

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 202 - September/October 2016

They can last a lifetime Dividing Daylilies

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You might have a gardening addiction if:

You excitedly await the day to plant the potatoes more than your birthday...

Your garden Crocs are your statement shoes...

You delight in the harvest of the first carrot -

the \$25 and 20 hours of work to produce it seems irrelevant...

While doing laundry you realize your clothes are dirtier than your kids' clothes...

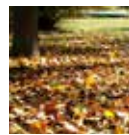
You refer to your garden fork as your "Baby"...

You make compost in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator...

*You hesitate when your spouse says there's not enough room in the house for both
her/him and the houseplants...*

In your will it states you want to be companion planted with your spouse in the garden.

I guess we all exhibit some form of lunacy now and then but at least with gardening we have an old fashion "social" interest that grows both lasting friendships and beauty to share in our neighborhoods without having to use an electronic network! With the peak of our hottest summer temperatures almost behind us, we'll be looking for outside garden activities to do in the upcoming cooler weather. This issue of our newsletter will give us some ideas of what to do next and also add to our education to perfect our knowledge to share in our communities.



The timely Q&A on page 4 teaches us about leaf composting as soon we'll have a bumper crop of leaves on our hands.



Want to grow strawberries? The Q&A on page 5 tells us how and when to plant and which are the correct varieties for our region. Aquaponics is an ancient

growing practice whose future is now! Soon our MG Demonstration garden will have an Aquaponics system on display. Aquaponics is beginning to revolutionize the world of home-grown healthy food. Read about this exciting method on page 14. I'm excited to report that for our plant sale



in October the Bulb Team has selected several unique, beautiful daylilies that will be offered for the first time. It's nearly time to begin dividing daylilies if you currently have them in your garden. Learn how to do this on page 8. Speaking of ancient, Figs and Kumquats have been grown for eons. Both are stars in our local landscapes, learn more about them on page 6. On page 9,



Donna Ward gets us busy with more activities from dealing with chinch bugs, fertilizing, pruning and a list of things to plant at this time of year. The Fall Gardening piece



*By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008*

on page 13 gives us more information about bed and soil preparation for fall sowing, fall vegetable planting suggestions, herbs and a few valuable publications available at the



Extension Office. We have a special Best Shots feature this month (pages 10-11) focusing on attracting hummingbirds to your gardens. Please enjoy meeting Master Gardener Lisa Belcher on page 16. There are several continuing series articles in this newsletter including



spotlighting local garden clubs and featuring a garden tool of the month. Visit the League City Garden Club on page 17 and refresh



your knowledge of the usefulness of the lopper on page 18 even if we can't decide how to pronounce it. Seasonal Bites on page 21 features two terrific recipes, Eggplant Gratin and a Mexican salad, enjoyed at the garden for lunch on a Thursday workday. The Carbide Park update appears on page 20. Dr. Johnson's Last Word column on mushrooms is on page 25.



Don't forget to check out our Monthly Calendar, Bulletin Board and Upcoming Events sections for volunteer, garden team and education course

schedules along with other current opportunities. We welcome your feedback, comments and suggestions for the newsletter.

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*Aren't gardening people the
happiest, friendliest, and most
generous people you know?*

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Cover:
Spectacular Daylily
Photo by MG 2001 Lester Wygrys



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.we are all about the joy of gardening.
Thanks for your interest!



By Chris Anastas
MG 2012

ask a master gardener

Q&A — Gardener's Gold - Leaf Composting

Question: Can you give me some particulars on leaf composting?

One of the inescapable October chores most all of us share is the collection and disposal of plentiful fall leaves. While our leaves do not acquire the brilliant colors of red and gold as they do in other parts of the country, we can very easily turn our humble brown fall leaves into gardener's gold.

We are of course talking about leaf compost, a very valuable addition to your landscape and garden soil. It is not just an organic additive for our organically-starved clay soils; it also makes the soil more tillable and improves aeration. Leaf compost is a wonderful home for earthworms (worm castings add even more nutrients to the soil) and beneficial soil bacteria. In addition, leaf mold can retain 300 to 500 percent of its weight in water, making it the perfect soil conditioner.

If you have already made the effort to rake them up or blow them into a pile, you are halfway to turning your leaves into gardener's gold. If you have never tried composting, this is the perfect time for you to give it a try. It does not get any easier than leaf composting and you will be well rewarded.

The first step to leaf composting is gathering the leaves into a pile. Smaller pieces break down faster. Shredding the leaves with a shredder, running over the pile with a mower or even using a weed trimmer can accomplish this. You may not want to discourage you children from jumping in the leaf pile as this can aid your efforts. Or, you can skip this step as the whole leaves will break down within a year rather than the three to six months it would take with shredded leaves.

Whole or shredded leaves should be placed in a pile at least 4 feet wide and 3 feet tall. Too small a pile will not retain the heat and moisture needed for composting to take place. Con-

versely if the pile is more than 5 feet tall, the center of the pile will not get enough oxygen to allow for the composting microbes to work and will also be harder to turn or manage. The leaf pile can be left loose or contained in an enclosure. The simplest method of enclosure is with woven metal wire or fencing forming a circle around the pile but leaving an opening for turning and removing compost. The pile can also be enclosed with brick or wood but make sure there are many openings for air and moisture to enter and escape. Wooden pallets or plastic fencing held in place with metal rods would work as well.

The next step is to wait. Yes, waiting is the next step! That is the beauty of leaf composting. The layering that is required in most composting is not necessary when composting leaves. If your leaves are all dry and brown you could add a very small amount of grass clippings, coffee grounds or other green vegetative matter to accelerate the composting, but it is definitely not necessary. Most

fall leaves contain enough green to compost without additional help.

Turning also speeds up the process, but again is not necessary. If your leaf pile becomes soggy from too much moisture, a little turn now and then with a garden fork or shovel will allow the microbes breaking down the leaves to get oxygen so they can continue their work and keep the leaf compost odor free.

Finished compost should be dark, crumbly and have an earthy odor and may be ready as early as spring. In addition to mixing with soil, the leaf compost can be applied thinly as mulch at a rate of one-quarter to one-half inch on top of soil. Because of the moisture retaining properties, leaf compost may also be used in potting soil with the percentage of compost not to exceed 25%.

By the time the leaves begin to accumulate again next year, you should have experienced your first batch of gardener's gold and will be eager to start your second.



Photo by MG 1991 Linda Steber

ask a master gardener



By Robert Marshall
MG 2012

Plant the right berry - strawberries

Q&A

Question: Can strawberries be grown in Galveston County?

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

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

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

Ever-bearing strawberries usually produce fruit under

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

When should strawberries be planted?

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

What is the right strawberry to plant?

Look for June or Spring Bearing varieties of berries which are planted in the fall. This variety should be protected through the winter season and will start their growth season in January or February. They should begin producing a crop of berries around March. These berries will produce one good crop of berries within a three or four-week period. There may be another smaller second crop but the berries will become progressively smaller and not as sweet. All your plants should be removed once you have decided they have finished the season.

The Day Neutral and Ever-bearing, which are also sold in this area, are planted in February and will bloom in March.

They will produce a few berries at a time into early summer but probably not survive the summer. Because of our heat and humidity, these are not a good choice for Galveston County.

Which variety of June Bearing is best for Galveston County?

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

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

How should I plant my strawberry plants?

It is highly recommended that strawberries be grown in a raised bed of sandy soil built in rows and covered with black

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

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

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



Photo by MG Margie Jenke



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

The Ancients...Figs and Kumquats

Reprint from The Island Garden - Sept. 2016

Figs

Pliny, the Elder (AD 23-AD 79) was an advocate of the consumption of figs, celebrating their merits in numerous examples throughout his writings. In one instance, he stated that *"This fruit invigorates the young, improves the health of the aged, and retards the formation of wrinkles."*

To express the opinion that the fig is an ancient fruit is indeed factual. Wild figs grew in Africa and Asia millions of years ago and undeniably people have been eating figs since there first were people. Delicious in taste, rich in calcium, potassium, and fiber, historical evidence has shown that figs were farmed in Asia as long as eleven thousand years ago. The Romans distributed figs throughout the Empire and east into China and the Spanish introduced them to North America in the 1500s.

Ficus is a genus of over a thousand species but simply called fig, common fig or edible fig.

The fig is a deciduous tree that may grow to thirty feet with spreading branches and a fairly shallow but extensive root system. The pear-shaped fruit varies in color and may be yellow-green, bronze or purple and is actually a hollow vessel with tiny flowers arranged in a mass inside. In the common fig, these tiny flowers are all female and need no pollination. Fig trees may produce two crops a year in some climates.

The fig can tolerate nearly any soil except highly acidic soil, but light sand, rich loam, or heavy clay with good drainage is acceptable...do not let your plant get water-logged. Part shade is recommended for young plants until they are well established and mature enough to fruit (fruiting should begin in less than a year after planting). Fertilize with a formula of 10-30-10 or 10-20-10 every six months and trim back in fall or winter for best results. Fig trees will produce vigorously up to fifteen years with declining crops in later years although the tree may endure to an advanced age.

The fruit may be picked as they ripen, but are extremely perishable...less than seven or eight days unless stored at low temperatures of 32 to 35 degrees F (if frozen whole or if dried in hot sun like raisins they may keep for several months). Figs can be eaten whole, fresh and raw or served in various ways including stewed, as jam, in pies, cakes and breads. The famous cookie "Fig Newton" comes to mind. Figs are low in calories, contain soluble dietary fiber, vitamins A, E, and K and the minerals, calcium, copper, iron, zinc and others as well as B-complex vitamins like niacin and folate.



Photo courtesy MG 2002 Mary Demy

Figs for Zone Nine

Texas Everbearing Fig:

- Early crop in May, main crop June through August
- Bronze skin, amber flesh, mild sweet flavor, excellent for fresh eating, canning or drying

Excel Fig:

- Medium size, yellow fruit, amber flesh, sweet flavor
- Very hardy, all purpose

Celeste Fig (sugar fig):

- Fruits July through August
- Medium size, pink flesh
- Best for drying and preserves
- Compact size, good for small yards and containers

Fun Facts

- Fig Trees have no blossoms on the branches... the blossom is inside the fruit.
- Figs are harvested fully ripened and partially dried on the tree.
- California produces 100% of the country's dried figs and 98% of its fresh figs.
- Some believe that it was actually the fig and not the apple that tempted Adam and Eve.
- Early Olympic athletes ate figs as a training food (figs formed the first Olympic laurels).
- One-half a cup of figs supplies as much calcium as one-half cup of milk.



Kumquats

Another fruit with an ancient history remains in the shadow of bigger and better known citrus... the kumquat. Early historical references to kumquats are known to have appeared in Chinese literature in the 12th century. Long cultivated in India, Japan, the Philippines and Southeast Asia, the kumquat was introduced to Europe in 1846 by Robert Fortune, a collector for the London Horticultural Society and later into North America.

The Kumquat whose name is derived from the Cantonese word, jyutping, meaning “golden tangerine” are a small group of fruit trees in the plant family Rutaceae and genus Fortunella. Slow growing evergreen trees with dense branches, glossy dark green leaves and fragrant white flowers, the kumquat tree may grow to fifteen feet and can produce hundreds of fruit. Kumquats are commonly propagated using cuttings with an application of rooting gel or powder.

As are most citrus, kumquats are self-pollinating. The fruit resembles a small orange about the size and shape of an olive and grows in clusters ripening from green to a brilliant orange about two inches in length. The entire fruit is edible with the peel being sweet in aroma and taste while the juice can be tart and sour. Squeezing out the juice and seeds can take away the tart and sour, leaving a fruit as sweet as candy. Kumquats are often preserved as jam, pickled, made into relish, used in desserts, added to meat dishes and the fruit added to tea.

The two most commonly grown kumquats are the Nagami that is oval shaped and vigorous, hardier and a more prolific producer and the Meiwa which is more rounded in shape and sweeter. Kumquats prefer full sun and will tolerate most well-draining soils. Keep the soil moist around young trees but not wet or soggy. A fertilizer espe-

cially formulated for citrus trees may be applied after three or four months, following the specific label instructions for additional treatment. Mulch well to aid moisture control and the growth of weeds; kumquats are subject to root rot so avoid excess moisture. Aphids and scale nuisances can be checked by the use of insecticidal soap and horticultural oils. Little pruning is necessary with the kumquat but if necessary or desired may be done after harvesting but before the flowers appear in the spring.

Kumquats may be grown in large containers that have been drilled with sizable drainage holes (covered with screen to keep the soil from falling through)...raise the pot off the ground to improve air circulation and protect from freezing.

Kumquats provide manganese, magnesium, copper, iron and folate for the formation of red blood cells. In addition, kumquats contain high amounts of vitamins A, C, and E as well as the nutrients that protect from free radicals making them an effective deterrent against cancer, inflammation, degenerative disease and diabetes. Eating kumquats can lower cholesterol and triglycerides to reduce risk of stroke or heart attacks, while the potassium, Omega 3 and Omega 6 helps to maintain blood pressure and heart rate...health benefits for the entire cardiovascular system.

Hybrid Varieties of Kumquats

Calamondin...mandarin orange with kumquat

Limequat...key lime with kumquat

Orangequat...satsuma mandarin with kumquat

Procimequat...limequat with kumquat

Sunquat...lemon with kumquat



How to Divide *Daylilies*

Help them prosper...

Sources: *Daylilies - The Perfect Perennial* by Lewis and
Nancy Hill Houston Garden Book by John Kriegel

By Patricia Martin
MG 1998

Daylilies should be divided for several reasons. One is to start new plants for your gardening friends. Another is to keep the plants healthy. When a clump becomes too large, the flowers become smaller and less numerous.

Daylilies don't need to be divided every year. Most varieties need to be divided every three to five years. The best time to do this for our area is in the fall when the weather begins to cool off - in October or early November.

The easiest way to divide the plants is to dig up the whole clump with a fork, and thus avoid damaging the roots. Cut back the foliage to four or five inches above the soil line. Rinse off the soil so you can see the many fans before separating them. The next step is to cut the fans apart with a clean, sharp knife. Try to cut the clump like you would a pie. It is easier to get a decent amount of leaves and roots on each division by cutting a large clump with a knife in pie-shaped sections. Other gardeners feel they have better success getting the necessary sprouts and roots on each division if they pry the fans apart with a screwdriver or use their hands. Whichever method is used, care should be taken to cause the least harm possible to the new divisions. Remove any decayed or damaged roots. Many gardeners trim the roots to a moderate 8" to 12" in length prior to replanting.

After splitting up a clump,

plant the new divisions in a sunny, well-drained location. Daylilies require a minimum of six hours of sun a day. Any good garden soil is fine for daylilies. They grow best in well-drained soil with the addition of organic compost to increase water retention. Humus or peat moss as well as sand may be added to our heavy clay soil. Plant the clumps one inch deep and 18-24 inches apart. Plants set too deep into the soil won't bloom well. Make a mound in the center of the hole. Set the plants in place with the roots spread down the sides of the mound. Work the soil around and between the roots as you cover the plant. Firm the soil and water well to be sure there are no air pockets. Don't fertilize until four to six weeks after planting; also do not fertilize during the hot summer months. Use low nitrogen fertilizer in early spring and fall. In March or October established daylilies respond to cottonseed meal or super phosphate to increase blooms and improve plant health. Even after daylilies have become established, water whenever there is not enough rain. This is most important during the budding and blooming seasons.

Daylilies should last a lifetime. If the daylilies don't

bloom well the first year after dividing, the reason is it takes time for the fans to develop. Daylilies are one of the most rewarding perennials because they have few disease and insect problems. By selecting varieties of daylilies with different blooming times and repeat blooming, the gar-

dener can have plants blooming for several months in the spring and summer.



Photo courtesy MG 1998 Patricia Martin

Trowels and Tribulations

In a Suburban Garden

This is a reprint of Donna's article for La Ventana del Lago, the City of El Lago's neighborhood newspaper



*By Donna J. Ward
MG 1996*

Whew - I thought summer would never go away! Weeks with no rain and days of triple digit temps got to be a bit tedious. I noticed that some neighbors didn't get the message about watering on even/odd days according to their address. Messages posted at entrances were either ignored or City Hall didn't have their phone number to give them a robot call informing them of the policy during water rationing periods. Those folks might want to call City Hall and get on the list for this and notices of various city activities.

September spells the end of summer in my book, September 22 to be exact. It may not feel like fall, but it's time to resume gardening activities in spite of the fact that it's still pretty warm. Our gardening chores were pretty much ignored all summer (mine included) and hopefully it's cooled off enough that you might want to do some of that edging, weeding and mulching that was easily put off during the miserable summer.

I heard many complaints about St. Augustine problems,

and noticed that all over the neighborhood those areas close to the street and sidewalks where infested with chinch bugs, indicated by the browning of the grass. These critters love that area that stays hot and dry. There are plenty of products to eradicate them, but be sure and treat according to the directions

general formulation for almost all trees, shrubs and perennials in our landscapes. Use this lightly on the lawn now or in October, but if it makes you feel better, pick up a 'Winterizer' formula to put the lawn nighty-night for a few months.

You can prune those roses lightly now. Get rid of any dead, diseased or

handful onto the ground and plant where they land. This method looks like Mother Nature planted them; you know she never planted anything in a straight line! Use a superphosphate to feed them - bone meal just attracts night roaming critters not to mention day-digging squirrels.

Check out the perennials especially the natives, hardy shrubs, etc. at your favorite nursery. Planting now will give them time to establish a strong root system before they have to face a stressful Gulf Coast summer.

Veggie gardeners - put on the overalls and straw hat as there is much to do this month in the vegetable patch. Seeds of spinach, radish, pumpkin, turnips, kohlrabi, cucumber and collards need to go in now. Mid-month is ideal for lettuce and peas both English and snap, and transplants of cabbage, beets and broccoli.

If you still have a little spare time (*Yeah, right*) you may want to start a few cuttings of your favorite impatiens,

begonias and other softwood plants. Give them a bright window exposure in the house, and they will be stronger than those that winter over in the landscape. I think this is more than enough to keep us busy this month.

on the bag or box - one application isn't going to do it.

Trees and shrubs would like a light snack this month. You know me - I'm not for a bunch of different formulations stashed in the garage. A light feeding of a 15-5-10 fertilizer is a pretty

crossed canes. A light feeding and a good mulching would be beneficial at this time.

This is a great month to plant spring blooming bulbs. Plant them in clumps among perennials and shrubs. Toss a



MG Best Shots and Narrative

One of the best loved poems that associates with hummingbirds of Emily Dickinson begins:

A Route of Evanescence
With a revolving Wheel—
A Resonance of Emerald—
A Rush of Cochineal—
And every Blossom on the Bush
Adjusts its tumbled Head—

These few words give the true impression of the quickness, the blur of wings, and the flashes of red and green that characterizes the ruby-throated hummingbird at a patch of flowers.

Each March and April, these far-flung members of a family of mainly tropical American birds leave their homes in Central America and head north. With the sudden flush of flowers and insects of the northern spring, the male birds arrive first and set up territories. The females soon follow and in a few weeks are building Lilliputian nests, laying eggs, and caring for their two young. Before fall migration, ruby-throats add to their energy reserves by increasing their weight as much as 50 percent. From the southeastern states, some birds cross the Gulf of Mexico, flying nonstop for several hundred miles. Great numbers however fly south along the Gulf Coast of Texas, apparently taking the shortest overland route to Central America. For more detailed information on hummers, go to www.hummingbirdsociety.org.

It is simple to attract hummingbirds into your yard. Hummers will learn your yard and come back year-after-year. The peak time that they will come is mid-August until the first cold front. Do not trim back your hummingbird bushes until after the first cold front blows through. Leave a hummingbird feeder out during the peak time. You can leave one out year round, too. Change the water once a week. The recipe is 4 cups of water to 1 cup of sugar. Stir until clear.

There are hundreds of bushes that attract hummingbirds. They favor long, tubular blooms that are red, orange, yellow or blue flowers. I will focus on six plants.

1. Porterweed or Snakeweed. *Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*, perennial, 48" height, plant summer, fall or spring. Blooms all summer long. Color blue. Sun to partial shade. Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. Plant anywhere in your yard and it does well. These plants are all over my garden. They are in continuous bloom and one of the best nectar plants. The bees and butterflies along with the hummers cannot seem to get enough of their long showy blooms and tall unruly ways.

2. Candlestick or Christmas Candle. *Senna alata* (syn. *Cassia alata*). Drought tolerant. Attracts bees, butterflies and humming-



1. Porterweed or Snakeweed. *Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*



2. Candlestick or Christmas Candle



Photos by Elayne Kouzounis

3. *Jatrophia integrerrima*

Inviting Hummingbirds to Your Garden



By Elayne Kouzounis
MG 1998

birds. This is an import from the tropics – so if you want to bring color and points of interest to spots in your garden this is a flowering tree that will do very well in your gardens. Very fast growing from 3 to 8 feet, it produces lovely yellow blossoms in candle-shaped racemes and is perfectly beautiful. Blooming from July until Frost. It likes plenty of sun and light sandy loam and water. Save the seeds and pass them on to your friends.

3. *Jatrophia integerrima*. Size 6"x3". Blooms spring to fall. Blooms orange-red. Sun to partial shade. Easy care root-hardy tropical. Scarlet to coral-red flowers from spring to fall. Plant anywhere in your yard and it does well. Attracts hummingbirds. Once it starts blooming it never stops. The cluster of red tiny blooms is a delight not only for our hummers, but also are a long-lasting flower to enjoy inside.

4. Cypress Vine. *Ipomoea quamoclit*, annual, 6"-20" height. Plant March to May, blooms May to October. Color red and white. Sun in any soil. Water in summer. Reseeds. Attracts hummingbirds. If you do not need heavy screens or shade, you have a choice of a lighter vine. The cypress vine is one of the daintiest of all climbers. Its finely cut foliage is lovely, and its small trumpet-shaped flowers are exceptionally dainty. There are two colors, scarlet and white. My vine is on the west side of our home and it is a delight to watch the bees, hummers, and butterflies enjoy the pollen from these dainty flowers.

5. Firespike. *Odontonema strictum*. Perennial, 48"-72." Plant or transplant spring or fall. Blooms fall to winter. Color red and pink. Partial shade to shade. Moist, well-drained soil. A must for hummingbird migration. This beautiful fiery-red plant is a show stopper. It is beautiful wherever you plant it. Mine tolerates all types of weather, and needs no care once it is established. When my firespike plants start to bloom I know the hummingbirds are on their way.

6. Pride of Barbados. *Caesalpinia pulcherima*. Evergreen, 8"-12." Full sun, well-drained soil. Drought tolerant. Attracts hummingbird and butterflies. Plant spring to early summer. Summer annual, perennial or woody shrub depending on severity of winter temperatures. The blossoms of orange and red are so incredibly beautiful; please take the time to look at them. This plant is in the Texas Superstar program. Save the seeds, break them in half, or just scrap the tough shell; they will sprout quickly if you keep them moist, remembering to wait until the seeds turn brown on the tree and fill your garden with these most beautiful of tropical plants.

I have raised these plants for many years and they have been attracting hummingbirds for more than 15 years. Regardless of the species, they are a thrill to observe. The birds look like jewels with colorful throats. They move up, down, backward and forward, and are such a joy to watch.



4. Cypress Vine.



5. Firespike.



6. Pride of Barbados.

2016 FALL PLANT SALE Seminar & Craft Sale



8:00 am Educational Seminar, Ed Pickett Hall
9:00 am Plant Sale, Rodeo Arena
1:00 pm Close



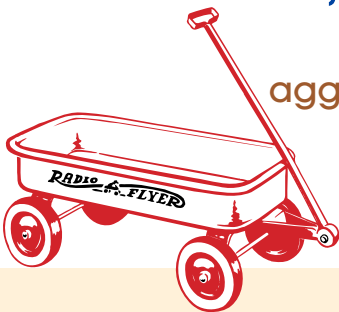
Saturday, October 15, 2016

Galveston County Fairgrounds ~ Hwy 6 ~ Hitchcock, TX
Galveston County Master Gardeners

**Fall Vegetables, "Texas Tough" Perennials,
Bulbs, Citrus & Fruit Trees, and more!**

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Vegetables for the chilly season

Fall Gardening



By Pat Forke MG
MG 2010

Could there be a slight chill in the air?

Perhaps just enough to prod us to begin planning our fall gardens. A great place to start our planning is either sitting in a class or talking to other Master Gardeners. Luke Stripling, MG Class of 1991, just completed a very informative class on fall gardening. A great publication available at our Extension Office is the Recommended Vegetable Varieties for Galveston County (GC-104) by Dr. Johnson. This publication lists a large number of types and varieties of vegetables along with their recommended planting dates and number of days to harvest. Another very informative brochure is Publ. E-502, Texas Home Vegetable Gardening Guide. This guide contains general information, as well as information of pest control, greening problems and planting guidelines.

Along with the usual fall chores in our landscape, you might also want to start preparing to plant some things that can be transported to your table and enjoyed by your family and friends. If you are planning a new bed or working with an existing one, you want to make sure your soil is receptive to providing you with a satisfactory yield. You want a deep, well-drained soil with adequate organic matter. If you are planting seeds, make sure you have a fine loose soil that is adequate for covering seeds. You might want to test your soil and add additives as needed. If planting seeds, be sure to research the best soil temperature for germination. You might choose to invest in a compost and soil temperature gauge. If germinating inside, be sure to provide adequate light, proper soil temperature (adding heat if necessary) and a small fan for air flow as needed. Transplanting outside will involve checking the soil temperature and researching the best time to plant the crops you have chosen. Adding a layer of mulch will help eliminate weeds, maintain temperature, and conserve moisture.

Luke had some specific vegetable suggestions for his class. When choosing cauliflower, he recommended Snow Crown Hybrid and

Snow King. Luke's favorite cabbage varieties are Early Jersey Wakefield and Late Flat Dutch. He suggested a side dressing of fertilizer for your onions after planting seeds in October. Luke has had success with beets, carrots, turnip greens chard, and numerous leafy vegetables. His favorite lettuce is Buttercrunch. Remember the fall herbs. Cilantro, dill and parsley thrive in cool temperatures and, with a little coaxing, can survive some warm temperatures. Most mints and other herbs are perennials and will last through the winter. Herbs can be planted anywhere in your landscape where the conditions are right.

For this year's garden, consider planting something you have not planted before. Consider one of the super foods that you have perhaps tried from the grocery store but did not enjoy. Many times the home grown version is much more tasty. This is particularly true of the leafy vegetables and, of course, tomatoes. There is just something about picking it and eating it immediately that makes what you have grown very tasty. And, of course, this is when the produce has its maximum nutritional value. This is also a wonderful experience for those younger soon-to-be gardeners who think all things edible come from a grocery store with a code attached.

Some general guidelines include making sure your garden has plenty of sunlight. The south side of your yard with no large trees works very well for most vegetables. Do not overindulge your plants. Too much fertilizer and water are not appropriate. Most cool season crops, especially the onion and greens families, are heavy feeders. Generally, foliar feeding is your best bet. Keep the frost protection handy for that occasional freeze. Be cautious with pesticides and stay away from weekend plant specials that advertise unrealistic claims. A little research and planning before plants will go a long way toward helping you toward a bountiful and healthy harvest of fruits and vegetables.



Photo courtesy MG 1983 Herman Auer



Photo courtesy MG 1983 Herman Auer



Photo courtesy MG 1991 Luke Stripling



By Robin Collins
MG Intern 2016

Aquaponics

Coming to the Demonstration Garden

A reality at the Demonstration Garden soon!

So, what is aquaponics? Aquaponics cultivates the farming of aquatic animals and plants together in a symbiotic environment. It is the combination of aquaculture, which is raising fish in a controlled environment, and hydroponics, the growing of plants in a soil-less environment.

So, how does this work? The aquaponics system feeds water in a fish tank that goes through piping into a hydroponic system where plants grow in water instead of soil. Waste from the fish is broken down and utilized by the plants as nutrients. The water is then circulated back into the fish tank.

A small team of Galveston County Master Gardeners recently traveled to Hockley, Texas to participate in Aquaponics Gardeners for the day. We began our day before sun up with our private chauffeur, MG Joe Copeland providing breakfast kolaches. MGs Glenn Diket, John Nisbet, Jane Carter and I arrived in Hockley at 8:30 and toured a traditional garden that supplies herbs and vegetables for the Houston Country Club chef. This was a beautiful garden with a very friendly crew who gave us a quick tour.

Thirty minutes later, we checked into the office, located outside the greenhouse. On the outside, Sustainable Harvesters' greenhouse looks like any other. On the inside, however, this greenhouse is anything but typical. Multiple, large, dark blue circular tanks on wooden platforms hold thousands of tilapia, a type of common freshwater fish. Spanning the rest of the greenhouse are rows of plants supported on Styrofoam boards floating on shallow water. Row by row, various types of lettuce, arranged by development stage, are growing on the Styrofoam. Sustainable Harvesters educates and supplies produce to local communities, grocery stores and restaurants. They seek to "redefine the way food is grown, prepared, and shipped to local communities, through aquaponics."

During the course of the day our education included kinds of fish used, how the entire commercial system functioned and on a smaller scale and, how a scaled down backyard system could work. Our group of farmers harvested lettuce and prepared the produce for shipping to local Kroger stores. An important component of aquaponics is testing the water to maintain a balanced ecosystem environment. During our class, we collected water from all beds, and testing for pH, nitrates, nitrites and ammonia. Another daily aspect of this type of gardening is propagation. We each planted a tray of seeds that were placed in a dark room for 3 days for germination. After this three-day stage, the small sprouts are placed under grow lights in the perimeter of the greenhouse and set on water, eventually transplanted to the rafts on which they will grow to maturity and be harvested. Lunch was served on outdoor patio benches, which included greens direct from the greenhouse. All very tasty!

My vision for aquaponics in Galveston County is to make an environmentally positive change. At the rate we are consuming our natural resources - that aquaponics is a great alternative to traditional gardening - with many benefits:

- Provides health conscious consumers with organic food choices
- Avoids use of pesticides for the protection of the fish and consumers
- Mimics the natural symbiotic relationship between fish and plants
- Produces more output in smaller spaces with less impact to the environment
- Enhances the ability to produce both fish and crops as a food source

I believe with hard work, planning and innovation we can develop, educate and sustain this emerging farming alternative. Imagine being able to grow organic vegetables twice as fast, with ten times more plants, using less space, and at a much lower cost. Imagine growing vegetables without planting, weeding, watering, fertilizing, composting and more weeding...

If any Master Gardeners are interested in becoming a part of the new aquaponics gardening forum, please contact me at robinssg@comcast.net or 281.794.6366.



Galveston County MGs Aquaponics Farmers for a day





They all say “Call LISA!”

Meet GCMG Master Gardener Lisa Belcher

*By Susan Meads-Leahy
MG 2014*

After a short drive up I-45, I found myself in the lovely company of Lisa Belcher who is a classmate of mine (2014) and I sincerely hope this article will leave you as I left her, with an overwhelming sense of enthusiasm for what we all do as Master Gardeners, be it writing an article, volunteering in the gardens, giving presentations, working in the greenhouse as she does or whatever “niche” found that suits your needs as well as the program’s needs.

Lisa and her husband Bruce moved to our area after living overseas in England where Lisa was an avid British gardener. Once back in the states, they decided to settle down in our area versus San Antonio where they first met and their families currently live. She said she felt like she needed to “start over” when she returned as her children were no longer living at home.

Lisa said she was hoping she would get a 2 for 1 experience after missing the deadline for the Master Gardener program by becoming a Master Naturalist. I have the utmost respect for anyone who can handle being an active participant in both of these programs! Shortly after becoming a Master Naturalist, they went back overseas for about three years and when they returned to their house, all of her efforts at creating a “Texas version” of a British garden was for naught as everything was dead or dying. Bruce then encouraged her to apply for the Master Gardener program and so she did and here we are!

Interesting point: where do Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners intersect in their endeavors? Well, Lisa said one day while working at the Gardens she overheard some of the others complaining about bunnies eating their vegetables. Very shortly, someone told her they found a litter of baby bunnies and were pontificating on what to do with them. Well, she took them home and rehabilitated them, now whenever anyone finds baby bunnies they all say “Call LISA!”

Lisa started her adventure in the gardens as we all do, moving around to the various areas until we find the place that feels like home.

After Lisa had made the decision working in the Gazebo area, an opportunity came up to work in the Greenhouse, so she made the move. She states she feels she has finally found her calling in the Greenhouse as she gets an immense satisfaction and feels like a true Master Gardener when starting plants from seed, nursing and repotting as they develop into full-fledged flowers or vegetables for our Spring and Fall sales. Our organization benefits immensely from now having the ability to sell plants that are raised in the greenhouse versus obtaining them from suppliers for the sales. Additionally, they only grow proven producers for the sales we know will grow in our climate.

She believes MG Debra Perkins laid a wonderful foundation on which to build the current team of Master Gardeners currently working in the greenhouse. She also gives MG Mary Gonzalez and MG Glenn Diket a lot of credit for establishing such a wonderful environment to work in and with. Lisa said she comes home from the gardens every Thursday afternoon with a great sense of satisfaction as she learns so much every time she is there. During one of our classes, Dr. Johnson made the statement “Knowledge not shared is knowledge lost” and that stuck with Lisa – literally!

Lisa stated she goes every Thursday to the gardens to have fun and learn new things, seriously what would we do if we couldn’t have fun and Lord knows this is a fun group to work, socialize and grow the strong organization of Galveston County Master Gardeners we currently enjoy! She said she has a darn good time except for in August when it is just too bloody hot!

Lisa continues to work on her British gardening at her home, learning to plant things at different times of the year to give her some of what she dearly loved while overseas with her high school sweetheart and flyboy Bruce! If you get the chance to visit the gardens any given Thursday, look up Lisa as she is a delight to talk to and a wealth of knowledge will be shared, not lost!



League City Garden Club

Dedication to environmental education and beautification.



By Kaye Corey
MG 2001



As a member of a local garden club, I am delighted to write this series of articles promoting Bay Area garden clubs. The members of garden clubs are interested in promoting all phases of gardening, environmental concerns and educational programs. The Club membership is open to the general public who share gardening interests. League City Garden Club is a community oriented 50-member club, meeting at the

Hometown Heroes Park
2105 Dickinson Rd
on the second Wednesday at
9:30 a.m.
September through May

The primary fundraiser for the LCGC is their Fall Garden Walk.

This year, their Garden Walk, entitled "Through the Garden Gate" is scheduled for September 24. Enjoy this self-guided tour of 7 outstanding League City gardens including the Demonstration Garden in Education Village on Hwy 96. Tickets are just \$15 at Nana's Attic on Main, from garden club members and online.

www.leaguecitygardenclub.org

As one of the oldest garden clubs in the Bay Area, League City Garden Club was organized and federated in 1949. This all -

volunteer organization has been a premier community builder for 67 years. They were instrumental in the construction of the Bicentennial Bandstand in League Park and its dedication in 1976. The Club funded and obtained a State Historical Commission Landmark plaque for League Park in 1981.

I think we all appreciate the efforts of the Garden Club members who planted oaks throughout the "City of Oaks" in the early years. The importance of trees continues today with the annual Arbor Day Celebration and tree give-away scheduled on the first Saturday of November in a city park. Many still remember the Club's successful efforts to save the Oaks along 518 Main St. when the street was being widened. Under those mighty oaks, beautiful Helen's Park demonstrates the community spirit of these gardeners with their contribution in its design and development.

Dedication to environmental education and beautification is a major focus of this multi-faceted club. In 2014, the gardeners planted wildflower seedlings for a wildflower project on Hwy 96 at Hwy 3. Watch for another wildflower extravaganza in Spring 2017. Continually working with the City of League City, they plant wildflower beds throughout the city. A new butterfly garden has recently been planted to educate the

saving of butterflies and the value of using native plants. League City is a bird sanctuary, therefore, teaching how to establish Certified Wildlife Habitats is primary.

Community caring and involvement are evident in a large variety of projects, in addition to those listed previously. At Christmas, they decorate the Bandstand in League Park and then raise money for the Police Department's Blue Santa Program. As students of flower design, the gardeners create Christmas flower arrangements to take to residents of assisted living communities.

Working with the young gardeners of tomorrow, LCGC supports community gardeners at the schools in the Clear Creek ISD. They award college scholarships to graduating seniors at the high schools. The Club's most impressive website provides educational and conservation programs to be used as teaching tools. www.leaguecitygardenclub.org

I thank Club President Kimberly Nitzschke and the Club members for their assistance with this article. It has been my pleasure to champion your cause. League City Garden Club is the place to meet some friendly, community spirited, creative and knowledgeable gardening enthusiasts. Remember, the second Thursday of the month OR attend their Garden Walk on September 24.



Is it a lopper [lopp-er] or [lo-pper]? Tool Primer

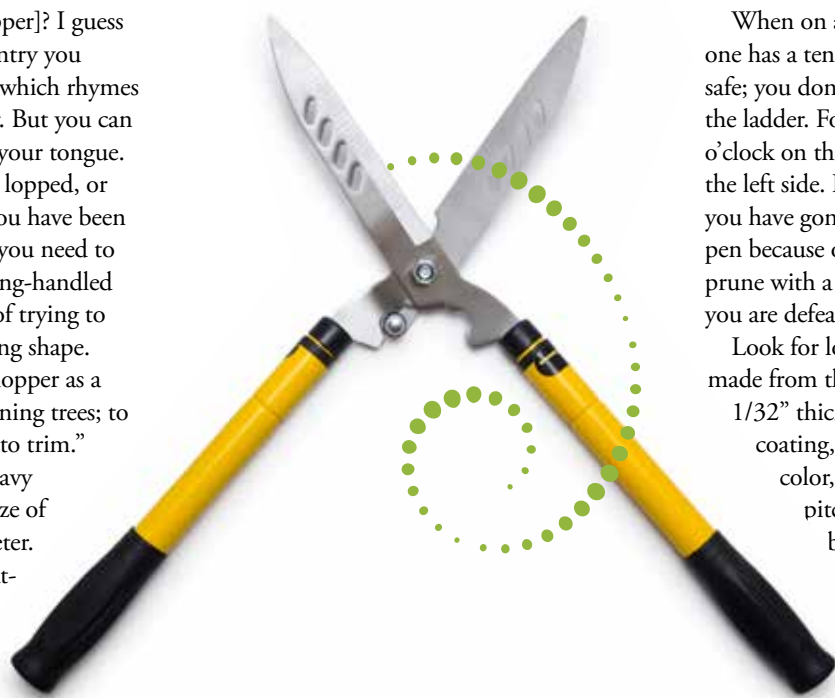
By Barbara Markey
MG 2013

Is it lopper [lopp-er] or [lo-pper]? I guess that depends where in this country you reside. In Texas, we say lopper, which rhymes with copper, shopper or proper. But you can say whichever rolls easily from your tongue. You can lopp, or you may have lopped, or been the loppiest, or perhaps you have been lopping. Whatever the reason, you need to know a few things about the long-handled tool before you begin the task of trying to "coax" your plants into a pleasing shape.

Webster Dictionary defines lopper as a "cutting tool, especially for pruning trees; to cut off a part or parts of a tree; to trim."

Most loppers are used for heavy trimming, from a branch the size of a thumb and up to 2" in diameter. The longer the handle, the greater the leverage and cutting power. Loppers, sometimes called shears, can have a combination long handle pruning saw and a pull string, as well as a doubled curved blade at the end, for clipping small branches from trees. Whatever you decide to call them, just know they allow you to trim quickly and efficiently.

Before we go further, I think a discussion about safety is paramount. Heavy trimming can be done while in a standing position on the ground. Weighty trimming, above the head, requires a ladder and a second person.



This individual can run interference and help stabilize and hold you on a ladder. Check the area for stones; it is imperative the ladder be placed on level ground so as not to rock from side to side. Have the helper stand directly behind you, place both hands on the back of your legs, making sure to have a firm grip to prevent slipping.

When on a ladder and trimming overhead, one has a tendency to reach further than is safe; you don't want to get down and move the ladder. For safety sake, don't reach past 2 o'clock on the right side, and 10 o'clock on the left side. If you stretch further than that, you have gone too far. Most accidents happen because of over reach. And, never try to prune with a pair of hedge shears. If you do, you are defeating yourself.

Look for loppers with replacement blades made from thick high speed steel, about 1/32" thick. Blades should have a titanium coating, which makes them a different color, and are non-stick to prevent pitch, the gummy substance from branches, from sticking to the blades of your tool.

Handles should be made from aluminum and have a ratcheting action that performs like gears, and allows you more power. Handles can be anywhere from 24" - 32" in length. Try the tool to be sure you have the best fit for you and is comfortable when you reach overhead. These loppers are a bit more expensive but well worth the investment.

"Never buy a cheap tool; if you do, you will keep buying it."
Robert Marshall, MG Class 2012



September/October "Things To Do"

by Jenifer Leonpacher
MG 2010

Gardening Calendar Video

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



by Gregory Werth
MG 2012



2016 MG Re-certification (Continuing Education)

Hours Available Through the AgriLife Extension Office

Date	Name of Program	Speaker	CEUs for MGs
1/7/2016	Wedge Grafting - MG ONLY	Sue Jeffco	2.00
1/9/2016	Growing Avocado and Papaya	Jerry Hulbert	3.25
1/9/2016	Growing Peaches in Galveston County	Herman Auer	2.25
1/14/2016	Care & Pruning of Bamboo	Tish Reustle	1.00
1/16/2016	Wedge Grafting	Sue Jeffco	2.00
1/16/2016	Kitchen Gardening	Mary Demeny	2.25
1/19/2016	Gardening by the Square Foot	John Jons	1.75
1/21/2016	Adult CPR Certification Class - MGs Only	Jaclyn Jones	4.00
1/23/2016	Spring Vegetable Gardening	Luke Stripling	2.50
1/23/2016	Growing Blueberries	Dr. David Cohen	1.75
1/28/2016	Anyone Can Grow Roses	John Jons	1.50
1/28/2016	Fig Tree Pruning & Propagation	Terry Cuculis	1.00
2/2/2016	Propagation of Plants by Cuttings	Bill Cummins	1.50
2/6/2016	Growing Backyard Citrus	Chris Anastas	2.00
2/6/2016	Citrus Greening	Robert Marshall	0.75
2/6/2016	Growing Great Tomatoes (Part 2)	Ira Gervais	2.25
2/11/2016	Rose Pruning	John Jons	1.50
3/12/2016	Tomato Stress Management (Part 3)	Ira Gervais	2.00
3/12/2016	Vermiculture - Worm Castings for your Garden	Linda Brown	1.50
3/15/2016	The ABC's of Composting	Susan Meads-Leahy & Rodger Allison	1.50
3/19/2016	Honeybees Around the Garden	Robert Marshall	1.25
3/19/2016	Turning Dirt into Soil	Jim Gilliam	1.50
3/24/2016	Peach Thinning	Sue Jeffco	1.00
3/29/2016	Texas Tuff - Landscape Plants	Sandra Devall	2.00
4/7/2016	Vegetable of the Week Educational Series in the Demo Garden - Potatoes	Barbara Lyons	0.50
4/9/2016	The Culture & Care of Palms	O.J. Miller	2.50
4/9/2016	A Passion for Plumeria	Loretta Osteen	2.00
4/14/2016	Vegetable of the Week Educational Series in the Demo Garden - Green Beans	Barbara Lyons	0.50
4/14/2016	Grafting Pecan Trees	Herman Auer & Various MGs	1.00
4/16/2016	Olive Oil Production	Randy Brazil	1.00
4/19/2016	Rainwater Harvesting	Tim Jahnke	1.50
4/21/2016	Vegetable of the Week Educational Series in the Demo Garden - Eggplant	Ira Gervais for Barbara Lyons	0.50
4/21/2016	Chemicals for the Home & Garden - MGs ONLY	Rod Mize	1.25
4/28/2016	Vegetable of the Week Educational Series in the Demo Garden - Cucumbers	Herman Auer for Barbara Lyons	0.50
5/3/2016	Chemicals for the Home & Garden	Rod Mize	1.50
5/5/2016	Vegetable of the Week Educational Series in the Demo Garden - Peppers	Gene Speller for Barbara Lyons	0.50
5/5/2016	Canning Class	Jackie Auer, Gloria Funderburg, Barbara Turner	2.50
5/7/2016	Plan Before You Plant	Karen Lehr	2.00
5/12/2016	Vegetable of the Week Educational Series in the Demo Garden - Corn	Barbara Lyons	0.50
5/19/2016	Vegetable of the Week Educational Series in the Demo Garden - Garden Soils	Barbara Lyons	0.50
5/26/2016	Vegetable of the Week Educational Series in the Demo Garden - Squash	Barbara Lyons	0.50
5/31/2016	Bamboo Uses in the Landscape	Tish Reustle	1.25
6/2/2016	Pruning Peaches - A Hands-on Demonstration	Sue Jeffco & Robert Marshall	1.00
6/7/2016	Drip Irrigation - Easy & Efficient	Susan Roth	1.00
6/9/2016	Pruning Peaches - A Hands-on Demonstration Session 1	Herman Auer & Sue Jeffco	0.75
6/9/2016	Pruning Peaches - A Hands-on Demonstration Session 2	Herman Auer & Sue Jeffco	0.75
6/11/2016	T-Bud Grafting - A Hands-on Demonstration	Sue Jeffco	2.25
6/11/2016	Planning For Your Successful Fruit Tree Orchard	Herman Auer	2.00
6/18/2016	Design Principals for Landscapes	Karen Lehr	2.00
6/21/2016	Growing Cucurbits: Summer & Winter Squash, Cucumbers, & Cantaloupe	Herman Auer	1.50
6/23/2016	Vegetable of the Week Educational Series in the Demo Garden - Okra	Barbara Lyons	0.50
6/30/2016	Vegetable of the Week Educational Series in the Demo Garden - Vegetables: All-American Selections	Barbara Lyons	0.50
7/7/2016	Vegetable of the Week Education Series in the Demo Garden - Seed Catalog Review	Barbara Lyons	0.50
7/12/2016	Insects & S'more	Emmaline Dodd	1.25
7/19/2016	A Homeowner's Guide to Weed Control	John Jons	1.25
7/23/2016	Aquaponics	Robin Collins	1.25
7/28/2016	Orchids - Educational Programs in the Demo Garden	Clyde Holt	0.50
7/28/2016	Flower Arranging - MG ONLY	Jackie Auer	1.50
7/30/2016	Successful Fall Vegetable Gardening	Luke Stripling	3.00
8/16/2016	Gardening by the Square Foot	John Jons	1.50
8/18/2016	Vegetable of the Week Educational Series in the Demo Garden - Southern Peas	Barbara Lyons	0.50
2016 Recertification Hours for MGs		Total CEUs (Hours)	88.00

Last Updated: Aug 19, 2016

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. The website to log your volunteer hours is: <https://texas.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm>. Contact MG **Wayne Elliott** at gcmghours@gmail.com for more information.

Demonstration Garden

Carbide Park



By Tom Fountain
MG 2008

I surely don't need to tell you it's been **HOT** here at the Carbide Park Demonstration Garden. Daytime temperatures in the 90s combined with the high humidity produced feel like temperatures into the 100s. The high pressure hovering over the area has increased temperatures and decreased rainfall. Weather Service graphics continue to indicate above normal temperatures and near normal rainfall over our area the next couple of months. So always remember to stay hydrated when working outdoors and use caution. Pictured in Fig. 3 are Master Gardeners Jerry, Tish, Alice, Judy and Wendy taking a needed water break.

The greenhouse crew has started getting a variety of plants ready for the October 15 fall plant sale. Pictured in Fig. 6 are MGs Bronia, Mary, Robin, Glen and Pamela. The hoop house is already in use, although not quite completed. Henry and Sharon are shown working on critter skirting and gates as Stewart fills them in on some greenhouse needs (Fig. 1).

The cover for the patio grill is taking shape with the addition of the railings. Some of the MG carpenters pictured doing this work are Kenneth, Clyde, and Tim (Fig. 7). Work has also been started for a trellis near the garden's entry walk.

Now, here is some exciting news. An aquaponics garden is being studied and is in the design stage. Robin is shown here talking to Joe about the requirements a suitable site would need (Fig. 4).

The blueprints for our new



restroom facilities and kitchen expansion were brought out for preview. The restroom site is where the dumpster was located.

Despite the heat, the garden has been full of activity. The routines of harvesting, watering and chasing weeds are still continuing. The valiant gardeners keeping their projects going have been faithful at their jobs. Also, it doesn't hurt to have good cooks like Greg, Ed, O.J., and Linda preparing lunch (Fig. 5). It's always fun to relax and visit after working hard in the garden.

So, Master Gardeners come on out, and choose a project or projects to work on and enjoy. some good fellowship. Until then, keep your hoes sharp, and your pruners handy.

Photos by Tom Fountain





easy recipes Seasonal Bites



by Sandra Gervais
MG 2011

Despite all the recent rain we've had that's kept the temperatures down, summer is still here. The eggplant bushes are happily overproducing so I was glad to get a new recipe from Master Gardener Linda Barnett. Since it was a hit at one of the Thursday lunches at the Demonstration Garden, I'm passing it on. Linda adapted it from one she found online to make it easier and tastier. For the Thursday crowd, she must have also doubled or tripled it since they are hearty eaters!



Eggplant Gratin

from the kitchen of
MG Linda Barnett

- Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 pounds eggplant, unpeeled, sliced into 1/2" thick rounds
- 1/2 cup ricotta cheese
- 2 extra large eggs
- 1/2 cup half-and-half
- 1 cup (divided) Parmesan cheese (freshly grated is best)
- 1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon Kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup good quality bottled marinara sauce

- Coat eggplant slices with olive oil and place on cookie sheet/baking tray.
- Put under broiler for about 5 minutes, turn over and cook another 5 minutes or until soft and browned. If greasy, drain on paper towels. Put aside.
- Meanwhile, mix together the ricotta cheese, eggs, half-and-half, 1/2 cup of the Parmesan cheese and all of the sharp cheddar cheese.

To assemble, place a layer of eggplant slices in bottom of 9 X 13 baking dish. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and 1/4 cup Parmesan. Spoon on 1/2 cup of the marinara sauce. Cover with half of the ricotta mixture. Place another layer of eggplant on top. Sprinkle on salt, pepper and a little less than 1/4 cup of Parmesan. Spoon on remaining marinara sauce. Cover with rest of the ricotta mixture. Dust top with remaining Parmesan. Bake for 25-35 minutes at 400° or until creamy top has set and the top has browned.

Note: Since Parmesan is a bit salty, be careful when adding salt. Also, you may enjoy using more marinara sauce or pepper.

Here's another recipe that has been enjoyed at the Demonstration Garden for many years. It's age shows; one of the ingredients originally indicated as a "39 cent bag of Fritos."

Some of us do remember when...



Mexican Salad

from the kitchen of
MG Demo Garden

- 2 ripe tomatoes, chopped
- 1 head of lettuce, torn and rinsed
- 1 regular sized bag of Fritos, crushed
- 1 cup of shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 can of ranch style beans, washed and drained
- 1 regular sized onion, grated

- Mix all together and add Kraft Catalina dressing to taste.
- Toss with dressing, starting with 1 cup (8oz.) and add more to suit taste.

Note: other vegetables can be added, such as peppers.



UTMB Earth Day

*By Mary Lou Kelso
MG 2000*

Mayor Pro Tem, Terrilyn Tarleton Shannon stopped off at the Galveston County Master Gardener booth during UTMB Earth Day and I was ever so lucky to speak with her with our being good friends. She was very interested in our articles and became even more delighted when I picked up the Texas Superstar booklet identifying all the plants that do so well throughout the State of Texas with minimal care. Terrilyn was simply delighted to learn about the field trials these plants have to go through and only after five years are they able to be singled out depending on their performance of surviving in the landscape.

She expressed the City of Galveston now requires new businesses to do landscaping in front of their area and they have never had anything to provide to the businesses to help them along with good plant choices. She knows I will contact Dr. Brent Pemberton in the Tyler area who is responsible for this wonderful program to secure copies for the City of Galveston to give out. I also provided her with copies of the

EarthKind program as well and will also get copies for the City to have, likewise.

It is so important for our City leaders to be aware of knowing there are plants that can really survive year-after-year without much care. Terrilyn is definitely someone who really cares about a beautiful city, but most importantly, about ALL the residents whether in her District or not.



Terrilyn Tarleton Shannon,
Galveston's Mayor Pro Tem



August 2016 Meeting

*By Cindy Croft
MG 2009*

The monthly meeting for August 9 took place at Moody Gardens. Once again, MG Mary Lou Kelso organized a wonderful all day, event-filled occasion for Master Gardeners to get together and have a good time. All of the events at Moody Gardens were available for everyone to enjoy including the Rainforest Pyramid, the Greenhouse, and the 3D film National Parks.

The evening dinner was at the

Garden Restaurant where Chef Andres Castaneda prepared a buffet that offered everyone their favorites. Door prizes awarded were provided for by Moody Gardens and almost everyone left with a plant.

After dinner, everyone went to the Moody Gardens Hotel to enjoy coffee and desert while watching the sun set over a panoramic view of Galveston Bay. I am already looking forward to next year.



July 2016 Meeting

*By Mary Lou Kelso
MG 2000*

The Meeting of the GCMGA meeting took place Tuesday, July 12, 2016 at the Extension Office at Carbide Park. The meeting was called to order by Ira Gervais, President. A potluck dinner preceded the program and Clyde Holt gave the blessing before the meal. Ira reported that the MG State Meeting has booked 423 rooms for the cruise leaving Galveston in 2017. A&M was still negotiating banquet space at Moody Gardens Hotel which will be the headquarters after the cruise on May 1, 2017.

The Demo Garden is working on putting more bathrooms in place and is presently using Andrew E. Gregory with drawing up plans. As the number of workers continue to increase on the Thursday workday at the garden, it has become necessary to provide more bathrooms.

Emmeline Dodd was introduced by Judy Anderson with her giving a presentation on insects.



The 2016 Southern Region Master Gardener Conference will be hosted by Texas this year!

November 1-4, 2016

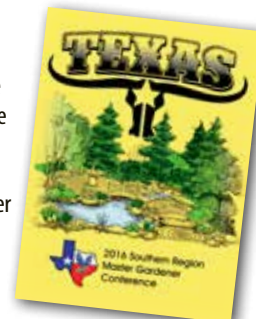
Arlington and Fort Worth

Barry Corbin, Actor

Capstone Speaker

Tarrant County Host

Don't miss your chance to participate in the 2016 Southern Region Master Gardener Conference!



2016southernregionmg.com
facebook.com/southernmgconference2016

GULF COAST GARDENING EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS

Upcoming Events - Aug/Sept 2016

Galveston County Master Gardener Educational Programs for Interested Gardeners

The following Master Gardener Programs are free to the public.

Location: **Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park**

4102 Main Street (FM 519), La Marque Texas 77568

GPS location: **29.359705, -95.003591**

For course reservations, call **281-309.5065** or email galvcountrymgs@gmail.com

Website: aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

SEPTEMBER

KITCHEN GARDENING

GC Master Gardener Mary Demeny

Saturday, September 10

9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

COMPOSTING

GC Master Gardener Jim Gilliam

Saturday, September 10

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

A PASSION FOR PLUMERIA

GC Master Gardener Loretta Osteen

Saturday, September 17

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

T BUD GRAFTING OF

CITRUS AND FRUIT TREES

GC Master Gardener Sue Jeffco

Saturday, September 24

9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

NOTE: Class size is limited to 24 persons participating in the workshop.

You must pre-register in order to participate. Others are welcome to observe.

UNUSUAL EDIBLE PLANTS

GC Master Gardener Ed Naspinski

Saturday, September 24

1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Ed will present a program on unusual edible plants that are easy to grow in our semi-tropical climate, using organic practices. Vegetables included in the presentation are culinary ginger, turmeric, Asian long (noodle) beans, and shitake mushrooms.

OCTOBER

"CRUCIFEROUS AND OTHER FAVORITE VEGETABLES FOR FALL GARDENING"

GC MASTER GARDENER GENE SPELLER

Saturday, October 1

9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

"HERBS IN THE GARDEN"

GC MASTER GARDENER CINDY CROFT

Saturday, October 1

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

"EASY BUTTERFLY GARDENING"

GC MASTER GARDENER Phyllis Koenig

Saturday, October 4

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

"BULBMANIA!"

AWARD WINNING

HOUSTON GARDEN CLUB MEMBER
DODIE JACKSON

Saturday, October 8

9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

"GARDENING FOR JEWELS... HUMMINGBIRDS"

GC MASTER GARDENER DEBORAH REPAS

Saturday, October 8

1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

"MY FAVORITE PRENNIALS"

GC MASTER GARDENER Jan Brick

Saturday, October 8

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

"Galveston County Master Gardener Annual Fall Sale"

8:00 - 8:50 a.m. Presale presentation by GCMG John Jons
Jack Brooks Park youth Building

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Annual sale of plants and trees that perform well in Galveston County

LOCATION

Galveston County Fair Grounds | Jack Brooks Park – Rodeo Arena | located at Hwy 6 and Jack Brooks Road, Hitchcock, TX.

Check the website for details and updates: aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston

**For Galveston County residents needing help on horticultural issues -
Call the help line 281.309.5061 to ask a Master Gardener.**



bulletin board



Volunteer Opportunities

- For the **MG Phone Desk** contact Ginger Benson by
- e-mail at galvcountymgs@gmail.com or call the office at 281.309.5065.

Volunteer Opportunities

- 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!*

Volunteer Opportunities

- 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 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, email 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.

SPECIALIST AND OTHER MG RELATED TRAINING

Please see the Texas Master Gardeners Website for details. By visiting the website you can find up-to-date information on Specialist Programs that were added in between editions of the newsletter. txmg.org. You may download the application forms from that website. *Note* all applications for the Specialist Training courses must be approved and signed by Dr. William M. Johnson. *Note* fees do not include lodging or food unless specified otherwise.

For more information on the Specialist Training on Propagation on the following programs, check out the details at txmg.org

Texas Superstar® - **September 20-22, 2016**, hosted by Bexar County, held in San Antonio, TX

Entomology - **September 26-29, 2016**, hosted by Bexar County, to be held in San Antonio, TX

Irrigation Efficiency - **October 24-26, 2016**, hosted by El Paso County, to be held in El Paso, TX

Oak Wilt - **October 26-28, 2016**, hosted by Permian Basin, to be held in Midland, TX

Vegetables - **November 9-11, 2016**, hosted by Bexar County, held in San Antonio, TX

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Tour Guides for "First-Thursday-in-a-Month" Public Access and 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 - 11:00 am. MGs are needed to serve as tour guides for our demonstration Garden. Contact MG Robert Marshall 281.993.5595, email rbrtm01@att.net or MG Bobbie Ivey 713.748.8564, email blivey@sbcglobal.net to volunteer.

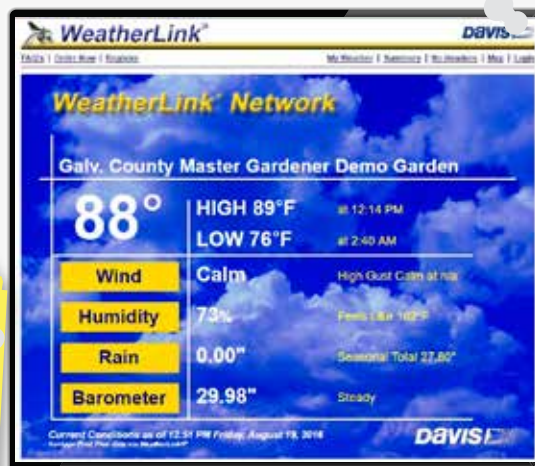
Volunteers are needed to help with the Saturday programs and the Tuesday evening programs.

If you can help please contact Herman Auer 409.655.5362, e-mail hermanauer@comcast.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, email fmbmab@verizon.net to find out the schedule and join her team.



Don't forget to put the link for our weather station on your smart phone and computer:
www.weatherlink.com/user/gcmga



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 . . .

MUSHROOMS ABUNDANT AFTER AMPLE RAINFALL

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*



Prolonged rainy weather has left most of us looking at soils that range from wet to waterlogged. At times I could have used a larger capacity rain gauge. When folks complain about the rainfall, I usually resist the urge to remind them of the record-setting temperatures and drought of 2011.

After an extended period of rainfall with warm temperatures, we typically see a few mushrooms popping up here and a few popping up there. After the recent round of daily or almost-daily rainfall over the past two weeks, mushrooms seemed to have popped up most everywhere. Some types of mushrooms grow in a random pattern (Fig. 1) while other types grow in a distinctive circular-to-elliptical pattern known as a "fairy ring" (Fig. 2).

The term "fairy ring" dates back to the Middle Ages when blood-letting was common practice and flies were thought to arise from rotting meat. People also had various ideas about where circles of mushrooms or other large fungal structures came from.

Some people thought the devil churned butter in the middle of the ring, while other folks thought fairies danced in the center. Despite such stories, some considered it lucky to have fairy rings in a field near their house. You might, however, get a strong counter-argument from today's homeowners and turf managers who have fairy rings in their turf.

Mystery and mythology aside, fairy rings are caused by fungi. More precisely, we now know that fairy rings aren't made by fairies or the devil. They are the fruiting structures of underground fungi. Several species of mushrooms can form fairy rings. Mushrooms are the reproductive part that forms from fungal threads that live and grow in the soil

or thatch (the layer of dead and living plant parts that develops between the grass and the soil surface).

Fairy rings are typically seen from August through October, but that's not a hard and fast rule. In some years they're more common than others because they're sensitive to environmental conditions. Fairy rings may look like a full circle, a semi-circle or as just fragments of a circle.

An obvious question is why do they grow in circles? The whole phenomenon begins with one small piece of fungal thread (known as hyphae) or a single spore. From that tiny particle, a mass of threads radiates in all directions like tendrils reaching towards food. The fungus will keep growing, hidden from sight, until it runs out of a food source or environment conditions becomes unfavorable.

Fairy ring fungi don't directly infect lawns, but cause damage by interfering with water movement to the roots of lawn grass. In order for the fungus to absorb nutrients, certain materials in the soil must be dissolved by the fungus into a useable form. The grass is essentially fertilized by the byproducts of this process. The most active part of the fungus is at the outer edge of the ring, so that's where the fruiting bodies form and thus forming a circular pattern.

So, what can you do if you want to get rid of a fairy ring? Fairy rings, as with other nuisance mushrooms or puffballs, are difficult to control since there are no effective and simple chemical procedures available to homeowners. Most fairy rings are present for only a few years and eventually outgrow themselves.

If mushrooms on the lawn make you happy, or you're at least agreeable to letting Mother Nature take her course, then sit back, relax and enjoy the show when it occurs.



*Photo courtesy of Robin Stone Collins
Fig. 1 Recent rains have given mushrooms everything they need to appear overnight in flower beds everywhere.*



*Photo courtesy of William M. Johnson
Fig. 2 An abundance of mushrooms growing in circles or fragments of circles appeared in lawns and along roadways after the recent rainstorms.*



By Judy Anderson
MG 2012

September 13, 2016 5:30pm

Backyard Mexican Fiesta Meeting
615 Bel Rd, Kemah

October 20, 2016 1:30pm

Fall Plant Sale Review
Extension Office
Carbide Park - La Marque
Beverages and Cookies

November 8, 2016 5:30pm

Ira Gervais - Annual Meeting,
Election of Officers; Updating by-laws
Pot Luck
Extension Office
Carbide Park - La Marque

December 13, 2016 6:30pm

Holiday Meeting - Mikey & Allen Isbell
1715 35th Street, Galveston Island

MG Judy Anderson thanks MGs for hosting backyard meetings.
You may contact Judy at jande10198@aol.com for information.

2016 MGA MONTHLY MEETINGS

September 13, 2016 – 5:30 p.m.

MEXICAN FIESTA BACKYARD PARTY

Robin Collins "Nest" | 615 Bel Rd. | Kemah

Bring a Mexican Themed Pot Luck!

Have some Sangria and Margaritas!!

- Grilled Beef and Chicken Fajitas
- Bring a plant to participate in the plant SWAP! (optional)
- Tour the "Chick-Inn" (coop)
- Give suggestions on her new garden...
 - Enjoy the "Deck"!
 - Bring a lawn chair
- Parking provided across street in and behind Kemah City Hall

It will be a festive pot luck occasion!



November 8, 2016 - 5:30 p.m.

Please join the Galveston County Master Gardeners for a pot luck dinner at the **Annual Meeting, Election of Officers and Updating the Association Bylaws.**

This is an important meeting for all members of the Association and you are encouraged to participate.

Dinner will begin at 6:00 p.m. with the meeting to follow.

December 13, 2016 - 6:30 p.m.

Mark your calendar for the **Master Gardener Holiday celebration**, Tuesday December 13 at 6:30 p.m.

Mikey and Allen Isbell will host the festivities in their historic home decked out in holiday splendor.

The evening gets lively when the holiday gift exchange begins.

To participate, bring a wrapped, generic, gardening gift.
Donations of unwrapped children's toys would be enthusiastically welcomed.

More details to be revealed closer to the holidays.



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



LET'S CELEBRATE!