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GULF COAST *Gardening*

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You might have a gardening addiction if: You know the 3-plant shuffle: You buy a plant but it would look best in a spot that already has a plant that is getting too much shade because you planted it 15 years ago when the tree next to it was tiny. Now the tree is huge and the plant is spindly because it needs more sun. So, you "need" to move that plant to a place with more sun, but there's already a plant there that needs to be moved, and...

With this issue of our newsletter, summer 2017 has arrived on our Beautiful Texas Gulf Coast! I'm writing my newsletter article on the day of 2017's summer solstice, the astronomical event observing the day with the most amount of daylight in the Northern Hemisphere. It's a time to celebrate Mother Earth and all nature in its glory. The power of nature is at its highest point and full of fertility on this day. According to folklore, this midsummer eve is one of the spirit nights of the year and begins the season of myths and rituals where humans is subject to fairy tricks and farmer's animals and crops are particularly exposed to disease or lack of sufficient rain. The season centers around the sun (fire) and water.



This year our Gulf Coast summer solstice didn't have much sun, but instead clouds, rain and a lovely breeze from a very small, very early tropical storm to our east. Hopefully, if the mischievous fairies are kind, that was it for this hurricane season!!

This issue of our newsletter will provide several ideas and educational topics to get us started enjoying our landscapes as the "fire" of our summer heat increases horticultural calamities and humidity "water" helps keep our wrinkles in check.

The Q&As describe heat tolerant plants that will survive our summer (page 5) and how to control mites (page 4), common annoyances for our region. Another article on page 6, describes several "bugs" and insects that make appearances in our gardens at this time of the year with management options. Water conservation is always topical. Page 13 offers garden design concepts using WaterSmart plants, compost,

mulch and rainwater harvesting techniques. The Best Shots story (pages 10 - 11) encourages us to create a Secret Garden. It also provides ideas on materials and plants to use. Donna Ward shares several tragedies she's observed



By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008

in local landscapes and ways to prevent them on page 12. Looking for something new to perk up your yard? Consider a water garden. Page 14 takes you through the planning, materials, building and plants for a beautiful, peaceful water feature in your landscape. This is the time of the year to update your kitchen herb garden. Page 16 lists several easy to grow and use herbs, including how/where to plant and maintain them. A fun article "Saints & Souls in the Garden" (page 8) tells us about garden ornaments and the magic and legends associated with their inclusion in our gardens. Lillian Bell, a Master Gardener from Denton County, gives us her impressions of visiting Galveston and our Discovery Garden during

the recent Texas MGA State Conference (page 7). Please enjoy meeting Master Gardener Linda Steber (page 18). Linda recently won second place as Outstanding Individual Master Gardener of the Year at the State Conference.

We are so very proud of her!

The Carbide Park update appears on page 21 and notes our new garden name change from Demonstration Garden to Discovery Garden. After seven years, we have a new name inspired by the educational opportunities, beauty, and innovation displayed there thanks to our Master Gardener volunteers. Tool Time (page 19) discusses potential weeding implements; as you know the weeds never end here! In The Last Word, Dr. Johnson tells us that hurricane preparations should include landscapes.

Hey Summer, we're ready ---- Bring it on!!!

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Cover:
Water Gardens
Photo courtesy MG Sharon Zaal



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Thanks for your interest!

Q&A ask a master gardener

Biting Mites in Homes



By **Laurel Stine**
MG Intern 2002

Some of the most intriguing questions we get are from people who think they have been bitten by invisible insects. We have had some submissions lately which have turned out to be biting mites.

Bird and rodent mites, like the northern fowl mite, house mouse mite, and tropical rat mite, are among the most common culprits in difficult-to-diagnose arthropod infestations. These mites live in bird and rodent nests. Although these mites occasionally bite humans, these mites cannot successfully survive or reproduce without their natural hosts.

When birds abandon their nests (as in after their chicks have fledged) or their roosting sites, the mites disperse looking for new hosts. This is when they may enter homes through openings (wall cracks, window gaps, open windows, etc.). They may then get on humans and bite. The bites can be irritating and people vary in their sensitivity to bites, but otherwise the bites are not harmful.

Mites that migrate away from the nests may be found anywhere in houses and buildings, but are most abundant in the vicinity of nests that were built on or in the house. Bird mites have no affinity for spices or other foods, or clothing, etc. They do not hitchhike on people and there is no danger of transferring them to another location.

The most effective method for eliminating such mite infestations is to control and remove any birds (e.g., swallows, sparrows, starlings, pigeons) from the structure. This is best accomplished with the help of a professional pest control company familiar with control of these pests. Once the hosts of these mites are eliminated, insecticidal sprays can be used by a professional pest control operator to reduce any residual mite populations.

Once bird nests are eliminated, any mites that are going to emerge in search of another nest should not persist very long. As long as the birds are excluded from the home the mites will go away relatively quickly as egg hatching and life cycle development usually takes 15-21 days.

Insecticides containing bifenthrin as an active ingredient are recommended for target treatment of nest areas and possible entry points into the home; however, bifenthrin insecticides are not recommended for widespread use throughout the home.



Q&A ask a master gardener

Common Questions about Heat Tolerant Plants



By Elayne Kouzounis
MG 1998

To really know your landscape, take a pad, pencil, and a walk around. As you walk, readjust your mind and eyes. Which way does the wind normally blow? Which part of the garden receives the morning or afternoon sun? When the sun, wind, or rain comes through, what does it hit;

what is sheltered? Asking these questions helps to identify the possible sources of problems. The hill-top may be windy, for example, or the soil type may change from the bottom of the hill to the top. We can take the same approach to creating the perfect garden. What seems to be doing well, and what is not? What looks great and what doesn't quite fit the look you want? When selecting Heat Tolerant plants, your first considerations will be how plants grow under different types of stress and conditions.

What are some plants for dry areas in your garden? *Gaillardia*, Lavender, and *Asclepias*.

What is Xeriscaping? Xeriscaping is a good gardening tactic to save water when droughts are possible. The concept is that certain perennials can withstand periodic dry spells, and excess water can be used on the plants that cannot go without constant water.

Additionally, some heat-loving plants have tap roots, meaning that they can dig down deep to find water. It is especially important to consider how much water will be available to the plants in comparison to how much they need when choosing plants for the summer.

Why should your plants be well established before the summer heat arrives? Once established, they are tough enough to withstand dry spells without stressing.

What is one plant that looks delicate, but very tough and hard to kill? *Dianthus* spp. ("pinks") is a repeat bloomer if cut back after blooming.

Is there a dainty plant that can handle heat better than cold blooms in drought and poor soil? *Gaura* will keep forming and blooming all summer if you deadhead the entire spent flower stalk.



Asclepias



Dead Nettle



Balloon Flower



Veronica Speedwell



Gaillardia



Thyme



Gaura



Lavender



Dianthus



Blazing Star

Which plant will grow in the dry summer shade under a tree? *Lamium* (Dead Nettle)

What would a recommended very low maintenance flowering plant be? *Platycodon grandifloras* (Balloon Flower); be careful not to confuse it with the similar *Campanula* plant.

Is there a plant that has the stamina to take the heat from pavers and to take heavy foot traffic? *Thymus* (Thyme) is a very versatile Mediterranean herb that thrives on dry heat and popular for growing between pavers.

Looking for a large and varied group of plants that are problem free and very tolerant of almost any type of weather? A *Veronica* (Speedwell) flower is long and spiky and resembles salvias.

Could there be a plant that is a magnet for monarch butterflies during their fall migration that is drought tolerant and accepting of all types of soil and add texture interest to your garden? Blazing Star (*Liatris Spicata*) is a good option. Try locating a compact or low growing variety so you can avoid staking.

A garden is not just for you; it is a habitat for all living things around you. Gardening is simply becoming more aware of your garden as well as the factors, such as weather, that affect it.

What bugs plants?



By A. Lynette
Parsons
MG 2011

What bugs plants? That is always an interesting question, but given the time of the year, we're thinking of the bugs and caterpillars we see feasting on plants in our landscapes and gardens. So, we're going to ignore soil nutrition and concentrate on those squirmy little things, the bugs.

It doesn't matter whether you are talking flowers, fruit trees, or vegetables, but the first decision you need to make is if you like moths and butterflies. It's those same pretty, winged creatures that started out as little crawly caterpillars, and their voracious appetites can do immense damage to a host plant.

So, if you plant a "butterfly garden," expect that the butterfly larvae will take up your kind invitation and lay their eggs all over those pretty plants with pretty flowers. The result won't be pretty, but you will have butterflies. Of course, not all plant damage is inflicted by butterfly and moth larvae. About a month ago, our Master Gardener Hot-Line at the Extension Office was inundated with calls about these "red worms with lots of legs" all over tomatoes. They were typically described as all bunched up, but scattered at the approach of human fingers. Those are the immature version (nymphal stage) of the leaf-footed bug, a real vampire type when it comes to tomatoes. Between the leaf-footed bug and the stinkbug, your tomatoes begin to change from gorgeous looking red things to red things with weird splotches. The splotches are where those two bugs have done their job, sucking juices from the fruit.

Then there are the "worms" that you find in sweet corn (corn earworm larvae), or the "worms" you find inside the stems of squash (squash vine borer). And the snails and slugs—how do you deal with these guys? You can try the time-tested method of banging two bricks together with the critters between, but you might also want to consider the current catch-phrase, "Integrated Pest Management" or IPM for short. IPM is what the folks at AgriLife Extension consider a multi-pronged approach to any pest problem, whether it's in the house or outside. In the yard and garden situation, it hopefully starts with fertile soil. If plants are not stressed from a lack of (or an excessive amount

of) nutrients and water, they are less likely to be a target for attack. It's that lagging elk that gets caught by the wolves, for example, not the fleet of foot.

Another early approach at ground level is to make sure that leaf litter and other homes to snails and slugs are cleaned up around your plants. Cleaning your beds in the fall and early spring gives you an opportunity to provide your plants with a fresh start, and that spring sunlight makes it hard for the snails to hide from the heat. After the plants are warmed up and sprouting away, is the time to add new mulch.

A third approach involves sprays of various types. Bt, the shorthand for *Bacillus thuringiensis*, is a biological control that is sprayed to control the caterpillar stage of a wide array of butterflies and moths. Insecticidal sprays such as neem oil are also used, and good old sprays from the water hose can sometimes be just as effective. What you need to know is what spray you're using is actually effective against, and when it is best to use it. Spray at the wrong time, and you might lose those fruits and vegetables you so long to eat. They write those instructions on the labels for a reason.

Then there are the critters that prey in turn on the bugs that prey upon the plants. If you see an infestation of one kind of bug that seems to be causing problems, you may begin to see other, even uglier bugs around. Big-eyed bugs (yes, that's their name), lady beetles (not ladybugs, it's a misnomer), assassin bugs, wasps, and even fire ants will attack other bugs, usually the plant feeders. It's like those wolves attacking the elk again. So, before you start swatting, make sure you identify the bug you are aiming for. You might slaughter your new best friend.

And that brings me to another great resource. In addition to lots of gardening books at your local libraries, there are websites that may be of help in identifying your bugs. Be sure to check our Galveston County Master Gardener website, which has a great section on beneficial insects (really great photos), those predators we just mentioned. Also, check out the Problem Solver Guides for Gardeners (http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/Gardening_Handbook/index.htm).

And finally, there's always your local AgriLife Extension Office, conveniently located at Carbide Park in La Marque, phone 281-534-3413.



Photos courtesy GCMG Digital Library



A New View of Galveston

By Lillian Bell, Denton County Master Gardener

Lillian was invited to write an article for the Gulf Coast Gardening Magazine after visiting The Discovery Garden at the conclusion of the 2017 State Master Gardener Conference.

Through the eyes of a child, I have always loved Galveston. Memories of pulling up to my best friend's family beach house with mounds of perennials spilling onto the drive, welcoming us back each August. Every morning was a repeat of the day before – rising early, racing to the beach, desperately trying to save sand dollars from the early morning joggers. After a plate of nachos, we would take a siesta, hiding from the harsh glare of the sun. At night, I would sit alone in the screened porch, basking in the quiet solitude, with the moonlight reflecting on the waves and the ever-constant wind blowing across my skin. Daisies, seashells, sand, wind and waves....

A Texas Master Gardener Association State Conference on a cruise ship departing from Galveston? We're there! Not only did my husband and I enjoy our first cruise filled with engaging speakers during the day and evenings dancing in Conga lines, but we were surrounded by volunteers who share an appreciation of natural beauty. Back ashore on Galveston Island, we took the grand tours of the Broadway Cemetery Historic District, Moody Mansion, the Bishop's Palace and a bonus, the Garten Verein, with Galveston County Master Gardeners Mary Lou Kelso and Linda Steber. I learned more about Galveston in those few hours with local Master Gardeners than in all my years before, including the local foodies' favorite eateries. By the way, the fried oysters at Shrimp N Stuff hit the spot!

One simply cannot attend a Master Gardener convention without visiting the host's home turf. Upon arriving at Carbide Park in La Marque, a nice grove of pecan trees greeted us, along with many Master Gardeners eager to share the fruit of their labors with us. Wandering through The Discovery Garden, we found that many of the Texas Superstar plants that are favorites in Denton also flourish in Galveston. Vegetables are cultivated with the same good practices of raised beds, drip irrigation, heavy mulch,

and the addition of compost to the soil. All are living proof that Texas AgriLife recommended horticultural practices truly work.

Turning right, past the vegetables, we came upon two hoop houses. The first one was filled with plants, with water lines hanging from above. The second hoop house will feature aquaponic beds. Together, the two will utilize the symbiotic relationship between fish and plants to produce food. It's a bold undertaking, but I have no doubt that the Galveston County Master Gardeners are up to the task.

Walking farther toward the rear of The Discovery Garden, ripe plump blackberries stretched our willpower to the breaking point. An espaliered apple tree displayed a gardener's practiced hand. Rows of peach and citrus trees have been pruned to a "ripe for the pickin" height. After admiring the brilliant use of horsetail reed in a tall container, I met Dr. William M. Johnson, Galveston County Extension Agent for Horticulture. Having heard him speak during the cruise, I knew he had a passion for beneficial insects. I mentioned having taken an entomology class in college, and Dr. Johnson quickly took me to see a colony of *Cerastipsocus venosus* on a citrus tree. Those tiny insects, commonly called zebra lice or barklice, feed on the fungi and algae growing on dead wood. Further reading suggests that they disperse like a herd of cattle when disturbed and then regroup afterward. It's fascinating to see nature in all of its complexities.

The ship has docked. The last tour has ended. I enjoy one more whiff of jasmine and longingly admire the handsome oleander, eternally in bloom. Thank you to all of the Galveston County Master Gardeners who let me see Galveston through their eyes.

Photos courtesy MG Lillian Bell



Barklice



Barklice feeding on fungi



Cerastipsocus venosus



Espaliered apple tree



MG Alice as tour guide



MG Lillian Bell and Dr. Johnson

The Island Garden July 2017

Saints and Souls in the Garden

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint of Jan's article in the *Island Garden Magazine*



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

The expression “communing with nature” is often cited by gardeners as a particular aim of all that exertion in out-of-door garden beds and plots, the results of which bring about a distinct and unique experience of near euphoria and exhilaration. One philosophy embraces the theory that exposure to nature can replenish our cognitive reserves when they are depleted by the constant barrage of modern day activities sirens, horns, phones, computers, TV, and the general bustle and goings-on of daily life.

An insightful quote from Alexander von Humboldt affirms that “mere communion with nature, mere contact with the free air, exercise a soothing yet comforting and strengthening influence on the wearied mind.” Anne Frank stated that “the best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely, or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere they can be quite alone with the heavens, nature and God.”

Gardeners understand and take advantage of these viewpoints every day with their gardening rituals and practices. In our quest to achieve peace and success in the garden (not always a given when dealing with the whims of Mother Nature), we may employ a number of strategies. The sounds of running water in falls or fountains always bring a sense of peace as do the birds drawn to baths placed randomly about the area, and colorful blooms that entice butterflies and hummingbirds.

Always considering any source of assistance and support, we may turn to folklore and the traditions of gardeners from the past. Bearing in mind their customs of ensconcing images of saints and souls in order to take advantage of any spiritual contribution that may be conveyed as well as that sense of peace imparted by their presence, we may add saints and souls to our gardens with the use of garden statuary.

The earliest examples of garden ornaments can be traced to Ancient Egypt, typically beautiful sculptures depicting their Gods. Next, the Greeks placed ornamental art in temple gardens; the Romans, not to be outdone, followed with handsome and striking figures like Venus de Medici, often said to be a copy of a Greek sculpture from the first century BC. The statues represented animals as well as human forms. There were also beautiful creations from Pompeii and Herculaneum.

In the Tudor period the favored garden ornaments were statues and sundials copied from the Romans who had previously copied them from the Greeks. From gnomes to oriental statues, the art and craft of copying the work of previous civilizations continues today.

The quintessential garden saint is St. Francis of Assisi, an Italian Roman Catholic friar, deacon and preacher who founded the orders of Franciscans. One of the most venerated religious figures in history, he became

associated with the patronage of animals and the natural environment. It has become customary for churches to hold ceremonies on his feast day of October fourth for the blessing of animals and livestock. St. Francis arranged for the first live Nativity scene at Christmas in the year of 1223. As the patron saint of garden birds, animals and of ecology, he is often shown preaching to the birds.

A classic soul in the garden throughout the world is the Virgin Mary, patroness of all things, who is revered by individuals hoping to be blessed by her spirit and strength.

St. Patrick is another favorite, especially by the Irish because as legend purports he did drive the snakes from Ireland. He is said to be the patron saint of organic gardening.

San Ysidro-Isidore is the patron of farmers, large gardens and sheepherders while St. Valentine watches over lovers and small intimate gardens. For help and healthy crops in your vegetable gardens, you might consult St. Werenfrid, an English Benedictine missionary who is often depicted in art standing on a ship. He also might be called upon to assist with symptoms of stiff joints from all that kneeling, stooping and crouching. St. Tryphon was a goose herder from Lampsada, who by the power of his prayer turned back a plague of locusts, thus keeping his town from decimation and starvation. Regarded in the Russian Orthodox Church as the heavenly protector of Moscow and a patron of birds, he is usually shown with a falcon on his arm and carrying a scythe. Perhaps he could be instrumental in the control of garden pests.

Gardeners strive for that combination of elegance, utility, rhythm and symmetry that creates that perfect sense of a quiet communion with nature. An old Kenyon proverb maintains that we must remember to “treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents but loaned to you by your children.”



Sun Dial in the garden



Virgin Mary

Saintly Responsibilities

Saint Adelard...

patron of gardeners

San Andreas...

aquatic gardens,
Koi and gold fish

Saint Ansovinus...

protector of crops

San Antonio Abad...

adept at digging holes
for plants and trees

San Antonio de Padua...

especially helpful
at finding
lost garden tools

Santa Barbara...

keeps gardeners safe
from lightning strikes

San Bernardo Abad...

patron of beekeepers,
flowers
and vegetables

Saint Dorothy...

fruit trees and orchards

Saint Elizabeth of Hungary...

rose gardeners and roses

Saint Fiacre...

herbs and vegetables

Saint Jude...

patron of
“brown-thumbs” and
gardeners with
bad luck

Saint Phocas...

a gardener himself,
the patron of flower and
ornamental gardening

Santa Teresa Lisieux...

patron of florists

Saint Urban...

vineyards and
grape growers

Virgin de Zapopan...

protector against drought



St. Patrick



St. Isidore the Farmer

“Little Gnome Facts”

Historically, garden enhancements and statues were available only to the wealthy due to the prohibitive expense of marble, so individuals of lesser means found ways to decorate their gardens with mystical creatures mostly made of cement. These well-known garden ornaments resemble small human figures, are typically males and generally wear red pointed hats. In the Renaissance period, the artist Jacques Callot drew a series of hunchback dwarfs that became the inspiration for the Derby porcelain company to create gnome figurines in the 18th century. Following that, the popularity of garden gnomes spread rapidly. It is said that gnomes are much like people. They love to “talk to one another, eat, play, and do mostly anything that we do except they do it at night and sleep during the day.”

- Garden gnomes were introduced to England in 1847, when Sir Charles Isham brought twenty-one of them from Germany. The only original survivor whose name is “Lampy” is purported to be worth \$1.58 million dollars.
- The Royal Horticultural Society recently lifted its one-hundred year ban on garden gnomes.
- The largest garden gnome in the United States goes by the name of Gnome Chomsky and stands thirteen feet six inches tall.
- A common practice of Mediterranean fishermen was to wear white hats at night to be more easily seen. Since gnomes prefer not to be seen, they wear red hats.
- Gnomes’ spirits are alleged to protect livestock, fruit plants and gardens.



St. Francis of Assisi



Venus de Medici

My Secret Garden!

Creating your own secret garden



By Elayne Kouzounis
MG 1998

If you look the right way you can see the whole world in a garden.

- Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*

Do take time to look around at all the happiness the world can offer. All life has a vital place in the preservation of our world. An appreciation and understanding of nature in all its forms is the beginning of appreciation and understanding for humankind for we are as much a part of nature as the birds, butterflies, and plants.

“Creating your Own Secret Garden” The essentials needed for your garden art

- Entrance
- Water
- Garden Art
- Color and Light
- Wildlife Habitat
- Sitting
- Natural Materials

Entrance: A special place should have a special entrance which could be a gate, an archway or whatever you feel gives you the feeling that there is something different on the other side.

Water: Water is vital in that your secret garden feels like a safe place for all of nature. I have a bird bath that I purchased from a festival years ago. I enjoy watching the birds and bees who visit daily to quench their thirst. Without water, there would be neither flowers nor people who grow them. Plants, like gardeners themselves, are largely made of water (70 percent of a person’s weight consists of water whereas about 90 percent of a plants’ weight consists of water).

Color and Light: You create moods from color, sunlight, and shade. The colors in soft hues (e.g., pinks, whites, blues, purples, and yellows) give a gentle, soothing effect. The cornerstone of your secret garden is the healing, soothing, and rejuvenating color of green.

Sitting: Do take time to gaze at your garden. Do take the time to look at a flower. Stop! Look! Listen! There is tremendous comfort in sitting, looking, touching, tasting, smelling, and hearing. I sit in my garden on a wooden bench anchoring my back on a brick wall. I do take time at least once a week to incorporate each of our five senses. Each time I am always reminded and amazed at how nature changed something I did not see the time before. I enjoy looking and listening for the movement the wind has created for my plants, shrubs, and wind chimes.

Natural materials: If possible try to use natural materials such as rocks, stones, and wood. I have many wind chimes as they, along with fences, trellises, arbors, gates, benches, and paths, help to connect us to our environment. Your pathway helps to navigate through your garden again looking, touching, smelling, and seeing the plants close up, but not over the pathways. Fresh air and good air circulation are vital to



Garden Gate Entrance



Sitting Area



Entering the Garden



Turks Cap



Walkway



Yard Art

keeping plants and their growers happy. Whenever I am at a garden shop or nursery, I always look for clever sayings and unusual gardening elements.

Garden Art: Collecting garden art is a favorite hobby. I have lots of garden art. Your secret garden is an open canvas for numerous well-crafted garden pieces. Here is where we can use our imagination and creativity.

Wildlife Habitat: We must see ourselves not just as gardeners, but as partners with nature. Gardens serve as corridors for the movement of the birds, bees, and butterflies that are pollinators for our plants.

Chemicals: I do not use pesticides in my secret garden. If you choose to use pesticides, try to use the least toxic approach as recommended by AgriLife Extension.

The Plants in my Secret Garden

East Wall:

Lions Tail
Mints (grown in pots)
Curly Parsley
Crepe Myrtle pink
Porter Weed purple
Plumeria pink
Ramie (Textile Plant)
Hibiscus
Echinacea
Many different Succulents
String of Pearls
Burrows Tail

West Wall:

Yew Tree
Holly Tree
Rosemary
Hawthorn Bush
Herbs
Firespike
Gladiolas (red and pink)
Plumeria (white)
Hibiscus (pink)
Mandevilla (pink)
Hoja Santa (root beer plant)
Mexican Plum Tree
Aluminum Plant
Blueberry bush
Milkweed (orange and yellow)
Turks Cap (red)



Yard Art



Yard Art

I water only when my plants are dry. Since most all my plants on the west side of the house are planted in the ground I water them once a week if no rainfall occurs. As summer progresses, I will most likely begin watering my plants twice weekly. I put the hose on the ground with a mild trickle. I water for 30 minutes then I move the hose to the next area and continue moving forward until the entire area has been watered. With this kind of watering plant roots go down in the ground and do not stay close to the surface where the roots would be shallow and require much more watering.

My plants that are in pots on the east side require much more attention. I can almost always tell if they need watering by just looking but if I am not sure I put the pencil to the test. I use a round long staking stick which I insert in the flower pot an inch or two – if it comes out clean, I know it is time for the plant to be watered. I also fertilize once a month using MicroLife Liquid Maximum Blooms 3-8-3 and MicroLife 6-2-4. That goes for my plants that are in pots and plants that are planted in the ground.

The sun comes up gently to my secret garden around 8:20 in the morning and intensifies around 8:45 and stays until around 5 in the afternoon.

There is light shade on the east wall in the morning from my gate to the crepe myrtle until 9 a.m. and from then on, full sun. On the west wall sun from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. then medium shade until dark.

How wonderful it would be if we all could have a real secret garden, as Frances Hodgson Burnett did, but for most of us that is not possible. We can however try to create an outdoor sanctuary in our backyard, patio, or even our front porch. A comfortable chair, a small table in a shady nook, or a hammock where you might make a retreat when you need a respite.



Color and Light

Photos courtesy Elayne Kouzounis

A Different Perspective

No regrets please



By Donna Ward
MG 1996

As I drive through our local neighborhoods it always delights me to see how many homeowners care a great deal about their landscapes and how they appear to passers-by whether on foot or behind the wheel. But I see our neighborhoods through the eyes of a gardener, and there are times when I would like to pull over, get out of my car and knock on a door, and I have done it a time or two. I'm not only seeing how carefully we are taking care of our landscape plants, but I see the errors that will eventually haunt us, and believe me they will.

The most common error is 'volcano' mulching. Mulching is one of the most valuable things a homeowner can do for a tree's health. However, if applied too deeply, or if the wrong material is used, it can actually harm trees and shrubbery. A two to four inch layer of mulch is sufficient, and the wider the mulch ring the greater the benefit. But we want to construct a 'doughnut' not a volcano. Never pile mulch against the trunk of a tree, pull it back several inches so the trunk's base and root crown are exposed. If you can't see the trunk's flare at the soil line - it's too deep. Please don't build a paver, rock or brick circle around the tree and fill it with soil. Mulch or soil against the trunk promotes excessive moisture and root rot, and may cause inner bark tissue to die. This activity leads to disease and insect problems, leads to conditions that produce alcohols and acids toxic to plants, and causes imbalances in soil pH. Did I mention it creates a habitat for rodents that chew the bark? I see homes in our neighborhoods that are landscaped and maintained by professionals, and mulch is piled too high on tree trunks - shame on them, they know better, or at least they should.

That English ivy *Hedera helix* clinging to and circling the trunk of your live oak *Quercus virginiana* depicts woody charm, but do you know what is going on behind the ivy? I can tell you from personal experience. One

day you will notice sawdust on the ground. When you pull away the ivy, holes in the tree's bark will be evident - Borers! The larvae infiltrate the tree's cambium layer beneath the bark. The cambium layer transports nutrients and water to the leaves, and once this layer is greatly penetrated, the tree's days are numbered. Call a tree removal company. I had the tree guys leave the stump about 4 feet high, and the larvae hatched for at least a year, maybe two. The upside is that the pileated woodpeckers feasted on the larvae which were as big as my thumb and ugly - Yuck!

Let's face it, most of us don't live on acreage. I see small front lawns where the homeowners have planted two or three oaks - what were they thinking? Oaks attain a height of 50 to 80 feet tall and 50 to 80 feet wide depending on the variety. There is such a thing as scaling the landscape to the size of the residence and the lawn's square footage instead of overpowering it. And who didn't give any thought to planting a southern magnolia *Magnolia grandiflora* under an oak? Southern magnolias are not understory trees. They will attain an average height of 40 feet. One might suspect that eventually the two will meet.

Several years ago in one close-by neighborhood I noticed a large area of digging had been done around the base of a beautiful large oak and rebars were being laid, indicating to me that concrete was about to be poured. I did knock on the front door, introduced myself and explained that concrete was going to smother the tree's roots, that it needed oxygen in the soil in order to survive. The homeowner took offense to my visit, asked me to leave, and not too politely. It took about 2-1/2 to 3 years for my prediction to come to pass. You can't pour a driveway around any variety of tree and expect it to survive. I restrained myself and didn't return to say "Told ya' so."

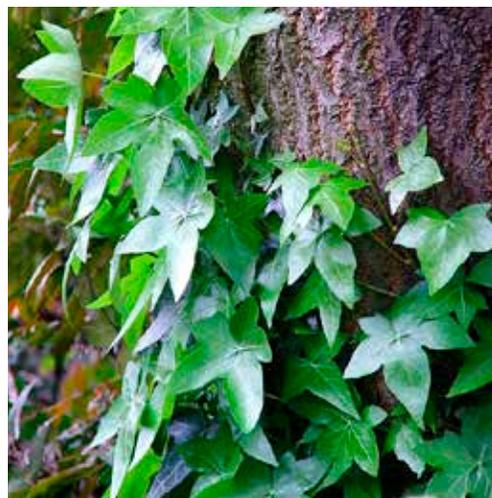
I hope I have given you enough information here to prevent any planting errors you may come to regret. I've learned my lesson, and I won't be knocking on your front door, but hopefully you'll be looking at landscapes with a different perspective.



Right Way - Construct a "Doughnut"



Wrong Way - Not a Volcano



Photos GCMG Digital Library

Water conservation techniques to try in you landscape



By Stephanie Hendrickson
MG Intern 2017

Outdoor water use accounts for about one third of municipal water use in Texas; this largely consists of landscape and lawn watering. The number can be even higher during our hot, dry summers. Since most homeowners have a tendency to overwater landscapes by as much as two to three times the amount needed. Implementing water conservation techniques would reduce the amount of municipal water used for landscapes.

Go *WaterSmart*:

A *WaterSmart* yard uses plants and practices that require little or no fertilizers or pesticides and less water than conventional lawns. With minimal grass cover and maximum use of native and adapted plants, the *WaterSmart* landscape can be beautiful, easy to maintain, and environmentally friendly. *WaterSmart* landscapes can significantly reduce the amount of polluted runoff entering the storm drain system and it can also cut reduce the amount of water you use for irrigation.



Photos courtesy MG Stephanie Hendrickson

Use native plants:

Native plants are well suited to our climate and soil conditions. Once these plants become established, they require less watering and need no chemical fertilizers or pesticides to thrive. Established native plants in your yard will require less water over the lifetime of the plant compared to exotics. When used in the correct conditions, they also require little maintenance. Compared to exotic plants, natives can better withstand drought and are more



resistant to attack by insects and diseases. They can also limit the chances of invasive species overtaking your yard. As an added feature, native plants attract wildlife such as birds and butterflies to our landscapes.

Install a rainwater harvesting system:

Rainwater harvesting captures, diverts, and stores rainwater for later use. You can collect rainwater in a large cistern, tank, or barrel. Harvested rainwater is an alternate water supply and stormwater-management approach that anyone can use. Rainwater harvesting is beneficial because it reduces demand on existing municipal water supply, and reduces run-off, erosion, and contamination of surface water. Rainwater harvesting can reduce the amount of drinking water used for landscape irrigation thus conserving water for your landscaped plants. It can also save you money by reducing your water bill.



Check watering and irrigation systems:

When possible, water early in the morning but after the dew has dried to help reduce water loss from evaporation in addition to reducing plant disease. During this time the winds are usually calmer which also reduces the amount of water loss. Train plants to require less water by slowly reducing the amount you give them. Water less often but more deeply to force the plants' roots to grow deeper in search of water. Roots that grow near the surface will dry out quickly. And be sure to group plants by their water needs. *WaterSmart* low-volume irrigation can be described as the practice of applying water in an efficient manner where it's needed, when it's needed without contributing runoff into storm sewers, drainage ditches, or waterways. Scheduled irrigation systems, although convenient, are often the culprit of over-watering and runoff problems. Timers on scheduled systems should be turned off so that watering can only be done when the landscape truly needs watering.



Use compost and mulch:

Composting is an easy way to increase the moisture-holding ability of soil. Compost helps the soil hold more water and retain more rainfall and irrigation in the yard. As compost breaks down, it improves the health of the soil, which helps plants survive stressful conditions like drought and disease. Add mulch to a depth of 3 to 4 inches to conserve moisture, reduce soil compaction, and keep the plant roots at a more even temperature.

For more information on water conservation and the *WaterSmart* program visit watersmart.tamu.edu. *WaterSmart* is a program of the Texas Coastal Watershed Program, a partnership between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Sea Grant, part of the Texas A&M University System.

Love Gardening AND Water?

You will love a water garden!



By Sharon Zaal
MG 2015

A few years ago, my husband and I made the decision to relocate from the north side of Houston to the Galveston Bay area, nearer the water and sailing, one of our favorite pastimes. We soon settled on a lovely home in a nice suburban neighborhood. The house itself needed few changes to work comfortably for us, but the backyard well, it was not plain ugly just plain! With the balmy days and mild winters in these parts, we knew immediately we wanted to create an outdoor garden to enjoy year round.

Having a fairly blank slate and a little imagination, we mused about the perfect garden space. Our perfect list ended up looking something like this - lots of patio, comfy seating, raised vegetable beds, fruit trees, tropicals, trellised vines, lots of blooming things, soothing falling water, fire pit, sunny areas, shady areas, butterflies, hummingbirds, and bees buzzing idyllic of course! The list got pretty long with not just a few big projects. Since we didn't always agree on priorities, we did what most couples do at such an impasse we put the list on the shelf.

Months later, my husband suggested taking in the annual Water Garden and Pond Tour, hosted by the Houston Pond Society and the Lone Star Koi Club. That weekend we visited numerous private water gardens and ponds, ranging from small backyard garden ponds and patio fountains, to huge multi-pond landscapes, complete with koi, waterfalls, and everything imaginable in between. We came away with a wealth of information and tons of inspiration. Our garden list came back out and we enthusiastically added to it water garden with fish!

Soon we set about creating the garden we imagined. Lack of experience didn't deter. Guess you could say we needed to get our feet wet take the plunge sink or swim! In spite of our blissful ignorance, we completed our perfect little garden, and at its heart is the water garden.

There are many ways to design a water garden. One needs to consider style, space, water capacity (gallons), containment, in ground or above, fish or not, fish type, aeration, filtration methods, planting areas, and plant types. We settled on an above ground architectural structure rather than an in-ground "natural" pond. The reservoir is formed with heavy duty vinyl pond liner, sinking below the ground one foot, and supported above ground with paverstone retainer walls two feet high. Natural stones cover the pond's interior walls to camouflage the liner.

Attached to the pond is the "active gravel bog filter" which is also retained with paverstone blocks a foot higher than the pond. The bog is key to keeping the pond looking gorgeous. The gravel bog bed is 12 inches deep with a grid of perforated pipes running through it. Fish in the pond produce waste. Wastewater circulates through the bog gravel and provides surface area for nitrifying bacteria. Beneficial bacteria convert the waste to a form that plants absorb. Bog plants take up the nutrients and filtered water returns to the pond, stripped of nutrients needed for algae growth, via a waterfall providing aeration. The bog utilizes water loving plants with roots planted directly in gravel. Our bog plants include Black Magic Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), Moneywort

(*Bacopa monnieri*), Variegated Sweet Flag (*Acorous calamus*) and others.

The "botanical stars" of the deep-water pond are the water lilies, (Nymphaea). We grow both hardy and tropical. Hardy water lilies grow from rhizomes while tropicals grow from bulbs. The biggest difference between tropical and hardy water lilies is their blooming habits. When both are fertilized properly, tropicals will bloom at least 20 times more often than hardies, and with considerably larger blooms. Tropicals are a bit more sensitive to cold temperatures, but in Zones 8-10, they winter well coming back year after year. With exception of a few night-blooming tropicals, both tropical and hardy water lilies typically bloom from 10 a.m. to as late as 6 p.m.

We also grow special submerged oxygenating aquatic plants in the pond. Anacharis (*Egeria densa*) and Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) are must-haves for keeping the water free of algae.

While plants add stately beauty, the "performing stars" of the pond are the goldfish. Fish bring life to a pond. Relaxation is sitting at water's edge, watching them move gracefully through the water, or splashing and playing in the waterfall. A wonderful way to start the day is pond-side, sipping a morning coffee, and checking in with the swimmers.

With four years under our water gardening belt, there are a few tips I can share –

- The pump is the heart of your pond, keeping water circulating, filtered, and aerated for pond and fish health. Don't skimp here. Pump capacity (gallons per hour (gph)) should circulate all pond water once an hour at minimum. Waterfalls, fountains, and streams will also determine the pump requirements. There are good internet sources for calculating correct pump size. A pump rated at 3,750 gph, runs 24x7 in our 650-gallon pond.
- For maximum blooms, fertilize water lilies every two weeks, April thru October, and repot each April. Aquatic fertilizer tablets are inserted deep into the pot's soil. In the winter, discontinue feeding and lower dormant plants deeper for additional cold protection.
- Pay attention to planting requirements for your pond plants. Deep-water plants will specify a submergence water level, e.g. 6 to 18 inches over crown. Create shelves in the pond for pots at different levels. While some aquatics are submerged in pots, sending blooms or foliage to the surface, other plants may actually float freely or grow entirely below the surface.
- Aquatic plant stores WILL sell you invasive species. Inquire regarding the growth habits of plants you purchase do your research! We learned the hard way that the lovely tall Papyrus Sedge (*Cyperus papyrus*) was evil below the waterline. I spent one afternoon in the pond, cutting away escaped roots that attached themselves securely to the pond walls and floor in every direction.
- Like any traditional garden, there are plants to prune, tidy up, or control, both in the bog and the pond. Prune water lilies of spent blooms and deteriorating leaves to look their best. Remove decaying plant debris to keep the water healthy.
- If your pond develops algae bloom, by all means use an algacide,

but don't underestimate the effectiveness of manual intervention. Pulling out large clumps of algae by hand is somewhat like weeding therapeutic!

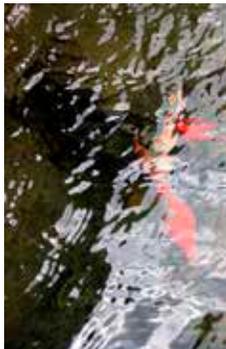
- In the summertime, when the pond water level drops, you probably don't have a leak. Losing up to 2 inches of water level daily during our hottest season is not uncommon. Significant water loss also occurs from waterfalls and fountains on windy days. Top off the water periodically. If adding more than 10% of city water, use a dechlorinating water conditioner.
- Koi are not for the faint-hearted. Though exotic and beautiful, koi can be expensive and have substantial water requirements - a minimum of 250 gallons each for mature koi. By contrast, goldfish are inexpensive and come in beautiful varieties and colors fantails, comets, shubunkins, and more in gold, black, white, orange, silver, calico. Goldfish mature at 6 to 12 inches, depending on the variety, and may live 20 years or more in an outdoor pond.

- There are debates about whether goldfish should be fed. Goldfish can survive indefinitely eating submerged aquatic plants and insect larvae. However, feeding can be one of life's great joys, when all of your fish surface from the deepest levels to eagerly feed. We feed lightly every day or two.
- Great white herons will stop in suburbia for a snack. Having enough submerged grasses and surface plants, where your fish can take cover, may keep your pond from becoming the daily buffet. However, once your pond is discovered, these predators are patient and persistent. After losing a few fish to the uninvited guests, we installed netting for peace of mind.

The water garden is a sweet spot of our outdoor space. Stepping outside to check the day's offering of water lily blooms, enjoying sounds of spilling water, and observing the carefree antics of the fish, is guaranteed to relax. Somehow the stresses of the day just melt away. Perhaps you too will want to create a water garden in your own perfect little garden.



Endless entertainment



Fish in day



Fish at night



Active gravel bog



Pond with netting



Waterlilies in bloom

Photos courtesy MG Sharon Zaal

What every kitchen really wants... *its own herb garden*



By Karolyn Grphart
MG 2017 Intern

Hummingbirds and butterflies have their own, flowers and vegetables do also.
Even roses and succulents are given this.

It's time to give your kitchen what it wants...its own garden.

Summer is a perfect time to plant a kitchen herb garden.
Select herbs that you will use in your kitchen and enjoy a new freshness
in dishes that will become favorites for your family.

Culinary herbs can be easy to grow as well as easy to use.

To get started, try 10 easy to grow and very useful herbs.



1. Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)

Aromatic as well as delicious, this herb can mature into a compact eight inches or up to more than three feet. It prefers full sun and repeated harvesting keeps the plant bushy and compact while removing blossoms lengthens the plant's life. With more than 200 varieties, basil can be cinnamon, Greek, lemon scented, spicy, sweet and more.

2. Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*)

This herb's tubular foliage has a delicate, light flavor. It can survive summer heat if it has some shade during the hottest part of the season. Loose soil with good drainage is essential along with dividing the plant every three or four years to keep the herb clump vigorous.

3. Marjoram (*Origanum spp.*)

This mild-flavored sweet herb grows in full sun for green leaf varieties and in afternoon shade for variegated leaf plants. It is used with seafood, meat, marinara sauces, mushrooms and vegetables. Being able to just say the word aloud is half the battle won!

4. Mint (*Mentha spp.*)

Aromatherapy plus! Red-stemmed Apple Mint, chocolate mint, spearmint, double mint, ginger mint, pineapple mint, orange mint...varieties seem endless. The Master Gardeners' Discovery Garden even has mojito mint! Mint can be used in steaming vegetables, mixing with butter for prepared vegetables, sprinkling on fresh cut fruit, adding to plain yogurt, and using in tea or other beverages including the Southern thirst quenchers, mint juleps or mojitos. Mint has 600 species with hybrids being introduced annually.

5. Scented Geraniums (*Pelargonium spp.*)

Fragrances include apple, lemon, peppermint, orange, nutmeg, coconut, cinnamon, lime and rose. The culinary uses of the geraniums include desserts, drinks, preserves, and salads. Try placing a few scented leaves in the bottom of a loaf pan and pour your pound cake batter on top. Remove before eating but you will notice the fragrance baked into the pound cake.

6. Thyme (*Thymus spp.*)

Thyme plants need full sun and light, well drained alkaline soil. They can serve as an excellent ground cover. With a wide range of forms and scents, herb gardeners/cooks can select their own personal favorites. Thyme can be found flavoring meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, vegetables, and certain fruits, such as pears, cranberries and apples.

7. Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

This tender perennial grows easily in Zone 9a and 9b and prefers full sun but will tolerate partial shade. Just brush against the plant and the aroma will bring joy to the gardener. Surprise your guests at a barbecue with skewers made of the strongest wood pieces on the bushy shrub. Used in many lamb, poultry or beef dishes, rosemary can also add a tangy slightly pine-like flavor to marinades, salad dressings, soups, eggs, cheeses, butters, roasts, dressing/stuffing, pastas and vegetables.

8. Sage (*Salvia spp.*)

This is a hardy evergreen perennial that likes full sun to partial shade. They require little water once they are established. Prune after flowering to have a full bushy shrub. With a strong distinctive taste and aroma, sage must be used sparingly in foods. While many use it in their Thanksgiving dressing/stuffing, it can also be used in sausages, salads, poultry, potatoes and other vegetables, soups, stews, pickles, vinegar, and green sauces.

9. Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*)

This hardy, evergreen perennial has nice blooms. It also has varieties with different flavors, flowers, scents, leaf appearances and growth habits. It likes full to partial sun. Use this herb in Italian cuisine, soups, stews and meats.

10. Salad Burnet (*Potarium sanguisorba*)

This evergreen has a mild cucumber flavor. It grows easily and makes a pretty hanging basket. It makes a wonderful cucumber flavored vinegar.

Like Dill, Cilantro/Coriander, Parsley? These are cool season herbs so put them on your TO PLANT THIS FALL list.



Basil



Chives



Marjoram



Sage



Mint



Rosemary



Oregano



Thyme



Salad Burnet



Scented Geranium

TIPS:

- Herbs are used in small amounts so there is no need to plant large quantities of any herb. Only a few plants can provide enough fresh and dried herbs for one kitchen to use.
- Most herb plants need good air circulation so don't pile on the mulch when planting 4-inch herbs. For the Mediterranean natives such as rosemary, sage and thyme, try a layer of gravel around them to reduce stem rot and improve drainage.
- To avoid fungal diseases, do not use lawn sprinklers where herbs are planted
- Herbs do need fertilizer so mix a balanced, slow-release organic fertilizer in the soil at planting time and then sprinkle it on the soil every 3-6 months.
- The best way to keep herbs in great shape is to use them in your kitchen. Be sure to cut off their blooms to save more energy for the leaves.
- Never prune more than one-third of any herb at one time.
- Consult your local County Extension Office for soil preparation, fertilization and other good garden practices.

HARVESTING:

- Fresh is best. Just snip what is needed.
- Freezing is the best way for freshness and flavor preservation. Remove leaves from washed and dried (!) herbs and pack them into a processor or blender. While processing, pour olive oil in until it makes a paste-like consistency. Pack in containers and store in the freezer. When cooking, just spoon out what is needed.
 - Drying herbs is popular. Wash and dry herbs then tie in small stem bundles. Hang in a cool, dry, dust-free location.
 - Or you can spread leaves evenly on a cookie sheet and back at 100 degrees until leaves are crumbly. Leaving the oven door ajar will help keep the oven from getting too hot.
 - Start collecting recipes using your kitchen garden herbs and try them on your family.
 - Pick your herbs early in the a.m. or later in the p.m. for best freshness.

How happy your kitchen will be to have its own special garden and YOU get to accept all the compliments!

Meet MG Linda Steber and her beautiful home garden



By Pat Forke
MG 2010

What a beautiful home and landscape and what a gracious hostess! The few hours spent interviewing our fellow Master Gardener Linda Steber was delightful.

Linda has been a Galveston County Master Gardener since 1991 and happened into the program in an unusual way. Patsy Jewell, Linda's sister, was being interviewed by Dr. Johnson. Patsy said she would only go into the program if her sister Linda was also accepted. Dr. Johnson must have had a

premonition of what a benefit these two ladies would be to our GCMG program and accepted them both!

Linda's landscape is as varied and colorful as she is. In her garden you will find potted plant arrangements, a bird feeding area (which also seems to be enticing for the squirrels), stained glass pieces done by her husband Rich, a bubbling fountain and areas to sit in the shade and enjoy the view. In the background are beds of assorted groundcovers, blooming perennials and annuals, and an assortment of trees. Succulents are very prevalent in Linda's landscape and she says she particularly enjoys their low maintenance. Linda has many plants in her garden, such as lantana and nandina, that came as starters from her mother.

Linda's mother was a very successful gardener who could grow anything and always had a beautifully landscaped yard. Linda is a BOI (born on Galveston Island), was raised in Texas City and now lives in Dickinson. Her great-great-grandparents settled in Galveston in the 1850's. Linda's grandmother at age 10 survived the 1900 storm on Galveston Island. Her two sons and families live in the Katy area. Linda and Rich particularly enjoy spending time with their grandson Joey.

Linda has without a doubt played a major role in the success of the GCMG Association. She has been actively involved in many aspects of our organization. Initially Linda worked in the Extension Office, but she teases that she somehow worked her way out of a paid position and now into a volunteer position. She headed up our semi-annual plant sales for many years. Linda creates graphic artwork for our website and serves as one of our online Volunteer Hour Reporting Coordinators.

Linda has worked for over 20 years on our award-winning *Gulf Coast Gardening* newsletter. She has led our newsletter team as our publication has grown from a one-page black and white newsletter to a 28-page full color publication. She was also instrumental in moving our newsletter into the digital age as we went from mailing 200 copies of our newsletter to our current on-line newsletter with over 500,000 downloads in 2016. Linda was nominated as Outstanding Individual Master Gardener of the Year in the extra-large association category and was awarded second place at Master Gardener State Conference held on May 1, 2017.

When I asked Linda what she enjoyed most about being a Master Gar-

dener, she said, without hesitation, that it is working with Dr. Johnson. Linda went on to say that for over 20 years she has always felt as if Dr. J brings out the best in all MGs, that he knows as a team we are capable of doing great things, and is so supportive. Linda feels as if an organization is only as good as it's leader and that GCMG is the best because we have the best leader. I know many agree with Linda and might add that Dr. J, as an example, sets the bar high for all of us.

Linda said she also enjoys the many educational opportunities within the Master Gardener program and enjoys sharing this information with others.

In addition to Linda's volunteer activities with GCMG, she also is on the board of The Friends of Moody Gardens. She loves to cook, read and needlepoint. She and Rich love to travel, workout with their personal trainer, work in the yard (mostly pulling weeds – her area of expertise) and following their grandson to all his sporting events.

Rich is retired and enjoys several creative activities including woodworking and stained glass.

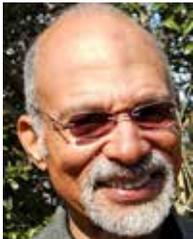


Tool Time - Weeders



By Barbra Markey
MG 2013

When you learn to recognize a weed, from your Weeds 101 class, then you see them everywhere. I do not know about your house, but my house seems to have an abundance of those pesky irritants. I am always pondering ways to rid myself of them and thinking of the best tool for removal. I do not always consider traditional weeding tools, since I realized I



By Henry Harrison III
MG 2011

can locate these tools, in unsuspecting places, by thinking differently.

Go into your kitchen, locate your spreader - the one you use to spread mayonnaise or mustard. I'm speaking of the one about 7" in length, with a stainless steel blade measuring about 3 3/4" long, with the serrated blade and oak handle. This is a perfect crevice tool, is easy to use, and does a super job removing weeds. No need to purchase those commercial ones with composite handles, as you already have a precise one.

Old kitchen knives from your drawers or ones found at a garage sale for 25¢ or so, can be ground down, sharpened, and used as a weeder, particularly in a very large container. They slip into tight spaces with extraordinary efficiency; plus, they easily store in your tool bag.

Small hand cultivators, like those found in those small canvas bags, can be useful. Remember those weeds covering the top of your flower beds last spring? Drag the cultivator over the top of your bed and watch weeds turn loose and stick to your tool. Such a feeling of accomplishment, with minimal labor, is always comforting.

Then there is that old, tired screwdriver discovered in the bottom of your tool chest. Dig around, find it, and put it to good use. If yours is missing, hit a garage sale and locate one for 50¢ or less. Don't be skeptical, just look; I have seen them as cheap as 10¢. Track down one with a stainless steel blade and oak handle. It will perform well, especially when you have a need to dig deeply to remove a very stubborn weed.

If you feel more comfortable with a "bought" weeder, then consider a Japanese hand scythe, in use long ago, as in Mesopotamia. They are easily located, are relatively cheap, and of reasonable quality. The curving edge allows deeper penetration, under a particularly tenacious weed. Most have serrated edges, which are helpful for removing large sections of grass, if used like a sickle. This very old tool has a long history and still serves a very valuable purpose today.

Perhaps the most interesting weeder, at least fascinating to me, is a commercially manufactured one of stainless steel. It is about 12" long with 2 prongs at the end, resembling a fork. Intriguing for me is the stainless steel cuff about midway the handle. This cuff provides leverage when dealing with very long, very stubborn tap roots - planted by your neighborhood squirrels. If ever a perfected tool was created for success, this is the one.

Go exploring and make a find!



July/August "THINGS TO DO"

Gardening Calendar Video

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



by Jenifer Leonpacher
MG 2010



by Gregory Werth
MG 2012



easy recipes

Seasonal Bites



By Sandra Gervais
MG 2011

Sometimes we are victims of our own success. Our current tomato season is a good example. The beauties just keep on coming small cherry tomatoes, firm pointed tomatoes, huge slicer tomatoes, large kidney shaped tomatoes, pink-hued tomatoes. Sigh. This happens when you plant tomato “determinate” varieties all at the same time; most of them will fruit in the same three-four week period. So we end up with a glut of tomatoes all at once and then almost nothing.



Tomatoes Grown by MG Interns • Photo courtesy MG Ira Gervais

Simple Baked Tomatoes

Core and cut bottoms flat. Slice tomatoes horizontally into thirds. Put one layer deep in greased baking dish. Sprinkle liberally with either bottled Italian salad dressing or homemade balsamic dressing. Season to taste with salt, pepper, Italian herbs or whatever is in the garden. Top off with grated Parmesan cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes or until soft. (Note: bake time depends on type and ripeness of tomatoes so it can vary. Decide how cooked you like the tomatoes and also what herbs you prefer.)

Here is Joy Edwards' recipe for fresh Marinara Sauce. It's easy, uses 5-6 pounds of tomatoes and freezes well. She peels and processes her tomatoes before cooking. To make it easier and also preserve nutrients, she just roughly chops them, skin and all. When cooked and cool, she uses her hand immersion blender until nice and smooth.



There are a couple of easy ways to solve this problem. One is to stagger planting the “determinate” tomatoes by a few weeks so that tomato production will also be staggered. Or pick some varieties that produce later to give you a steady stream of tomatoes over a longer period. Another idea is to use some “indeterminate” varieties which will produce over a longer period and will produce further into summer. Of course, then you'll be fighting stink bugs, heat, and critters. No surprise there.

For dealing with the present tomato glut, here are some easy ideas:

- Add tomatoes to meat when cooking, either in oven or on stovetop. This helps to tenderize the meat and adds rich flavor to gravy.
- Add to grilled cheese sandwiches, along with ham, mushrooms, peppers.
- Make a simple quiche using a store made pie shell. Slice tomatoes on top, sprinkle on herbs, and bake.
- Get out your favorite salsa recipe and make enough to share. Roma tomatoes are good for this.

And here is an easy recipe, especially good with baked pork roast or chicken.

Fresh Tomatoe Marinara Sauce

4 tablespoons olive oil
2/3 cup chopped onion
3 teaspoons minced garlic

Sauté in large pot until soft.

Add:
5-6 pounds of chopped tomatoes
12 ounces tomato paste (not sauce!)
4 tablespoons parsley flakes
2 teaspoons oregano
3 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
3 tablespoons Italian seasoning
3 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons basil (dried)
1/2 cup chicken broth
1/2 cup red wine

Mix well and simmer for 1-1/2 hours, stirring occasionally. Check seasoning and adjust. (Remember, it has to be flavorful since it's going on pasta. Add salt and spices to suit your taste buds.) When cool, blend as smooth or chunky as you desire.

Yields about 80 oz.



The Discovery Garden Update



By Tom Fountain
MG 2008

The name of our garden has been changed from Demonstration Garden to The Discovery Garden and a new sign has been installed at the entrance. Rachel is putting a coat of paint on the frame (Fig. 1).

Around the Galveston County area, temperatures have continued a couple of degrees above normal so far this year. Rainfall on the other hand has been a little spotty, but on average remains slightly above normal. The weather outlook for Southeast Texas continues to indicate above normal temperatures and rainfall near normal for the summer. Also, hurricane season is upon us and this year is expected to be very active, so BE PREPARED!

Garden temperatures are back into the 90's again! This combined with our humidity will be pushing the "feel-like" temperatures well into the 100's, making it dangerous to be outside working, so be sure to take it easy, take breaks, and drink plenty of water. Wes and Jenni are taking a water break and visiting under one of the arbors in The Discovery Garden (Fig. 2).

The aquaponics garden facility is almost finished. This is due in part to the tireless efforts of Robin, Henry, Sharon and Rachel who lead this effort. The pumps, tanks, and grow beds will soon be installed and then it will take some time and effort to get the water in the fish tank balanced and to start production. Help is always needed on a startup project, so if you have an interest in aquaponics or want to lend a hand please see Robin, it will be appreciated. Sharon and Robin (Fig. 4) are unfolding the shade cover for the hoop house. Jim and Kenneth are installing electrical, outlets while Bobby looks on (Fig. 3).

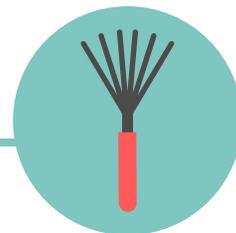
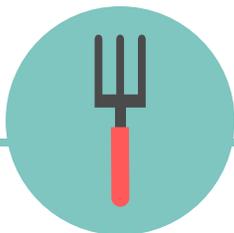
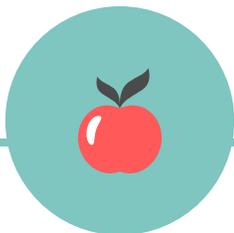
We recently had an impromptu visit from Galveston County Commissioner Joe Giusti (Fig. 5) who was greeted by Henry, Alice and Sharon. He seemed to be impressed with our little garden, thanks to all of you.

It's always busy at the garden and summer is no different. Jim is making mulch out of mounds of potato vines and cabbage plants (Fig 6). There is always a lot more to do like watering, weeding and mulching. Try to stay hydrated, stay safe and have a great summer!



Photos courtesy of Tom Fountain





REMEMBER

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 approved means. Contact MG Wayne Elliott at gcmghours@gmail.com for more information.

Date	Name of Program	Speaker	MG CEUs
1/5/2017	Collection of Dormant Graftwood	Herman Auer & Sue Jeffco	1.25
1/5/2017	Veg of the Wk.: Broccoli & Cauliflower	Barbara Lyons	0.50
1/7/2017	Wedge Grafting	Sue Jeffco	2.50
1/7/2017	Propagation of Plants by Cuttings	Bill Cummins	1.00
1/11/2017	Highlights of Soil Solarization Study	Gene Speller	0.25
1/14/2017	Growing Great Tomatoes (Part 2)	Ira Gervais	2.00
1/14/2017	Successful Spring Vegetable Gardening	Herman Auer	2.50
1/17/2017	Gardening by the Square Foot	John Jons	1.50
1/19/2017	Fig Tree Pruning & Propagation	Terry Cuclis	0.50
1/26/2017	Veg of the Wk.: Cabbage & Brussels Sprouts	Barbara Lyons	0.50
1/28/2017	Growing peaches in Galveston County	Herman Auer	3.00
1/28/2017	Kitchen Gardening	Mary Demeny	2.50
1/31/2017	Anyone Can Grow Roses	John Jons	1.50
2/4/2017	Growing Backyard Citrus	Robert Marshall	3.00
2/4/2017	Growing Blueberries	Dr. David Cohen	1.25
2/10/2017	Spring Plant Sale Pre-Sale Preview	John Jons	1.00
2/11/2017	Growing Avocado & Papaya	Jerry Hurlbert	2.00
2/11/2017	Soil Health & Evaluation	Jim Gilliam	2.00
2/23/2017	Rose Pruning	John Jons	1.25
3/9/2017	Veg of the Wk.: Radishes	Barbara Lyons	0.50
3/11/2017	Bonsai	Clyde Holt	2.50
3/11/2017	Composting	Jim Gilliam	2.00
3/18/2017	Tomato Stress Management	Ira Gervais	2.25
3/18/2017	Culture & Care of Palms	O.J. Miller	2.00
3/25/2017	Turning Dirt Into Soil	Jim Gilliam	2.75
4/13/2017	Grafting Pecan Trees	Herman Auer & Sue Jeffco	1.25
4/25/2017	Beneficials in the Garden	Dr. William Johnson	1.50
5/4/2017	Veg of the Wk.: Potatoes	Barbara Lyons	0.50
5/6/2017	Tool Time	Tim Jahnke, Henry Harrison	3.00
5/11/2017	Veg of the Wk.: Okra	Barbara Lyons	0.50
6/1/2017	Veg of the Wk.: Sweet Corn	Barbara Lyons	0.50
6/3/2017	Plumeria	Loretta Osteen	2.00
6/15/2017	Veg of the Wk.:Squash	Barbara Lyons	0.50
6/20/2017	Current Challenges in Horticulture	Dr. Mike Schnelle	1.00
2017 Recertification Hours for MGs		Total CEUs (Hours)	52.75



Master Gardener Graduation

2017 Snapshots



By Mary Lou Kelso
MG 2000



June 13, 2017

The Master Gardener Graduation and Recognition Ceremony took place on Tuesday, June 13, 2017, in the beautiful backyard of MG Mikey and Allen Isbell. GCMGA President Ira Gervais opened the program and welcomed everyone present. Dr. Johnson then introduced members of the MG Intern Class of 2017. Galveston County Commissioner Ken Clark assisted Dr. Johnson and GCMGA President Ira Gervais in presenting the Texas Master Gardener Certificates to the MG Graduating Class of 2016.

Dr. Johnson proceeded to then recognize several Master Gardeners with *Making a Difference* plaques for their volunteer service provided over calendar year 2016. Those recognized were Gayle McAdoo (JMG program leader), Linda Steber (MG Newsletter Editor and State MG Award recipient), Robin Collins (MG Newsletter production); Billy Decker (assistance at the Extension Office and Discovery Garden); Penny Bessire – (recordkeeping for *Gulf Coast Gardening* educational programs); Nita Caskey (Vice President for Media Relations); Mary Lou Kelso (Event Coordinator for Master Gardener State Conference at Moody Gardens on May 1 and May 2); Ira Gervais (GCMGA President); and Sandra Gervais (Welcome Committee Chair for Master Gardener State Conference at Moody Gardens).

Commissioner Clark provided a presentation on the economic and educational impacts that Master Gardeners have on Galveston County.

Mikey Isbell thanked Mary Lou Kelso for serving in the leadership role of House Chair for her home during the Galveston Historical Homes Tour held over the first two weekends of May. Mikey also thanked the 67 Master Gardeners that Mary Lou recruited to serve as docents during Galveston Historical Homes Tour. Many of the MGs volunteered for two to three docent shifts and were so appreciated by both Mikey and Mary Lou!

Clyde Holt gave the blessing of the bountiful dinner.



Photos courtesy of Herman Auer



Upcoming Events - July-August 2017

Galveston County Master Gardener Educational Programs for Home Gardeners

The following Master Gardener 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

GPS location: 29.359705, -95.003591

For course reservations, call 281-309-5065 or email galvcountymgs@gmail.com

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

JULY

THE GREAT PEPPER EXTRAVAGANZA – Presentation & Tasting

Saturday, July 15 e-mail: galvcountymgs@gmail.com to pre-register
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon

Peppers are perhaps the most diverse of all the vegetables grown in home gardens. They may be sweet and mellow or fiery hot, depending on the variety, and are easy to grow. This presentation by GC Master Gardener Gene Speller includes backgrounds and origins of pepper plants; heat value classification (Scoville Units), how to start them from seeds, culture and growing tips, recommended varieties for this area, insect and disease control, and pepper uses. Gene will have a tasting display of salsa, pickled peppers, and pepper vinegar that he has prepared. He will also have his homegrown peppers available for tasting and comparisons. The general public is encouraged to bring in their own un-sliced peppers for taste comparisons.



ARRANGING FRESH AND ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS

Saturday, July 22 e-mail: galvcountymgs@gmail.com to pre-register
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Presented by GC Master Gardener Jackie Auer who will demonstrate and explain the basic techniques of fresh and artificial flower arranging. She has produced arrangements for the retail market, as well as for individuals.



AUGUST

GARDENING BY THE SQUARE FOOT

Tuesday, August 1 e-mail: galvcountymgs@gmail.com to pre-register
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Galveston County Master Gardener John Jons will present a workshop teaching the basics of small space gardening. Come learn how much you can grow in just a small 4'x4' garden. It includes basic design, planning, soil preparation, plant selection and establishment, as well as insect, pest, disease control, and general care. A great introduction to a gardening program.



A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO WEED CONTROL

Tuesday, August 15 e-mail: galvcountymgs@gmail.com to pre-register
6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

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

SAVE THE DATE!!

2017 FALL PLANT SALE

Seminar & Craft Sale

Saturday, October 14, 2017

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



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

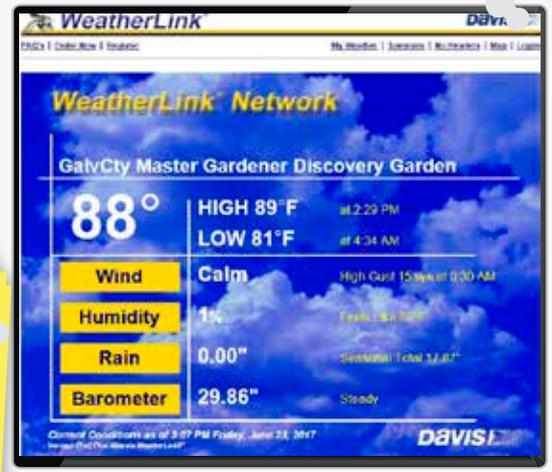
Please see the Texas Master Gardeners Website for details. By visiting the website you can find up-to-date information on Specialist Programs that were added in between editions of the newsletter. txmg.org. You may download the application forms from that website. **Note** all applications for the Specialist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

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Tour Guides for "First-Thursday-in-a-Month" Public Access and Tour of our Discovery 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
Denny Noh @ 281-723-2830 or dnoh@aol.com
Nancy Langston Noh @ 832-289-7087 or nancylnoh@aol.com

AgriLife Extension Office Discovery Garden needs volunteers!
The gardens around the AgriLife Extension Office are maintained by Master Gardeners under the team leadership of MG Ginger Benson. 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 Ginger at 281-309-5065, email galvcountymgs@gmail.com 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

Welcome to The Discovery Garden

Knowledge Not Shared is Knowledge Lost
GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS
Open on Thursdays, 9-11 a.m. • Other Days by Appointment • 281-309-5065



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

Retamas blossom after dry period when rainy

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint of Margaret's Tree Stories Series from the Galveston County Daily News



By Dr. Margaret Canavan
MG 2003

Recent rains have been a real gift to our trees. Our wet winter was followed by a relatively dry spring, so June rains have provided a boost that will help them thrive during our scorching summer and boom-or-bust rainfall season.

Rainy events following a dry period causes many flowering plants to rebloom. A tree that responds in this way is the Retama (*Parkinsonia aculeata*). In nature, Retama is a desert dweller, native from Texas south to northern South America and west to Arizona and knows how to take advantage of rainfall. It blooms primarily in spring, but rainy periods may cause intermittent flowering through autumn. Showy clusters of small bright yellow flowers resemble pea blossoms.

A particularly striking specimen on Postoffice Street at the corner of 15th Street. There are several others around town, which many were installed during NeighborWoods plantings.

Retama is a rapidly-growing mostly evergreen tree that can reach 15 to 20 feet in height. Its small leaves and multi-trunked growth habit create a graceful and lacy canopy that casts dappled shade. This desert survivor is a drought, heat and salt-tolerant and requires full sun and good drainage to thrive. It adapts to poor soils and a variety of weather conditions. Galveston is not a desert, but it can seem that way if summer rain eludes us.

One of Retama's common names is Paloverde, which is Spanish for "green pole" or "green stick," so named because the trunks and branches are green. The green trunk and branches perform photosynthesis even when leaves are dropped due to drought or extreme cold.

You may recall from science class that photosynthesis is the process by which green plants and some other organisms use sunlight to create food from carbon dioxide and water and generate oxygen as a byproduct. This is a boon for these trees when leafless during times of drought or extreme winter cold.

Retama is also known as "Jerusalem thorn," which suggests a certain prickliness. Indeed the native version of this tree has some impressive thorns. A modern thornless hybrid, "Desert Museum," is available in the nursery trade, but does tend to sell out quickly during planting season.

Bees and other pollinators adore this plant, and during blooming the tree will be swarming with them. Blossoms are followed by seed pods, which are a food source for small animals and birds. The plant's seeds have been used as a food source by some native people, and the wood is used for creating food implements.

Retama is popular as a landscape plant for its rapid growth, floral display and its open, airy canopy of bright green leaves and unusual green trunk. It can be a good choice for the right spot given Galveston's unpredictable rainfall. Trees are available in the nursery trade but can be propagated from seeds if you are patient. This true desert plant requires a

minimum in the way of cultivation, given the right growing conditions.

"Tree Stories" is an ongoing series of articles about island trees. Email treesforgalveston@gmail.com. Dr. Margaret Canavan is a Galveston resident, a Galveston County Master Gardener and a member of the Galveston Island Tree Conservancy Board.



the last word... Hurricane preparations should include landscape

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint of Dr. Johnson's Weekly Gardening Column in *The Daily News*



By Dr. William M. Johnson
CEA-HORT & MG
Program Coordinator

Hurricane season started June 1, and meteorologists and emergency operation center managers have three words of advice—prepare, prepare, prepare.

We all know that there are lots of things we need to do well in advance of a hurricane heading in our direction, from having adequate food and water on hand to getting important papers together for evacuation.

You have a family disaster plan for what you would do in case a hurricane strikes. You checked your disaster supply kit and obtained and/or replaced any needed items.

Our landscapes also require some attention and thought when it comes to preparing for and dealing with the aftermath of the high winds and heavy rains that hurricanes bring.

Do not wait for a major storm to form in or enter the Gulf before you carefully check large shade trees on your property to make sure they are in good shape and structurally sound.

Trees should be examined periodically for health and potential hazards.

In particular, look for any large dead branches in the trees. These should be removed, especially if they pose a threat to the house.

Also, look for branches that hang over the house near the roof. The high winds of hurricanes can cause trees to bend somewhat and branches to flail around considerably. These branches can cause extensive damage to the roof and generally should be removed.

Look for abnormal or unusual growth on tree trunks or limbs. If you see fungal growths that look like mushrooms (known as conks) on a tree trunk, then the trunk likely has heart rot or decay. The presence of this fungus is particularly serious if several conks are present.

To determine if the tree is unsafe, you need to know how extensive the decay is. Call a certified arborist immediately if you see conks growing around the trunk of a tree.

Cavities and hollows in trunks and branches are typically the result of decay that followed injury. The injury often occurred many years ago. If a tree has a cavity or hollow, have it checked by a competent arborist.

Hollow trees are not always at risk of falling down, so each situation must be carefully assessed.

A tree cavity is similar to a cavity in your tooth. Without proper treatment, the situation will only get worse.

Trees that are one-sided or leaning should be pruned to balance out the canopy. After the prolonged rain associated with many hurricanes, the soil may be so soft that trees can topple over if the weight is not properly distributed.

Look at the overall condition of the trees in your landscape. A tree that is sickly or low in vigor and shows significant signs of rotten or decayed areas in the trunk or termite damage should be cut down if it poses a threat to buildings.

If it's a large tree, you also should consider how it might affect neighboring properties.

It is best to have this kind of work done by professional, licensed arborists. Arborists are trained individuals who make a career of caring for the urban forest.

It's a good idea to contact more than one company and get estimates before you have the work done. And make it a point to be present when the work crew is there so you can make sure what is done is what you wanted.

Well before a hurricane threatens, if you are the organized sort, make a list of things outside that need to be brought inside and where to put them. Also make a list of things that need to be tied down.

Buy the necessary equipment, including anchors. Estimate how long it will take to secure things. You can make these lists part of your family's emergency plan.

Should a hurricane head our way, it's important to secure loose objects in your landscape. Look around your grounds for container plants, hanging baskets, tools, lawn furniture, porch swings, toys, bicycles, bird feeders, wind chimes, barbecue grills, playhouses and doghouses.

These items can become destructive missiles during high winds and should be stored indoors, in garages or sheds or anchored securely in place.

If you have removed the stakes from young trees planted within the past one to three years, consider re-staking them just before a hurricane to prevent them from blowing over. Make sure the stakes are driven deeply and securely into the ground.

Don't wait for a tree to let you know it is sick or dangerous. Be proactive. Look over your trees. If you see something suspicious, call a certified arborist. A healthy tree is a safe tree.

Now is the time to take care of these tree issues; do not delay



Do not wait for a major storm to form in or enter the Gulf before you carefully check large shade trees on your property to make sure they are in good shape and structurally sound. Cavities and hollows in trunks and branches are typically the result of decay that followed injury. A tree cavity is similar to a cavity in your tooth. Without proper treatment, the situation will only get worse.

Photo courtesy of Dr. William Johnson

2017 MGA Monthly Meetings



By Judy Anderson
MG 2012

July 11, 2017

6:30pm

The July Master Gardener Meeting will be a pot luck at the Extension Office with the program to follow. Tinsley Gwenshaffer, a Houston Police Officer, will share her experiences in gardening. She is an Urban Gardener with an interest in exotic, unique and hard to find plants that are representative of her travels and passion for a serene space in her life.



MG Judy Anderson thanks MGs for hosting backyard meetings.

You may contact Judy at
jande10198@aol.com
for information.



August 8, 2017

Our Annual August Meeting at Moody Gardens begins at 2:30 p.m.

For a cost of \$20 which includes:

2:30 p.m. MG Bus Shuttle to Greenhouse

3:30 p.m. Amazon 3D Movie as a group in the theater

4:30 p.m. Rainforest Tour by Donita Brannen

5:45 p.m. Dinner in Garden Restaurant Buffet - Visitor Center

6:45 p.m. Moody Gardens Hotel for Sunset Viewing in the Viewfinders Room top floor of Hotel with a Dessert Party and a Hotel Suite viewing

8:00 p.m. Door Prizes in the Viewfinder's Room

Moody Gardens is also offering a \$30 Day pass for MGs and their guests to go to all attractions (except Ropes Course).

Invitation will follow with details.

Don't miss this special event on the island.



FEEDBACK

We Want Your 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

