

THE GALVESTON COUNTY Master Gardeners

Issue 192 - August/September 2014

Trees, Trees, all about Trees
everything you ever wanted to know

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



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"The oaks and the pines, and their brethren of the wood, have seen so many suns rise and set, so many seasons come and go, and so many generations pass into silence, that we may well wonder what "the story of the trees" would be to us if they had tongues to tell it, or we ears fine enough to understand." Author Unknown

"There is always music amongst the trees in the garden, but our hearts must be very quiet to hear it." - Minnie Aumonier



*By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008*

According to the Arbor Day Foundation, trees can add value to your home, help cool your home and neighborhood, break the cold winds to lower your heating costs, and provide food for wildlife. Trees typically go unnoticed. Unless we have a desire for a specific tree in our landscape, most of us don't think about trees until they die or have some other problem that results in a change that we finally notice.

Our newsletter this month focuses on trees with several educational articles providing insight into the best trees for our region and how they can be used to an advantage in our landscapes, neighborhoods or community projects that you may be associated with. In the Q&A's this month, Tim Jahnke discusses how to handle trees growing too close to your home's foundation (page 4) and Laurel Stine tells us how trees actually grow on page 5. Pricilla Files, Sr. Arborist and Executive Director of the Galveston Island Tree Conservancy, provides a list of trees that have sought after characteristics like blooms, flowers, interesting bark, wildlife like them and they thrive in the wind, salt and high heat environment of our Texas Upper Gulf Coast (page 6).

I didn't know that it was illegal to sell Chinese tallow trees in our area, I just knew the ones that used to be in my yard were a problem so we removed them! Dr. Margaret Canavan tells us about these invasive trees in her article on page 7. The Best Shots story on pages 8-9, provides a listing of some favorite trees of our own Master Gardeners and why they like them.

If you never navigate further than the vegetable beds in our MG Demonstration Garden, you're missing the superb display, at the north end of the garden of native and adaptive trees and shrubs that grow in our region. Several years ago as a project to further enhance the educational opportunities of our MG Demonstration Garden, Yvonne Enos worked with Dr. Johnson to select trees and shrubs for this area that you may not have thought of to use in your own yard. These plants are over their initial planting stage and are now turning into nice specimens to view. The article on pages 10-14 provides a descriptive of what is located there. Please visit the north end of the garden! Donna Ward's piece on page 16, gives proper planting and care instructions for trees in our horticultural zone (Zone 9). In The Last Word article on page 25, Dr. Johnson describes the distinction between trees and shrubs and answers a few burning gardening questions he received as County Extension Agent.

Other features you might enjoy this month include an interview with a Master – Luke Stripling; get his thoughts on fall gardening on page 15. Jan Brick's article on page 17, features the popular Coleus, everything old is new again. We are getting closer to the time to plant wildflowers, Kaye Corey provides what we need to know on page 18.

Check out the doings at our Demonstration Garden at Carbide Park. A truly fabulous, dynamic group of hard working Galveston County Master Gardeners and Interns deserve a lot of credit and thanks for making our demonstration garden spectacular!! Our calendar of events, monthly gardening video and volunteer needs pages have been updated.

Volunteer hours for the 2nd quarter are now due. Please get your hours in to remain in good standing. Send your hours to: mghours@wt.net



Cypress Trees in Dickinson - Photo by MG Sandra Devall

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*Front Cover Photo
by MG Margie Jenke*

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ask a master gardener



By Tim Jahnke
MG 2011

Hot Line Topics tree root damage

Question: We just bought an older home with trees very close to the foundation. Can tree roots damage my foundation? Any suggestions on dealing with the matter?

Yes, tree roots can damage your foundation, driveways and walkways. As roots grow larger with age, they can exert remarkable pressure on resisting surfaces. The most extreme solution would be to have the trees removed by a qualified tree expert.

Another effective, although expensive, technique that may be worth trying is installing a root barrier. A barrier may be placed into the soil to prevent the extension of roots under the patio. This barrier may be a solid substance (metal, plastic, or concrete). This will require digging a trench one time and placing the barrier material vertically into the trench to block the growth of roots.

Care must be taken not to dig trenches too near the tree. Digging too closely to the tree can result in damage to major roots. This will result in damage or death of the tree. When trenching near established trees, maintain sufficient distance. The closer you get to the trunk of a tree with the barrier, the higher the risk of damaging or destabilizing the tree. **CLICK HERE** for an excellent publication that provide additional information on root barriers.

If you do not want to add a physical barrier, another option would be to dig a narrow trench to a depth of two feet, cutting through roots. Then, backfill. This process will need to be repeated every 4-5 years (or more frequently depending on root growth) as the root continues to grow towards the house. As mentioned above care must be taken not to dig trenches too near the tree.

'Root barriers' can be placed in a trench between the tree and house or next to your house. The barrier is installed in the trench and back-filled with soil. Barriers are made of heavy/thick plastic or sheet metal. The root barrier goes between the tree and the structure allowing as much distance from the tree as possible.

While sawing off wayward tree roots would seem like a plausible solution, be aware that this may create a hazardous and costly situation if the cut roots destabilize the tree, allowing it to fall. In most cases killing roots will damage or even kill a tree.

If your tree is a large, mature specimen, we highly recommend consulting a qualified tree expert before taking any action. In an ideal landscaping world two practices would apply: 1) only trees with non-invasive roots would be planted in the first place and people would water deeply to encourage deeper roots for healthy tree, and 2) trees would be planted far enough from foundations to avoid root intrusion problems. It is important to remember to strive to select an appropriate size tree (live oaks are not good candidates for small

yards) then plant it the right place to avoid major root and hardscape conflicts, although this isn't always an option.

There are some other 'less neighborly' plants that you also may want to control using a root barrier. Some of them are blackberries, the spreading bamboos (no problem with clumping bamboos), bald cypress (no problem with Montezuma cypress) and flowering pears. If your next-door neighbor has planted any of these and they are invading your property, install the barrier at the property line. For long stretches, it might worthwhile to use sheet metal and rent a trenching machine.

When planting new trees, be sure to research the full size of the tree before planting. This will keep it from intruding on areas of your landscape (and your neighbor's landscape) where it is not wanted. Avoid plants that may spread without caution.

Other uses of barriers: Look around your yard and a smaller barrier may be an effective solution for other garden control problems. Most of these can be stopped with an 8 inch metal barrier. Examples would include an invasion of vines from your yard or neighbor's yards, plants that may invade from neighboring open areas, or keeping St. Augustine out of a bed or plants out of the St. Augustine.



MGs in the garden installing a root barrier around a cluster of bamboo



Photo by MG Linda Steber

This large tree is just a little too close to the house!



By Laurel Stine
MG 2002

do tree trunks get taller? don't be fooled

Question: Do tree trunks get taller as the tree gets older?

You would think so, wouldn't you? How many of us sat and watched cartoons of trees quickly sprouting out of the ground, with the trunk gaining height along with growth on the rest of the tree? To the casual observer, over time that is what seems to be happening.

But don't be fooled. All growth of new tissue takes place at only a few points on the tree, by the division of specialized cells.

There are three growth points on a tree; at the tips of the branches (canopy gets wider and taller), ends of the roots (root system expands in the soil), and in the cambium layer, which is the circulation directly under the bark (trunk gets wider).

Many times what looks like a taller trunk is the result of trees "pruning" themselves. The leaves on branches that are shaded conduct only a limited amount of photosynthesis but still cost the plant energy, nutrients, and water to maintain. These branches generally die and get knocked off by wind or other environmental factors in a process called "self-pruning" after they can no longer maintain themselves.

This quite often happens when the growing canopy shades the branches, such as the smaller, earliest branches. The young branches

closest to the ground eventually die and fall off; hence the trunk appears to get "taller." The photo below depicts the static height of a tree trunk.

Another, more noticeable demonstration of self-pruning is when large limbs suddenly break on a pecan tree. Many times these limbs show no signs of problems. This is not an uncommon scenario that can happen to large, crowded, older pecan trees on a calm summer day. Factors that can contribute to limb breakage in pecans are a heavy crop of pecans, lots of new spring growth from abundant rains, and very long limbs. Crowded and older trees often have major limbs reaching out for more sunlight. Eventually, physics takes over and limbs break.

Water stress is a contributor to large limb breakage. Pecan wood in late summer can be extremely dry and therefore brittle. A pecan tree needs about 100 to 200 gallons of water per day from April through October, which translates into about 2 inches of water every week. To a home owner, this represents about 1,000 to 1,500 gallons of water per tree, depending on tree size, up until the time of shuck split.



"This fence became embedded in the tree as it grew. Notice that over the years it took this to happen the fence remained level." US Forest Service <http://www.forestryimages.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=5375028>



wind and salt tolerant trees

My Favorite Small Trees for Galveston Island

(Priscilla Files is the Sr. Arborist and Executive Director of the Galveston Island Tree Conservancy. She is an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist and has a B.S. and M.S. in Horticulture from Texas A&M University.)

By Priscilla Files

While nothing beats a big Live Oak spreading its canopy across Broadway Boulevard, some of my favorite trees that the Galveston Island Tree Conservancy plants are small (25'– 30' at maturity). Pre-approved for planting under power lines and great for a small yard, most have been planted as street trees during our popular annual NeighborWoods projects. Along with their utility-friendly size, they have multiple ornamental characteristics like showy flowers, beautiful bark and/or fruit. Most are native Texans and have leathery leaves enhancing resistance to our sea breezes. They're attractive to birds, bees and other wildlife. One of GITC's goals is to increase the diversity of trees on the Island and small, ornamental trees are a delightful way to do just that.

TEXAS REDBUD, *Cercis canadensis* var. *texensis* – a multi-trunked small tree, our native Texas Redbud is an early bloomer. Bright pink to fuchsia pea-like flowers pop out along the branches and trunk in late February/early March, followed by heart-shaped, leathery leaves giving it a higher tolerance for our Gulf wind than its cousin the Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*). I think it performs best when protected from the Gulf wind.

TEXAS MOUNTAIN LAUREL, *Sophora secundiflora* – blooming in sync with Texas Redbud, this compact, evergreen Hill Country transplant grows remarkably well on the Island. Because of its performance in folks' yards (clearly some are Ike survivors), we included it in our NeighborWoods projects this year. The bees and I can't wait for those big panicles of purple, grape popsicle-smelling flowers. Its E. Texas cousin, Eve's Necklace, *Sophora affinis*, is a good understory tree for a backyard or other protected site.

MEXICAN OLIVE, *Cordia boissieri* – Galveston Island is quickly becoming a haven for Mexican Olive or Anacahuite. Mexican Olive has large evergreen leaves and flushes of large white blooms from late spring through fall. It also has a gnarly, furrowed bark that's as interesting as the tree itself.

PALO VERDE/RETAMA/JERUSALEM THORN, *Parkinsonia aculeata* – photosynthetic green trunks and limbs are insurance against drought-induced leaf loss. It's native to Texas and the Southwest, with showy yellow flowers in spring through summer that attract all kinds of pollinators. It has a spreading crown and fine, compound leaves. A great choice when you want a fast grower that throws light shade, and if you have a semi-arid to arid style landscape. 'Desert Museum' Palo Verde is a thornless variety developed at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum in Tucson.

DESERT WILLOW, *Chilopsis linearis* – not really a willow, it's related to the Bignonias, like Cross-vine and Catalpa. My favorite, burgundy-flowered 'Bubba', was discovered by Paul Cox of the San Antonio Botanic Garden. The largest 'Bubba' is at the Stephen F. Austin Mast Arboretum in Nacogdoches. Along with its heat and drought tolerance, its deciduous willow-like leaves give it its name. Flowers are big and showy and range from white to deep burgundy depending on the variety.

YAUPON, *Ilex vomitoria* – our native Texas Holly. Small, leathery evergreen leaves with bright red berries in the winter make this a

standout in the winter landscape. Both Yaupon and cousin Possumhaw, *Ilex decidua*, have smooth, medium gray bark with white patches. Possumhaw is deciduous so the winter berries really pop. A tea can be made from the leaves, but don't drink gallons...hence the 'vomitoria' part of its scientific name! You'll need a female for berries, and 'Pride of Houston' is a great one. You'll need a male too; never fear, they're everywhere! Usually multi-trunked, with a neat, rounded canopy, you'll want to prune and thin lower branches and twigs over time to reveal the beautiful trunk form.

A couple of non-natives:

JAPANESE BLACK PINE, *Pinus thunbergiana* – a very hardy, salt tolerant small to medium sized pine. I've included it because it has a beautiful growth form, developing pendulous branches, often with right angles at the mid-point of the branch. It's pyramidal in shape and has dark green needles. It can handle the heat as well.

CRIMSON BOTTLEBRUSH, *Callistemon citrinus* – an Australian import, Crimson Bottlebrush joined our NeighborWoods program this year for plantings in Jamaica Beach. Because of the proximity to both the Gulf and the Bay, their salt tolerance, leathery leaves and drought/heat tolerance will serve them well. We're all looking forward to their showy red blossoms that resemble a bottlebrush... so are the nectar-loving birds and insects. The canopy is rounded and dense and about as wide as the tree is tall, 15' – 20'.

And one to try – **TEXAS PERSIMMON**, *Diospyros texana* – Texas Persimmon is a multi-trunked, native tree with small leathery leaves, small fruit for wildlife and a candidate for the "Most Fabulous Bark" category. Silvery gray and smooth, its bark is looks almost muscular. This is a strong, well-behaved tree with a rounded crown growing to about 25' in height. It's going on the NeighborWoods list for 2015. You can see some in Laffitte's Cove Nature Preserve.



Photo by MG Margie Jenke

don't plant this one!

Invasion of Habitat Snatchers

(*Republished with permission of The Galveston County Daily News.*)



By Dr Margaret Canavan
MG 2003

Here's a question: What would you think of a plant that is illegal to sell, distribute or import into Texas, spreads rampantly while crowding out native vegetation, and is difficult to eliminate? No, it's not Audrey from the "Little Shop of Horrors."

This tree, *Triadica sebifera*, is the Chinese Tallow, also known as the "Terrible Tallow."

While legend credits its U.S. introduction to Benjamin Franklin, it's no friend to us on the Gulf Coast because it adores our mild climate far too much.

Recent Texas Forest Service statistics show that in Galveston County since 1970, woodlands containing monocultures of the invasive tallow have increased in area from 5 to 30,000 acres. Over a fifth of all trees in the Houston area are tallows, more than any other tree species.

The tree does have its fans. Tallows offer colorful fall foliage. They are fast and easy to grow and are decent small shade trees (although its limbs and branches break easily).

Local beekeepers consider them an excellent nectar source for honey production. Also on the positive side, they have been grown for centuries in China for seed oil, used for making candles, soap, cloth dressing and fuel. Oil from Chinese tallow trees was used successfully as an emergency source of fuel for diesel equipment operated by Allied forces during World War II.

So why do poor tallows have so many detractors?

They are aggressive and tenacious land-grabbers. They spread by root fragments and cuttings, so are quick to invade after a hurricane.

Tallow trees begin producing viable seeds after only three years, and just one tree can produce 100,000 seeds annually. Trees can remain productive for 100 years. Even one tallow tree presents a dan-

ger of explosive expansion that can harm local ecosystems by crowding out native vegetation.

Tallows are extremely difficult to eradicate. Freezes can damage the trees but roots are rarely killed. Bulldozing is ineffective because it results in sprouting from roots.

Fire can successfully eliminate small trees, but larger trees tend to resprout. To be effective, herbicides must be applied repeatedly, and it is estimated that it costs about \$250 per acre to control such exotic plant species.

The Texas Department of Agriculture lists Chinese Tallow as one of our 24 most invasive plants and includes it on the agency's list of noxious and invasive plants.

The tallow invasion has contributed significantly to the degradation of wetlands along the Gulf Coast. Chinese Tallow may even alter soil chemistry, allowing the species to self-perpetuate once established.

Insects, diseases and other natural enemies have little if any impact on our pesky friend. In the agricultural realm, it is toxic to cattle while crowding out their preferred grazing foods.

So, are the benefits of tallow worth the high environmental cost? It may have a useful place in the US, but it's not on the Gulf Coast.

Surely there are better choices for shade trees.

Galveston residents were able to pick up two free trees at the Galveston Island Tree Conservancy tree giveaway last November, and none of them were tallows.



Photo by MG Sandra Devall

MG BEST SHOTS



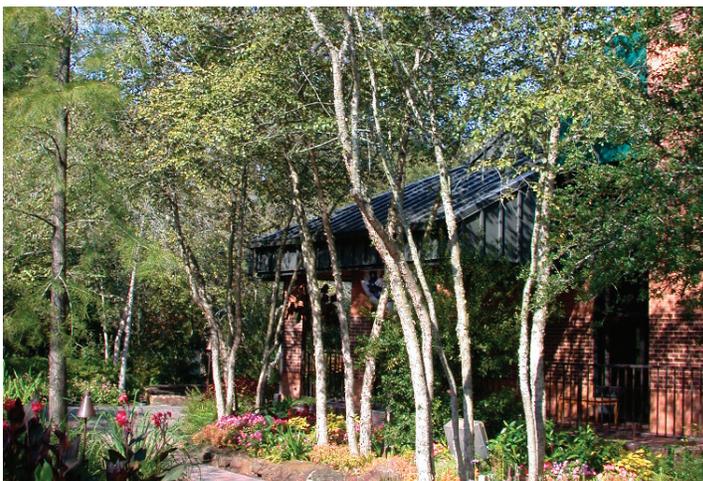
Mexican Plum



Pecan



Loquat



River Birch



Japanese Maple



Southern Magnolia

Photos from the MG Digital Library

...and Narrative

favorite trees of our Master Gardeners



A favorite tree usually has many stories attached to it. We had a pecan tree that was known as first base and although the squirrels and the children kept that tree in a unique shape and without pecans for us, we were very sad when the last hurricane put it to the ground. *By Sandra Devall MG 1998*

A tree begins to have a life of its own when it is our favorite because every time we see that tree somewhere, the stories and the beauty of it comes back too. Hope that you can all remember a special tree and can remember to tell your stories, too.

Mexican Plum, *Prunus mexicana*

Doris Heard, MG 1997

If you are like me and enjoy attracting birds, butterflies, bees and other wildlife to your yard, plant a Mexican Plum, *Prunus mexicana*. This small, single-trunked, deciduous native tree (25' tall) is covered with extremely fragrant white flowers in the early spring, which attract pollinators from far and wide. It is the host plant for the beautiful Tiger Swallowtail butterfly and the Cecropia moth. The small plums that ripen in the fall are tart but make a nice jelly; however, you will have to beat the birds and small mammals to them. Best of all, this tree, which grows in full sun or partial shade, was included in the "Texas Tough Trees" list after surviving the historic 2011 drought with little or no irrigation. It is the perfect tree for a habitat gardener.

Pecan, *Carya illinoensis*

Ken Steblein, MG 1992

The state tree of Texas is my favorite tree because they are native—provide amazing shade during the summer, with great leaves for composting in the fall—superlative wood for carpentry with the scapes and fallen branches for grilling and chilling. They have yummmmmmy nuts for eating straight from the ground or use in baking or salads, plus the shells are a bonus for mulching. Pecans provide excellent habitat for wildlife—they are the magical tree of life for Texas.

Loquat, *Eriobotrya japonica*

Sandra Devall, MG 1997

The tree that gives me the greatest amount of pleasure is my loquat tree. It is a little taller than the roof and its leaves have a unique shape that afford shade and cover to a family of cardinals. The cardinals return every year to stay with us through the summer, showing off their baby each year. One of the reasons they come is because the loquats are good to eat, and several of my friends agree with the bird. The tree is about six feet from the garage and does not create any hazard to the roof or the foundation and the garage does not cause any hazards to the bird. I also have my wind chime on it that my Mom gave me, probably one of her last gifts. Fruit, flowers, birds and shade, how could anyone ask more of one tree.

River Birch, *Betula nigra*

Judy Anderson, MG 2012

I like River Birches. They don't get too big, no need to worry about big roots near the house. They can take on a sculptural effect and reflect the seasons. Their bark peels in the winter exposing the contrast of old and new bark in beautiful brown colors. A beautiful display of River Birches can be seen at the Helen Hall Library on the HWY 3 side of the building. Birds eat their seeds, deer eat the leaves and twigs, beavers eat the bark, and rabbits eat the seedlings. Sounds like a win-win. Nature finds a bounty and I find it beautiful. They are native in the Eastern US through Texas.

Japanese Maple, *Acer palmatum* and *Acer japonicum*

Barbara Lyons and Ed Beazley, MG Interns

We love the maples of the North. When we found a home here, we quickly planted two Japanese Maples that are being given the great care they need to survive to grow here on the Texas Upper Gulf Coast. We hope they make it. They are planted in the shade in an area where we can see them every day—both to enjoy them and to watch them during their 'nursery' days. Our goal is a foot of growth a year, so let the experiment begin!

Southern Magnolia, *Magnolia grandiflora*

Laura Bellmore, MG 1992

I had never given much thought to the question "what is my favorite tree?" So it took me a little while to decide. It is the Southern Magnolia. Yes, I grew up in the city, so I never saw one in all its glory until I was an adult. But we did have a magnolia tree growing in the small front yard of my childhood home. It was almost as tall as the brownstone, but because of pruning, its branches were never as wide as what a mature tree can be. But it was beautiful. And since we did not have air-conditioning, the house was filled with the fragrance of the blossoms during the late spring/early summer. In the winter, I would collect the cones which were full of red seeds for adorning the cement planter on the porch for the holidays. In adulthood, when searching for that first house to buy, the presence of the large magnolia tree in the front yard helped sell me the home in League City. It is a beautiful shade tree. I still collect the cones in winter for decorations, and I enjoy pruning out small branches for wreaths. And the first hint of that wonderful lemony scent of magnolia blossoms each year sends me back to my childhood memories.



a showcase of native & adapted trees & shrubs

MG Demonstration Garden at Carbide Park

By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008

If you, like many people visiting our Demonstration Garden, never make it past the raised vegetable beds or the orchard you are missing out on our showcase of native and adapted trees and shrubs appropriate for growing in our area. Located in the north end of the garden, just past the Earth-Kind and Serenity gardens, these plants provide a learning opportunity for the public and Master Gardeners to view sustainable landscape options that might work in your own yards or in projects throughout the community that you support and are involved in. The trees presented in our north garden are easy care requiring annual mulching, fertilizing and keeping the area around the trees free from weeds, and most produce flowers or fruit that attract bees, butterflies and birds. Make some time to visit soon and you'll see:

Drummond Red Maple (*Acer rubrum* var. *drummondii*) – this native, deciduous tree grows over 40 feet tall, in sun to partial shade, blooms red in spring and leaves turn golden yellow in fall, has high heat tolerance and likes an acid soil. This maple has an attractive pyramid shape. Male trees have notable pinkish red flowers in early spring, and females display decorative red samaras (fruit) soon after. The bark becomes scaly as the tree ages and is another focal point of the tree.



Possumhaw Holly (*Ilex decidua*) – this native, deciduous shrub likes sun to partial shade, grows 20-30 feet, white blooms appear in summer. Birds are attracted to its berries. Parts of plant are poisonous.



Mexican Sweetspire or Mexican Summersweet or Sweet Pepper Bush (*Clethra pringlei*) – this large evergreen shrub or small tree has long racemes of cinnamon scented white flowers in summer. Leaves are elliptic and toothed toward the terminal end and can grow to 15 to 20 feet tall in sun or partial shade. It is evergreen. Attractive to bees, butterflies and birds. Flowers are fragrant.



Wax Myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*) – also known as Southern Bayberry and Southern Wax Myrtle, this native, evergreen shrub grows a wispy 20 feet tall in full sun to partial shade. It has inconspicuous blooms in late winter/early spring. Drought-tolerant, suitable for xeriscaping. Is used for screens and hedges. Needs a male and female (dioecious) to produce berries. Leaves are aromatic. Candles are made from waxy covering on fruit. Birds are attracted to the berries.



Orchid Tree (*Bauhinia variegata*) – adapted, does best in acidic soil, not tolerant of alkaline or salty conditions. Grows in full sun to light shade. Blooms in late winter/early spring. Purple flowers are fragrant. Will drop its leaves in short freezes. Grows more shrub-like in our region. Is considered a category 1 invasive species in Florida.



Mexican Buckeye (*Ungnadia speciosa*) – this deciduous native is drought-tolerant, suitable for Xeriscape gardens, grows 12-15 feet and prefers alkaline soil and full sun. Multi-trunked. Pink or rose/mauve flowers bloom in later winter/early spring. Some parts of the plant and the seed, if ingested, are poisonous. Attracts bees, but livestock seldom bother the toxic foliage.



Texas Mountain Laurel (*Calia secundiflora* or *Sophora secundiflora*) – native tree or shrub, prefers strongly alkaline soil and can grow 8-20 feet tall in full sun to partial shade. All parts of the plant are poisonous if ingested. Grape smelling purple blooms appear in late winter/early spring. Plant suitable for xeriscaping and is deer resistant. The Genista Caterpillar (immature stage of a moth) are common pests.



Lacebark Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) – also known as Chinese elm; adapted tree that can grow 40 feet tall. Full sun. Deciduous. Very good shade tree.



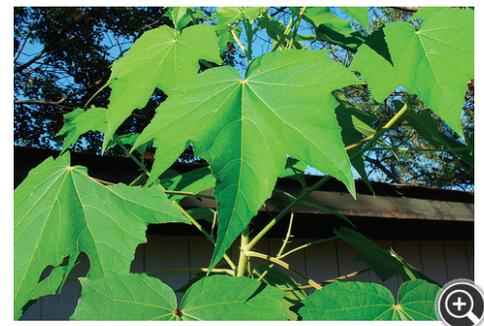
Banana Shrub (*Michelia figo*) – evergreen shrub, grows 10-15 feet tall in sun to partial shade. Blooms in mid-spring with white/cream/tan flowers. Likes mildly acidic soil and consistent moisture. The banana shrub is so-named because of the distinctive, sweet banana scent of its flowers. Attracts bees, butterflies and birds.



Walter's Viburnum (*Viburnum obovatum*) – native shrub prefers acidic soil, blooms profusely in full sun but performs well in part shade. Grows 8-10 feet tall, has dense foliage, tolerates pruning for formal hedges. Cuttings are easy to propagate. Butterflies sip nectar from spring flowers and birds and other critters eat the autumn drupes. The densely twiggy bush is a favorite nesting site for cardinals and other song birds.



Confederate Rose (*Hibiscus mutabilis*) – adapted, large shrub or small multistemmed tree, grows to 15 feet high. Deciduous in winter. Blooms in late summer to early fall. Flowers open pure white and change color over 3 days becoming deep pink and when they die look blue-pink. Needs little or no care, prefers sun to light shade, needs regular watering but is drought tolerant and easy to root.



Mexican Plum (*Prunus Mexicana*) – deciduous native, grows 15-25 feet high in full sun. Blooms are white and appear late winter/early spring. Attractive to bees, butterflies, birds. Flowers are fragrant. Dark red or purple fruit ripens in late fall. Drought-tolerant, suitable for Xeriscaping. Adapts to most soils.



Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) – native, small deciduous tree. Grows 15-20 feet tall. Blooms in spring before leaves form. Flowers are pink-purple, rose-purple or white. Needs full sun to partial shade. Drought-tolerant, suitable for Xeriscaping. Attracts bees, butterflies and birds.



Texas Redbud (*Cercis canadensis* var. *texensis*) – this native, deciduous tree grows 15-30 feet tall in full sun. Pink or rose/mauve flowers bloom in early spring before the shiny, glossy textured heart-shaped leaves form. Drought-tolerant once established, suitable for Xeriscaping. Attracts bees and butterflies to your landscape.



Rose of Sharon or Althea (*Hibiscus syriacus*) – adapted, long-blooming deciduous shrub, grows 6-10 feet high, in full sun preferring well-draining soil. Blooms in summer. Commonly used in mixed shrub borders, or in a group for its tall, upright shape and summer color.



Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia (indica × fauriei)* 'Tonto') – requires full sun, grows 8-10 feet tall. Forms large clusters of soft-textured fuchsia-red blooms on a semi-dwarf form. The foliage turns orange-red in fall for cool season color. Smooth, colorful peeling bark provides year-round interest. Good powdery mildew resistance along with excellent heat and drought tolerance. Deciduous.



Vitex or Chaste Tree (*Vitex agnus-castus* 'Montrose Purple') – adapted deciduous shrub or small tree. Blooms early summer to frost with 8-12” long fragrant purple flower spikes. Attracts bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Drought-tolerant and deer resistant. Can be sheared to the ground in winter for continued shrub appearance, or allowed to grow to 8-10 feet with multiple limbs. Needs well-draining soil.



Photos by: Cheryl Armstrong, Herman Auer, Sandra Devall, Margie Jenke, Billy Jenke, Sue Jeffco and Linda Steber (members of the Digital Photography Team).



The trees in the MG Demonstration Garden at Carbide Park



get ready Fall Gardening

By Susan Meads-Leahy
MG 2014 Intern

Have you ever had that moment of déjà vu' when you are sitting and talking with someone? Well, that is how my interview with Luke Stripling began. And, upon reflection, the déjà vu' happened to be memories of visiting the farm with my Grandfather.

Luke is 64% Cherokee and his parents lost their land early on in his life. They moved to Texas when he was about 7 years old and became sharecroppers. He has been gardening for over 50 years.

My first question for Luke was: what was his favorite fall vegetable to grow/eat? He answered as anyone who enjoys food would with ... "well, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, carrots, turnips" ... anything that can withstand the cold and frost until spring. He had me at cabbage....

I asked him what was the easiest fall vegetable to grow and you should just re-read the previous paragraph for the answer. You have to love someone who can casually entice you to love gardening and make it sound so easy. Luke says cold weather vegetables are easier to grow than summer vegetables.

There are so many things you learn in class when you take the Master Gardeners' course. In order to solarize your garden in the late summer for the winter garden, there are various methods that work for many but not all gardeners. Most will do this at the beginning of summer when it gets really hot and it takes about 60 days. After speaking with Luke, I have to go back to my roots and understand that you can learn a lot, but you will never have all the answers, and the tried and true for one isn't always the answer for all.

Luke's approach to fall gardening begins with cleaning out the bed (raised preferably for the urban gardener) from everything you had been growing throughout the summer. It is imperative that we clean out all of the plants we had growing (roots and all), and till up the soil so that it has a couple of weeks of that harsh summer sun to help kill exposed nematodes, and many other undesirable things that can be found in our gardens.

According to Luke, nematodes are one of the most difficult if impossible to truly get rid of in your garden. Nematodes are microscopic worms that happen to live in soil and are happy to feed on the roots of certain plants. He suggests that you rotate your crops if you find you have nematodes. The best way to find them is to pull up a tomato plant as they will have "root knots" if infested with the root-knot nematode. You can also purchase plants that are nematode resistant.

Luke relies upon a tiller that his son found in a yard sale many years ago and it has been invaluable to him over the years. According to Luke it is very important to allow the soil in your garden to be exposed to sunlight for a while before planting your winter crops.

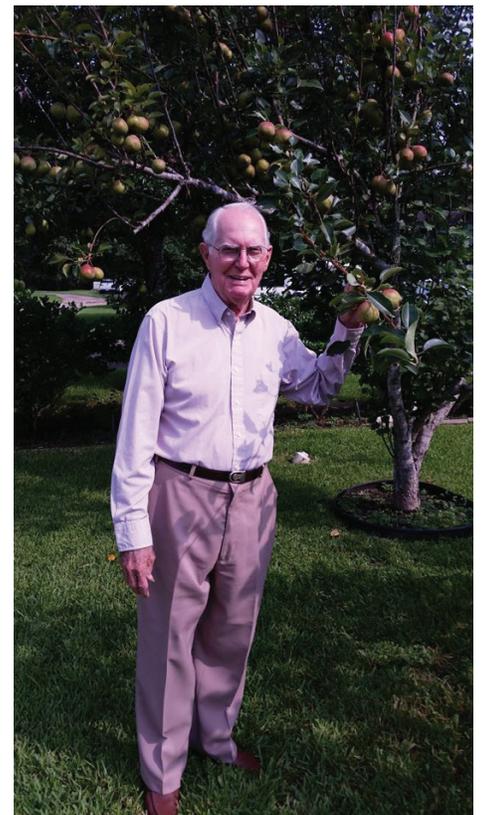
He starts his seeds for his fall/winter crops about this time of year (mid-July) as he finds transplants tend to be the easiest to maintain and cultivate in a fall garden. He said transplants are best planted in the garden after they have grown for about six weeks from seed.

His best advice for the novice gardener is to make sure you maintain "pore" space in your bed. With the "gumbo clay" found in our area, it is highly recommended that you add organic matter if you are not going to have raised beds. The addition of organic matter makes the soil easier to work with but needs to be added on a regular basis as it breaks down quickly in our warm, moist weather conditions. Luke adds grass cuttings to his beds to help achieve adequate pore space.

To get an idea of how long it takes to work our "gumbo clay", Luke told me a story of where he added lawn grass in 1994 to a bed and has been working it ever since. He said after 20 years of work, only one end of his bed is friable (/friəbəl/ adj. easily crumbled, "the soil was friable between his fingers). He is now using that bed for Irish potatoes but plans to plant some Kershaw there soon as well.

After visiting Luke at his home on a recent Sunday morning, I was amazed at the fruits and vegetables he has growing in his yard. Grapefruit, figs, Meyer lemons, limes, peaches and the list goes on and on... it was amazing to see such beautiful fruit and the taste was beyond compare to what you get in the grocery stores. Luke is a wonderful, well-spoken, astute gentleman and I am pleased he considers me a new friend. If you ever have the opportunity to chat you won't regret your time spent with him as he is a wealth of information and has some delightful stories to tell as well!

I believe an important part of life as a gardener is this: there are people who have degrees and can teach you multitudes, there are novices that can tell you what works in their garden, and there are retail stores that will sell you anything that looks good in their inventory even though they may not be good to grow in our region. Take it from a new Master Gardener, you want to listen to the men and women who take the time and effort to go through this program, as well as those like Luke Stripling that not only went through this program but grew up in a farming family, and can attest that tried and true works for most but sometimes it is just trial and error.





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.)

It's almost September and we're looking forward to cooler temperatures. We can help it along with a bit of planning. Shade equals cool, or at least cooler—considering our semi-tropical climate. If you're new to gardening or just want some detailed info on trees and their planting, you can go to our city website (<http://www.ellago-tx.gov>), or you can cut out this article and tape it to the refrigerator. Fall is the time to give serious thought on planting more trees. Trees are the highest order of plants and an important part of our landscape. They increase the value of our property and are a visual asset to the neighborhood.

Shading our home from the summer sun, trees help to lessen our air-conditioning expenses. Deciduous trees (those that drop their leaves in the fall), planted on the south or west side of a home can reduce our cooling expenses by as much as 20-25% during the hottest months of summer. Not to mention it's more pleasant to sip lemonade on a shaded patio or deck than a sun-drenched one. Toward the end of the year when leaves begin to fall, the winter sun's rays will warm our homes.

After you have established the planting location and the variety of tree(s) suited to that location, visit a reputable local nursery. Avoid the mail-order catalogs from distant states with dissimilar climates, as their offerings are not suitable to our locale. Drive around the neighborhood and see what types of trees are doing well for your neighbors. You may have your heart set on a particular variety, but if you don't see any of them growing in our neighborhood—they probably won't.

Container-grown trees are the easiest to plant. Their roots are often coiled around one another in the container, so you will need to split the lower half of the root system and spread the roots horizontally to encourage new root growth.

Dig the hole twice as wide as the container diameter, but no deeper than the soil level in the container. Place the top of the soil ball at a slightly higher level than the surrounding soil. The finished planting depth after the soil settles should be such that the plant is the same depth or slightly higher after planting than it was when grown in the container.

Our soil tends to be very clay-like, and if it was damp when you dug the hole you will notice the wall of the hole is glazed and almost impermeable. Roots will have a difficult time penetrating the wall unless you rough it up a bit with a spading fork, hoe or hand-held cultivator.

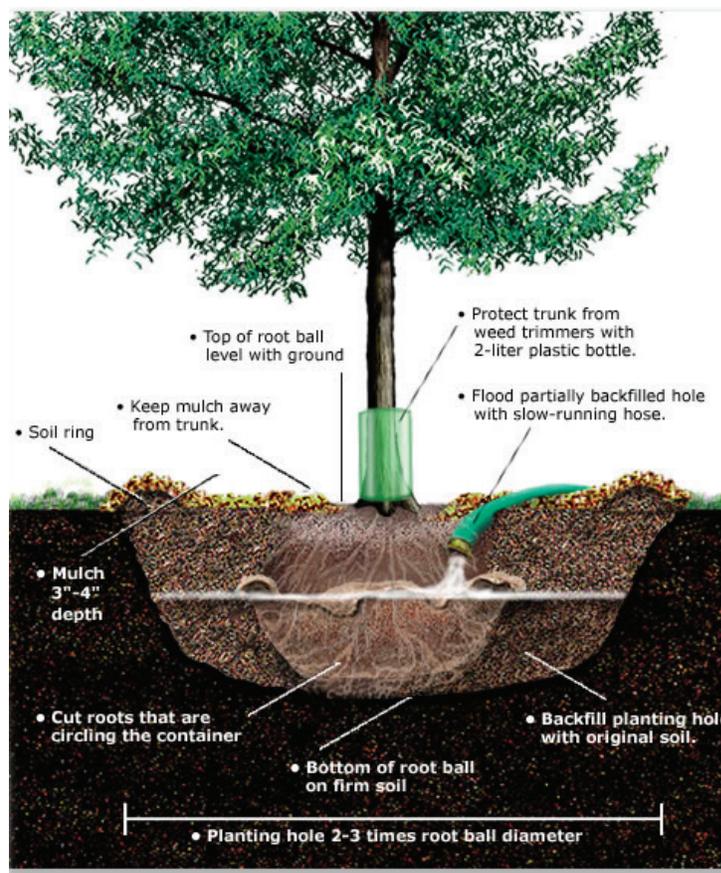
Once you have positioned the root ball in the prepared hole, backfill with the soil taken from the hole. Do not add organic matter. By backfilling with native soil, the plant is immediately forced to establish new roots in the backfilled soil and beyond. Do not fertilize at the time of planting as delicate root hairs are easily burned by fertilizer. A root stimulator would be beneficial when planting, but hold off any feeding until the tree's second growing season, and then feed lightly.

After planting, water deeply. It is essential that the soil settle around the tree roots and eliminate air pockets. Consistent moisture

is critical, especially during your tree's first growing season. Each leaf on our tree has its own personal root hair 12-18 inches below the soil line. These are the roots dedicated to taking up moisture and nutrients. If this root hair is allowed to become dry, it's corresponding leaf withers and dies.

Our temperate winters allow newly planted trees to spend winter months establishing a healthy root system before spring makes demands for top growth. So start planning now, and by October when the ideal window for tree planting opens you will have picked a planting spot, a variety suited to that spot, and your shovel will be sharpened and ready to go. Now where did you leave those overalls?

Plant Your Tree Properly



<http://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu/PlantTreeProperly.html>

THE ISLAND GARDEN

Crazy for Coleus - Colorful Cultivars Make a Comeback

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



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

I grew up in a very old small town where there were scores of Victorian homes with large wrap around porches that my Grandmother called verandahs. As a little girl, I spent many happy and contented days with my Grandparents on a regular basis. Treated like a princess—sitting in my Grandfather's lap while he rocked and smoked his pipe, building houses with playing cards, my favorite foods at every meal and sitting on the verandah!

Perhaps my love of gardening was taught and nurtured during those leisurely hours watching my Grandmother tend her plants on the verandah. I remember gigantic "Boston" ferns, elegant oversized geraniums and masses of colorful variegated coleus—my favorite. She had a magic touch with that coleus!

Victorian homes and coleus just belong together! Victorian gardeners used coleus for dramatic color on their verandahs and in those hard to brighten spots of shade in the yard and flower beds. Always notorious for their need for some canopy of shade, coleus fell from favor as more versatile plants arrived on the gardening scene. Recently, with the introduction of hybrids and their "eye-popping color combinations and fascinating leaf shapes," there has been an increasing interest in these one-time garden classics.

Native to Indonesia, coleus thrives in the heat and humidity of our intense summers. Many of the new hybrids can tolerate full sun, but may require extra watering to keep them happy without wilting.

To enhance those vivid colors, more sun as opposed to less is better. Since the foliage is the primary goal of our focus with coleus, remove the flower stalks and pinch back the outermost leaves to keep your plant bushy and contentedly producing. An excellent container plant, the coleus is easy to propagate from cuttings—place a two to three-inch cutting in a container of water, put in a warm corner and your cutting should root within a week or so—transplant or "pass along" your new plants. Spray the occasional aphid or whitefly with a squirt of a soapy water solution.

Give coleus a fertile, moist soil, some liquid fertilizer every couple of weeks and enjoy "the gaudiest foliage imaginable." It's equally happy in the ground or in a pot. And from the time it's planted until a hard freeze in fall, it supplies that eye-popping color.

I found an old magazine in my green house recently that featured an article on designing attractive spaces using coleus as an accent plant or as the main focus. These were their suggestions:

Mass planting: "Use trailing or low-mounding coleus to fill open areas in your garden beds. You'll have a sea of color that lasts until the first frost."

Edging: "You can ratchet up the impact of any garden by choosing coleus in colors and textures that highlight your existing plants. Look for smaller plants that will work at the front of your beds."

Color companions: "Choose coleus to set off the colors of specific plants. Consider what's in your garden, and look for the right mix of foliage colors and textures to create beautiful pairings."

Containers: "Take advantage of the range of sizes, hues and textures that coleus offers to create containers of mixed plants with dramatic color and appeal."

I have found myself using this "Rainbow Foliage" increasingly in recent years—not only for the colors and shapes of their leaves but also because they remind me of my beloved Grandmother. Coleus is extremely versatile—use wherever a splash of color is called for—show off an assortment in containers. They are fun to collect and are easier than ever to grow.

Colorful Choices:

Atlas - deep purple leaves with bright green centers and edges (full sun to part shade)

Black Magic – purple black leaves with medium green edge (shade)

Chocolate Mint – brown to maroon with mint green edges (shade)

Dipt In Wine – deep crimson leaves with yellow-green edges and centers (sun or shade)

Jupiter – purple leaves with orange to magenta veins and olive green edge (bright light)



Photo by Dr. William M. Johnson



wildflower seeds Time to Get Wild

By Kaye Corey
MG 2001

Most people believe that wildflowers are easily grown from seeds. All we need to do is broadcast the seed mixes in the fall and wait for a beautiful lush

Texas-in-the-spring display. Unfortunately, it is not that simple and we are not going to receive the instant results that has taken nature years to accomplish.

Texas bluebonnets (*Lupinus texensis*), the Texas state flower, Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja indivisa*), and Indian blankets (*Gaillardia pulchella*) are annuals that set seed. Texas annuals do best if planted in the autumn, right after the first fall rain. They germinate and grow roots all winter when the soil is generally damp and not likely to lose its moisture to a baking sun. If we have a hot dry spring, they are ready to perform. The bluebonnet must winter over before blooming and are designated winter annuals.

If you want to grow a mix of annual wildflowers in a grassy area, the soil must be disturbed. Disturbed means the ground has been mowed, tilled, and exposing a lot of bare soil. Scratch the ground a little, scatter the seeds, and cover about half of the seeds. Some seeds must have light to germinate and some must be covered. Save some seeds for February or March planting in the event your fall planting does not come up. Do not plant bluebonnet seeds in the spring; they should be planted in the fall.

After broadcasting your wildflower seeds in your disturbed grassy areas, it is important to know when to mow. Refrain from mowing when the plants are in bud or while blooming or they will not set seed for the next year. If you do not mow from frost to June, you are likely to have an abundant harvest of flowers. It may not be a good idea to put annual wildflowers in your front yard if you have a HOA.

You will want to gather seeds yourself. When seeds are set, pull plants out and shake out any remaining ripe seeds clinging to the plant. Or, shake the seed into a paper bag and store in a dark cool place until the fall.

Consider a wildflower garden with free flowing and natural boundaries. When it is established, it requires little water and low maintenance. Some species require a little more effort than casting

the seed on the soil and waiting for growth. Since these seeds are not genetically altered like ornamental flower or vegetable seeds, they require specific soil (sandy loam for most), proper temperature conditions and a lot of patience. Adverse weather such as drought, hail and excessive rainfall with poor drainage conditions are not conducive to a successful wildflower garden. Wildflower seed mixes are not always the best answer.

Wine Cup (*Callirhoe involucrata*) can be started from seed, or from the carrot-like tuber in the fall or early spring. The **Showy Primrose Buttercup**, (*Oenothera speciosa*), can be grown from seed, root division or rhizomes. The rhizomes result in a plant that can be invasive. The buttercup takes two years to produce a bloom. **Fire Wheel** (*Gaillardia aristata*) is the cousin of the **Indian Blanket** (*Gaillardia pulchella*) and thrives in the heat. **Yarrow** (*Achillea millefolium*) is a true perennial taking two years to become established.

The development of the 'Abbott Pink', a pink bluebonnet, and 'Barbara Bush' Bluebonnet, a lavender bluebonnet of the *Lupinus* species, was developed by members of Texas Cooperative Extension in San Antonio in the 1990's. Like all bluebonnet seeds to accomplish optimal germination, the seeds must be scarified. To scarify means to scar or loosen the seed coat. One way to scarify is by soaking in a concentrated sulfuric acid treatment for 30 to 60 minutes. Or, you may rub the seeds on sandpaper.

For more information check out <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wildseed/>. Growing wildflowers is a venture in true Texas gardening love. Good luck!

Average planting success percentages:

- Texas Bluebonnets, (*Lupinus texensis*) 'Abbott Pink' and 'Barbara Bush' - 60%
- Texas Paintbrush (*Castilleja indivisa*) - 40%
- Indian Blanket/Fire Wheel (*Gaillardia*) - 80%
- Wine Cup (*Callirhoe involucrata*) - 80%
- Showy Primrose/Buttercup (*Oenothera speciosa*) - 60%
- Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) - 70%



Bluebonnets Photo from MG Digital Library

Project: Demonstration Gardens

Carbide Park



By Tom Fountain
MG 2008



Summer here in Galveston County has been near normal and afternoon temperatures have been in the mid to upper 90s. We continued to have a little rainfall which helped our plants. In fact, our garden has produced more than 800 pounds of food for local food pantries so far this year.

We had an excellent crop of blueberries this summer; just ask our expert pickers and samplers, Luke and Wes. Peppers, figs, and tomatoes, also were plentiful. Now, it's about time to get that fall garden planting underway.

We have several water and cool down areas set up for when we are working—use them. Remember to drink plenty of water when working outside. Jan took a picture of Jackie, Kay, and Bill taking a break at one of the water stations.



Have you been out near the "Serenity" and "Earth-Kind" gardens? Well, if you haven't, a new butterfly garden is taking shape nearby and looking real nice. Tish and Alisa say there will be a mason bee house there also.

There are lots of unsung heroes working on projects on our gardening days, Monday and Thursday. One of these is Jim, who "not so quietly" goes about the business of mulching the garden trimmings for the compost bins. I might add our new MG Interns have really pitched in and are a blessing to us all.



The greenhouse is taking shape and we have big plans for it. Jan took a picture of some of the greenhouse crew, Tom, Stewart, Alice, Oscar, and Linda, who were getting one of the roof panels up. The Cooking Crew (O.j., Ed, Phil, Jan, Kay and Cheryl) have had way too much fun with their new theme luncheons, especially the German lunch. Thanks from all of us!

The demonstration garden tours continue to draw lots of interest. We have had visitors coming in from all over to get tips from some of our experts. The Montgomery County Master Gardener group came for a tour with Ira, lunch, and to check out our program. Enjoy the fruits of summer gardening!

simple and delicious

Seasonal Bites



By Linda Steber
MG 1991

I love cooking with fresh vegetables, and this recipe is a favorite. Not only is it delicious, but it makes for a very colorful dish and a great way to use those nutritious squash, potatoes and tomatoes. The bottom layer of caramelized onions adds another depth of flavor. You can use any number of vegetables, so why not try other combinations to discover your favorite.

Vegetable Swirl

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 tablespoons olive oil (divided) | 1 yellow squash |
| 1 large sweet yellow onion cut in half and sliced | 3 large Roma tomatoes |
| 2 cloves of garlic, minced | Sea salt, freshly cracked black pepper, to taste |
| 1-2 russet potatoes, unpeeled | Dried thyme, to taste |
| 1 zucchini | 1/2 cup of grated Parmesan cheese |

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Coat a baking dish with olive oil cooking spray. Heat 1 tablespoons of olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Once hot, add the onions and sauté until translucent, about 8 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for another 60 seconds. Spread the onion mixture on the bottom of the greased baking dish.

Slice the potatoes, zucchini, squash and tomatoes in 1/4 inch thick slices. Layer them alternately in the dish on top of the onions, fitting them tightly into a spiral, making only one layer. Season with sea salt, black pepper and dried thyme, to taste. Drizzle the last tablespoon of olive oil over the top.

Cover the dish with tin foil and bake for 35 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender. Uncover and sprinkle the Parmesan cheese on top and bake for another 25-30 minutes or until browned.



By Pat Forke
MG 2010

JULY MG MEETING WITH HEATHER MCKNIGHT

Our July meeting's speaker was Heather McKnight who is the city arborist for League City. Heather talked to us about the importance of planting shade trees and some of the best ways to be successful. She suggested gardeners choose water smart and either native or well adapted trees. Choose an upright tree with a straight and strong leader trunk.

Much has been said about the guidelines for planting trees and Heather had a few tips to add. Make sure there is adequate room for the tree to grow. Add a root barrier if you are close to a building that could suffer future foundation problems from a mature tree. Do not plant too deep. Either late fall or winter is the best time to plant your trees.

Mulching around your trees can add many benefits. Mulch will help with weed growth, maintain soil temperature, hold water and provide slow release of organic matter to help feed your tree. Be careful not to build a mulch volcano around your tree. Keep your tree trunk free from mounds of mulch. Heather prefers a native hardwood mulch.

Adequate watering is very important. Heather suggested using the screwdriver test to check the moisture in your soil. You should be able to easily insert a 4" to 6" screw driver at several locations around your tree. Watering is best provided by using a soaker hose or a hose with a slow drip.

When the weather is warm, prune only damaged wood. Heather does not recommend topping trees. Additional pruning can be done during cooler weather when the tree is dormant. Trim for the health, size and beauty of your tree.

Several critters and diseases that you might observe on your tree include bark lice, wasp gall, yellow-necked caterpillars and oak leaf blister. None of these are fatal to your tree and do not require treatment. The bark lice will produce a web but aids in the clean-up of fungus. The yellow-necked caterpillar will defoliate oaks. And, the oak leaf blister is common on ash and is drought related.

For a list of recommended large, shade trees, click here: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/publications/beaumont/lgtrees.html>



Heather McKnight,
League City Arborist



MINUTES JUNE & JULY MG MEETINGS

The Master Gardener Class of 2013 has officially been conferred the title of Certified Texas Master Gardener! The ceremony and pot luck was held on the lawn at the beautiful historic home of Mikey and Allen Isbell of Galveston Island the evening of June 10.

By Cindy Croft
MG 2009

Calling the meeting to order at 7:15 pm was Dr. William Johnson, Master Gardener Program Coordinator and Galveston County Extension Agent who began by welcoming members and guests. The new 2014 Interns were then introduced and given the challenge of meeting requirements for certification next year.

Dr. Johnson reported that the number of volunteer hours accumulated last year by our Master Gardener Chapter have added up to 24,610 hours. Encouraging everyone to get volunteer logs filled out and turned in for this year, he jokingly said he would like a second floor and an elevator added for the new AgriLife building at Carbide Park.

Sandra Devall continued the levity of the evening by roasting and toasting a few of the many Master Gardeners who have gone above and beyond in their contributions in 2013 like Alisa Rasmussen who received the "Princess of Earth Kind" award for her leadership and hard work in creating a new Water Smart bed in the Demonstration Garden and Oscar Nelson who received the "Big Red Heart" award for his outgoing, positively encouraging personality.

Recognition was given to the many members who contributed up to and more than 500 hours of volunteer service in 2013 along with the Master Gardeners who have served the community through our Chapter for over 20 years! Herman Auer is our longest serving member at 31 years.

Jim Edwards, a Master Gardener since 1996 and past President was recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his service. After the awards presentation, Luke Stripling said the blessing and the meeting was adjourned with a "Let's Eat!"



Photos by MG Helle Brown



MINUTES FOR JULY 8, 2014

The activities started at 5 pm Tuesday afternoon at the Demonstration Garden in Carbide Park. Robert Marshall gave a tour of the orchard, Alisa Rasmussen talked about the new Earth Kind bed and Tish Reustle directed attendees through the Serenity Garden.

After a pot luck dinner, the monthly meeting was called to order

at 7 pm by President Ira Gervais. Special Guest, Galveston Mayor Jim Yarborough and his wife were also in attendance. This was the first time Mayor Yarborough has visited the new County Extension Building since its completion.

The night's speaker was Heather McKnight, City Arborist for League City. Heather spoke on "Shade Trees in the Landscape" and gave pointers for care and maintenance. Heather can be contacted at heather.mcknight@leaguecity.com

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm. Business was not conducted at this meeting.



Mayor Jim Yarborough (foreground) and Dr. Johnson

2014 Recertification (Continuing Education) Hours Available Through the AgriLife Extension Office

Date	Name of Program	Speaker	CEUs for MGs
1/4/2014	Growing Avocados & Papaya	Jerry Hurlbert	3.25
1/4/2014	Grafting Your Own Fruit Trees	Herman Auer	2.25
1/7/2014	Successfully Growing Peaches	Herman Auer	1.5
1/11/2014	Spring Vegetable Gardening	Luke Stripling	2.5
1/17/2014	Grow Great Tomatoes (for MGs only)	Ira Gervais	2
1/17/2014	Growing Citrus in the Home Landscape (for MGs only)	Chris Anastas	1.75
1/18/2014	Planting Fruit Trees	Herman Auer	2
1/20/2014	Fruit & Citrus Trees for the Gulf Coast (MGA Meeting)	Heidi Sheesley	2
1/21/2014	Anyone Can Grow Roses	John Jons	1.5
1/25/2014	Grow Great Tomatoes	Ira Gervais	2
1/25/2014	Growing Blueberries	David Cohen	2
1/28/2014	Growing Citrus in the Home Landscape	Chris Anastas	1.5
2/4/2014	Gardening by the Square Foot	John Jons	1.5
2/8/2014	The ABCs of Home Composting	Ken Steblein	2
2/8/2014	Kitchen Gardening	Mary Demeny	2.25
2/11/2014	The Evolution of the North End Garden (MGA Meeting)	Tish Reustle	1
2/13/2014	Rose Pruning for the Home Gardener	John Jons	0.75
2/13/2014	Pecan Graft Wood Collection	Herman Auer	2.5
2/20/2014	Rose Pruning for the Home Gardener (MG Interns)	John Jons	1
2/22/2014	Heirloom Tomatoes	Terry Cuculis	1.5
2/25/2014	Honey Bees Around the Garden	Stewart McAdoo, Robert Marshall	1
3/1/2014	Texas-Tuff Plants for the Home Landscape	Sandra Devall	2.5
3/4/2014	50 Ways to Live a Greener Life	Ken Steblein	1.5
3/11/2014	Tool Talk (MGA Meeting)	Henry Harrison III, Tim Jahnke	1
3/15/2014	Bonsai for Beginners	Clyde Holt	3.75
3/20/2014	Fig Pruning for the Home Orchard	Terry Cuculis	0.5
3/20/2014	Peach Tree Fruit Thinning	Herman Auer	0.5
3/27/2014	Peach Tree Fruit Thinning	Herman Auer, Robert Marshall	1.5
3/29/2014	Tomato Stress Management	Ira Gervais	2
4/5/2014	Gardening for Jewels ... Hummingbirds	Deborah Repasz	1.5
4/7/2014	Irises for the Gulf Coast Garden (for MGs only)	Monica Martens	0.75
4/15/2014	The Culture & Care of Palms	O.J. Miller	1.75
4/17/2014	Spring Pecan Field Day	Jim Hall, Herman Auer	1.5
4/29/2014	The Joy of Daylilies	Nell Shimek	1.25
5/6/2014	Irises for Gulf Coast Gardens	Monica Martens	1.5
5/10/2014	Rainwater Harvesting	Tim Jahnke	2
5/22/2014	Peach Tree Pruning for the Home Orchard (for MGs only)	Herman Auer, Robert Marshall	1
5/23/2014	Preserving the Harvest - Water Bath & Pressure Canning	CEA Sharon Trower	3
6/3/2014	The Fabulous Fragrant Frangipani (Plumeria)	Loretta Osteen	1.75
6/7/2014	Tomato Tasting and Evaluation	Terry Cuculis	3
2014 Recertification Hours for MGs		Total CEUs (Hours)	70
Last updated: 8 July 2014			

Reminder: In order to maintain your status as a certified Texas Master Gardener, each year you must complete a minimum of 6 hours continuing education, as well as 12 service hours. Additionally, those hours must be reported using a volunteer hours log

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

SUCCESSFUL FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING

Saturday August 16, 2014

9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Long time Galveston County Master Gardener Luke Stripling will present a program on growing fall and winter season vegetables in Galveston County. Topics will include soil preparation, drainage, the use of raised beds, the best seed planting dates, the best varieties, planting depth, fertilizer methods, water requirements, pest control and harvesting.

GARDENING BY THE SQUARE FOOT

Tuesday August 19, 2014

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Presented by Galveston County Master Gardener John Jons, this program is a workshop on the gardening methodology of gardening by the square foot. Learn how you can grow an abundance of plants or vegetables in just a 4' X 4' area. Discover this unique way of planning the bed, building the bed, selecting plants, maintaining the bed and renewing the bed. Also covered in this program will be insect pest and disease control. This is an ideal program for anyone who would like to learn a simple, productive method of gardening in a small area and will enable them to also teach children or adults with limitations how to learn and enjoy gardening.

BACKYARD SERIES - "STRAWBERRIES"

Tuesday August 26, 2014

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Presented by Galveston County Robert Marshall, this program will cover how to successfully grow strawberries in the Galveston County area. Topic covered will include the correct time to plant and choosing the best varieties for this area. Also covered will be how to best prepare your beds, fertilizing needs, disease and pest control.

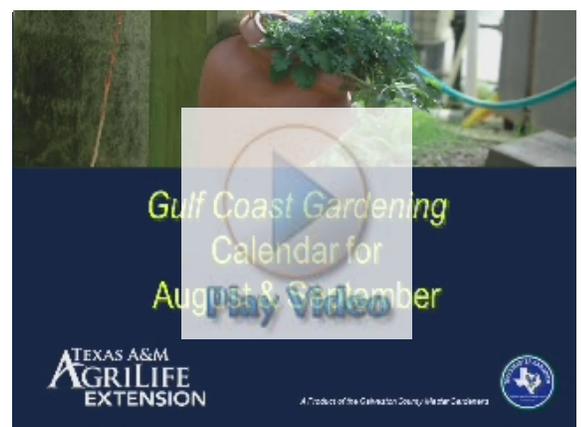
August/September "Things To Do" Gardening Calendar Video



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.

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.

Junior Master Gardener® Teacher/Leader Training

Montgomery County August 14 @ 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Date: August 14th, 2014 Tuesday Time: 8:30 am Check In Program 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. Lunch & Refreshments provided
Location: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Montgomery County, Thomas R. LeRoy Education

Entomology Specialist Training - Travis County

September 8-12, 2014 – 8:00 am – 5:00 pm - \$280.00/person
1600-B Smith Rd., Austin, TX, 78721 – ebrown@ag.tamu.edu
Training only for MGs & Master Naturalists. Includes experts speaking on insect identification, integrated pest management, pesticide safety, insects in the garden and landscape, butterfly gardening, biting and stinging insects, collecting methods and preservation techniques. Most of the course will be conducted at the Travis County Extension Office. There will be some local travel to sites for field trips and we are relying on participants to provide transportation for these trips.

Greenhouse Management Specialist Training

Victoria County - October 9-11, 2014 – 1:00-5:00 pm - \$225.00
283 Bachelor Dr., Victoria, TX, 77904 – (361) 575-4581 – <http://vcmga.org> - Training was created as a hands-on, intensive multi-day training that will empower MGs with the knowledge and skills required to effectively support and multiply Texas A&M AgriLife Extension efforts in educational programs. The class will focus on the hobby greenhouse. MGs who fulfill specified training and volunteer requirements will be recognized as Master Gardener Specialists in the specified field of Greenhouse Management. This certification does not empower the individual with supervisory or administrative authority within their local county programs, but provides them with the knowledge to support their MG Educational Outreach Program. They will volunteer 20 hours above and beyond their county's current volunteer obligation.

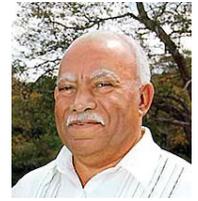
Irrigation Efficiency Specialist Training – Dallas County

October 27-29, 2014 – 8:00-5:00 pm - \$200.00 per person
17360 Coit Rd, Dallas, TX, 75252 - (972) 952-9688 - d-woodson@tamu.edu - This hands-on training will include practices for determining irrigation efficiency, setting controllers, soak and cycle method, minor irrigation repairs, system trouble shooting, catch can test, converting spray head irrigation to new water conserving head, converting spray irrigation to drip irrigation and many other water conservation practices. They will volunteer for 12 hours above their current volunteer obligation, train MGs in their county, present the information to at least 3 other groups and do a catch can demonstration for MGs, a garden club, neighborhood association or civic organization.

the last word . . .

DISTINCTION BETWEEN TREES, SHRUBS NOT ALWAYS CLEAR

(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: What's the difference between a tree and a shrub?

A: An interesting question that would seem to have a one-size-fits-all answer.

If we look at only the most obvious examples, there would be no debate over the difference between trees and shrubs.

Nobody would look at mature oak trees and call them shrubs. Nor would anyone mistake Indian Hawthorne shrubs for trees.

But we're dealing with Mother Nature here and the distinction is not always clear-cut.

We are challenged when we try to categorize everything under neat, black-and-white headings that humans feel most comfortable with.

The generally acknowledged definition of a tree is a "woody plant having one erect trunk at least 3 inches in diameter at a point 4 1/2 feet above the ground, a definitely formed canopy or crown of foliage, and a mature height of at least 13 feet."

In contrast, a shrub is characterized as a "woody plant with several perennial stems that may be erect or may lay close to the ground. It will usually have a height less than 13 feet and stems no more than about 3 inches in diameter."

The above descriptions provide sufficient distinctions to categorize most trees and shrubs in the landscape.

As is true with most things in life, there will be exceptions. Some trees might have multiple trunks—crape myrtles being a prime example.

Some shrubs can be shaped into a small tree by training one trunk.

One of my Master Gardener volunteers has shaped her red tip photinia to grow as a small tree.

And where do banana trees fit? While we call them banana trees, they do not produce any woody growth.

The plants are among the world's largest plants without woody stems. The banana is closely related to ginger and ornamental plants such as birds of paradise, amaranths and canna lilies.

The banana plant is not a tree, but the world's largest perennial herb.

Q: I have a 4-year-old pecan tree in my backyard.

As of right now, it has no leaves on it and does not look like it is trying to get any. Do I need to worry about it being dead?

A: I know from experience, never say never on things horticulture-related.

However, given your description and since it is already almost August, I think it very, very unlikely that the pecan tree will put on any new growth since it has not done so thus far.

Pecan trees are deciduous (a term meaning "falling off at maturity") and typically used in reference to trees or shrubs that lose their leaves seasonally—most commonly during autumn).

While pecans are typically among the last trees in a home landscape to establish new leaves in the spring, they should have put on some new growth by now.

If a pecan fails to grow new leaves during a growing season, it will not survive.

Q: Is there any truth to the statements made about Canada Green's "Perfect Grass Seed" and Grassology's "Ultra Low Maintenance Grass Seed"?

A: I have not seen any university-conducted research trials on either product.

Both products are promoted as a breakthrough secret to a lush, green, lawn.

Other claims state that homeowners will save tons of money, time and aggravation by using these grass seeds.

More claims include no more high watering bills and no more weekly mowing.

American home improvement television show host Bob Vila is promoting the claims of Grassology's "Ultra Low Maintenance Grass Seed."

So, forgive my cynicism and even with Bob Vila's endorsement, I remain skeptical.

Unless and until I see unbiased research/field study data that reflect our local growing conditions, my advice is let the buyer beware.

At the very least it would be an expensive undertaking to establish a large yard.

I really think our Gulf Coast summer heat would present a serious challenge.

But it would not be a bad idea or too major of an investment to try a small scale test to see if my cynicism is unfounded.

Q: I would like to build a raised bed around my maple tree and grow flowers in the bed. Will this harm the tree?

A: I strongly recommend against changing the soil grade under the drip line of a tree.

The roots can actually suffocate if you add soil over the top.

Instead, why not grow plants in containers and group them near the base of your tree?

You can even add a bench beneath the tree and set a few pots of colorful flowers on the bench.



Local banana trees will produce fruit

Banana trees are grown by local gardeners and will produce fruit when favorable weather conditions occur. While we call them banana trees, they do not produce any woody growth. The banana plant is not a tree, but the world's largest perennial herb.

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

August

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, August 12, for Master Gardeners and their guests to spend the day and evening at Moody Gardens.

Venues begin at 9:15 am, the Meal at 5:45, and the Hotel Party at 7:30 pm. There are some exciting added attractions this year, so be sure to "Save the Date."

A Tip-of-the-Trowel is extended to Master Gardener Mary Lou for her time and efforts in working with Moody Gardens' management to make this year's schedule of activities possible.

Look for your invitation by separate e-mail with all the details.

**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

