

Gulf Coast Gardening

WRITTEN BY GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS IN COOPERATION
WITH THE GALVESTON COUNTY OFFICE OF TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

Issue 196 - May/June 2015

Live Oak Tussock Caterpillar

Caterpillars attack areas oak trees



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You know you're a master gardener

when~ Your version of "selfies" are pictures of your plants. You've gardened with a head-lamp. You wish you had planted more fruit trees 10 years ago. You have more fruit trees in your postage stamp yard than the rest of your neighborhood combined. You have more pairs of garden gloves than you do earrings. You convince your neighbors they need a garden too... and then you maintain it. Pruning clippers in your back pocket. You drive by any lawn and think, that could be a garden. (You're surprised when you look down and see clean fingernails. Your neighbors don't recognize your face because that's usually not the end they see!)



*By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008*

I have to admit, I recognize many of the peculiarities above and many of my back pockets sport holes from shoving my pruners into them. I'm a little behind this year and am trying to get all my mulching done before the real summer heat rolls in and my yard guy (hubby Ken) leaves for yet another extended mountain climbing trip. I've gotten my 720 bags of Black Diamond mulch, but after all the recent rains, Ken and I can barely lift some of them. The fork lift and 12 pallets are quite a topic of conversation every year in my small subdivision. The neighbors all stop by when they see me and admire the mulch bags, but, unbelievably, not one has volunteered to help me!

Here's hoping your gardening activities are going smoother than mine and you can relax a few moments to peruse our latest newsletter. Presently there are several phenomena going on in our landscapes.

Learn about Oak Leaf Blister in the Q&A on page 4 by Laurel Stine. Tim Jahnke has received queries regarding various citrus problems, he discusses them in the Q&A on page 5. Frank Resch describes Fire Blight on pears (page 7). In the Last Word on page 21, Dr. Johnson talks about the populations of the Live Oak Tussock caterpillar invading our trees and gardens at this time of the year.

Some additional educational topics you might appreciate include: Donna Ward's article on page 12 where she provides us more wisdom on activities we should be doing in our gardens this month; our Best Shots story this month features several stunning spiders that are common in our region (pages 8 & 9); maybe you are interested in home beer brewing — checkout John Jons article on page 10 on growing hops in Galveston County; if herbs are your interest, learn about Marjoram in Elayne Kouzounis' piece on page 11 and looking for something new to plant in your landscape? Jan Brick gives us a couple of ideas with Crossandra and Lespedeza on page 13. Please enjoy meeting our very own Robert Marshall (page 6) and read about his recent very prestigious award. Congratulations to our newsletter team, they won 1st place for Written Education at the recent Texas Master Gardener State Conference. Don't miss the Carbide Park update on page 14. Volunteers are always needed in the demonstration garden. Read about the special trellis the very talented, Henry Harrison (MG 2011) designed and built for an important rose in our demonstration garden (page 16). Seasonal Bites on page 15 features a couple of appetizing recipes to try.

As always don't forget to check out our Gulf Coast Gardening video calendar and upcoming June Programs (page 18). The Bulletin Board (page 20) has been updated with volunteer needs and specialized training if you are interested.

The newsletter team can always use a few volunteers to help produce the newsletter. If you are interested in helping here, let Linda Steber know steber8@msn.com

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Live Oak Tussock Caterpillar
Orgyia detrita Photo by GCMGA



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

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ask a master gardener



By Laurel Stine
MG 2002

Q&A

Hot Line Topics - Oak Leaf Blister

Question: A few weeks ago my oak tree, which was putting on new growth, started shedding its leaves. Now there are leaves all over my driveway. The leaves are cupped and have blisters. The leaves remaining on my tree look very unattractive. What is wrong with my tree?

It sounds as if your tree might have a disease called Oak Leaf Blister, caused by the fungus *Taphrina caerulescens*.

A close fungal relative of this disease causes a similar disease on peaches called peach leaf curl. This disease of peaches may have a significant economic impact on fruit production. On oak, the leaf blister fungus is more of a cosmetic problem rather than an economic one.

When leaf buds open in the spring, fungal spores present on the bud scales infect the expanding leaves.

The fungus causes leaf cells to divide abnormally and enlarge. If you flip the leaf over you will observe light-green cup-like depressions. Yellow, blister-like bulges, corresponding with the lower leaf depressions, will be seen on the upper leaf surface. As the disease progresses, blisters coalesce and will cause the leaf to curl. The fungus can sometimes be seen in the depressions, first colorless then darkening after spores are released.

Infection is most severe in wet, cool spring weather.

Because of the narrow window for leaf infection, the fungus seldom becomes severe enough to require treatment. Even in years when early infection is severe, it is normally limited to only the first few leaves that emerge.

In areas where spring weather conditions frequently favor disease development, fungicides, such as mancozeb or chlorothalonil, are applied at early bud swell and repeated in 10 days. Due to the limited injury done to the tree by this fungus, fungicide treatments are normally restricted to only those trees that are highly valuable and visible in the landscape. Treating young (up to 8-to-10 years old) trees may be warranted to provide optimal growing conditions.

Removal of infected leaves from areas around the tree will help some to minimize reinfection. Dispose of the leaves in the trash.



Other Common Names: Oak leaf curl

Disease Pathogen Name: *Taphrina caerulescens*

Pathogen Type: Fungus

Period of Primary Occurrence: late spring into late summer

• Infection only takes place during spring on young/emerging leaves

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/Gardening-Handbook/PDF-files/GH-031--oak-leaf-blister.pdf>

Citrus Problems

Question: Why have all my lemons dropped off my Meyer lemon tree?

I have received several calls this spring regarding citrus trees dropping blossoms, young fruits and leaves. Many calls were about Meyer lemons. Some Galveston County gardener calls were about citrus trees purchased and planted this year. Most calls were about well-established citrus trees that have not had problems over many years. I understand their concern because one of my eight year old Meyer lemon trees has lost its fruit and dropped its leaves.

Blossoms Dropping: We all enjoy still nights when the air is filled with the sweet aroma of citrus blossoms. While a citrus tree may produce thousands of blossoms it can only support a limited number that form fruit. Citrus trees will normally drop up to 90% of its blossoms. Other factors that can impact blossoms are late spring frosts, poor watering practices and lack of nutrients.

Fruit Dropping: Citrus trees are self-regulating when it comes to producing fruit. A healthy citrus tree will hold a maximum crop. When it is stressed, the citrus tree will reduce fruit production to ensure survival. The higher the stress level, the higher the fruit loss. Citrus trees can be stressed from being too dry or too wet. March and April were very wet this year with a total of about 14.5 inches of rain. The ground was saturated and many tree root systems were under water for days.

Leaves Dropping: A citrus tree will drop leaves when it is stressed. The stress can result from temperature changes, under watering, over watering, insects, disease or low nutritional elements. Citrus trees absorb oxygen through their root systems. The tree is stressed when the root system is flooded and oxygen is removed from the roots.

The most likely cause of these recent citrus tree problems in Galveston County is the heavy rain experience in March and April. The frequency and duration of the rainfall resulted in many areas of the county being saturated for an extended period. Citrus trees in areas that became waterlogged were severely stressed. The trees went into survival mode.

Minimizing Citrus Tree Problems

The key to producing good citrus fruit is to grow healthy trees. The following are guidelines to producing healthy citrus trees.

Soil: Citrus trees should be planted in deep well-draining soil. Most citrus grows well in soil with a pH of 6 to 8.

Site: Citrus grows best in full sun. Avoid overhanging trees (now and future). Plant 6 to 8 feet from a building, drives and sidewalks. Plant on the south or southeast side of your house for extra freeze protection. Avoid septic system.

Selection: Consider cold tolerance when picking citrus varieties. You will need to protect low cold tolerant citrus trees during cold winters. Citrus trees have improved cold tolerance as they mature.

Water: Maintain good watering practices. Water deep and less often. Prevent over and under watering. Newly planted trees need watering two to three times during the first week then one to two times per week for the next several weeks.

Nutrition: A soil test is a good starting point to determine nutritional needs for your citrus tree. Do not fertilize new citrus trees until they start putting on new growth. Established trees can be fertilized two or three times a year. The first feeding is made around Valentine's Day, second feeding is made around Mother's Day and the third feeding (if doing three) is made around Father's Day.

Fertilizer with less than 15% nitrogen – 1 pound per inch of trunk diameter per year (2 cups dry fertilizer equal about 1 pound)

Fertilizer with more than 15% nitrogen – 0.75 pound per inch of trunk diameter per year (2 cups dry fertilizer equal about 1 pound)

Weed Control: Keep area around the tree free of grass and weed. Use mulch to aid in water and weed control. Keep mulch 12-inches away from tree trunk to prevent insects and disease problems.



By Tim Jahnke
MG 2011



Meyer Lemon with yellowing leaf



Photos by MG Tim Jahnke

Meyer Lemon with major leaf drop

Tree Inspection: Routine inspection of citrus trees is the best method for early detection of problems. Look for insects, diseases and changes in the tree.



By Susan Meads-Leahy
MG 2014

Quite an accomplishment Meet a Master Gardener

Robert Marshall

Robert Marshall joined the ranks as a Galveston County Master Gardener with the class of 2012. Want to talk about an amazing accomplishment? Robert won Second Place as Individual Master Gardener at the 2015 Texas Master Gardener Conference in Belton, Texas on April 16-18.

Robert said he became a Master Gardener to learn and obtain experience with growing and maintaining fruit trees in Galveston County. He said he couldn't think of a better place for this to happen than in our Master Gardener Orchard at Carbide Park!

Robert has been able to experiment with various rootstocks to ensure healthy growth as many will suffer from a multitude of problems. Proper root stock is imperative to achieve positive results when growing apples in our area secondary to the pH of our soil. Apple trees prefer soil with a pH between 6.5 and 7.0.

One of the main problems encountered with apple trees in our area is collar (or "crown") root rot. Collar rot is caused by a soil-borne pathogen but can be minimized with proper site selection, appropriate rootstock as well as fungicides.

Robert considers himself to be a serious researcher and is currently experimenting with multiple varieties of old southern apples such as *Arkansas Black*, *Red Dixie Rebel*, and *Reverend Morgan* which he is grafting at his home. I asked how varieties of apples get their name and he told me that if you have an apple tree that is completely different from any other you have ever encountered/seen and have no idea where it came from then you get to name it!

Additionally, he is experimenting with pear trees that produce fruit for eating but not cooking such as *Grandpa Green Pear*. A&M has a new series of peaches he is anxious to try but hasn't had enough hours or manpower in the day to include them in his current experimentations both at home and in the MG Demo Garden at Carbide Park.

There are two presentations that Robert gives at various times throughout the year at our Educational Series, one on Citrus Greening with Chris Anastas and the other is wholly his own regarding growing strawberries in Galveston County.

The presentation on Citrus Greening gives in-depth information on exactly what citrus greening is, its origin and how it got to Texas, as well as how it is identified. It is most informative and I highly recommend anyone interested in growing citrus to sign up next time it is presented.

There are many hurdles we encounter when trying to grow strawberries in our area such as a multitude of pests, humidity, uneven rainfall amounts, soil as well as selecting the best variety. All of these play significant roles in becoming successful at growing these delicious berries in Galveston County. Robert covers all of this and more in his presentation and as I went out this morning to check on mine in my backyard, it is obvious I desperately need to sign up for Robert's class!

I asked Robert what was the strangest question he had encountered since becoming a Master Gardener. His reply was something I had never heard of—Pecan Truffles anyone? He said there was a gentleman who called the MG Hotline about producing Texas Pecan Truffles. He had a pecan orchard and in the southeast corner he had encountered truffles. While the Texas Pecan Truffle is much like the one coveted from Europe, Robert referred the gentlemen to Texas A&M as there are two fungi that look exactly like this particular truffle but are very deadly.

When discussing MG Interns in the garden, Robert said they get to cover grafting, propagation, basic orchard functions—means we have the best place for both MG Interns as well as the public for learning all of this valuable information in a "hands on" setting.

Robert said the main function of our garden at Carbide Park is EDUCATION. Hopefully, everyone who reads our newsletter knows the Gardens are open to the public from 9-11 every Thursday and there are plenty of Master Gardeners on-site to answer any questions. Trust me, if the one asked doesn't know the answer they definitely know who to go to for an answer!

If you have questions on citrus and would like to have Robert come to your home to help solve your issues, just call the MG Hotline and leave a message for him as he believes sometimes the only way to get a clear picture is to see the problem with your own two eyes!

Well, if you happen to run into Robert in the garden or anywhere else, take a moment to congratulate him on his recent accomplishment and award.

Becoming the second best Master Gardener isn't an easy task and to do it in two years to boot deems a standing ovation as far as I'm concerned. Congratulations Robert, we are all very proud to be a part of the Galveston County Master Gardener program with someone like you!



Disease of the Month

Fire Blight

Photos by MG Linda Steber



By Frank Resch
MG 2007

When the tips of many branches on a pear tree turn completely black and the leaves are dried and shriveled, these are symptoms of fire blight, which is one the most problematic diseases on pears in our area. The disease gets its name because the leaves turn black and appear to be burned.

Fire blight is caused by a bacterial pathogen (*Erwinia amylovora*). Bacteria overwinter on the tree branches, and when the tree flowers in the spring, the bacteria gain entrance through flowers, growing shoot tips or freshly pruned sites. The bacteria can be spread from flower-to-flower by insects or even splashing rain.

Under light infections, homeowners often see small sections of blacken leaves dotted throughout the canopy. Severely infected fruit turn black and shrivel (Fig. 2). The disease will eventually work its way into the twigs under severe conditions (Fig. 1), and can kill whole limbs of the tree under such severe disease levels.

To treat fire blight remove diseased branches by pruning them about 8–12 inches below visible signs of the disease (cankers and/or dead wood). In order to reduce the mechanical spread of the bacterial pathogen through pruning tools, it is recommended that you prepare a bucket of water with a 10% solution of household bleach (1 part bleach to 9 parts water), and immerse your pruning blades in the solution for several seconds between each pruning cut. When finished, rinse your shears with clean water, dry them, and coat them with a light oil or WD40 to prevent rust formation.

To keep the bacteria from gaining entrance into the flowers and the twigs during the spring flowering season, treat the tree with a bactericidal spray (such as agricultural grade streptomycin sulfate). Several forms of copper (such as Kocide 101) are also suitable for fire blight control. Copper sprays are best used during dormancy and bud break because they may damage leaves and fruit.

You should be aware that removing diseased limbs and other infected tissues

may not completely eliminate the disease. If there are signs of fire blight the following year, you may have to continue a spray program and removing diseased limbs.

The best way to minimize disease in most types of pear trees is to keep them healthy with adequate moisture and fertilizer—trees under stress are more susceptible to disease. However, rapidly growing, succulent twigs and leaves which have been stimulated by excessive nitrogen application or heavy pruning are extremely susceptible to the fire blight bacteria. Therefore, it is best to use a balanced fertilizer with fairly low nitrogen content for moderate growth.

You can also plant resistant pear varieties, such as Keiffer and Orient. Fire blight is also a common problem on other trees in the rose family including apple, Bradford pear, loquat, photinia (red tips), plum and pyracantha. The good news is that fire blight is seldom severe and seldom fatal to established trees in our growing area.

SCIENTIFIC NAME OF PATHOGEN

Erwinia amylovora



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

MG & CEA Best Shots



Argiope Spider

Photo by William M. Johnson



Argiope Spider—June Beetle in its grips

Photo by MG Laura Bellmore



Banana Spider

Photo by MG Herman Auer



Banana Spider

Photo by MG Margie Jenke



Orchard Spider

Photo by MG Margaret Canavan



Orchard Spider

Photo by MG Margaret Canavan

...and Narrative

By Candice Hawkinson
MG 2003



"If you wish to live and thrive, Let a spider run alive."
... Old English nursery rhyme.

Black-and-Yellow Argiope: The black-and-yellow argiope spider (*Argiope aurantia*) is quite attractive and one of the more conspicuous species of orb weaving spiders. They are also known as golden orb-weaver, yellow garden orb-weaver and the writing spider.

This is the largest size spider in the Galveston-Houston region (they are very prominent during late summer into fall) with females from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches and males from $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Both have a cephalothorax (small front body section) covered with short, silvery hairs. The shiny, egg-shaped abdomen is yellow or orange on a black background with matching legs. Like other orbweavers, each leg has 3 claws per foot, one more than most spiders. Orbweavers use this third claw to handle the threads while spinning. These spiders prefer sunny places with little or no wind to build their webs. Once they find suitable sites, they will stay there unless the web is frequently disturbed, or they can't catch enough food. Their orb webs can be up to 2 feet in diameter and are very complex.

A. aurantia is most active during the day. They have relatively poor vision, but are quite sensitive to vibration and air currents. This carnivorous beneficial preys on flying insects including some wasps (especially mud daubers). Their web traps aphids, flies, grasshoppers, mosquitoes and bees. *A. aurantia* is very beneficial and quite attractive—unless the mere sight of a spider triggers a case of arachnophobia!

Banana Spider: *Nephila clavipes* is a large, brightly colored species of the orb-web spider family. Commonly called banana or golden silk spiders, other names are calico spider, giant wood spider, golden silk orb weaver and writing spiders. 'Golden' refers to the color of the silk, not the color of the spider, for the web of a mature female has yellow threads that look like rich gold in the sunshine.

N. clavipes is the only species of the genus to be found in the Western Hemisphere. It lives in warm regions, preferring high humidity and relatively open space, and is one of the two most common orb-weavers seen in citrus and pecan groves. Near the coast, there are some arboreal or swampy nooks where large numbers of adults and their webs reside in almost frightening numbers. Adult males begin to come out in July with most mature females following later, during late-summer to early fall. *N. clavipes*' females are among the largest non-tarantula-like spiders in North America. Females are about 3 inches long and their color pattern consists of a silvery carapace (outer body wall) with yellow spots on a muted orange to tan cylindrical body. Her long legs are banded brown and orange with feathery tufts or gaiters on the lower segment, making her one of the most easily recognized. The slender males, on the other hand, are a rather inconspicuous dark brown averaging less than a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length and would often go unnoticed if not for the fact that they are often found in the webs of females.

The strong web of banana spiders is complex. They make big webs, about 3 feet wide. Some scientists suggest that the silk's color serves a dual purpose: sunlit webs ensnare bees that are attracted to the bright yellow strands and in shady spots, the yellow acts as camouflage. Webs are woven anywhere from eye-level upwards; into shrubs, trees or between the wires of utility lines. Their golden webs annoy hikers and hunters, as they make a sticky trap for the unobservant.

The banana spider preys on a wide variety of small to medium sized flying insects, which include bees, butterflies, flies, grasshoppers, leaf-footed bugs, mosquitoes, small moths, stinkbugs, and wasps. Banana spiders have even been seen feeding on beetles and dragonflies.

Orchard Orbweaver Spider: "Orchard Orbweaver" is the common name adopted by the American Arachnological Society, but this little spider is also called Mabel Orchard Spider, Orchard Spider, Venusta Orchard Spider and long-jawed orbweaver. Its scientific name is *Leucauge venusta*.

One can find *L. venusta* during this season, by taking a walk in a wooded area and looking closely at the ground around some dappled shade. The colorful orchard orbweaver may be seen living on a 1 foot-wide web built low in the underbrush of shrubs or small trees. How can one tell if it is a *L. venusta*? Easy. They are small. The females' body length is only around $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch, and males are half that size, but their green legs are quite long, overall making this spider just under an inch.

However, it is the orchard orbweaver's markings where this beneficial spider stands out amongst its brethren. They carry their bulbous, oval abdomens high. The top is silver-white, with overlapping streaks of bright yellow and green on its side. A single black stripe spreads, then separates, into three lines about a quarter of the way down its back, then flows parallel to its posterior. The end of the abdomen is often a variety of neon orange, yellow and/or red. The underside has an orange smile-shaped design on the rear of the abdomen. All of these colors and markings are variable in size and sometimes are not even present. If one has a magnifying glass, and if one can get a *L. venusta* to hold still long enough, there is a delightful fringed edge of comb-like hairs along its back legs, right next to the spider's body. So why is this species of spider considered beneficial? Because they eat small insects, just like all other orbweavers. Unfortunately, they are prey to other spiders.

PLEASE NOTE: Although people are concerned about being bitten, most spiders (with a few exceptions) are not dangerous. Nearly all spiders are shy. They may bite when harassed, held or pinched but the bite itself is not harmful to a healthy adult. The bite may produce a localized pain with a slight redness, which quickly goes away. On the whole, spider bites are much less severe than a bee sting. Most spiders are considered medically harmless to humans; however, very young and very elderly individuals or those with compromised immune systems, should exercise care and seek medical attention as appropriate.



by John Jons
MG 2003

Humulus lupulus is a vining perennial

Growing Hops in Galveston County

In our ongoing efforts to anticipate the potential horticultural needs of our Galveston County residents, in particular noting the increase in home beer brewing activities, and that local and national beer brewing supply stores sell hop rhizomes (Cascade, Centennial, Chinook, Crystal, Golding, Mt. Hood, Northern Brewer, Perle, Sorachi Ace, Sterling, Tettnanger, Willamette & Zeus) each year at the end of March, we decided to investigate if hops could be easily grown in Galveston County.

The hop plant (*Humulus lupulus*) is a vining perennial. It has a very vigorous growth habit, sending up long shoots that can reach 30 feet in height, requiring a structure for support, and they die to the crown (a bit above the ground) in the fall. Hops are cold hardy to Zone 3 and the heat hardy Zone is not defined but apparently new varieties in South Africa, that are not available in the US, are grown in very hot conditions. The hop plant likes moisture, with good drainage, plenty of sun (6-8 hours) and good air circulation (just like roses). Hops typically grow between the latitudes of 30 and 60 degrees North or South. Galveston is 29.2811 degrees North; theoretically not exactly ideal for hops. The hops benefit from the long summer day-length, which is typical of the northern latitudes and not so typical of the very southern latitudes. Hops are normally grown from rhizomes that are planted in the ground after the ground has thawed. Only female plants produce the cones used in making beer, herbal teas, soft drinks and medicines. These cones are typically harvested in the fall and are dried. The cone contains oil, which imparts its aroma and flavor to the beer and other drinks. This oil also contains antibiotic properties that suppress bacterial growth in beer. Hops are also grown as a garden ornamental.

We elected to use the "average local homeowner gardener" protocol of selecting plants that are assumed to grow well in our area and then only applying basic homeowner gardening practices. The rationale for this protocol is that if we applied advanced gardening practices, we could end up with results that the typical Galveston homeowner gardener may not be able to easily duplicate. We anticipate that we will grow the hops for three years.

In making some local informal inquiries, I found out that some local home brew enthusiasts had managed to grow the hop variety of Cascade in the Houston area (29.7604 degrees North). I was informed that hops grown in the Houston area are usually about 10' tall before the hops in the northern USA emerge from the ground and that we are able to get two harvests a year—the first harvest in June and the second in August and then the plants succumb to the heat. Apparently, the wet (and warm) winter we had this year resulted in many hop plants dying from some kind of root rot.

In selecting the hops for this experiment we elected to try four varieties based upon available space in the Master Gardener Demo Gardens, with available trellis options. The hops were purchased from a hops grower in Oregon (Crosby Hop Farms). Their advice was solicited on what hops may grow in Galveston. In consideration of the southern Texas climate, it was suggested that we avoid selecting hops that were common to the northern European countries (eg., Germany, England). We selected the hop varieties of Nugget,



Chinook, Columbus and Cascade (see info below from USAHOP.ORG).

NUGGET - is a high alpha (hop bitterness/flavor) variety that was released in 1983 from the U.S.D.A. breeding program in Oregon. It is characterized by a mild herbal aroma and has good storage stability.

CHINOOK - was developed by the U.S.D.A. breeding program in Washington State and was released in 1985 as a high alpha variety. It has a medium strength aroma profile and is becoming increasingly popular with U.S. craft brewers. Chinook is often used in Pale Ales, IPA's, Stouts, Porters, and in Lagers for bittering.

COLUMBUS - is referred to as Super High Alpha variety, having a very high alpha acid content. One of the most widely grown hops in the U.S.

CASCADE - is an aroma hop that was developed by the U.S.D.A. breeding program in Oregon and was released in 1972. It contains low amounts of alpha acids. The aroma is of medium strength and provides a unique floral/spicy character with well-balanced bittering potential. It is the most popular hop with the U.S. craft brewing industry.

The four varieties of hop rhizomes arrived via U.S. Mail on 03/26/15. They were shipping in a priority mail envelope and packaged in plastic bags with variety identifiable labels. The rhizomes were clearly moist and healthy. Although we ordered just one of each variety, there were actually two rhizomes in each bag, except for the Columbus variety, that only contained one very large rhizome. The rhizomes varied from 4" to 6" long and from 3/8" to 1-1/4" inches thick and weighed 0.4 – 3.4 oz. They were immediately placed in moist soil within one-gallon pots outside in my garden, in full sun. The ambient temperature ranged from around 60F to low 80F.

On 4/2/15, the hops rhizomes were replanted in the Galveston Master Gardener Demonstration garden. One of each varieties displayed new growth ranging from 1/2" to 1". This new growth is called a "bine." They were planted in a small mound of soil that was about 12" high. Where we had two rhizomes of a particular variety they were both planted in the same mound. The rhizome was planted about 1/2" to 1" below the surface with the growth eyes (nodes) facing up (like potatoes). Some of the literature on planting hop rhizomes suggests that the rhizomes should be planted vertically and some literature suggest that they should be planted horizontally. So, in the case where we had one rhizome we planted it vertically. If we had two rhizomes, we planted one rhizome vertically and the other horizontally. We then placed about 1" of mulch on the mound and watered the mound. A week later, all the hop rhizomes had sprouted bines (vines) ranging from about a 1/4" to about 6". It appears that planting the rhizomes vertically or horizontally did not make much of a difference. To be continued...

Botanical: *Origanum majorana*

MARJORAM

(Sweet Marjoram, Knotted Marjoram)



By Elayne Kouzounis
MG 1998

The word Marjoram (MAR-joram) derives from two Greek words which mean the "joy of the mountain." Isn't that a glorious thought? There are many species of marjoram, but the one best known today as a culinary herb is *Origanum majorana*, or sweet marjoram. Marjoram is an aromatic herb and belongs to the Oregano family and shares many of the same culinary properties, but are rich in flavonoids and volatile oils, notably carvacrol and thymol, which have medicinal applications. The heady fragrance and soft downy leaves makes this HERB a must in your garden. It has a bushy habit that you can increase by pinching back the tips of the plant during the growing season. Its leaves are small and ovate, and its white flowers form tiny knot like shapes before opening, prompting one of its common names knotted marjoram. This fragrant herb can reach 18 inches in height and 3 to 4 feet across. Marjoram is used as one of the main ingredients in bouquet garnish and roasts of all kinds. Marjoram is enormously versatile and it enhances many dishes. There is only one mistake you can make cooking with marjoram, and that is cooking it too long. Because it's delicate, it has a tendency to turn bitter, so always add it toward the end of a recipe with long-cooking foods.

Marjoram leaves are used in stuffing's, salads, eggs, cheese, soups, stews, salad dressings, puddings, muffins, pies and cakes. Dried leaves are rubbed over lamb, veal, pork and poultry. For Germans it is the "sausage herb" (Wuratkraut). It can be used in bread making, as well as in the manufacture of beverages. It is one of the ingredients of the well-known "vermouth." A paste will preserve fresh marjoram for one year. Put one cup of leaves in a food processor, add just enough oil to form a paste. Put in an air-tight container and store in the refrigerator. Spoon out the desired amount, using the same measurement as called for in the recipe.

Marjoram should be considered an annual in all but the warmest climates. Purchase plants or take cuttings. If cuttings are taken—soft cuttings in the spring and woody cuttings in the fall. Cuttings should be dipped in hormone solution and then stuck in vermiculite or perlite that is kept very moist for 2-3 weeks. The cuttings will have set a good root system and can be transplanted to 4" pots. In approximately 3 weeks the plants will be ready to go to the garden.

Marjoram needs full sun, well-drained soil and good air circulation. Feed once a month with fish emulsion, sea kelp or a mixture of iron and blood meal. The plants may be cut back by 1/3 to ensure continued vigorous growth. In late fall, cut the plants back and dry the stems. When completely dry, rub through a screen that is over a large piece of paper. Collect the dried material into a GLASS jar, secure tightly and store in a dark area of the pantry. This will stay fresh for 3-4 months.

Medicinal—some recommended remedies for various conditions are present here. They are suggestions from my own experience and from others and are not intended to take the place of a physician's advice or counsel. If a chronic condition persists, professional medical advice should be sought.

Insomnia or sleeplessness can be alleviated when marjoram leaves are made into a pillow or sachet and laid by your head.

Head colds and sore muscles can be helped by drinking marjoram tea.

Liver and spleen can be cleansed by drinking a decoction made from marjoram

Bruises are healed by rubbing a marjoram salve on them.

Ear aches or ringing in the ear is reported to be helped by putting two drops of marjoram oil in the ear.

Tension headaches can be relieved by drinking marjoram tea.

Other Uses

Using herbs to brighten and freshen each room in your home will extend the benefits of your garden all year round. Sharing your garden's treasures with others is a pleasure and a double blessing. Following are some suggestions for your home and for novel and appreciated remembrances for others.

A scented candle made from melted paraffin and marjoram oil will soothe and calm the whole household.

Make a sleep pillow using dried marjoram and any pretty piece of fabric, these are placed by the sleeper's head or put inside a regular pillow. These make great baby shower gifts.

Fresh marjoram put in a muslin bag and hung over the faucet in the bath will soothe frayed nerves.

Marjoram attracts beneficial insects such as bees and butterflies.

Enjoy your garden and do have fun. Practice makes perfect. And remember, it's always nice when you entice with herbs.





By Donna J. Ward
MG 1996

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.)

Step outside and smell the roses—and the magnolias, and the jasmine, and the myriad of fragrant blossoms that identify spring on the Gulf Coast. Mother Nature's fragrances surpass anything born in a chemist's vial.

Speaking of roses, check your roses for aphids. Their mouths are a modified piercing and sucking tube, and they literally suck the life juices from a plant. These little critters are really pretty dim-witted and a hard spray with the hose washes them off; they don't have enough sense to climb back up.

Aphids are quite often 'herded' by an ant colony, and they will herd them back up to the plant's tender growth. Ants 'milk' the aphids for their honeydew. Sometimes controlling the 'ranchers' eliminates the aphid problem. Our local nurseries have plenty of formulations to control ants in our landscapes but very few approved for the veggie garden.

By May, lawn mowing has become a weekly event, and if you haven't already fed your St. Augustine, apply an easy to find 15-5-10 formula and stand back. Set the mower to its highest setting. Leaving the grass blades taller provides some shade to the stolons and helps to conserve moisture. Be sure your mower's blades are sharp. Sharp blades cut the grass while dull blades tear the grass.

To bag or not to bag? Your call—the decomposing clippings do provide some nutrients to the lawn. If you don't want to leave clippings on the lawn, toss them into the compost pile. You do have a compost pile—right?

If your old pruners have seen better days and if you haven't already pruned your azaleas, drop by your local garden center and pick up a new pair of by-pass pruners. They are much more efficient and plant friendly than the anvil type, in that they 'cut' instead of 'crush.'

This is your last chance to prune azaleas. If you procrastinate and wait too long you will be removing next year's bloom wood. If next spring you don't have any 'bloomers,' you've no one to blame but yourself. While you're at it give them their last fertilization before June 1st. Since azaleas are finished blooming, many nurseries have put them on sale.

When I first moved to Texas I was so impressed with the Bayou Bend Azalea Trail that I went out and bought a dozen and planted them along the length of our curved driveway. Fortunately, they were all bought on sale because the mortality rate was 100%. I didn't know that they had to have their roots loosened, spread, and planted high. If you do find a good sale, don't forget the mulch—enough to layer several inches thick. Azalea roots are very shallow and quite susceptible to drying out in warm weather.

Mulching is one of the best remedies known for conserving moisture, controlling weeds and lowering the soil temperature during the inevitable sizzling temps of our Gulf Coast summers. Almost forgot—give those azaleas a soil acidifier to green up those pale leaves caused by an iron deficiency. Both granular or a hose-end application works well.

As I travel around the neighborhood, I'm beginning to wonder if I neglected to warn against piling mulch up against the trunk of your trees. Did I forget to mention that mulch against the trunk promotes excessive moisture and root rot, inner bark tissue dies, encourages disease and insect problems, provides a home for rodents that chew the bark, causes an imbalance in soil pH, becomes a matted barrier that prevents the penetration of water and oxygen? Mulch should never be more than 2 inches deep at the base of the trunk—if you can't see the 'flare' of the trunk's base—it's too deep.

Now that you have a new pair of pruners, give the oleanders a haircut and any other summer bloomers that have finished their performance. Oleanders usually don't need pruning, except occasionally we need to keep them in shape and remove straggly or crossing branches.

For you veggie gardeners, there's still time to put in transplants of eggplant, and okra seeds are anxious to snuggle into that warm garden soil. Not much left to do except enjoy the fruits of your labors—and the veggies.



Photos by GCMG Digital Library
Magnolia John's Pride



Oleander

THE ISLAND GARDEN

Crossandra & Lespedeza

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



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

When a gardener comes upon a plant that is fresh and brand new to his world, he must share the word with others. Recently, I have become aware of two such plants—plants that I have not seen in my gardening experience and ones that I must have! While shopping for just the right gift for my daughter for Mother's Day (I always get her an unusual plant), I was startled and captivated by the crossandra. The foliage is an extremely bright, shiny green and the striking and charming orange blossoms stand upright among them. There was no doubt—this was my choice. As I loaded this lovely acquisition into my car, it occurred to me that I must have one for myself as well—after all it was my Mother's Day too!

I found a comment as I was researching the crossandra that says it all. "Grow this underused and underappreciated tropical plant and you're sure to get lots of questions and compliments! It's a great performer in hot, sunny spots. It produces clusters of frilly orange or yellow flowers all season and shiny, dark green leaves."

Crossandra is native to India and Sri Lanka, and is related to the Mexican petunia and the yellow shrimp plant. In south India, the orange flowers are tied with jasmine into short beautiful lengths and sold in street stalls to decorate a ladies hair. Crossandra and jasmine are also sold outside of temples to use as offerings.

A two to three foot-tall plant, crossandra thrives in warm, humid environments. It can tolerate up to four hours of direct sun per day, but light shade is ideal. In hot climates, the plants prefer to be shaded for most of the day with just a few hours of early-morning sun. Fertile, moist but well-drained soil is best for growing in the ground while those plants in pots need regular watering and fertilizing. Pinch off the faded flower clusters to promote continuous blooming. The crossandra will bloom through the summer and fall months to frost but if temperatures drop below fifty-five degrees the leaves can discolor or the top growth may die off. The plants can usually re-sprout as long as the roots don't freeze. When you put water on the seed pods of this plant, they POP out, sometimes as far away at 12 feet! The best way to harvest the seeds is to put the dry seed pods in a jar, add water and place your hand over the rim (very quickly) to keep the seeds from popping out, and then lay them out to dry on a paper towel. Germination usually takes ten to fourteen days. Propagation is also easily achieved by planting stem cuttings in the spring.

With no serious pest or disease problems and easy propagation, the cassandra will surely become a favorite of local gardeners.

I am currently researching and creating a presentation on perennials for the Upper Texas Gulf Coast and while discussing some of my favorite plants with another Master Gardener, she suggested the lespedeza as a possible candidate for my perennial program. I was not familiar with this beauty so she showed me photographs of her gardens. Wow! We all need this one. One gardener stated "After a typically difficult Texas summer this plant provides a burst of joy and optimism that is sincerely welcomed. The plant also blooms in the late spring before the heat of summer but the fall bloom is the more significant of the two blooming events in my opinion."

The lespedeza "Little Volcano" has been called the "fall show-off" as it erupts into a fountain-like profusion of rosy-purple blooms in September and October, although there is some sporadic blooming in the spring and summer. "The fuchsia-colored blooms arrive en masse along small, dark green leaves that burst from an upright clump, giving the appearance of fireworks weeping from the sky. Its beauty doesn't end there. After flowering, the deciduous foliage then transfigures into a golden fall color."

A deciduous perennial shrub, the lespedeza 'Little Volcano' originates from the Ryukyu Islands of Japan and is a member of the legume family. It is a no-fuss shrub and is noninvasive. Because of its drought tolerance the 'Little Volcano' makes an excellent candidate for the Xeriscape garden. Give lespedeza sun, a well-draining soil and plenty of room to show off. Once established, it needs little if any help from the garden hose. It is also pest free—a bonus! Cut it back in late winter and it will re-grow in an even larger fountain-like form.

Can you picture this lovely plant waving, fluttering and dancing outside your windows this fall?



Crossandra



Lespedeza "Little Volcano"

Project: Demonstration Gardens

Carbide Park



*By Tom Fountain
MG 2008*



The drought has ended officially(at least in our area of Texas). Over the last few months we have had rain on most of our garden days and we have been chased out of the garden by the rain on several occasions. Galveston County has had more than three inches above normal rain fall since the first of the year. April temperatures have averaged near normal or slightly above. The warmer weather, along with the precipitation, has produced a bumper crop of mosquitoes.

The Master Gardener class of 2015 has started invading the demonstration garden and it is always good to see new faces. I understand they have started a study on plant growth using a bed of tomato plants. Also, they have joined the rest of us in taking care of the garden, gathering vegetables, weeding beds, working with the construction crew, and even showing visitors around the garden.

I like this time of year at Carbide Park. The whole place seems to turn green almost overnight and the blooms are really bright. In the orchard where small flowers once bloomed, now there is growing fruit. In fact one of the nicest places here is in the Serenity Garden area and the Earth-Kind Garden. The colors and textures are wonderful. Tish is always seen working that area.



This April we took time to celebrate Clyde's 80th birthday during our luncheon. He is one those guys you see all over the garden doing whatever needs to be done. When you see him on the mower "**watch out**"! He is like a "Tokyo Taxi Driver" (full speed - no braking). Clyde is the one on the right along with Ken, John and Ed.



Pictured above: A group of new Master Gardener interns checking and recording the plant growth in a bed of tomato plants. Wes, Joe, Clyde and Jim are harvesting a wheel barrow full of carrots. Clyde is washing the carrots. Henry and his crew are hanging the doors on the greenhouse. Ira is showing a group of Harris County Precinct 2 visitors around the garden.

There are still opportunities to participate so if you want some fresh air and want get your hands dirty, come join us.



by Sandra Gervais
MG 2011

Simple - Fast - Easy Seasonal Bites

I cook because I really, really like to eat. So does my family. And it's no surprise that we're from south Louisiana, where a meal is not fully digested until it's been discussed and critiqued—why is it so good this time, what could be done to make it better next time, and my favorite, what variations could we make? With these thoughts in mind, here's a quick recipe from a friend that happily takes to changes and still tastes great. I like it even better the next day. So don't be afraid to add, omit or adjust the ingredients.

Sausage, Tomato and Spinach Toss

8 oz. of pasta (penne, linguini, and angel hair all work well)
1 lb. loose Italian sausage (mild or spicy depending on your taste)
1 onion (chopped)
2 garlic cloves (chopped or smashed)
1/2 medium green & 1/2 medium red sweet bell pepper (chopped finely)—adjust to your taste
4 oz. fresh mushrooms (sliced)
8-12 oz. fresh spinach (depends on how much you like spinach)
1-2 cans of Italian diced tomatoes with liquid (we like tomatoes so I use 2 cans)
1/4 teaspoon each basil & oregano (to taste; fresh or dried both work nicely) salt, pepper, red pepper flakes, garlic powder, onion powder—to taste (I use salt sparingly so use other spices first. Sometimes no salt is needed.)
2-4 tablespoons of Vermouth
1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese
4 tablespoons of Parmesan cheese

Cook pasta according to directions and drain. While pasta cooks, scramble sausage in large skillet or pot on medium high heat until cooked. Remove sausage. Sauté onion, garlic and peppers in sausage grease until soft. Drain grease if necessary. Put sausage back in the skillet and add mushrooms, spinach, canned tomatoes and seasonings.
Cook until mixture bubbles and spinach wilts, 2-5 minutes.
Adjust seasonings and add Vermouth.
Add hot pasta and mix well.
Top with cheeses while still hot so they can melt.

Serves 4-6 at my house.

Here's another recipe for coleslaw from MG Yvonne Enos. Besides being both easy and tasty, she says that it can be frozen. Since the cabbage crop can be overwhelming most years, I thought this was a great idea to pass along. My only problem? ... We never have any leftover to freeze!

Freezer Coleslaw

1 medium cabbage, finely sliced or shredded, rinsed and drained
1/2 cup celery, finely chopped
1/2 of a medium green sweet bell pepper, finely chopped
1/4 cup onion, finely chopped
4 carrots, grated
3/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup vinegar
1/2 teaspoon mustard seed
1/2 teaspoon celery salt

Mix all ingredients together well and adjust seasonings to taste. Refrigerate and let sit for a few hours or overnight for best flavor.

Remember, this slaw can be frozen. So leftovers will be no problem.



By Yvonne Enos
MG 2008



By Mary Lou Kelso
MG 2000

MINUTES - MARCH 2015 MONTHLY MG MEETINGS

The March meeting of the Galveston County Master Gardener Association was held in Dickinson on Lovers Lane Street on March 10 at the lovely home and yard of Rod and Lynne Mize. It seems folks continue to like to remove the street sign identifying where they reside. Several days prior to the backyard meeting and the morning of the meeting, they experienced heavy rainfall. But, by the afternoon on the event day, the sky became very bright and clear and the party went on. Rod planned ahead of time by clearing out the barn where his tractor was kept and tables were in place along with the delicious food that everyone brought with them. It was a most wonderful event, regardless of the few puddles remaining in the yard with have such cool temperatures and the fact of all the blooming plants that everyone enjoyed along with the large pond.



HENRY'S GARDEN TRELLIS

In our Galveston Master Gardener's garden beds I planted a rose called Fortuniana. This rose is a classic one time blooming old garden rose. It dates back to 1840, has blush white flowers, dark green gloss foliage, with a just a few prickles (thorns) and has a climbing growth habit. This rose is possibly the best roots stock rose for grafted roses to be grown in our area. I planted the rose as a source for potential future grafting needs.

As spring emerged, this rose (as expected) experienced a vigorous growth spurt, with long canes falling all around it. As the rose was planted in a rose bed with limited room, it quickly became apparent that it needed some kind of trellis to contain and manage its canes in an organized manner. I shared this dilemma with our resident Galveston County Master Gardener craftsman, Henry. We talked about several trellis options and Henry said he would "create something."

About two weeks later Henry showed me his creation—a sturdy "artistic" looking vertical triangle-shaped trellis, using three-eighths concrete iron reinforcing rod. The trellis is about six foot tall. The top of the trellis formed a point and the bottom of the trellis forms an equilateral triangle with each of the sides about eighteen inches long. Henry constructed this trellis using three six-foot lengths and three 18" lengths of iron reinforcing rod. One of the six-foot lengths of rod had a hook shape formed at one end. Henry welded the three six-foot lengths of rod at the top and spread apart at the bottom about 18 inches. About six inches up from the bottom of the six-foot vertical rods, the eighteen inch rods were welded horizontally, to each of the rods to form the equilateral triangle shape at the bottom of the trellis. The six inches of rod below the welded horizontal rods, enabled the trellis to be forced into the ground, to stabilize and anchor the trellis.

I placed the trellis around the base of the rose and trained (espaliered) the rose canes around and through the trellis. As you can see from the pictures Henry's garden trellis works very well.



by John Jons
MG 2003

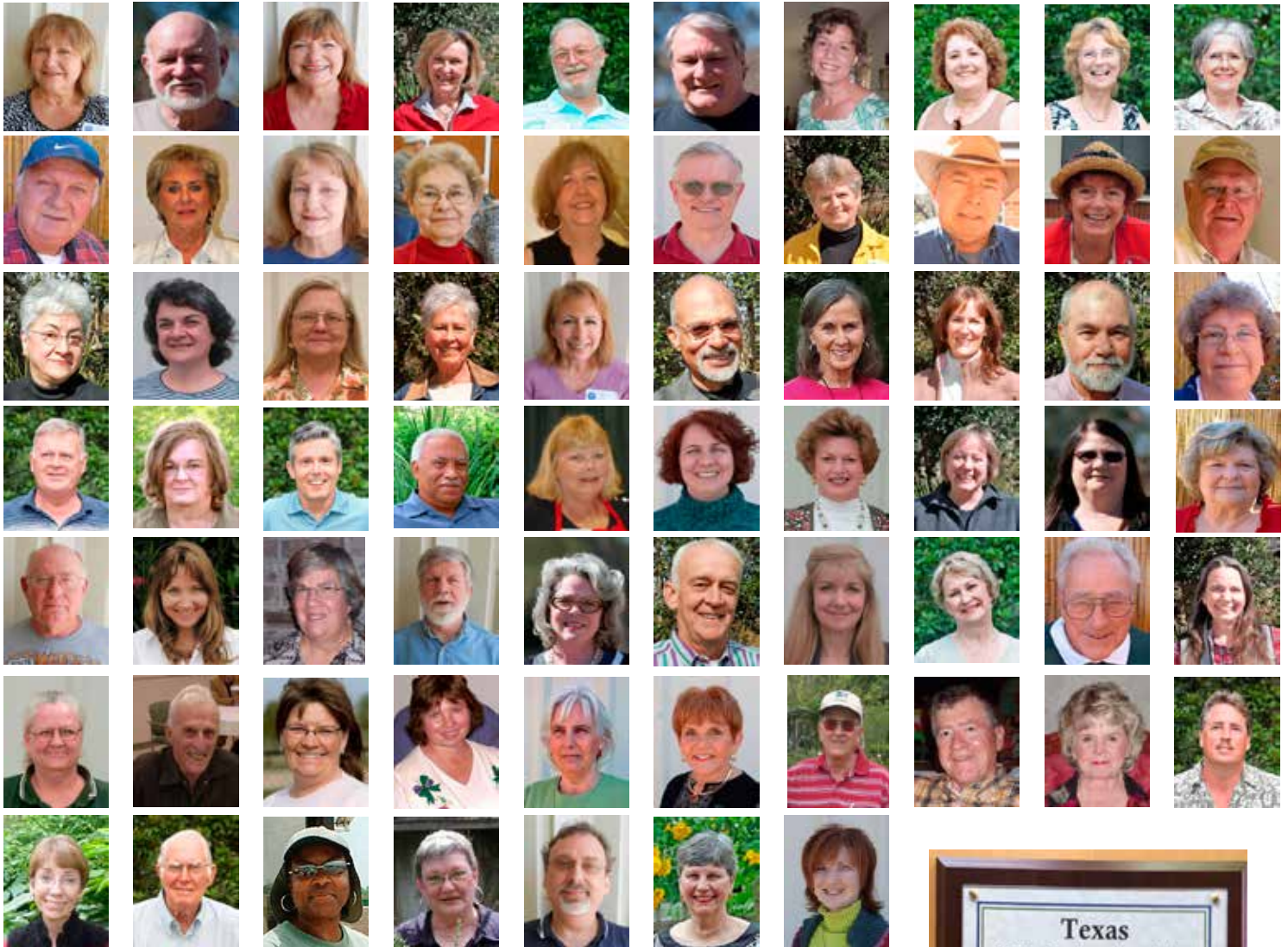


by Henry Harrison
MG 2011



Congratulations

Congratulations to our Newsletter Team for receiving First Place for Galveston County Master Gardener Association "Written Education" award for our Gulf Coast Gardening Newsletter at the Texas Master Gardener Association Search for Excellence 2014 Awards recently presented at the State Conference in Bell County. It does take a dedicated team to produce this successful newsletter. We have a core group of about 20 Master Gardeners who are involved in producing each issue and the team reaches out to bring in many others to lend their talents and areas of expertise in putting together this 20+ page newsletter for each issue.



Accepting the award at the State Conference, pictured left to right: Linda Garren-McKillip, Linda Steber and Kaye Corey.

Upcoming Events **Tuesday Night & Saturday Seminars**

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

JUNE 2015 PROGRAMS

TOMATO EVALUATION & TASTING EVENT

Email GALV3@wt.net for more information or if you plan to bring tomatoes

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Homegrown heirloom and hybrid tomatoes grown by Master Gardener Terry Cuculis will be available at this event for tasting, comparing, and evaluating. This is a great opportunity to share information and knowledge about this year's season and harvest.

The general public is also encouraged to bring in their own, un-sliced tomatoes for taste comparisons. If bringing homegrown tomatoes, please plan to arrive by 5:45 p.m. to allow preparation time for inclusion into the tasting array.

Open to the general public. Participants may come and leave as they wish. The public is invited to sample all tomatoes—or as many as they are able! Vote for your favorites and the winners will be announced on our Master Gardener website.

THE FABULOUS FRAGRANT FRANGIPANI (Plumeria)

Saturday, June 6, 2015

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Galveston County Master Gardener Loretta Osteen will give a PowerPoint program covering the history and culture of Plumeria, how to use the flowers, propagation by seeds and cuttings, and grafting.

THE CULTURE AND CARE OF PALMS

Saturday, June 6, 2015

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Palm tree enthusiast and Galveston County Master Gardener O. J. Miller has over 15 years of experience with palms in our area. This program will include an introduction to palms, an overview of the exotics and commonly found palms at nurseries in our area, palm planting methods, palm fertilization, freeze preparation and proper care. The program will include a discussion on the better varieties of palms for Galveston County and the surrounding area.

May/June "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.

2015 MG Re-certification (Continuing Education) Hours Available Through the AgriLife Extension Office

Date	Name of Program	Speaker	CEUs for MGs
1/6/2015	Grafting Your Own Fruit Trees	Herman Auer	1.50
1/10/2015	Growing Avocado and Papaya	Jerry Hurlbert	2.75
1/10/2015	Successfully Growing Peaches in Galveston County	Herman Auer	2.00
1/15/2015	How to Graft Fruit Trees - a hands on workshop	Herman Auer	1.25
1/17/2015	Growing Citrus in Your Own Backyard	Chris Anastas	2.00
1/17/2015	Citrus Greening	Robert Marshall	0.75
1/20/2015	Gardening by the Square Foot	John Jons	1.50
1/24/2015	Successful Spring Vegetable Gardening	Luke Stripling	2.75
1/24/2015	The Real Dirt on Garden Soil	Bob McPherson	2.00
1/27/2015	Anyone Can Grow Roses	John Jons	1.75
1/29/2015	How to Graft Fruit Trees - a hands on workshop	Herman Auer	2.00
1/31/2015	Grow Great Tomatoes	Ira Gervais	2.50
1/31/2015	Growing Blueberries	Dr. David Cohen	1.75
2/3/2015	Fruit Trees & Spring Vegetables for the Gulf Coast	John Jons	1.00
2/17/2015	February MGA Meeting - Demonstration Garden Requirements	Bobbie Ivey	1.00
2/19/2015	Rose Pruning - a hands on workshop	John Jons	1.50
2/19/2015	How to Graft Fruit Trees - a hands on workshop	Herman Auer	1.50
2/21/2015	Texas Tuff' Landscape Plants	Sandra Devall	2.25
2/21/2015	Kitchen Gardening	Mary Demeny	2.25
2/24/2015	The ABCs of Composting	Ken Steblein	1.75
2/26/2015	How to Graft Fruit Trees - a hands on workshop	Sue Jeffcoat	2.00
3/3/2015	Gardening for Jewels - Hummingbirds	Deborah Repasz	1.50
3/17/2015	Honey Bees Around the Garden	Stewart McAdoo, Robert Marshall	1.50
3/19/2015	Peach Thinning - a hands on workshop	Herman Auer	2.00
3/21/2015	The Culture & Care of Palms	O.J. Miller	2.25
3/21/2015	Tomato Stress Management	Ira Gervais	2.00
3/24/2015	75 Ways to Live a Greener Life	Ken Steblein	1.50
3/26/2015	Peach Thinning - a hands on workshop	Herman Auer, Robert Marshall	1.00
3/31/2015	Tool Talk	Tim Jahnke, Henry Harrison III	1.50
2015 Recertification Hours for MGs		Total CEUs (Hours)	51.00

Last Updated: 5 May 2015

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 through the online Volunteer Management System or other means. Contact MG Wayne Elliott at mghours@wt.net for more information.

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.

Tideway is a program of the Transitional Learning Center

Dr. Johnson has approved Tideway Transitional Learning Center (644 Central City Blvd., Galveston, Texas 77551) as a location where Master Gardener service hours may be earned. Plans to prepare the gardens at Tideway for spring planting are ready and volunteers are needed. Volunteers can contact Brack Collier at bcollier@tlc-galveston.org. The focus is on the long-term needs of individuals with an acquired brain injury. The program offers accessible horticultural experiences, through which individuals with a brain injury can improve sensory awareness, motor skills, range of motion, endurance and flexibility as well as regain confidence, and learn new skills. This provides the opportunity for our residents to develop the necessary skills to gain and maintain a productive lifestyle whether it is on site or volunteering in the community. The residents at Tideway are very much "hands on" in building the different garden beds, in fact some of the residents came up with the designs. And they have chickens.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Tour Guides for "First-Thursdays-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 Robert Marshall at 281-993-5595 or e-mail at rbrtm01@att.net or MG Bobbie Ivey at 713-748-8564 or email at blivey@sbcglobal.net to volunteer.

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.

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 Specialist Training Conclave

May 21-22, 2015 on Texas A&M Campus
MG Vegetable Specialist; Course Director-Joe Masabni
MG Earth-Kind Landscape Specialist; Course Director- Tim Hartmann
MG Circulture Specialist; Course Director-Monte Nesbitt
MG First Detector- Invasive Pest & Pathogen Specialist;
Course Director- Kevin Ong

The MG Specialist Conclave is an opportunity for certified Master Gardeners to gain specialist training in a conference setting. Four specialist courses will be taught concurrently on the Texas A&M University Campus at College Station, Texas. Certified master gardeners with approval and support of their county coordinator may register for one of the training sessions.
Registration \$250

****Master Gardeners completing their requirements are eligible for \$50 in rebates from the Texas Master Gardener Association.**

On-Line Registration: <http://agriliferegister.tamu.edu>
(keyword Master Gardener)

Course Descriptions-All four courses involve 16 hours of classroom instruction spanning two days, as listed above. Registrants must begin and complete each session during the listed dates (no exceptions). 20 hours of volunteer service must be completed in one year to gain certification.



Here is a great way to support our GCMGA

Amazon will donate 0.5% of our personal purchases to Galveston County Master Gardener Association.

All you have to do is:

Go to smile.amazon.com -Choose Galveston County Master Gardener Association as your charity. - Save smile.amazon.com to your favorites. - Always start from this site to do your amazon shopping. - You should see your chosen charity in the top bar on amazon's website. - If you have any problems, search smile on amazon's website

the last word . . .

CATERPILLARS ATTACK AREA'S OAK TREES

(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

The spring ritual of phone calls and visits to the AgriLife Extension Office in addition to urgent e-mails submitted by county residents this time of year is proof that insect pests and disease problems on landscape plants can be expected to return with warmer weather conditions.

The following was the most asked question on trees by local residents this spring:

Q: My oak trees have been invaded by an army of caterpillars that are very hairy and quite colorful. Any ideas on the name of this caterpillar? Is this a stinging caterpillar? Should I treat my oak trees?

A: This year is shaping up to be an active year for caterpillars across Texas. Populations of tent caterpillars have been enormous in some areas of Texas. Tent caterpillars have caused dozens of black-outs in the Dayton, Texas, area when caterpillars moved from tree limbs onto high voltage transformers and caused electrical shorts. Galveston County residents are fortunate in that tent caterpillars rarely occur in this area.

The caterpillar that has alarmed local residents is commonly known as the Live Oak Tussock Caterpillar (scientific name is *Orgyia detrita*). The Live Oak Tussock Caterpillar does not form tents. While this caterpillar is known to occur in low numbers in most springs, residents in the League City and Friendswood area are

reporting major outbreaks of this insect pest.

The good news is that a healthy tree or shrub can generally tolerate a total defoliation without suffering permanent damage. By the time homeowners notice the leaf damage on their oak trees, most caterpillars have stopped feeding and are entering the non-feeding pupal stage.

A mature caterpillar is about 1.25 to 1.5 inches long, with two long tufts of black hairs projecting forward from the head and a similar tuft of black hairs projecting backward from the rear of the body. Four dense patches of hair occur midway on the topside of the caterpillar's body.

While Live Oak Tussock Caterpillars are not regarded as being stinging caterpillars, it is advised that people do not handle them. Some people aren't bothered by the caterpillar but others could have a reaction that ranges from a mild to fairly severe rash. Parents are advised to keep an eye on their toddlers when outdoors to ensure that they do not make contact with the caterpillars.

I suspect that the abundance of Live Oak Tussock Caterpillars is correlated with the mild temperatures over last winter.

This year is shaping up to be an active year for caterpillars across Texas.



2015 MGA MONTHLY MEETINGS

February 3, 2015

John John - Pre-Fruit Tree Sale Presentation
10:00 am - Extension Office
Carbide Park - La Marque

February 17, 2015

Bobbie Ivey - Vegetable Beds at Demo Gardens
6:30 pm - Extension Office
Carbide Park - La Marque

March 10, 2015

Rod & Lynne Mize
4004 Lovers Lane
5:30 pm - Dickinson

April 14, 2015

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

May 12, 2015

Tish Reustle - Backyard Meeting
5:30 pm - 902 West Viejo
Friendswood

June 9, 2015

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

July 14, 2015

Brock Colliers (from Tideway) & Monica Martins
7:00 pm Extension Office
Carbide Park - La Marque

August 11, 2015

Mary Lou Kelso, Moody Gardens
Galveston Island
Venues begin at 9:15 am

September, 2015 TBA

Fall Plant Sale Preview
6:00 pm - Extension Office
Carbide Park - La Marque

October 13, 2015

Helen Bashline & Gail Ayers - Backyard Meeting
5:30 pm - 1016 Church
Galveston Island

November 10, 2015

Ira Gervais - Annual Meeting, Election of Officers
6:00 pm - Extension Office
Carbide Park - La Marque

December 8, 2015

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 - Mark Your Calendar

June 9, 2015, join the Galveston County Master Gardeners for an evening of recognition and awards as we celebrate the Graduation of the 2014 Class. Congratulations to them for a job well done. It will also be an opportunity to recognize other Master Gardeners for their contributions to the success Galveston County MG's. It will be a festive pot luck occasion!

July 14, 2015, Brack Collier of Tideway in Galveston will present a program on transitional gardening. The Tideway program offers accessible Horticultural experiences, through which individuals with a brain injury can improve sensory awareness, motor skills, range of motion, endurance and flexibility as well as regain confidence, and learn new skills. This program will follow a pot luck dinner at the Extension Office. Please bring a dish to share; serving spoons will be provided; drinks will be provided. Guests are welcome.

Invitations to follow by e-mail

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



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