn about two diseases affecting our gardens at this time of the year. One is fungal, Early Blight on tomatoes (page 4) and the other, Phylloxera Gall on pecan trees, is caused by an insect (page 5).

Relevant educational articles include a piece by Henry Harrison and Stewart McAdoo describing different types of raised bed construction techniques and which might work best in your landscape (page 6). This is the time of year when our gardens start yielding like crazy. MG Mary Demeny is interviewed on page 10 and gives us ideas on what to do with our abundant harvests and Sandra Gervais volunteers some wonderful recipes for using our tomatoes (page 16).

Ways to "Pay it Forward" are growing throughout our nation and Community Gardens are one way to do this. Our Best Shots piece on pages 8-9 describes community gardens in our area. Donna Ward provides advice on how to limit drought damage to our trees on page 14, and Jan Brick's article (page 15) highlights plants that provide seeds for birds.

Enjoy visiting MG Julie Moncur's amazing yard on page 12. As always things are hopping at the Demonstration garden. Read about the current happenings on page 17. Dr. Johnson is featured on page 23 with the Last Word on Thrip Infestation. Remember to check out the calendar, bulletin board and upcoming events sections for updates to events and volunteer needs in our area. Don't forget to report your volunteer hours.

If you have any comments/suggestions (good, bad or indifferent) you'd like to make regarding our newsletter, please send them to Linda Steber (steber8@msn.com) or Laura Bellmore (galv3@wt.net) a note. We appreciate and thank, in advance, everyone who takes time to do this as it makes our newsletter better.



Cosmos Photo by MG Maargie Jenke

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*Front Cover Photo
by MG Margie Jenke*



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How to Reach Us



Extension Office:

Phone. . . . 281-534-3413, ext. 1-2

E-Mail.galv3@wt.net

To Submit Newsletter Articles:

Contact Linda Steber

Phone281-534-6695

E-Mail . . .steber8@msn.com

We encourage your articles!

Due the 20th of each month.

To Send Volunteer Hours:

E-Mail.mghours@wt.net

Speakers Bureau:

Contact Cindy Croft

Phone 281-332-9501

E-Mail

garden.speakers@gmail.com



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ask a master gardener



By Laurel Stine
MG 2002

Hot Line Topics

what's happening to my tomato plants

Question: My beautiful, abundant tomato plants have been attacked by something which is shriveling the leaves at a rapid rate. What is causing this?

Your tomato plants may have a fungal leaf spot disease known as early blight, which can cause leaf, stem and fruit lesions.

Early blight is caused by the fungus *Alternaria solani*. Leaf spots can start out brownish-black and then expand to show concentric color zones with a yellow halo. Many times the spots will be angular and confined between leaf veins.

You may notice that disease typically starts on the lower leaves, which are closest to the soil, which harbors the initial inoculum that starts the disease cycle in the spring. Splashing water, as well as heavy rains, can help spread early blight, so only water the root zone of the plant and avoid wetting the foliage as much as possible. Mulching and staking can also help reduce the splashing effects of rain or irrigation.

Early Blight is an annual problem for most gardeners. It normally develops into a problem when plants have a heavy fruit set and the area has received rainfall. Spores from the fungus are spread to the lower foliage by wind and splashing rain. Leaves must be wet for infection to occur. At 50 degrees F. the leaves must be wet for 12 hours for infection, but at temperatures above 59 degrees F., the length of time for infection is only 3 hours. Leaf spot development is most severe during periods of cloudy days and high humidity.

Once early blight is present, your only option is to slow the rate of disease transmission. Scout your garden regularly and remove infected leaves or severely infected plants because they provide inoculum (spores) for the disease to spread.

Use the following cultural control practices:

1. Use only clean seed saved from disease-free plants.
2. Remove and destroy crop residue at the end of the season. Where this is not practical, plow residue into the soil to promote breakdown by soil microorganisms and to physically remove the spore source from the soil surface.

3. Practice crop rotation to non-susceptible crops (3 year cycle). Be sure to control volunteers and susceptible weeds.
4. Promote good air circulation by proper spacing of plants.
5. Orient rows in the direction of prevailing winds, avoid shaded areas, and avoid wind barriers.
6. Irrigate early in the day to promote rapid drying of foliage.
7. Healthy plants with adequate nutrition are less susceptible to the disease.
8. Minimize plant injury and the spread of spores by controlling insect feeding.
9. Hand picking diseased foliage may slow the rate of disease spread but should not be relied on for control. Do not work when foliage is wet.
10. Use resistant or tolerant varieties.

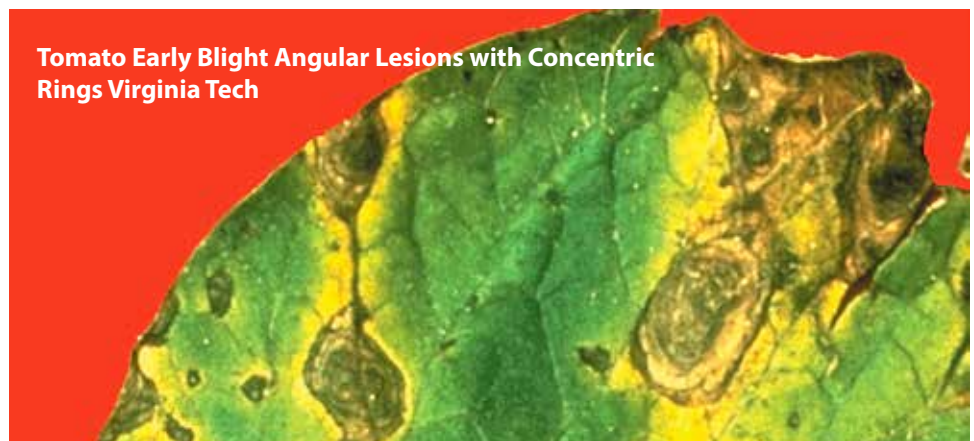
According to Tom LeRoy, fungicides typically used to help control early blight include chlorothalonil, fixed copper, mancozeb, and maneb and should be applied on a 7- to 10-day spray schedule. It is important when using fungicides to adhere to all label directions. A possible organic control product would be Serenade. Serenade™ biofungicide is a wettable powder formulation of *Bacillus subtilis*, QST-713 strain. *B. subtilis* is applied as a preventative fungicide and works as an antagonist against many pathogens.



Tomato Early Blight Stem Lesions Virginia Tech



Tomato Early Blight Fruit Lesions Florida Extension



Tomato Early Blight Angular Lesions with Concentric Rings Virginia Tech

small soft-bodied insects can cause infested leaves to drop early



By Laurel Stine
MG 2002

Question: What are these weird bumps on the leaves, twigs and nuts of my pecan tree?

It sounds as if you may have a case of Pecan Phylloxera Gall. Four species of *Phylloxera* insects cause galls on leaves, twigs and nuts of pecan trees. Although unsightly, galls on pecan leaves caused (*Phylloxera notabilis* Pergande) are not particularly damaging although they cause infested leaves to drop early. Galls on twigs, caused by *P. devastatrix* Pergande, can lead to mid-season (July) defoliation and twigs breaking off during windy weather or excessive weight which results in reduced yield and misshapen trees.

Pecan phylloxera are small, soft-bodied insects that are similar and closely related to aphids. They live inside hollow galls formed on new-growth leaves or twigs that may reach up to one inch in diameter. Leaf galls remain green and fleshy until they have opened. Twig and stem galls are woody and may remain on the tree for several years.

Eggs hatch around bud break in the spring and tiny nymphs begin to feed on tender young growth, releasing a substance that stimulates the plant tissue to develop galls. The nymphs hatch and mate while still immature. This unusual capability is called neoteny.

After developing into adults in 4 to 5 weeks, females deposit clutches of eggs inside the galls or on fresh, young growth. Nymphs hatching from these eggs develop into wingless and winged females. The winged variants often are referred to as winged migrants. The eggs deposited by the winged migrants hatch into sexual males and females.

Within 3 weeks, the galls split open and release the adult stages. *Phylloxera* can have several generations. However, the stem phylloxera has only one damaging generation per year.

Prior to dying, the female seeks shelter in a protected area on the tree, usually under the bark, in old galls or under dead scale insects. She will lay a single egg. The egg will remain dormant within the body of the dead female until the egg hatches the following spring and begins another cycle.

By the time symptoms are noticed, it is too late to treat during the current season. As far as the basic health of an infested tree is concerned, no pesticide treatment is actually needed. The vigor of infested trees can be increased by proper fertilization (following the recommendations indicated by a soil test) and watering during dry weather.

If you decide that an insecticide is needed, it should be applied before the immatures become embedded in the new tissue. Insecticides only need to be applied to a tree if a tree had galls the previous season.

Apply horticultural oil during the dormant season, then follow up with malathion at bud-break—just as the buds begin to split and show green color; terminal bud growth should be about 2 inches long.

There is another active ingredient labeled for pecans called imidicloprid. Here is what Alabama Extension has to say: "There is a product labeled for pecan trees for soil applications only. This product contains the active ingredient imidacloprid. Soil application would have to be made prior to bud break for the active ingredient to be taken up and distributed throughout the tree before the stem mother settles in to feed. Only one application of imidacloprid can be made per year. Control will depend on timing of application and sufficient uptake. Drench applications made in the fall have been successful in controlling *phylloxera* the following spring."

Photos from <http://entopl.okstate.edu/ddd/insects/phylloxera.htm>



Phylloxera in gall UGA



Leaf phylloxera UGA



Phylloxera stem gall UGA



by Henry Harrison
MG 2011

choosing the right bed

Different Raised Beds for Different Needs



By Stewart McAdoo
MG 2012

Galveston County Master Gardeners' Research and Education Garden reflects solutions for successful gardening in Galveston County through the use of raised beds and amended soil. Let's talk first about why to install raised beds and amended soil.

"Why can't I just strip a part of my yard of grass and weeds, till what's there and plant in it. After all, grass and weeds grow just fine." Well, the weather and the soil here is the reason. For instance, when it rains here, sometimes it pours. Then, this is sometimes followed by a dry season—months of a dry season. We also have a soil base that is not ideal for growing vegetables. The Texas Gulf Coast soil is either 90% clay (on the mainland) or 90% sand (on the island). In rainy conditions the water will drain too quickly through the sand, and the clay soil will hold it all and drown the plant. In order to provide a place to grow vegetables and other plants, we amend our soil and we raise it, too. We amend the soil to provide the nutrients the plants will need and to hold water (but not too much). We raise the beds so that the excess water will run through it and not drown the plants. Many plants do not do well when their roots are wet all of the time.

To accommodate the need for soil amendments, if we raise the bed, we will actually be adding a significant amount of soil, which should be a really good soil. A good soil mix is 1/3 organic soil, 1/3 sand, and 1/3 top soil, which you can buy mixed together by either the pick-up or dump truck load. If you need smaller amounts, you can buy all three products in 40 lb. bags and mix them together yourself, three bags at a time. You can also buy pre-mixed garden soil mix in bags.

In choosing the size of a raised bed, you need to consider the location. The location should have at least 8 hours of direct sunlight and should have reasonably good drainage before raising the bed. You really don't want to put the garden in a swampy wet area. That would make getting to it difficult and/or messy and construction would not be easy. The bed size itself needs to be determined by access to the bed interior and the space available. You should be able to walk around at least one side because you can only reach about 2 feet into a bed. The bed, therefore, would need to be about 4 feet wide assuming you have access to all sides.

Length. Since everyone has a different configuration of lawn space, the length of the bed can be determined according to available space, in multiples of 4-feet for consistency and construction ease. Beds can be as small as 4 feet x 4 feet which would be a good starting size for someone wishing to raise two or three vegetables or an herb garden. A common size is 4 feet x 12 feet.

Width. A bed 4 feet wide is convenient for reaching the center from either side. A bed 8 feet wide may be needed for special crops or available garden space. Care must be taken, however, in your planting strategy to ensure access to the crops. Both examples are in our Carbide Park Demonstration Garden.

Master Gardeners have completed a project to assist our community in making their decisions about what types of raised beds to use for their vegetable gardens by demonstrating a variety of bed types and sizes there.

Choosing from a Variety of Raised Beds

There are several varieties of raised beds based on construction materials used: wood, concrete, cinder blocks, concrete blocks and stacked rocks (usually for flowering plants). Each one was built and can be found in our garden.

Cinder blocks are a good choice for a beginning gardener without construction skills or delivery problems. They can be stacked two high, and corners can be just a matter of making a 90-degree angle or stacking one vertically to give you a place to put things or on which to sit. It is important to put in some effort to ensure that the ground on which the blocks are laid is level. When setting the blocks, one should allow a small gap between them for drainage.

Concrete beds are the most permanent, but alkaline matter could leach out into the soil if a plastic barrier is not placed between the concrete and the soil. This can be a problem as most plants do better in a neutral or slightly acid soil. Our concrete beds do not have a barrier, and the soil will be tested as part of our research. Concrete beds would be a choice to make for a very permanent bed, but they are more labor intensive and costly to build.



One of the MG Bed Builders



Corners Supported by 4 x 4 posts

Concrete blocks, available at home stores, and stones make quick and very attractive bed edges. Keeping the dimensions in mind and stacking them two or three courses deep will provide a fine bed edge.

Finally, the **most versatile is a bed whose edge is defined by wood**. At the research garden the beds were originally made using the rounded timbers with flat tops and bottoms that are available at home stores. They lasted about 8 years before they rotted out due to contact with moist soil. This gives an estimate of how long a wooden edge will last as an edging material. One design criterion then would be to make the components of the bed container replaceable. For the beds at the research garden we chose treated dimensional lumber. Treated lumber is considered safe in that the treatment chemicals used currently are not toxic being based on copper content.

Our basic design was to create a **box out of 2 x 12 lumber supported at appropriate places, such as corners, by 4 x 4 posts**. We assembled the pieces using galvanized lag screws.

Sides. We purchased 2x12 boards in lengths of 8, 12, and 16-foot lengths. The 8-foot boards were used as end boards either whole or cut into two 4-foot lengths to make the ends of a 4-foot wide bed. Our beds are generally 24 feet long or longer, so we used 16-foot boards spliced at posts placed along the sides.

Corner Post Supports. Corner supports are inside the frame and are 4 x 4 x 2 to 3 feet long, set vertically with 1 to 2 feet in the ground and flush with the frame at the top. The posts are set into the ground without concrete. The hole is dug, posts are placed in it, and the dirt is backfilled and tamped into place. For smaller beds 2x4 posts are suitable. Similarly, along the sides of the bed at 8-foot intervals, a support post is included to keep the bed sides from sagging outward under the weight of the soil.

Specialty considerations. Some of our beds incorporated 2 x 4 posts extending above the 2 x 12 sides for the purposed of supporting chicken wire fencing to keep out varmints that may want to eat the crops (e.g., rabbits). They could also be used as support for PVC pipe hoops for supporting plastic sheeting to protect crops from direct sunlight or from light frost.

Raised garden beds can be set up for special needs accommodations. The beds can be built to a height that would accommodate any kind of chair or wheelchair so that gardening can be done sitting down. We have several of those in our garden. One is laid out as a square-foot garden. The top of any bed can be capped with 2 x 6 lumber to form a comfortable place on which to sit. Our special needs beds have seating incorporated and one low bed has seating provided for those who are working on grafting buds onto root stock growing in that bed. There are also three-tiered beds which would look as nice in a front yard as in a backyard garden. Right now one is almost filled with one beautiful artichoke plant with a least a dozen artichokes flowers



Cinder Blocks



Concrete Bed with Cover



Rounded Timbers - Flat Tops



Box Out of 2x12 Lumber
Supported at Corners by 4x4
Posts



Closer Look at Corner Post
Support



Wheelchair accessible



A Comfortable Place to Sit



Three-Tiered Bed

If you are interested in seeing some of our beds or would like to ask some questions about them, the Carbine Demonstration Garden is open on Thursdays from 9 am – 11 am to walk through at your own pace. Other tours can be set up by appointment by calling 281-534-3413, Ext 11 and leaving a message on the hotline.

MG BEST SHOTS



Carter Temple Garden



The Margaret Biehl Community Garden



Libby's Place



Plant a Seed~Feed the Need



Memorial Lutheran Garden



Dickinson Community Garden

...and Narrative

old fashion grass-roots effort



By Sandra Devall
MG 1998

Community gardens are an old fashion grass-roots effort to return to the need for fresh vegetables and for vegetable gardening itself. When our newsletter committee chose 'community gardens' for their next best shots project, it was difficult to locate them. They are hidden 'gold mines' started and maintained by one individual or an organization. One of the organizers spoke to us and said that they are easier to start if an organization supports them and there is already a group in place to rely on to fill the different chores.

That problem of finding gardens did not last. Not only have they located a nice list for this article, but they continue to find more. If you are interested in starting a community garden or wish to volunteer or start a bed, please use the names at the end of each description, they will welcome your call. Hooray for Galveston County.

This 'best shots' will feature the first six they were able to find. They are so pleased with the results of this project that they will continue to feature other gardens in our newsletters after this edition.

Carter Temple Garden. This community garden was started in 2010, in a vacant field that was available next to Carter Temple Church at 39th and Sealy in Galveston. The clearing and initial soil prep was done by young men from the neighborhood and the church.

At that time, they also added a chicken coop and kept 4 laying hens because they had a volunteer who knew how to setup and maintain it. This group has a mix of older people who have garden history and younger folks who can do the muscle work. They also try to provide summer jobs to the few younger folks as improvements are added.

There is a lot of foot traffic because this is a very visible location which provides an opportunity to share the produce with neighbors and strangers. The garden shares openly and has an honor system set up for donations from those who wish to help with the necessary supplies.

For more information about this garden, contact Master Gardener Henry Harrison, (409) 763-6854.

The Margaret Biehl Community Garden. This community garden serves all gardeners in the Galveston area as a space for individual gardens (raised beds 8' x 4'). It is also a donation garden, and has a meditation and sitting garden to serve the neighbors. There are currently openings for new gardeners and volunteers are needed. Last year the garden was on the Clean Galveston Backyard Garden Tour. The garden was established after Hurricane Ike to replace a neglected, eyesore vacant lot with lots of concrete and debris that was behind St. Augustine of Hippo Episcopal Church at 41st and M 1/2.

Contact MG Karen Lehr, kalehr@yahoo.com or 409-599-4514 for information.

Libby's Place. Libby's Place is located in Galveston next door to Moody Memorial Methodist church. Libby's Place is an adult day care for people 55 and older with cognitive, social or physical limitations. The garden gives them an opportunity to plant, maintain and harvest vegetables for their own use. The garden is surrounded by fruit trees and plants that attract butterflies. The activities for them in the garden increase socialization, memory skills keeping a calendar of

plant care and physical activities.

Additional help would be appreciated for maintenance and landscaping, contact Master Gardener Pam Windus, (409) 771-5620 or DrPGilbert@aol.com

Plant a Seed ~ Feed the Need. MG Tabatha Hart told us about this community garden at St. Christopher Episcopal Church in League City, Texas which began in 2008. There are currently 12 raised beds each holding 150 square feet of growing space. In the fall of 2010 they planted a fruit tree orchard, which includes 30 different varieties of fruit including fig, citrus, apple, pomegranate and blueberry.

The garden is funded through individual donations and corporate in-kind donations, as well as community development grants. Memorial gifting opportunities are also available including park benches, bed sponsorship, and tree plantings. The garden is open to all individuals and groups wishing to volunteer in this community outreach project. To-date they have hosted area church youth groups, Girl and Boy Scout groups, environmental groups and individuals seeking community service hours. This is truly a community outreach project that has surpassed its original scope. In addition to providing fresh produce to those in need, the garden has become an opportunity for education, and an example for Stewardship of our limited resources here on planet Earth.

Please contact Ally Hardick at lmc@stchrishurch.org or the church office T 281-332-5553 to learn about volunteer and memorial gifting opportunities.

Memorial Lutheran Garden. This is another newer garden behind Memorial Lutheran Church in Texas City. This garden was begun very soon after this new church was built. Memorial burned down several years ago at their location in downtown Texas City and is now relocated on a larger piece of land close to the beltway. This gave them an opportunity to include a place for meditation, a vegetable garden and fruit orchard in the back of this property. It is accessible to everyone.

Master Gardener Terry Earl is in charge of the garden and the orchard. Their members harvest whatever is available on Sundays and it provides fresh vegetables for the members and also given to another church who distributes it to the needy.

For more information contact, MG Terry Earl, (409) 795-0627

Dickinson Community Garden. This is the newest community garden that we located. It found its home in a vacant lot between the homes in the Moore's Addition neighborhood. The organizers were Faith United Methodist church and Weaser Whitfield. The property belongs to one of the church's members, Maxine Jones.

This is a community garden which offers a garden plot to those who are interested. Gardeners can get off to a great start because gardening soil and free seeds are available. Most important, help is always available to give 'new' gardeners advice and "hands on" experience.

To donate to the Dickinson Community Garden, 2413 22nd St., in Dickinson or to sponsor a row, contact Weaser Whitfield at 281-734-3359 or Paul Slater at 281-389-5634.



it's called canning

What To Do With A Bumper Crop

By Susan Meads-Leahy
MG 2014 Intern

What a wonderful way to begin your Saturday morning, interviewing an expert on canning when my garden is exploding, in a good way, of course! From the moment I walked into her kitchen, I knew I had truly met someone who not only meant business, but took her canning very seriously. However, I had to laugh when Mary Demeny opened the conversation with "Canning is extremely easy, all you need is a person, a pot, jars, water and food to can."

I asked Mary why it is called canning when it is done in glass jars. She told me that it originated when Eleanor Roosevelt went out to the farm women through the development of Home Economics and originally tin cans were used; hence, "canning". I did a little research, and as you can imagine there is quite a history of the development of canning but I think I like the way Mary describes its origins better...from the way she was taught by her mother and great-grandmother!

Mary and Roger Demeny have been gardening for 60+ years and you can see the results everywhere you look in their garden (and in her cupboards)! I had to ask Roger how he manages to get such a bumper crop of figs and berries because the birds usually get mine. He chuckled and told me you have to pick three times a day; morning, noon and night. Mary added if you pick figs or berries before they are 100% ripe you can leave them on the table to finish ripening. I did remember

that trick from my grandmother who always finished ripening her tomatoes on the windowsill to keep the birds from getting into them. The Demenys have several fruit trees and all are very productive. Roger showed me their grapefruit tree that recently gave them over 800 grapefruits in one growing season. Additionally, they have blackberries, fig trees, vegetables, an absolute plethora of fruits and vegetables growing in their beautiful backyard. One of their favorites is Pakistani Mulberry as she says it cans beautifully. Some people enjoy lawns but people like us prefer fruitful garden beds!

Mary said her real inspiration for canning came from her mother as she and her siblings all "helped" her mother by washing jars, gathering wild strawberries, picking peaches, pears, etc. She recalled a story from one day while helping out her mother had just taken some jars out of the pressure cooker and was moving them across the room to a table to cool. She walked in front of an open southern-facing window and when the wind hit the jar it exploded in her mother's hands. Mary says she never walks near an open window when dealing with "hot-pack" items. Her mother taught her and her siblings how to be survivalists by using everything, including scraps (a.k.a. composting) in gardening.

HINT: To be successful when hot-packing, put whatever you are canning (she was talking about the chicken when she gave me this hint) on a sheet pan in a COLD oven. TAPE THE OVEN DOOR SHUT

AND DO NOT OPEN UNTIL THE NEXT MORNING! Turn oven on to 325 degrees. Once reaches 325 degrees, time for another 45 minutes then turn the oven off. Do not open oven door until the next morning. Tighten the jars and put away.

The Demenys have two large freezers full of canned items as well as jars upon jars of canned food in their kitchen! Additionally, Mary shared with me how easy it is to can chicken; you just cook it for 55 minutes in a pressure cooker. She tells me the main advantage to canning over freezing is apparent in our area during hurricane season. You don't have to worry about losing power and having your food spoil. I questioned her about the food she has in her freezer and she said it will keep for weeks if you make a plan before you open the door and know exactly what you need when you get into it versus continually opening to get this and that.... Method of preparation for and method of canning used depends on "what" you are canning, according to Mary.

Roger and Mary do not use any pesticides or herbicides/fungicides in their garden as they believe these things kill the microbes in the soil. Based on her beautiful garden I would venture to say she is right!

As I was getting ready to leave, I did ask her if there was anything she would not can.... after careful thought and an initial knee-jerk response of "nothing" she did say she did not find it economically feasible to can potatoes but that was all she could think of that she didn't can (other than pickles

due to health concerns with how much salt was in them and that was just a personal preference). Mary said people ask her all the time why doesn't she take her "bountiful crop" down to the farmer's market and sell it...she said no, if it didn't get canned she just preferred to give it away to neighbors, people at church, her kids, etc. She didn't want to profit from her garden, she wanted to share the bounty.

I hope one day I find my passion for canning as rewarding and fulfilling as Mary exudes in her conversation, mannerisms and warm, loving smile.



our conversation was dotted with recipes:



Photos by Susan Meads-Leahy

Recipe #1 – before I even sat down to write

QUICK AND EASY OKRA

Wash okra, put in a bowl (cut or uncut as you prefer)
Drizzle with canola oil (her preference) or olive oil
Sprinkle with Garlic Salt and Black Pepper and lay on baking sheet in one layer
Broil for 10-15 minutes (keeping a close eye so it doesn't burn)
Serve immediately

Recipe #3 (previously published in May 2011)

(I include this because she gave me a loaf and it is YUMMY)

Recipe #2 – before I could ask another question

YUMMY PAK CHOI SALAD

(can use Swiss chard, spinach or even lettuce)
Pick, wash and dry Pak Choi
Chop into bite size pieces and put in a salad bowl
You can add Ground Almonds, Chow Mein Noodles, or Green Onion (or all if you prefer)

In a serving bowl mix the following for the dressing:

2 tbs. canola oil, 2 tbs. soy or tamari, 2 tbs. rice wine vinegar, 2 tbs. jam (light colored) or honey

Whisk together, pour and enjoy!

ITALIAN TOMATO BREAD

5-6 cups of flour
¾ tsp. salt (optional)
1 tsp. granulated garlic or garlic powder
1/8 tsp. cayenne
1-2 Tbs. spaghetti spice, may use oregano, thyme, or dried basil instead
2-3 Tbs. sugar
½ cup grated cheese

¼ cup parmesan cheese
2 eggs
¼ cup oil
1-14 oz. can of stewed tomatoes or 1 pint canned tomatoes
½ cup finely chopped onion
2-3 cloves garlic, finely minced
2-3 Tbs. Dry yeast
1/3 cup warm water
½ cup chopped green onion tops

Chop onion and set aside. Mince garlic and set aside. Measure yeast into warm water with 1 Tbs. sugar and allow to proof. Measure all dry ingredients in a mixing bowl and add 3 ½ cups of flour. Put all wet ingredients in a bowl and mix lightly. Add to dry mixture. Add the proofed yeast last. Mix well and add green onion tops.

Place a good amount of flour on counter space and pour out the wet mixture onto it. Slowly incorporate flour into dough. Slowly knead the tomato dough for at least 10 minutes. Place dough back into our sticky bowl and cover with a dry towel. Allow to rise for 45 minutes or until double. If not double in 45 minutes, punch down anyway and shape into three loaves. Place in small, greased, foil pans and again cover with dry towel. Rise until double. Rising may require more time on a cool day than on a hot day.

Bake at 350 degrees until done which is usually about 30 minutes. This bread is particularly good toasted and topped with homemade pimento cheese.



a paradise for butterflies

Talented Gardeners - Amazing Yards

By Pat Forke
MG 2010

The home of James and Julie Moncur was built in 1992 in Clear Lake Shores. The soil on their 60 x 100 foot lot was a typical builder soil of sand on top of gumbo. Over the years they have added enriched top soil for both their lawn and their beds. Their primary interests are a combination of love of hummingbirds and butterflies along with addressing various drainage and drought conditions.

You will find the beds are flowing curves to appeal to the butterflies that like to meander. Julie has planted host and nectar plants for the butterflies most common to Galveston County. These plants include tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*), purple passion flower (*Passiflora incarnata*), elegant Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia elegans*) and common fennel.

In 2004 Julie and James were able to purchase an adjoining 50 x 100 foot lot thus more than doubling the size of their gardens. With the additional space, they were able to add vegetables gardens as well as various fruit trees. The fruit trees consist of satsumas, figs, lemons, grapefruits, peaches, as well as some mulberry bushes. Other flowering and drought tolerant plants that were added include the Lilac Vitex (*Vitex angustifolia*), a Golden Raintree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*), and Golden Dew Drop Sky Flower (*Duranta erecta*). Many of the trees serve as nesting areas for a variety of birds. The berry producing vines, such as the blue potato vine (*Solanum crispum* Glasnerium) serve as food for the birds year round. There is a gentle bubbling fountain and several bird baths that serve as a water source for the birds. Julie does not use bird feeders as she has found that these seem to attract the neighborhood cats who then stalk the birds.

After taking Mary Demy's kitchen gardening class, Julie added a container garden on her back deck. This garden, with easy access from her kitchen, contains tomatoes, herbs and assorted salad fixings.

Julie uses a DIY drip irrigation system along with timers to cut down on the maintenance of her gardens. You will also find rain barrels attached to rain gutters throughout her gardens. Julie uses a wagon to transport buckets of water from her rain barrels around her gardens.

Julie completed her Galveston County Master Gardening program in 2006 and credits this program with increasing her gardening knowledge. This knowledge has enabled her to not only improve her gardens, but she also shares her knowledge through writing for a local publication and by establishing a children's butterfly garden near her home. Julie also raises butterflies and then enlists the help of neighborhood children when it comes time to release the butterflies.

When Hurricane Ike passed through in 2008, it destroyed most of the Moncurs' landscape. Remaining was an American Elm, a Drummond Red Maple and a tea tree (*Melaleuca disambiguation*). Their gardens, which had been mostly shade pre-Ike, was now mostly sunny. This meant choosing more sun-loving plants as well as more drought-tolerant plants.



Julie Sitting in Her Butterfly Garden



Photos by MG Helle Brown

Monarch Busy Laying Eggs



Neighborhood Children Help with the Monarch Release

... Amazing Yards

In addition to many blooming plants in the gardens, you will find a wide variety of yard art. Julie particularly like the cobalt blue bottles and has them placed on stakes through her gardens. She also paints wooden butterflies and also purchases ceramic butterflies to hang throughout her garden. There is a water fountain, signs, bird feeders, as well as many potted plants through the landscape.

The Moncurs' landscaping is both enjoyable and practical. They welcome visitors and enjoy sharing their knowledge and experience with other gardeners.



Butterfly Garden Entrance



Wide Variety of Yard Art - Cobalt Blue Bottles on Stakes in Garden



Unique Flower Beds



Side Pathway with Tropicals



Peaceful Fountain



More of the Butterfly Garden



By Donna J. Ward
MG 1996

our trees need deeper water & extra care

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.)

"June is bustin' out all over, all over the meadow and the hill—Well, O.K. Rodgers and Hammerstein weren't thinking about our neighborhood and the drought conditions brought on by June, July and August when they wrote the musical Carousel, but it is something we need to be thinking about. Lack of summer rain withers young trees and saplings, and takes its toll on older established trees. Don't be fooled when the St. Augustine greens up after a brief rain. Grass quickly recovers with a minimum amount of rain, but our trees need deeper water and extra care. Be on the lookout for shriveled leaves, leaves with brown edges, curled or crinkly leaves, and falling leaves. Once you begin seeing these signs of stress brought on by drought - run, don't walk to the nearest faucet, hopefully one with a hose already attached.

Find the drip line of your tree(s). The drip line is the edge of the area covered by the canopy of the tree, the spot where rain water would naturally drip to the ground below. Turn on the hose to a little more than a trickle and let the water soak into the soil at the drip line for at least an hour. Move the hose one-quarter of the way around and continue soaking the soil. Move it again and again until you have completely soaked the perimeter of the canopy.

How much water you ask? Well, of course you're not going to measure, but if you can wrap the fingers of one hand around the trunk at about your waist height, your tree will need about 10 gallons (or 10 minutes at a low flow) at least once, but preferably twice a week.

If you can wrap both hands around the trunk at the above mentioned height, your tree will need somewhere between 30 and 50 gallons (about 30-50 minutes at a low flow) at least once a week.

If your tree is a larger, mature specimen with a sizeable canopy, place the hose under the drip line and let it run at a low flow for 45-60 minutes in that location before moving it one-quarter and letting it soak in again before moving it again until you have deep watered all the way around the canopy. For a mature tree, this may take several hours - maybe more.

Remember that even if you have an automated sprinkler system, it's unlikely that it puts out enough water to dampen more than the top few inches of the lawn. Most tree roots are in the upper 12 to 18 inches of soil, especially the finer roots doing the critical work of taking up water and nutrients, so it's essential that water soak down to that depth. Remember also that each leaf on your tree is connected to its own fine root hair under the soil, its life line so to speak, and if that hair-like root dries, its corresponding leaf dies.

At the risk of repeating myself almost monthly, a good layer of mulch will help to retain moisture, keep your trees healthier and reduce stress during our relentless summer heat. Be careful not to pile the mulch against the tree trunk, as that encourages diseases and pests. We want those trees to be healthy when Mother Nature arrives this fall with paint brush in hand, ready to splash reds and yellows among the over-head canopies



Photo by MG Herman Auer
Tree Damage from Lack of Rain

THE ISLAND GARDEN

Cheap Eats & Gourmet Treats

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



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

A family might enjoy some nice dinners for what it costs to refill those back yard bird feeders! Why not consider a budget friendly solution...a unique approach to trimming down your expenses at the grocery store and at the same time providing special treats for the birds that visit your garden—plant a garden with plants that produce the seeds that birds love! You can attract more birds to your garden by planting annuals from seeds. In just a short while you will have a plentiful food source for seed-eating birds.

There are many choices of course but here are a few suggestions:

Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)

"Add a pool of sunshine to the garden with a massed planting of black-eyed Susan. From midsummer, these tough native plants bloom their golden heads off in sun or light shade and mix well with other perennials, annuals, and shrubs. Tall varieties look especially appropriate among shrubs, which in turn provide support."

The black-eyed Susan is native to the central United States and is one of a number of plants with the common name of black-eyed Susan. Other common names include brown-eyed Susan, brown Betty, gloriosa daisy, yellow daisy, and yellow ox-eye daisy.

Plant your black-eyed susans in well-draining soil in full sun. In late fall after the foliage has faded and wilted cut them down to three inches and let the plants rest for a few months. With the onset of spring fresh growth will appear. The clumps may be divided at this time. During the summer and fall months, be sure to enjoy the blooms as cut flowers—and feed the birds by running your finger over the dried seed heads to release the tiny black seeds!

Cosmos (*Cosmos bipinnatus*)

"Those who possess a brown thumb, rejoice: cosmos flowers can grow in your garden in spite of you. In fact, these flowers prefer a bit of neglect. As an added bonus, cosmos plants provide height without ever flopping over, no supports required. Discover what these tough, pest-free annuals can bring to your landscape."

If you have an area of the garden where the soil is poor or lacking in nutrients, you can plant your cosmos here, as long as the site is sunny and well drained. Scatter the seeds, drag a rake across the seed bed to help the seeds come into contact with the soil, and look for germination after about a week. Water sparingly after the plants have become well established. They may look delicate but, cosmos plants will shine in triple digit temperatures for days without a drink.

Do not add fertilizer to cosmos as too much nitrogen encourages excess foliage at the expense of blooms. Cut plants in half when seed pods outnumber flowers to rejuvenate plants for the second half of the growing season and if you leave cosmos plants in place for a month after frost, birds will continue to feast on the seeds.

Dahlberg Daisies (*Thymophylla tenuiloba*)

According to the Park Seed Company the Dahlberg Daisy is "the

plant you love to neglect! Little-known and less appreciated, Dahlberg Daisy is a quiet treasure for baskets, containers, and the garden. No seed is easier to grow, and once the blooms begin, you can forget about it for days on end—but you won't, because the cheery yellow daisies, framed in very lush, ferny foliage, are too eye-catching!"

Also called Golden Fleece or Shooting star, this fragrant annual is covered with delicate, daisy-like yellow blossoms in July and August. It is native to Texas and Mexico with a variety of applications such as cut flowers, ground cover, hanging baskets, and flower beds. The showy, flashy and brassy Dahlberg daisy is pest resistant, disease resistant, drought tolerant and heat tolerant, grows in most well drained soils in full sun and needs little water once established.

Sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*)

Sunflowers may be the ultimate plant for seed production and consumption by humans as well as birds and other animals. "These hardy, easy-to-grow annuals brighten up any garden with their large, dramatic heads and petals. Sunflowers can grow anywhere from two to fifteen feet tall depending on the variety, and their seeds can even be harvested and enjoyed as a delicious snack."

Plant your sunflowers in soil that drains well. They need full sun to reach their full potential. If you live in a windy area or your stalks lack strength, staking the plants with wood or bamboo will help support the weight of the plant. Water thoroughly every other day but do adjust your watering routine on particularly hot or cloudy days. When the seeds begin to dry and brown and the flower heads begin to droop, the sunflower seeds are ready for harvesting.

Sally Roth, who offers more information at her website, sallyroth.com, says she often saves whole seed heads and stalks of seeds and bundles them together to hang out for the birds.

When saving individual seeds, she clips the seed heads into an open brown grocery sack (a separate bag for each type of seed), then rolls the top loosely and sets the bag in a dry place for a week or two. Then she rolls the top tightly and shakes the bag vigorously a couple of times to separate the seeds from other residue. Remove the dead flowers and seed heads and you're left with seed. It takes about a week or two for seed heads and stems to dry out, and then you can keep them indefinitely, stored upright, Roth also comments that different types of seeds can be stored together, as you would any kitchen grain: in a fairly airtight container or canister. They'll keep for years.

"Birdseed is easy to grow and natural seed will attract even more birds than filled feeders. As a bonus, by growing your own birdseed you will eliminate the need to fill feeders, since the birds will happily feed directly from the plants."

Take a lead from Mary Poppins..."feed the birds... tuppence a bag, tuppence, tuppence, tuppence a bag"...Plant a garden that really is for the birds!



Black-eyed Susan



Cosmos



Dahlberg Daisy



Sunflower



by Sandra Gervais
MG 2011

only so many salads can be eaten What To Do With an Abundance of Tomatoes

I don't need a calendar, ads in the newspaper or a thermometer to tell me that summer is here. The window sill over my sink tells the whole story; it is already fully lined with tomatoes...large kidney-shaped pink German Giants, pointed end Park Whoppers, and orange-pink Champion II. Other varieties will follow. The question that pops into my mind is...what do I do with them all?

The first year we had such success, my husband and I were both taken aback. After all, we were busy settling into a new house that summer and a lot of our plants were struggling. Not the tomatoes. And the ones in our bed at Carbide Park were producing lustily. What to do with all this bounty? Some went to the food banks of various churches. Some were given to other Master Gardeners; a few went to our good neighbors. Still they came down the vine. Their being perishable meant that we had to have a plan. And with us being busy & tired as we settled in the new house, it had to be an easy plan.

Since only so many salads can be eaten before a mutiny starts, out came the cookbooks. Some varieties, such as Super Marzano a Roma variety, cook and freeze well. So these go into the freezer after being cooked down. Some could be just sliced and baked for only thirty minutes (seasoned with minced garlic, balsamic vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper and a dusting of Parmesan cheese) to serve with pork or baked chicken dishes.

Looking at recipes started some ideas. Who knew that you could make a true pie using a regular pie crust, with mainly tomatoes for filling? So I looked around and found some easy ways to use our bounty that made us all happy. As an aside, our four foot tall basil could also be used in most of the recipes. Just cutting it made the house smell wonderful.

Here are a couple of easy recipes to make summer easy and fun.

Note: for these recipes slice ripe tomatoes and let drain 10-30 minutes. Dry with paper towels to stop excess moisture in the pie. Also, some people like to skin tomatoes before slicing.

FRESH TOMATO PIE *Use these recipes as starters and think of fun things to add...bacon, green onions, and different cheeses. Remember, the goal is to enjoy these beautiful fresh tomatoes.*

9 in. deep piecrust, baked blind according to directions. (I use frozen!)

While pie shell is baking, prepare tomatoes.

Slice 4 medium tomatoes about 3/4 inch thick. Sprinkle lightly with salt and let drain on paper towels. Before using, wipe them dry.

Remove pie shell from oven and cover with 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese. Cool.

Process coarsely or mince/chop finely by hand 3/4 to 1 cup loosely packed basil and 4 garlic cloves.

In another bowl mix 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, 1/2 cup mayonnaise, 1/8 teaspoon pepper and 1 cup mozzarella.

Put drained tomato slices on cheese in pie shell.

Sprinkle basil/garlic mixture on top of them.

Spoon cheese mixture over all, spreading evenly.

Bake at 375 degrees for 35-40 minutes. Or until top is golden and bubbly.

Garnish with basil leaves if you want and serve warm.

TOMATO-ONION PIE

9 inch deep piecrust, baked blind according to directions. Cool.

Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in skillet.

Sauté 1 large, thinly sliced onion until soft, about 15 minutes.

Add salt & pepper to taste.

Spread onion on crust.

Top with 1/2 cup chopped fresh basil and 1 cup of goat cheese.

Arrange 1 pound of sliced drained (as above) tomatoes over cheese.

Chopped olives... if desired.

Top with 1/2 cup of goat cheese.

Bake at 375 degrees for 8-10 minutes or until cheese starts to slightly brown.



Photo by MG Cheryl Armstrong

Project: Demonstration Gardens

Carbide Park



By Tom Fountain
MG 2008



Weather continues to be a subject of conversation at the garden. We continue to be cooler than normal and have only had a day or two when afternoon highs were above 90 degrees. We are also continuing to be much dryer than normal by almost 5.5 inches. The occasional light rain and mostly cloudy skies have kept the grass and weeds green around Galveston County but that could change quickly. I say this because I was planting a few things after the last rain we had, and I found the soil to be powder dry in the bottom of my six-inch hole. I am curious about how a cooler summer would affect our summer crops. Will they produce longer and more or will it stunt production? (*Update: How quickly things change with last week's 6" rainfall.*)



Henry and Stewart and that crew have settled on a design for the greenhouse. That project is taking shape and should be dried-in in a few more weeks at this rate. I have continued to be astonished by changes that are being made to the "serenity"

and "low water use" gardens by Tish and Alisa and crew. When I think that part of the garden couldn't look any nicer, it does. Our garden as a whole looks great. It's full of lush green plants and colorful flowers due to our gardeners' hard work. Some of our unsung heroes are wild Clyde, who mowed the grass and anything else that might get in his way, and jovial Joe on the tractor hauling all that soil and mulch from bed to bed.

May was a special month for celebrations. O.J. returned to the kitchen; we celebrated Wes' 87th birthday and Kenneth came out to visit for the first time since his illness. If all that isn't enough, Ed Klein in the kitchen has added some new menu items, such as Hawaiian ham and sloppy Joes to our luncheons. We also had a Spring Plant Swap for the Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists that was successful and lots of fun.



You can always find some new ideas and participate in some hands-on demonstrations out at the garden. Plum and peach trees in the orchard are in need of a little pruning, and Robert Marshall and Herman Auer will be giving some hands-on demonstrations over the next few Thursdays. The garden provides lots of opportunity to participate and learn. If you are interested in learning, just ask.





simple and delicious Seasonal Bites

The Master Gardener Newsletter Team was invited to lunch at the Demo Gardens and we all brought a dish to share. Members enjoyed MG Kaye Corey's Coconut Pie and requested her recipe.

By Kaye Corey
MG 2002

Charleston Coconut Pie

4 Eggs, beaten
½ Cup Self-rising Flour
1 1/3 Cups Sugar
½ Stick Butter, melted
2 Cups Milk
1 Teaspoon Vanilla
1 8-ounce can flake coconut
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Beat all ingredients together and pour into a greased 10-inch pie plate.
Bake 45 minutes. Though the filling seems unsettled, do not cook pie any longer.
Refrigerate it, and it will settle without spoiling its creamy consistency
It will make its own crust. However, I put this pie in a single unbaked crust.



The 2014 Texas Master Gardener Association Conference

<http://www.2014tmgaconference.org/>



The conference will be hosted by the
Permian Basin Master Gardeners
on September 25-27, 2014,
at the [MCM Grandé Hotel and FUNdome](#), Odessa.

There will be numerous garden field trips,
expert presentations, informative exhibits,
fun times, and much, much more!

MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND NOW!

[Raffle Tickets Are Available Here Now.](#)

[Conference Hotel Reservations Are Available Here Now.](#)



By Mary Lou Kelso
MG 2000

By Cindy Croft
MG 2009

MINUTES

APRIL & MAY MG MEETINGS

The April MG Meeting was held in the home of Karen and Tom Morris on Tuesday, April 8 with President Ira Gervais calling the meeting to order with about 30 members in attendance.

Deborah Repasz made an announcement about the plant swap on April 26. Judy Anderson did the coordination and set up. Penny Bessire said the blessing which was followed with great food and visiting.

Members toured their orchard. It was extremely windy, but sunny and nicely cool. Karen thanked her daughters for cleaning and helping set up as she had had bunion surgery and was hobbling around in a big boot/shoe, but honored her obligation to have the meeting like a trouper!

The Galveston County Master Gardener meeting for May 13, 2014 was called to order by President Ira Gervais where he introduced our host and hostess MG Barbara and Dr. Gary Hankins. Their home occupies a unique place on Galveston Island, overlooking Galveston Bay on the back and salt marsh on the front. Bird enthusiasts spotted brown pelicans, cormorants, grackles, great egrets, snowy egrets, roseate spoonbills, ibis, and blue herons. The home also features large expanses of lawn for walks along the bay, raised gardens and an orchard designed to help withstand the winds and salt spray to which the area is subjected.

The pot luck dinner was attended by 48 Master Gardener members and guests. Business was not conducted at this meeting.



Barbara & Gary

MASTER GARDENER AND MASTER NATURALIST PLANT SWAP

What happens when Master Gardeners and Master Naturalist meet early in the morning to talk and swap plants? Deborah Repasz and Chris Anastas worked together to find out. The event exceeded expectations!

April 26, a Saturday morning, Master Gardener's arrived early to set up tables and chairs at the Demo Garden in Carbide Park. A registration table was set up where Deborah checked in the participants and made water available. Tables were organized with at least two swappers per table. A free zone was created where people could leave plants and garden items for donation. As all of the tables became occupied, more tables were set up.

There were seeds, bulbs, cuttings, and plants, as well as hose, pots, and plant holders. About 30 participants were prepared to trade their wares. Iris bulbs were bartered for a confederate rose, aloe was swapped for coleus, and so it went. When most of the trades had been made, people began to give their extras away. No one walked away empty handed. Even the free stuff found a home.

At the end of the swap, everyone pitched in to clean up the area, leaving it just like it was found early in the day. It was a fun day for learning about new plants and being open to try something new in the garden. Visiting with other gardeners is an easy way to be educated about a new plant. The swap was so popular another one is planned for the fall. This summer, plant some seeds, separate some bulbs, or repot some plants for the swap later in the year. Join the fun of the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist plant swap.



By Judy Anderson
MG 2012



Tribute to Susan Antonelli



Galveston County Master Gardeners shared a heartfelt morning in the demonstration garden December 5, 2013, memorialized as Susan Antonelli Appreciation Day. Susan was an Intern in the Master Gardener Program of 2013 and as of mid-June had only accumulated 26 of the required 50 volunteer service hours to earn certification. As the year was coming to an end and Susan having entered pancreatic cancer-stage four, it was recognized that she would be unable to finish what she set out to accomplish—be a Certified Master Gardener. It was initially suggested that fellow interns transfer some of their existing hours to help Susan reach her commitment and goal. Fellow interns then thought about working a specified day in the demonstration garden and that day's cumulative Intern hours would be donated to Susan. It was then suggested that all the Master Gardeners working in the Demonstration Garden that day would follow the Interns' lead. After the ideas were approved, with combined efforts 107 hours were worked and entered in Susan's volunteer/service log. Each Master Gardener entered their name and hours worked.

During lunch that day in the garden, Dr. William M. Johnson, County Coordinator and County Extension Agent, Horticulture, Galveston County, spoke to the gardeners. He regretted Susan was not able to attend; he had hopes of presenting to her in person her Master Gardener certification plaque. He went on to say that this is something he has not done; in almost going on 25 years now, he has never had to do this—hopes he never has another occasion necessitating something of this type. Dr. Johnson continued, "I think you can have an organization, run itself, and still have humanity. Know what that means? You can be rough and tough and you can still have a heart!" He saluted the 2013 Interns. The following day a beautiful bouquet of roses from the garden and Susan's Master Gardener certification were delivered to her at her home.

Susan's classmates wanted her to know that they loved her, were thinking of her, and missed her being around, so pictures and videos of well-wishers were taken on Susan's Appreciation Day, put to the music of the Rolling Stones, and a movie was made! Hoping the movie would get laughs and smiles from their new friend, it was learned how much she loved it—especially after long bouts of chemotherapy. It made Susan happy to see the movie of so many smiling faces helping her achieve her goal of being a Master Gardener!

After her courageous battle with cancer it was with great sorrow when Susan passed away the month that followed. She was honored to be a Master Gardener—something she had wanted to do for many years.



Texas Master Gardeners Association

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

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

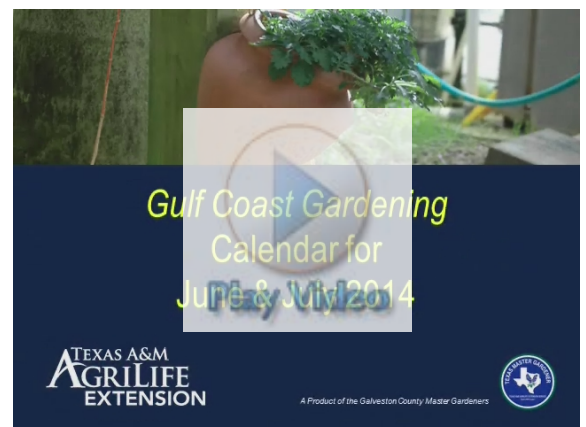
June/July "Things To Do" Gardening Calendar Video



by Jenifer Leonpacher
MG 2010



by Gregory Werth
MG 2012



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

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-B 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

A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO WEED CONTROL

Saturday, July 19, 2014

9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Do you have a bumper crop of something growing in your yard this spring that you did not plant? Is your lawn more weeds than grass? What can you do about the problem weeds that are taking over your yard? Presentation by Master Gardener Anna Wygrys will include common species identification, Integrated Weed Management plus chemical options, and practical solutions for controlling weeds in the home landscape.

RAINWATER HARVESTING 101



MG Tim Jahnke

In mid-April, 19 Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists gathered at the Extension Office to make rain! Well, really to make rain barrels during the Rainwater Harvesting Advanced Training.

Master Gardener Tim Jahnke, a dedicated water conservationist, led the training. Tim began with a presentation on rainwater harvesting in Texas. He talked about how rainwater harvesting can be from small scale such as a five gallon bucket to a central Texas facility that operates completely off of rainwater!

After the presentation, everyone headed outside to build their rain barrel. Blue fifty-five gallon barrels, some smelling like the pickled jalapenos they once held, were coveted by participants! An assembly line was formed, holes were cut, spickets installed and rain barrels created!

Many thanks to Tim Jahnke and his assistants, Mel Measeles, Chatt Smith, Dennis Peterson and George Kyame.

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 Windus 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.

VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGS

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

SPECIALIST & OTHER MG RELATED TRAINING

Please see the Texas Master Gardeners Website for details. Please note that if you go to the website you can find up-to-date information on Specialist Programs that were added in between editions of the newsletter. <http://txmg.org>. 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.

Master Gardener Composter Specialist Training

Class 5

Hosted by Bexar County – San Antonio

(210) 467-6575

Training Location at San Antonio Botanical Garden

555 Funston Place, San Antonio, TX 78209-6635

June 18, 2014 (Wed) - June 20, 2014 (Fri)

Master Gardener application must be approved by their local Master Gardener Program Coordinator or their County Extension Agent.

For more information, contact David Rodriguez, County Extension Agent-Horticulturist at (210) 467-6575 or dhrodriguez@ag.tamu.edu.

Junior Master Gardener® Teacher/Leader Training

– Montgomery County August 14 @ 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Date: August 14th, 2014 Tuesday *Dress comfortably for garden tour*

Time: 8:30 am Check In Opens, Program 9:00 am – 4:00 pm.

Lunch & Refreshments provided

Location: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Montgomery County, Thomas R. LeRoy Education

Center (South gate entrance) 9020 Airport Road, Conroe, TX 77303

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

The Photography Group 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.

NEED A GIFT?

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

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

the last word . . .

MANAGE THRIP INFESTATION WITH INSECTICIDE ON BUDS, NEW GROWTH

(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

Q: Most of the blossoms on my roses have developed brown-colored edges and many of the blossoms fail to open properly. What caused this and what should I do to prevent it?

A: Your rose blossoms are being damaged by insect pests known as thrips.

Thrips are tiny, winged insects about 1/20-inch long. The length of the life cycle (time period from egg to the adult stage) of thrips depends on temperature.

During warm-weather conditions, the life cycle takes about 12 days; in cooler weather, the cycle can take as long as 44 days.

Thrips affect the buds and blossoms of roses and several other flowers. These flying insects usually are found inside the bloom near the base of the petals.

On bright warm days, swarms of the adult stage can be seen in flight. Although thrips prefer light-colored blossoms, such as yellow and white, they can also be a problem on dark-colored rose blossoms.

Their damage can readily be seen on light-colored roses as brownish discolorations of the petals.

Rose buds infested with thrips may not open at all, may only partially open or may fully open but appear disfigured.

Under severe infestations, buds may simply wither and die before opening. Flecked or scratched petals are also a sign of damage by thrips.

The rasping mouth parts of thrips cause this injury when they scratch the petal surface to feed.

Here's a simple technique for checking for thrips. Cut off two or three blossoms displaying insect damage. Insect population will decline as a rose blossom matures, so select young blossoms.

Sharply tap a blossom several times on a white sheet of paper. If you see small slivers of cream, yellow or brown "specks" scurrying about headed for cover, then your rose blossoms are infested with thrips.

Recommended controls include application of an insecticide containing acephate, bifenthrin, cyfluthrin, esfenvalerate or permethrin. Repeat applications may be necessary.

Since species of thrips that attack roses generally do not harm foliage, insecticide applications can concentrate on buds and new growth, rather than the whole bush.

One additional recommendation to help manage thrips when only a few blossoms are affected or you only have one or two rose plants: Before application of an insecticide, it would be worthwhile to collect damaged blossoms in a plastic bag, seal the bag and dispose through household garbage collection.

Q: The bark on my crapemyrtles is peeling off and it looks like it has been shredded and just hangs off the trunk and some of the lower branches. Is this normal?

A: As crapemyrtles age, the bark will begin to peel off. The horticultural term for this is exfoliating. This is normal and there is no cause for alarm.

After the gray bark peels away, you may notice a different shade of underbark. Some of the newer varieties have colors that are cinna-

mon to dark brown in color.

This colorful underbark adds to the beauty of a crapemyrtle, especially in the winter. Go ahead and peel any loose bark off once it starts shedding to hasten the exposure of the underbark.

Q: Why are there a lot of small holes in the leaves of my eggplant plants?

A: This damage is caused by insects known as flea beetles. Row covers will provide some protection. Sevin insecticide can be used, but do not apply within one day of harvest.

Q: When should I harvest my Irish potatoes?

A: New potatoes can be harvested as soon as they reach a suitable size.

Fully-developed potatoes for storage can be harvested when the top growth turns yellow.

Do not harvest potatoes when the soil is very wet. This will increase the chance of rotting.

Q: I have noticed that a lot of professional landscapers mulch trees with shredded pine bark mulch in a cone formation around the base of trees. Is this a good idea?

A: Mulching around trees is recommended, especially given our current dry weather conditions.

Mulching materials that come into contact with the tree trunk can severely weaken or even kill the tree. The constant moist conditions created by the mulch will rot the bark layer and damage the cambium (growth) layer of the tree.

It is recommended that mulch about 4 inches deep be spread around the tree but kept a few inches away from the tree trunk. The rule of thumb is to build doughnuts, not pyramids, around trees.

Q: Will pine needles used as a mulch help lower the soil pH?

A: It is true that pine needles help create an acidic soil in native forests after hundreds or even thousands of years of growth and decomposition.

But in a home landscape there is not enough time or plant litter to substantially modify our slightly alkaline gumbo clay soils.



Gardeners should be on watch for signs of damage by insect pests known as thrips, which can readily be seen on light-colored roses as brownish discolorations of the petals.

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.

2014 MGA MONTHLY MEETINGS

January 20, 2014

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

February 11, 2014

Tish Reustle - Activity at Demo Gardens
6:30 pm - Extension Office
Carbide Park - La Marque

March 11, 2014

Henry Harrison III and Tim Jahnke
Garden Tool Maintenance
6:30 pm - Extension Office
Carbide Park - La Marque

April 8, 2014

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

May 13, 2014

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

June 10, 2014

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

July 8, 2014

Heather McKnight, League City Arborist
7:00 pm Extension Office
Greenhouses
Carbide Park - La Marque

August 12, 2014

Mary Lou Kelso, Moody Gardens
Galveston Island
Venues from 9:15 am, Meal @ 5:45 pm, Hotel Party 7:30 pm

September 9, 2014

TBA

October 14, 2014

Mike & Leslie Mize - Backyard Meeting
5:30 pm - 1504 7th Street
League City

November 11, 2014

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

December 9, 2014

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



*By Judy Anderson
MG 2012*

GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Upcoming Master Gardener Programs

June

It's Graduation time for the class of 2013 and recognition of Galveston County Master Gardeners. Mikey and Allen Isbell will be hosting the summer highlight with drinks on the patio and the pot luck set up in the greenhouse. Mikey has requested Master Gardener's, and their (one) guest, arrive around 7:00 P.M. Congratulations to the Graduates and Recognized Master Gardeners. Check your email for more details.

July

An open house for the Demo Garden will be held prior to the July Master Gardener Meeting.

Come check out the progress of the Greenhouse and Butterfly Garden. It might be a good time to visit the Texas Gulf Coast Tree selections in the garden since the League City Arborist, Heather McKnight will be presenting the program. She answers questions on the League City Web site at ask the Arborist, but she will also be available for questions after her presentation.

Before the program, there will be a pot luck dinner and Ice Cream Social, a nice way to cool down after visiting the Demo Garden. Ice Cream Socials used to be a great way to try a variety of homemade ice cream; we may not have homemade ice cream, but there will be Blue Bell Homemade Vanilla. Let's hope some of the Master Gardeners bring some yummy deserts to make that ice cream extra special! The Demo Garden will be open at 5:00 P.M. for the Open House and the Pot Luck will begin at 6:00 P.M.

We Want Your Feedback

FEEDBACK



We would love to hear from you. Send us your comments or suggestions for future articles, or just let us know how you are using our newsletter. To make sending feedback easy, just click on the button with your response

