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GULF COAST *Gardening*

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"Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'"
— Robin Williams

Today as I write my article for the current newsletter it is the one of the two days of the year where the sun rises in the east and sets in the west for the entire world (on other days, the Sun rises either north or south of "due east" and sets north or south of "due west.")

It's the first day of Spring known as the vernal or spring equinox. The sun will shine directly on the equator, making the length of the day and night nearly the same. The word 'equinox' simply means 'of equal length.' The festival of the spring equinox speaks of freshness, excitement and endless possibilities. Early flowers bloom with the warming sun bringing color into our lives on the wings of a March wind (which, of course, blow all the blooms off my azaleas!).

Spring is one of our favorite times of the year to refresh our landscapes. It's also the time of the year we have an abundance of every gardener's opponent – WEEDS. Our Q&A articles in this issue feature two weedy annoyances, the Large Bur Clover and

ary freeze (page 13) and provides ideas on trees to consider for your yards.

Our Master Gardeners are diverse and talented. Please meet one of our favorite and amazingly gifted, in more ways than one, Denise Franke, on page 14. Who wouldn't like to travel with John Jons? He shares his visit to Kew Gardens in London, England on page 15 along with stunning photos in a YouTube video he made for us. This newsletter begins a new series featuring schedules and locations for Farmers Markets in Galveston County (page 16). Results from a recent survey of our MGs detailing what was lost and what survived during the freeze is highlighted on pages 20-21. It's a very interesting collection of data.

Continuing our series on how our Master Gardener's came by their talents, please enjoy page 17 where Marie Leal, Billy Decker and Sharon Zaal are showcased. Succulents are some of the most popular plants in our region. A review of a recent *Gulf Coast*



by Camille Goodwin
MG 2008



Henbit (pages 4 & 5). Learn about the beneficial but foul-smelling Stinkhorn fungi on page 6. Many gardeners love herbs and even have special theme gardens featuring them. Page 7 discusses many varieties of mint. Pick one for your landscape that is out of the ordinary.

Jan Brick's "By the Beach" story on pages 8-9 tells us about ways to protect our beach areas by growing plants in this challenging environment that are good for coastal preservation. Not since the 1970s have houseplants been so fashionable. Houseplants have again become essential elements of lifestyle design. I still have offspring spider plants and Christmas cactus plants from the '70s growing in my house. The article on page 10 explains how to keep houseplants happy inside your home.

Donna Ward provides several thoughts on landscape cleanup after our freeze, adding spring plants to bring color to your gardens and more than enough vegetables to plant now to feed your subdivision (page 12). Margaret Canavan fills us in on the state of vegetation on Galveston Island after the Janu-

Gardening seminar on succulents and what was learned is provided by Susan Meads-Leahy on page 22. We know we are beyond fortunate to have Dr. Johnson's leadership and friendship as our Extension Horticulture Agent. He was recently honored by The Texas A&M University's System's Chancellor and Board of Regents with presentation of the Regents Fellow Service Award, the highest honor given to Texas A&M System employees. Please read Julie Massey's article on page 18 that describes this award and Dr. Johnson's exceptional contributions.

Checkout a new recipe on page 24 and enjoy reading the Discovery Garden Update on page 23, our calendars and bulletin boards have been updated. In *The Last Word* (page 31) Dr. Johnson tells us about Crane Flies which I thought were useless until I read their role in nature.

Enjoy photos from our recent, very successful, plant sale on pages 26-28. Happy Spring Everyone!!

"Every spring is the only spring, a perpetual astonishment." — Ellis Peters

Inside This Issue...

- 2 *Intro* by MG Camille Goodwin
- 3 *How to Reach Us*
- 4 *Question and Answer - Large Bur-Clover* by MG Briana Etie
- 5 *Question and Answer - Weed Henbit* by MG Gene Speller
- 6 *Stinkhorns* by MG Robin Collins
- 7 *All About Mints* by MG Karolyn Gephart
- 8 *The Island Garden* by MG Jan Brick
- 10 *Foliage and Houseplants Trouble Signs* by MG Elayne Kouzounis
- 12 *Trowels and Tribulations* by MG Donna Ward
- 13 *Tree Story - Brown is the New Green* by MG Margaret Cananvan
- 14 *MG Interview Denice Franke* by MG Susan Meads-Leahy
- 15 *Kew Roses* by MG John Jons
- 16 *Farmers Market* by MG Trish McDaniel
- 17 *Green Genes* by MG Karolyn Gephart
- 18 *Board of Regents Award - Dr. J.* by MG Julie Massey
- 20 *Survey Results - What Froze - What Did Not*
by MG Pat Forke and MG Monica Martens
- 22 *Succulents Program* by MG Paula Spletter and Marilyn Hill
- 23 *The Discovery Garden* by MG Tom Fountain
- 24 *Seasonal Bites* by MG Sandra Gervais
- 25 *Recertification Hours* by MG Ginger Benson
- 26 *Plant Sale in Photos*
- 29 *Lunch and Learn*
- 29 *Minutes* by MG Bernice Shirey
- 29 *Upcoming Events* by MG Nita Caskey
- 30 *Bulletin Board* by MG Linda Steber
- 31 *Last Word - Crane Flies Look Like Texas Size Mosquitoes*
by Dr. William M. Johnson
- 32 *2018 Monthly Meetings and Invitation* by MG Judy Anderson



Cover:
Crane Fly
Photo courtesy Dr. William Johnson



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Thanks for your interest!

Q&A ask a master gardener

Weed of the Month: Large Bur-Clover



By Briana Etie
MG 2017

Lawns across Galveston County landscapes were uncharacteristically brown in mid-February after the arrival of freezing temperatures. Fast forward a couple of weeks thereafter and concerned homeowners are asking about the mounds of green growth that prominently stood out in otherwise drab brown St. Augustine lawns. What was this super weed in lawns that was doing so well despite February's freezing weather conditions?

Actually, there are several weeds that stood out in our browned lawns but one stood out in particular given its size and vigor. It's a cool season weed with a cool name: Large Bur-Clover. Large Bur-Clover is a close relative of white clover, which is a more well-known weed to gardeners. In fact, two species of Bur-Clover invade lawns in the Galveston/Houston region. Large Bur-Clover is the most commonly occurring species (*Medicago polymorpha*). The second species is commonly known as Little Bur-Clover (*Medicago minima*).

Both species are dicots (broadleaf plants) in the legume (Fabaceae) family and are closely related to the true clovers. Large Bur-Clover and Little Bur-Clover are native to Europe but were brought to the U.S.A. as grazing material (forage crop) for cattle. By late spring, stems of Large Bur-Clover grow to 2 feet in length and tend to trail along the ground, but may grow upright along fences. Flower clusters consisting of 3-to-5 flowers appear during late winter. Leaves are compound and consist of three leaflets.

In the Galveston/Houston growing region, Large Bur-Clover's blooming period is from February to June. Germination occurs in the fall season when temperatures are cooler. Large Bur-Clover reproduces from seeds contained in "burred" seedpods, as well as by spreading prostrate stolons, which allow it to tolerate close mowing, increasing its survival and spreading abilities. The exterior of burred seedpods have numerous velcro-like hooks that may become entangled in animal coats or human clothing, which serves as a common means of dispersal.

Preventive practices (such as proper turf management) are best in reducing infestations. Here in the Gulf Coast area, a lawn fertilization program based on a soil test will encourage growth of a dense, healthy turf, which will help inhibit this weed from becoming established. Pulling Large Bur-Clover by hand is effective if the whole plant (roots and top growth) is removed; this is best done after a heavy rain when roots are more easily removed without breaking. Mechanical or physical removal is not recommended when soil moisture levels are low because stolons and roots may break and re-sprout new growth, increasing rather than decreasing the infestation.

Pre-emergent herbicides like those contained in many types of "weed and feed fertilizers" may be used to prevent seed germination or kill weed seeds as they germinate in the fall. Timing of the application is critical for effective control. In the Galveston/Houston region, early October is recommended after the arrival of cool fronts as Large Bur-Clover seeds (like other types of

cool season weeds) start to germinate as soil temperatures start to cool as the fall season commences.

While weed and feed fertilizers for lawns can be an effective tool, they can stress or kill landscape trees and shrubs if applied under or near their drip line. Over-the-top spray herbicides or post-emergence herbicides like "broadleaf weed killers" may be used in the spring. If you choose to use a postemergence herbicide, do so when the Large Bur-Clover is actively growing. Apply a broadleaf lawn herbicide containing a combination of 2,4-D and MCPP and triclopyr as its active ingredients. More than one application may be necessary. To be most effective, the herbicide should be applied when temperatures are between 60 to 80 degrees, no rain is in the forecast for 24 to 48 hours, and no wind is present to drift herbicide spray onto non-target broadleaf plants.



Large Bur-Clover is a common weed pest in lawns in the Galveston/Houston region. Photo was taken on January 26, 2018 in Carbide Park.



Large Bur-Clover can be readily identified by its small pea-like yellow flowers and clover-like leaves.



The exterior of each seedpod has numerous velcro-like hooks that may become entangled in animal coats or human clothing which aides in seed dispersal.

Q&A ask a master gardener

Weed Henbit - Common Name

Lamium amplexicaule - Scientific Name



By Gene Speller
MG 1997

Article originally written by MG Peggy Wright in 2007.
Updated and edited by MG Gene Speller in 2018.

Q: During this past winter, my lawn was overgrown by these weeds that grow in clumps. They have purplish-colored trumpet-shaped flowers. What can I do to control them?

A: The weed in question is commonly known as Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*). While several other weeds are more commonly known and cause more widespread problems in lawns, henbit can spread aggressively if not properly managed. Henbit is commonly found in thinning lawns, bare spots and yard edges.

Henbit is native to Eurasia and Africa and is thought to have arrived in the U.S.A. in lawn seed during the 1920's. The name "Henbit" is derived from observations that it's a favorite meal for chickens. It is a broadleaf plant (dicot) that easily grows in clumps while your St. Augustine grass or bermudagrass lawn is dormant (Figure 1). Reproduction is primarily by seed, but it can reproduce from stems rooting at the nodes. Henbit is a winter annual. It is usually first observed during late winter and early spring in our Texas Upper Gulf Coast region. However, its seeds germinate during early fall upon the onset of cool temperatures.

Henbit is a member of the mint family and has flat four-sided (square) stems. The first true leaves are rounded and coarsely toothed with visible netted veins. On mature plants, lower leaves are attached to the plant by short stems (known as petioles). In the upper part of the plant (where flowers occur), the leaves lack petioles and attach directly to the primary stem (a "sessile" attachment). They also wrap around the stem. Leaves occur opposite each other (in pairs) along the stem and leaf margins. The attractive flowers are reddish (especially un-opened flow-



ers, Figure 2) to purplish when fully expanded (Figure 3), slender, tubular (trumpet-shaped), 2 lipped and 1/2 to 3/4 inch (13-19 mm) long. Flowers are produced in clusters of 6-12 flowers per cluster.

The flower clusters occur at the axil of a stem and upper leaves. The blooming period occurs during late winter through spring. During our mild winters, some plants also bloom during late fall for about a month. Each flower typically produces four triangular-shaped seed nutlets (Figure 4) and each plant can produce several hundred seeds per year!

Will henbit pose a problem in your lawn? If the population is small, enjoy the flowers briefly, but certainly do not let it set seeds. Hand-pulling is a viable means of control when only a few plants are involved. Maintaining a healthy turf (including proper fertilization) to provide competition will help deter weed establishment. Regular lawn mowing at the proper height can help minimize weed growth and reproduction. Remember, allowing a few plants with pretty flowers to go to seed can result in major infestations later!

If henbit is a more serious problem in the lawn, more aggressive control measures may be required. Pre-emergent herbicides (containing prodiamine as an active ingredient) provide good control of henbit. In Galveston County,



pre-emergent granular herbicides should be applied during the first two weeks of October prior to germination of target weeds. Post-emergent broadleaf herbicides (containing 2-4 D, Dicamba, and Mecoprop as active ingredients) can be successful if applied prior to flowering. The proper timing and application of both pre- and post-emergent herbicides are essential for optimal control. As with all pesticides, follow label directions carefully.

Don't like chemicals in your lawn? Then, the best option is to pull by hand prior to seed formation. Try some henbit in the kitchen. It's edible and reportedly has a mild-to-tangy "spinachy" flavor. You can also save henbit for the neighbor's chickens – they love it!

Stinkhorns - Nastiest. Mushroom. Ever.

A smelly but beneficial Fungi!



By Robin Collins
MG 2016

In January, our MG Garden HotLine received an interesting e-mail from a county resident inquiring about unusual growths found in her lawn (Fig. 1, Fig. 2 & Fig.3). Then MG Yvonne Enos found similar structures growing in the mulched beds around the Extension Office and inquired about them because she had noticed similar growths in her home landscape in Dickinson.

Dr. Johnson identified the growths as stinkhorns. We have come to learn from experience what will

follow after an identification is provided: do some research and learn more. And, of course this led Dr. Johnson to direct that we as Master Gardeners needed to share what we learned with all gardeners by way of our *Gulf Coast Gardening* newsletter.

During cool weather in winter and early spring, some homeowners in subtropical areas notice foul-smelling mushrooms popping up in their yard. Although their strong rotting smell is unappealing, these fungi, known as stinkhorns, are not actually bad for your landscape and can be beneficial.

How to identify a stinkhorn?

Stinkhorns are in the same order of fungi that includes puffballs and earthstars. There are approximately 22 members of this stinkhorn mushroom family with various species occurring in differing states.

How does a stinkhorn grow and/or reproduce?

Stinkhorn fungi begin as white, egg-like structures (Fig. 3) in mulch or other damp, decomposing material. Most of this fungal structure (known as mycelia) is underground and not visible. The egg-like structure is attached to the soil by a white cord. When adequate water is available, this egg-like structure will rupture (Fig 4) and the mature mushroom (the “stinkhorn”) will emerge and grow rapidly. In five or six hours one can grow 4 to 5 inches tall and about 0.5 inches in diameter.

The egg is now visible at the base of the mushroom. Unlike typical mushrooms, which depend on wind for spore distribution, the stinkhorn depends on insects to disperse its spores. After sprouting from the egg-like bulb, the stalks produce a slimy, carrion-scented spore coating near the tip. Flies, ants, beetles and other insects are attracted to the scent, and after feeding on it, they fly or carry off and disperse the spores to new locations. The morphology of

stinkhorns widely varies from stalk-like, globular, or latticed and is species specific. Stinkhorns vary in color but are usually pink to orange.

Depending on the species of stinkhorn, this mushroom (the fruiting body of a fungus) varies in color, and size. The most commonly occurring stinkhorn in the Texas Gulf Coast growing region is known as the Column Stinkhorn (*Clathrus columnatus*).

Describe the unique stinkhorn odor?

All stinkhorns produce foul odors, which some people describe as a putrid, rotting meat smell. The smell attracts insects which serve as spore dispersal agents to spread spores to new sites.

Are stinkhorns beneficial?

As a fungus, stinkhorns break down organic matter which is especially helpful for landscapes and gardens. In your garden, stinkhorns break down organic matter (such as mulch) and make those nutrients available for plants. Stinkhorns do not harm landscape plants.

How to manage stinkhorns?

Homeowners can take heart that stinkhorns are seasonal. Stinkhorn mushrooms usually appear for a few weeks only once or twice a year, and especially during wet, cool weather. Should your garden be afflicted with stinkhorns, take comfort in the fact that their reign is short-lived. They're not poisonous, so you can just let them be, and those spongy, hollow stalks will shrivel a day or two after their quick growth spurt.

Methods to deal with stinkhorns in your landscape?

- Remove decaying organic matter, especially sawdust piles, dead roots, underground stumps, and hardwood chip mulch.
- Handpick stinkhorns in the “egg” stage, put them in a zipper freezer bag, and throw them away.
- Tolerate them since they are short-lived. Try keeping your windows closed to minimize the odor problem.
- There are no registered fungicides for controlling stinkhorn fungi as chemical treatments are not a recommended or practical control method. Remember: stinkhorns contribute to the recycling of plant debris into nutrients that improve soil fertility and can be used by garden plants.



All About Mints

Growing Mint is easy, delicious and fun!



By Karolyn Gephart
MG 2017

A useful herb garden can make drinks and food dishes smile with flavor and one herb that is most popular for thriving in Galveston County is the mint plant. Mints are hardy perennials and are easy to grow.

Mint has two basic oils: peppermint and spearmint but there are more than two varieties. In fact, more than

2,000 mint varieties exist with 19 species all according to a grower's preference for flavor or scent.

Favorite varieties: apple, chocolate, English, peppermint, lemon-lime, spearmint, pineapple mint, orange mint, mojito mint, julep spearmint, Hillary's Sweet Lemon Mint (named after Former First Lady Hillary Clinton), and Kentucky Colonel Spearmint to name but a few. Based on the diverse selection of mints available, it's obvious that not all mints taste the same.

Where to plant: Plant mint in full sun or part shade.

Mint grows by underground root runners, and mint spreads quickly and easily. To contain it, grow mint in a large-wide container so it can't ramble through your garden space. If you want it in a garden area, you could put the container into the ground so the pot doesn't show but still keeps the herb contained.

You also can plant mint in a large half-barrel or plastic pot and leave it outdoors year-round. If you are determined to put it in the landscaping area, a good idea would be to encircle the plant's root area with metal trim. To say mint is aggressive and invasive is almost an understatement.

Mint can also be grown indoors. Plant the herb as you would outdoors, in a pot, and place in a room that gets a generous amount of sunlight. Soil preparation: Mint thrives in rich, moist, well-drained soil. Mint adapts to many soil types, but develops the best foliage in soil that has been enriched with a 2-inch-thick layer of compost.

Keep the plant well-trimmed and if you remove some of the root growth, replace the soil to keep the plant healthy. Mint must have good drainage. Build raised beds if the soil doesn't drain well so that roots won't sit in water.

Watering: Water at ground level.

Harvesting mint: The best way to keep your mint in shape is to use it. Cut off blooms when they appear to divert the plant's energy into leaf production. To keep their bright green color, use fresh leaves immediately or freeze them.

To air-dry mint, hang the stems upside down in small bundles or spread

them loosely in a small tray. When the stems and leaves become brittle, remove the leaves and flowers and store them in airtight containers.

Fertilizer: Mix a balanced slow-release organic fertilizer into the soil at planting and then it can be sprinkled over the mint's soil every 3-6 months. Over-fertilizing can diminish flavor and encourages mint to flower which reduces flavor and leaf production. Adding mycorrhizal amendments, which are naturally occurring fungi, can help healthy roots form also.

Pests and Diseases: Mint plants can have several pest problems, including diseases such as Verticillium wilt, mint anthracnose, mint rust, and insects such as spider mites, cutworms, flea beetles, root borers, and root weevils. Aphids are also a bother at times. To prevent foliar diseases, provide good air circulation to plants and well-drained soil. Use a spray from a garden hose to dislodge insects and spray the undersides of leaves where pests can hide.

Mint is a problem solver for many who seek deer resistant plants and plants that can serve as a groundcover and offer erosion control.

Birds love mint and bees are attracted to its blooms. Food and drinks are enhanced with mint and to the kitchen gardener, mint is a low maintenance herb that gives back to its owner on a daily basis.

Enjoy! It's a match "mint" to be.



Photos courtesy of MG Library

By The Beach

The Island Garden March 2018



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

Editor's note: This is a reprint of Jan's article in the Galveston Monthly magazine.

When one lives on a barrier island, the condition of and the maintenance of the beach are ongoing conversation topics among the locals and those who visit to enjoy the amenities of said beach. Who is ultimately responsible for the protection, the fortification and the defense of this treasure that lays at our feet? How can we assure that future generations will continue to enjoy this prize that

is many times taken for granted? Of course, there are untold numbers of groups and alliances including government entities that are entrusted, assigned and committed to that cause. But what can individuals do in a practical and effective manner to decrease the everyday progress of erosion and destruction? What plant life may be helpful in the reduction of loss and the increased possibility of natural accretion of the precious sand?

Consider not only vegetation on the dune sites themselves but what also may be installed as a border protection system in the expanse landward of them. Coastal sand dunes are an effort to provide some protection from storm surges and ocean waves to low-lying areas. Shrubs, grasses, vines and other flora are a vital component in any effort to construct and maintain a dune system and supporting areas behind them. Plants selected will be subject to heat, drought, salt spray and sand blasting as well as a limited supply of nutrients. Fortunately there are species that can survive under these trying conditions. The following are among those recommended by experts in coastal preservation.

Sea Oats (*Uniola paniculata*)

The ragged feathers of sea oats are the dominant plants seen growing on sand dunes along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. This tall beach grass whose seed plumes have been popular in home decorating is particularly salt tolerant and is used extensively in beachside restoration projects. Sea oats grow from creeping underground stems and are considered a native perennial grass. Their widespread system of roots and stems help to provide long-term stability to the berms and dunes and reduce erosion. Considered a critical component of dune establishment, *Uniola paniculata* can grow to heights of six feet in the summertime with clusters of seed heads that are dispersed by the action of the wind.

Gulf Muhly Grass (*Sporobolus poaceae*)

Gulf Muhly Grass is a perennial grass recognized by its flamboyant masses of three-foot tall plumage. A Texas native, it is said to be one of the most beautiful ornamental grasses available when it puts on a real show with flowers that look like a purple cloud. An easy to grow stiff upright clumping grass that is tolerant of salt spray and drought conditions, Gulf Muhly Grass produces plumes in colors of white, pink and purple and is perfect for natural open areas.

Panic Grass (*Panicum amarum*)

Taken from the Latin word panicum or the French word panis (bread), panic grass has been grown for fodder or grain. Also called running beach grass, it is a tall clumping, perennial with large wide leaves. The upright growth form will stand out when compared to other species growing nearby. Helping to secure the sand through the rapid extension of their deep-rooted rhizome systems, this valuable plant also reproduces through seed distribution. The fact that panic grass is attractive to bees, butterflies and birds gives another good reason to include it for beach areas.

Smooth Cordgrass (*Spartina patens*)

Another of the perennial grasses that are primary stabilizers, *spartina patens* aids in the securing of dunes or the grassy area behind the dunes with its thick matting roots. It is an erect grass standing one to four feet tall that is known as well-adapted to sandy-clay soils and will tolerate occasional inundation by storm tides.

Sea Purslane (*Sesuvium portulacastrum*)

Also called sea pickle and a member of the carpetweed family (*Molluginaceae*), sea purslane is often found on the beaches along the Gulf Coast. It is a low growing ground cover with pink star-shaped flowers and fleshy leaves that requires little care. A creeping perennial that spreads along the ground forming large mats of branches, sea purslane is delicate in nature and may be easily obliterated by foot traffic. In parts of the world the sea pickle is grown as a vegetable and has been used in the treatment of some medical disorders.

White Morning Glory (*Ipomoea stolonifera*)

Commonly called the fiddle-leaf morning glory, this plant can quickly spread along the ground for long distances. Thick glossy green leaves make an elegant backdrop for its three-inch wide white funnel-shaped flowers. Blooming through summer and fall, the blossoms open in early morning and close before noon.

Red Morning Glory (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*)

The red morning glory, commonly called railroad vine, is a trailing vine that spreads rapidly across sand sending its deep roots as anchors against the wind and waves. Succulent runners may reach up to thirty feet in length. One of the most popular of the beach plants, the railroad vine is used extensively throughout the world. Its attractive purple flowers bloom at sunrise then close by mid-afternoon. Although the red morning glory may appear to die off in the winter, the underground stems will sprout when warm weather conditions return.

Seashore Elder (*Iva imbricate*)

The seashore or beach elder is found in coastal dune systems from Virginia to Texas. This is a plant that is prized for its ability to accumulate sand and thereby producing low, rounded mounds. The elder is a woody shrub up

to three feet or more in height with upright stems, bright green leaves and small lavender flowers that appear in late summer. It is helpful in assisting in the preservation of as well as adding to the diversity of the landscape. Collecting and rooting cuttings from around existing plants can easily accomplish propagation of the beach elder.

The beachside is exposed to constant drying winds and salt spray along with the inescapable sandy soil. The heat, wind, near-drought conditions, torrential rain showers and rising tide, as well as the threat of hurricanes can be daunting. The more exposed your area is, the fewer choices you will have for landscape plants. Wind breaks such as dunes, berms and mounds will afford some protection for gardens and beds further back from the beach itself. Utilizing native or naturally adapted plants is encouraged, as well as the inclusion of trees, shrubs, vines, and grasses that already exist in your particular surroundings. Seek out examples of hardy plants in neighboring landscapes.

Protecting the beach front is essential in order to preserve its natural character and because it provides erosion control and flood protection. Sand-binding plants play an important role in the formation, development and maintenance of this area. If these plants are destroyed, eventually the sandbanks and beachfront berms themselves can be lost, leading to severe damage to the beach and risk to coastal properties. These are temporary and fragile formations that help to preserve the integrity of low barrier islands. Unfortunately, they are also subject to the whims of the general public; driving or walking on them must be discouraged as these activities damage and destroy the tenuous hold of the root systems. The delicate nature of beach structures must be respected, as their very existence is dependent upon concerted efforts to maintain and sustain them while attempting to insure their chances of survival.



Gulf Muhly Grass



Panic Grass



Red Morning Glory



Sea Purslane



Sea Oats



Seashore Elder



Smooth Cord Grass



White Morning Glory

Foliage and Houseplants - Problem Signs



By **Elayne Kouzounis**
MG 1998

When plants do not thrive as they should, they often show visible clues as to what is ailing them. Once the plant's trouble is known, it usually can be corrected. Sometimes though, we are very anxious to start looking for such troubles and trying to correct them. For instance, as soon as a leaf starts to yellow, or a brown spot appears, we try to remedy it immediately. Most often we think the plant needs fertilizer or a household pesticide. **WRONG!!!**

In most cases the plant's problem is related to a simple cultural practice. I will mention a few of the most common symptoms resulting from improper cultural practices. These symptoms can be corrected by the changes in the growing methods (i.e., cultural practices). Insufficient light exposure and low-fertility soil can produce leggy weak growth. When soil becomes compacted, it should be aerated with a fork. Physiological adjustment occurs when a plant raised in the nearly ideal conditions of a temperature-controlled greenhouse or cool, shaded nursery field in a warmer section of the country is brought into the home. The plant suffers "shock."

Often a plant drops a few older leaves as it acclimates to the new environment (Photo 1). This is particularly true of gift plants sold for the holiday seasons. When this occurs, simply pull off the yellowed leaves and continue normal care, watering the plant regularly as needed. If, however, leaf yellowing continues for a longer period than seems reasonable, move the plant to a place where the lighting is different and change the watering schedule. Overwatering fills the porous spaces of the soil with water instead of air and thus prevents a plant's roots from getting the oxygen it needs for proper growth. This lack of oxygen, usually accompanied by a leaching of soil nutrients, often damages roots and endangers the plant.

Yellow leaves are signals (Photo 2). To remedy oversoaked soil, withhold watering until the plant almost wilts, then you can gradually begin a new watering program. After about a week or two, apply a water-soluble houseplant fertilizer. If the plant is still doing poorly, repot it in a fresh soil.

Hunger, or lack of nutrients (especially nitrogen), is typically indicated by a gradual yellowing of leaves (Photo 3). The yellowing usually begins at the outer edges of a leaf and then spreads to the whole leaf. Sometimes the soil only needs fertilizer, but more often the nutrient shortage is the result of the plant having outgrown its pot. The roots need more soil from which to get nutrients. Applying fertilizer is a quick remedy for a pot-bound plant, but the longer-term remedy is to repot by shifting the plant to a pot one size larger than the one in which it is growing. Small leaves are a complaint most often heard from those who are growing philodendrons (Photo 4).

As new leaves appear, they are smaller and smaller. The reason most likely





is too low light exposure. Try moving the plant to a brighter location. Also keep the leaves free of dust by rinsing them off frequently in a sink, using room-temperature water. When I know I will be watering I always fill a container with water the night before, so the water is not a shock to the plant. Another way to encourage larger leaves is by rinsing the plant which will give the plant periodic increases in humidity. This may seem contradictory but too much light can also cause smaller leaves. This may occur with African violets that are in a bright, sunny south window with no relief from the hot sun's rays (Photo 5). Do try a new location for such plants.

Leaf spots on foliage plants are usually the cause of too much sun. When this happens consistently move the plant to a place where it gets less sunlight. Spattering the leaves of any plant with hot or very cold water droplets may also cause spotting. Hairy-leaved plants, such as African Violets, are especially sensitive to cold-water droplets.

Brown-edged leaves are often the result of careless tending (Photo 6). Perhaps the plant has been neglected and the soil has been allowed to dry out frequently. The soil has been flooded with water damaging the plant's roots. Brown edges also occur when a plant near an open window or door is exposed to cold drafts. Another cause is the accumulation of fertilizer salts on the edges of pots. When leaves rest against this, they develop a brown edge. Scrub the edge of the pot and in the future remember to flush the soil with water to reduce excessive accumulations of salts.

Leggy plants occur when stems become overly long because they are reaching for more light or because they are growing in a room that is too warm (Photo 7). Move your plants to a brighter and cooler location. No flowers may be the result of overfeeding plants to induce lush foliage. Withhold fertilizer applications, especially during winter months. Sometimes an abrupt break in routine, such as drying off of the soil for a short time or a change of light exposure will cause a "lazy" plant to flower. Flower-booster fertilizers are recommended for plants that are not overfed.

No growth is usually a sign of insufficient light. The plant exists in a languid state, neither producing new leaves nor growing larger. Many plants are sensitive to low light.



Trowels & 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 Ward
MG 1996

Do kids still fly kites? When my boys were little, March meant taking their kites to the local park's huge open area and letting the wind carry the colorful kites upward as high as the yards and yards of string would allow.

I think March now means - How can I get more Facebook friends this month than I did in February? But for us older folks, especially those interested in one of America's best-loved hobbies, what's on our 'to-do' list now that

spring is knocking on our door? Well, I'm glad you asked, but first some interesting statistics.

Millennials (ages 18-34), are the fastest growing population segment of food gardeners. Who would have guessed? Among all age groups, food gardening and flower gardening were the most popular gardening activities last year. In the gardening population about one out of three households planted vegetables (36 percent) and a few less planted flowers (34 percent). Veggies beat out flowers!!! Americans spent an estimated \$3.6 billion growing vegetables, fruit, berries and herbs and \$2.7 billion on flower gardening.

But before we start planting there's a lot of cleaning up we need to do. Most of our yards look like a plant cemetery - the cold winter certainly left its mark on our landscape. At this time of the year, if it's brown, cut it off is my advice, but don't be too anxious to yank everything out of the ground. I suspect it didn't stay cold long enough to destroy most root systems. If it's not showing green by mid-April, start shopping for its replacement.

Looking for a little color to plant now? Coleus, lantana, plumbago, verbena, salvia, hibiscus, bluebells, marigold, penta, impatiens just to name a few.

Trees should be fertilized in March along with your shrubs and roses. The flowering shrubs should be fertilized after they have bloomed. You know me, I'm not for filling the garage with bags and bags of different fertilizer formulations. Unless you're talking about some finicky plants such as azaleas, roses, camellias and hibiscus, a good old 15-5-10 is my formulation of choice.

If you haven't already, consider joining that 36 percent of gardeners who planted vegetables last year. Believe me there are plenty to go into the ground in March. Set in transplants of broccoli, cabbage, peppers and eggplant. Some of us already had corn planted and a tomato plant or two. You might have had to cover those tomatoes when we had a cold night, but they now have a head start and will produce as long as the night time temps don't get too warm.

I don't know why, but those little grape and cherry types produce longer

than the 'slicers.' Time to put in cucumbers, green beans, lettuce, mustard greens, radish, summer squash, kohlrabi, collards, wax and snap bush beans, Lima pole and snap pole beans, and southern peas.

If you still have some room, put in pumpkins and watermelon. Being a Yankee, I'd never heard of southern peas, but found out soon enough that black-eyed peas, purple hull, crowder and cream peas fall into that category. All of these can be eaten either fresh or dry. Harvest them before the pods begin to turn yellow and the seed is still tender, or allow them to mature and use them as dry shelled beans.

When you have finished your gardening chores, cleaned and put away the tools, load up the kids or grandkids and take them and their kites and head for McNair Memorial Park (named in honor of Space Shuttle Challenger Astronaut Ronald McNair) in El Lago. We have a great open space that is ideal for kite flying. Meet you there!



Anaheim Peppers



Black Wax Beans



Sweet One Mill

Photos courtesy of Donna Ward

Tree Stories:

Brown is the New Green



By Margaret Canavan
MG 2003

Galveston's recent freeze was not actually all that cold as freezes go. Plants that survived 25 degrees in 2011 could not handle the same low in January. Why the difference? The 21.5-hour duration of the freeze compounded the stress already placed on vegetation by the low temperature.

What we have now is a landscape that looks very brown. There is an upside to this: we can really see our trees. Once we move past the grief at losing tender plants, we have the opportunity to clearly observe the trees in home and public landscapes.

Some of our trees are deciduous, and drop their leaves for winter even in warm years. The pecan is an example of that, beautiful but cautious and seemingly the slowest to leaf out in spring, and among the first to let go in fall. In their leafless condition we can observe their graceful shape and look for damaged limbs or those that need pruning.

We might consider adding a deciduous tree to the landscape that will provide winter interest. The bare structure of the small crepe myrtle can be particularly lovely if not deformed by "crepe murder" pruning. Sycamore and lacebark elm are both large fast growers and have beautiful bark which draw our attention with color and artful designs. Cottonwood's unusual ropy bark stands out when leaves are absent.

Some deciduous trees we are better off without, especially Chinese tallow and Arizona ash. The former is best removed due to their invasive nature and the latter should be enjoyed during their limited life span due to their tendency toward disease and limb breakage.

Some semi-evergreens are showing what "semi" means: brown leaves. My beautiful wild olive usually stays green year-round, but now is as brown as can be.

Evergreens are definitely winter showoffs. Norfolk pines tower over many home landscapes and are ridiculously easy to grow. Yaupons sport leaves as well as red berries beloved by birds. Palms are generally thriving, although we have lost many due to disease and some are odd-looking due to the discouraged "pencil-topping" style of pruning. Oleanders have generally fared well although there are a number around town that have browned, likely variants that lack the toughness of their still-green cousins. The majestic oaks' green canopies will soon be displaced

by new leaves, providing us with raking duties. Many citrus trees have suffered, but some (especially kumquats), are quite cold-hardy and still display glossy leaves and orange fruit. Magnolias, pines, Japanese yews, cherry laurels, and camphors appear unfazed by the weather and are attractive year-round.

This is a perfect time to observe and identify trees to consider for your home landscape. Local nurseries are preparing to provide some excellent choices. The Texas tree selector (<http://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu/>) is rich with information, and previous Tree Stories are accessible at galvnews.com.

So, now is the time to plan. Just don't get in a rush to remove brown plants that might show signs of life soon. Remember that green is just around the corner.

"Tree Stories" is an ongoing series of articles about island trees, tree care, and tree issues. If you have or know of a special tree on Galveston Island that should be highlighted, email treesforgalveston@gmail.com. Margaret Canavan is a Galveston resident, a Galveston County Master Gardener, and a member of the Galveston Island Tree Conservancy Board.

Editor's Note - this is a reprint of Margaret's Tree Stories from the Daily News



Meet Master Gardener - Singer, Songwriter Denice Franke



By Susan Meads-
Leahy - MG 2001

Always having a presence of music in her life thanks to her father's side of the family, she learned to play the guitar, write songs, sing and continues to pursue her musical interests to date. In the 70's she joined the Beacon City Band and after the band broke up she and Doug Hudson formed a duo called Hudson and Franke. She was also a backup singer for Nanci Griffith for many years. In 1989 she and Hudson toured extensively across the U.S, Ireland, and England as Griffith's opening act and background singers. In 1991, she traveled to 13 countries including the Netherlands, Germany and France. She has enjoyed many years being a part in the music industry; more importantly, the Texas music industry.

With such a wonderfully colored background of music, bands, travel, and fame, I asked Denice why she wanted to become a Master Gardener. After a significant pause - which told me there was a major event that precipitated her interest in the MG Program - Denice began to explain her interest in gardening piqued when she and her partner, Julie Ann Brown, purchased a home that was rebuilt in 1889 in Galveston. Her new home had an established garden that she loved but had no idea how to care for it all. Then along came Hurricane Ike which did considerable damage to her landscape as well as her surrounding friends and neighbors as well as most everyone else on the island.

Denice said she was overcome with a feeling of helplessness that she couldn't provide the information required to help people recover from this disaster. After volunteering with many other organizations, she discovered the Galveston County Master Gardener Program. Looking for a wealth of information to draw from, she applied to the program in

*Born and raised in Dallas, Denice Franke is a Texan by birth, not a Texan by choice. While she "got out of Dallas as soon as she could" because she couldn't do the "big hair," she didn't go very far as she moved to San Marcos to attend college. *****SIGNIFICANT PAUSE (see photo below) during our interview, everyone on the street, as well as patrons and staff from surrounding restaurants came out to stand with heart over hand for TAPS played by a Galveston Constable at the intersection of Post Office and 21st Street. This occurs every evening at dusk***** One more reason Galvestonians love our little slice of paradise.*



2010. Much to her surprise, she was accepted and embraced the GCMG Program and "tribe" just as a true gardener would.

One of the first things we hear from Dr. Johnson is – don't worry, you will find your "niche" in the program which is why we are taught and have mandatory requirements of the many different aspects our first year. Always being a "tree hugger," Denice found her niche. After Hurricane Ike in 2008, over 40,000 trees were lost due to the extensive flooding on the Island. First being music, she had now found her second passion in her life and an avenue to give back to her new community. According to Denice, many do not ever find their passion in life but she has realized passion can be such a blessing, if you embrace it, learn both from and about it and hold it dear to your heart.

Denice participated in the PBS television premiere of "For the Sake of the Song: The Story of Anderson Fair" with Lyle Lovett and many other singer/songwriters featured in the documentary. When she moved to Galveston no one in the community knew about her musical history. She told about attending a Lyle Lovett and John Hyatt concert at The Grand 1894 Opera House in Galveston. During the encore, he announced "one of my favorite singer/songwriters in Galveston is with us in the audience tonight" and invited her on stage tossing with him. Not knowing there were other Master Gardeners attending the same concert, the word was out.

Denice currently has her own landscaping business and works for the Bishop's Palace as well as other private clients in Galveston and continues to sing in various venues in Texas. She is scheduled to perform at the Third Coast Music Festival in Galveston on April 27 (www.thirdcoastmusicfestival.com)

The Roses of Kew Gardens in London, England



ByJon Johns
MG 2003

Kew Gardens is a botanical garden in southwest London that has the “largest and most diverse botanical and mycological collections in the world.” This includes over 30,000 different kinds of plants and more than 7 million preserved plant specimens. Located on Kew’s three hundred acres of gardens are eight different plant houses, four ornamental buildings, a palace, three galleries, a museum and a variety of plant collections, laboratories and libraries.

It even has its own police force. Not surprisingly, it is a World Heritage Site and one of London’s top tourist attractions.

Besides visiting Kew gardens to enjoy the gardens, my primary purpose on this visit was to view the rose gardens. Kew has had rose gardens since 1920. The last time I visited Kew was in the early 2000s. The rose gardens were updated around 2009 and I was eager to see the improvements.

Needless to say the gardens did not disappoint me. The roses were in full bloom. The garden had approximately 24 rose beds of different sizes that contain over 1,500 roses from more than 100 varieties. The collection includes species roses, old garden roses, rugosas, shrub, English Roses, floribundas and hybrid teas and climbing roses trained to pillars.

Like most great gardens, they are hard to simply describe in words. So, I took lots of photos and made a YouTube video titled the “Roses at Kew Gardens, London, England” (<https://youtu.be/o5Tyf9Ushm4>)

If you would like to see more garden and rose videos, please consider subscribing to my YouTube channel.

All photos © J. Jons 2017



Farmers Market - Come on Down!



By Trish McDaniel
MG 2001

We all value a job well done. We work hard to hone our skills in the ways of horticulture - in the classroom, Discovery Garden and our home gardens. Whether the stars line up or not, we are rewarded with satisfying results or knowledge gained by our mistakes.

Stepping out to local farmers markets is another way to marvel and benefit from jobs well done - by those who make the science of cultivation their living.

When we participate, we help support the common mission of these markets: to foster a sustainable program of agriculture and nutritional food economy within our community. Bonus!

Our own Kenneth Steblein (Master Gardener, Class of 1992), gone but not forgotten, was a great friend to the following organizations. Ken helped foster and advance their efforts in his role as horticulturist, mentor, vendor and volunteer.

This is the first of several articles which offer schedules and locations of markets in Galveston County. The following two operations are on Galveston Island. Both are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. Both are also volunteer-staffed and volunteer-operated.

GALVESTON'S OWN FARMERS MARKET (GOFM)...

Where the garden comes to you.

Location and hours: The Bryan Museum, 1315 21st Street; Sundays, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (October – May), and 9:00 a.m. to Noon (June – September); Thursdays, 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

GOFM is an eclectic assembly of local agricultural professionals and enthusiasts. Beyond access to quality products and produce, you can expect to benefit by asking questions and gathering tips from folks who are so passionate about their livelihood.

GOFM also provides a wonderfully festive atmosphere. For many locals it serves as a weekly social tradition.

Vendors include: Bob's Salsa, Chaste Foods, Co-Creative Farms, Farmers Daughter Cottage Foods, Fidelis Farms, Fresh Continental Delights, Galveston Bread, Galveston Island Moringa, Gulf Coast Honey Bee Farms,

Jeff's Aquaponics, Jolly Farms, Just Got Layed, Kattera Exotics, Kyle's Farmstead Mayonnaise, K-9 Campus Café, Laughing Dog Farms, Law Ranch Cattle Company, Local Harvest, Moon Dog Farms, MycoGourmet, Salt Masters, Spring Hill Farms, Texas Hill Country Olive Co., 3rd Coast Kombucha, and Winter Family Farm.

Additional programs: Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Programs (SNAP) and Fresh Bucks, benefitting low income residents; Coastal Village Elementary "Young Gardeners" program; Cooking lessons.

BONUS: Live Texas music, always! Wine in the Bryan Gardens, Thursdays! Fresh-brewed coffee from Galveston Coffee Roasters, Sundays! Friends of Rosenberg Library used books - cookbooks, gardening, free books for kids and more, Second Sundays, Third Thursdays!

SEEDING GALVESTON – *Where you come to the garden!*

Location and hours: Farm stand, Wednesdays, 8 AM until they run out; NW corner of Avenue N & 33rd St.

This one acre island jewel presents the ultimate urban farm-to-market experience. Offerings include "just picked" seasonal produce. Resident goats and chickens provide fresh eggs and dairy. All customers benefit from below market prices, especially valuable to those on fixed incomes.

Co-founders of Seeding Galveston take to heart what's important to their customers. They've procured seeds and grown hard-to-find plant varieties as suggested by their neighbors, filling missing pieces of culinary heritage. They also provide hands-on instruction and advice to those interested in starting their own gardens.

Additional programs: Furnish produce to local food banks; Collaboration with local chefs and school culinary programs; Classes in farming techniques and the value of nutritious food choices. Upcoming programs: Community composting and SNAP.

BONUS: Lending library! Membership opportunities including your own raised bed at the 19th/ Market St. Community Garden! Social gatherings for meals and celebrations! Mark your calendars for Farm Fair Day, April 15!

For more information: Galvestonsownfarmersmarket.com & Seeding-galveston.com

Happy shopping and don't forget to BYO bags!



Green Genes - Grandparents

Impact MGs, instill plant love



By Karolyn Gephart
MG 2017

Green thumbs and curiosity about growing things are not just acquired through study but sometimes it's under the skin....in the DNA.

When Master Gardeners talk about their love of the many different areas that comprise horticulture, it is not unusual for them to think of a favorite memory and to share childhood scenes where very influential people have been in their lives, leaving a legacy for green life.

This article is part of a series that looks at the past, the families and friends of Galveston County Master Gardeners who influenced their paths, many times subconsciously by instilling in them an appreciation and love that continued to grow and mature.

Master Gardener (Class of 2017) Marie Leal worked as a systems analyst in telecommunications for AT&T and UTMB. Hours were spent working and not landscaping or propagating blooms but her time to explore her roots was coming in retirement.

Marie's grandfather owned a sugar plantation and large farm and was knowledgeable on farming and its many avenues for growing things successfully. He used natural methods and taught her about planting by the moon, plants in general, and a love for growing.

Marie's father was always someone she considered having a green thumb.

It wasn't surprising she joined the Master Gardener class in retirement and thrived in its variety of programs and presentations. Originally from Galveston, Leal lives in Texas City with her husband. She has dedicated weekly time to the Extension Office and its many job opportunities for MGs.

Her past work experience and her new knowledge of the MG program made her a natural for the MG Garden Hot Line that is offered to callers in the county who have horticulture-related problems. Her kind helpful voice works so well in the program.

Marie is also an asset in the Discovery Garden helping in every area of the large garden. She is a welcome sight in the kitchen and has already been given leadership responsibilities in the plant sale in the hospitality department.

Marie's father and grandfather would be happy to see their legacy continue in her.

Grandparents were role models for Master Gardener (Class of 2017) Billy Decker also.

His grandmother and her oldest brother influenced Billy as a boy. His Uncle Charlie raised maple trees in New York State. He was involved in major production of maple syrup and his name is associated with top products of his time using his syrup.

Billy remembers enjoying the many lessons a farm can teach a child and growing up, he watched his mother gardening and loving what she did.

Billy was born in Kansas, moved to New York and later grew up in Florida. He has been around many plant zones and experienced what each had to offer.

In his career, Billy served as a Maintenance Technician for LBC Tank Terminals.

His career and his green heritage together make him a great Master Gardener. He has helped in the Discovery Garden with every area. He has worked with the watering system and helped in repairs of every type of need they have had.

Billy enjoys working in the Discovery Garden's fruit orchard but can be found doing whatever is needed in any area of the large location. Living in Santa Fe, he is close by to be available and is in a green area to continue to grow and use his MG skills.

The Great Depression impacted the grandparents of Master Gardener Sharon Zaal. They became self-sufficient, raising their own food. Living in Louisiana, her grandparents had a strawberry farm and kept a big garden year-round.

Sharon, the new President of the Galveston County MG Association, grew up in Beaumont, worked as an information technologist and systems analyst and now lives in Seabrook with her husband Tom. She became a MG in 2015.

Sharon enjoys working in the gardens of the Discovery Garden and plants grow well under her direction. She is not afraid of hard work or long hours.

Sharon is helpful to others and shares her knowledge with all. Being able to take over the huge job of President is a gift from her past to handle what is needed and do what is right for all.

What an impact that parents and grandparents have had on these three Master Gardeners.

What made YOU love all things green?



Dr. Johnson Receives Texas A&M Regents Fellow Service Award



By Julie Massey, MS.,
CEA Coastal &
Marine Resources,
MG 1996

On Wednesday, February 7, 2018, our friend and leader, Dr. William M. Johnson traveled to College Station to be recognized by the Texas A&M Board of Regents and the Texas A&M University System Chancellor.

So, what's the difference between Texas A&M University and The Texas A&M University System? Texas A&M University is that school located in College Station (known as the flagship university) while The Texas

A&M University System is comprised of that flagship university located in College Station plus ten other regional universities across the state (which includes Texas A&M-Kingsville, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, West Texas A&M University, Tarleton State University and others) in addition to my alma mater: Texas A&M University at Galveston. The Texas A&M University System also includes eight agencies such as Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (that's us), Texas Forest Service, Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, and more.

The Texas A&M University System has evolved into one of the largest systems of higher education in the nation. The system employs 8,920 faculty members and student enrollment for the 2017 fall semester was 152,439. The system also employs 4,522 professionals within its eight agencies which includes Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (remember, that's us). Sometimes we are not fully aware of the impact and operation of the A&M University System. It is widespread and impactful. <http://assets.system.tamug.edu/files/communications/pdf/Facts2018.pdf>

So, why am I writing this article for the *Gulf Coast Gardening* newsletter? It's due to several reasons: (1.) I am a Galveston County Master Gardener (Class of 1996 !!!); (2.) Dr. J and I have been colleagues and good friends for over 26 years; (3) The Regents Fellow Service Award is the highest honor/recognition that can be bestowed on employees within The Texas A&M University System; and (4.) it's an exceptionally distinguished honor and if someone had not prepared this announcement, it was not going to get done if it were left to Dr. J to highlight or even mention his accomplishment!

The award ceremony was swanky, the food exceptional and the medallions awarded rival Olympic medals! Dr. Johnson was one of ten agency service professionals to be recognized this year as Regents Fellows. This award is specifically for professionals employed within the eight agencies of The A&M University System.

"These professors and professionals make The Texas A&M University System extraordinary," said Charles Schwartz (Chairman of the Board of Regents) in a statement. "Because of them, the universities and agencies within The Texas A&M University System will continue to thrive."



First announced during the October 2017 meeting of the Board of Regents, the A&M System employees were selected for their "exemplary performance during [fiscal year] 2016-2017." Recipients each receive a total stipend of \$15,000 (paid out on a 3-year term) along with the honorary title of Regents Fellows, according to System documents.

Dr. Doug Steele, Director of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, is elated with hope that the stipend will incentivize William to stay on the job for another three years! (As usual, William is playing his cards close to his vest – his MG vest!)

The selection process for the awards begins with a call for nominations from the System Chancellor, after which an internal selection committee is formed within each university or agency. Final nominations are put forth to the chief executive officer of each respective entity. Nominees are then subject to a System-level review consisting of academic vice chancellors and past recipients of the awards. Finally, nominations are forwarded to the System Chancellor and the Board of Regents for final review and approval. Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp said the new Regents Fellows have proven their commitment to The System's success.

"These exceptional individuals represent the best of our great System and higher education in Texas," Chancellor Sharp said. "They are true assets."

Here are some excerpts from Dr. J's nomination package.

Dr. Don Wilkerson, Professor of Horticulture & Extension Specialist – Emeritus, wrote: *Let me begin with Dr. Johnson's most important and valuable attribute. William can always be counted on for the highest professional and ethical character no matter the situation. This, above all, is what has guided Dr. Johnson's distinguished career and made him respected among his colleagues and a trusted pillar of the community.*

Perhaps his best-known effort in this area (horticulture) was in helping to guide Galveston County through the devastating loss of thousands of trees following Hurricane Ike in 2008. His collaborative work with the Texas A&M Forest Service, FEMA and the City of Galveston played a pivotal role in evaluating the damage, as well as developing a strategic plan for re-planting. Dr. Johnson's weekly newspaper articles and Extension publications helped property owners and communities throughout the Upper Texas Coastal area mediate damage by following his recommendations for recovery.

No review of Dr. Johnson's career accomplishments would be complete without recognizing his outstanding leadership of the Galveston County Master Gardener

Program (GCMGP). The GCMGP is widely recognized as a very innovative and prolific Master Gardener program in the State of Texas. These Master Gardeners put in thousands of volunteer hours towards community service projects and educational programs that serve the county. William's ability to keep volunteers on task, focused and working towards collective goals is the envy of every other Master Gardener Program in Texas. His steady hand in managing this group is, again, guided by the highest professional and ethical standards.

Dr. Johnson and the Galveston County Master Gardeners produce a monthly publication that rivals any commercially available horticulture magazine or newsletter. Their website and online presence have also demonstrated innovation and an ability to reach out to new audiences.

Dr. Doug Welsh, Professor of Horticulture Emeritus and Associate Dept. Head, wrote: *Dr. William Johnson is among the very best of County Extension Agents in Texas.*

William serves as the Galveston County Master Gardener Coordinator. I have worked with the best of the best volunteer coordinators and William is at the very top of the 100 County Extension Agents who serve as Master Gardener Coordinators.

Successful volunteer managers have varying leadership styles. William is a servant leader with a kind heart and calming personality which is effective in coordinating over 200 Master Gardener volunteers in Galveston County. If allowed, each of the Galveston County Master Gardeners would immediately write the Selection Committee glowing commendation letters for William. He is beloved by his Master Gardeners.

William is also an accomplished administrator, having served as the Coordinator of the Galveston County Extension Office for 20 years. It was William's continued efforts to interpret AgriLife Extension's value to the County Commissioner's Court that resulted in the assignment of County land and funding/construction of the fabulous office facilities.

Dr. Doug Steele, Director of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, wrote: *In 2016, Galveston County MG volunteers served a total 32,198 hours, an average 168.5 hours per volunteer—the highest annual average among 95 Texas County Master Gardener Programs serving 111 counties.*

Dr. Johnson was selected as a Regents Fellow nominee from AgriLife Extension's 573 community-based educators. We believe that his achievements exemplify the role of Extension educators to make a difference in the communities they serve, using research-based knowledge and resources from the land-grant university system to directly benefit the people.

At the front-line of Extension education, Dr. Johnson well represents a university that is "Fearless on Every Front."

Heber Taylor, editor (retired) of the Galveston Daily News, wrote: *Dr. Johnson, by example more than anything else, somehow offers people a heightened sense of integrity and oftenacity in his programs, in addition to a love of gardening. People who take the training do become better gardeners, of course, but there's a sense that taking a class with Dr. Johnson is about becoming a better human being.*

Charles W. Schwartz (Chairman of the Board of Regents) stated during recognition ceremony that "...it is a splendid medallion but do not overestimate [its] power!" Leave it to Dr. J to crack the magical powers that this "splendid" medallion holds!

On your next visit to the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office, please stop by and congratulate Dr. J on this well-deserved and very prestigious award. Be sure to check out his medallion to see if any of its magical powers have been tapped!

Congratulations, Dr. J., our fearless leader and friend for many, many years!



Survey Results...

What Froze and What did NOT



By Pat Forke
MG 2010



By Monica Martens
MG 2013

Winter growing seasons in our growing area are typically mild and subtropical in most years. The key phrase is “typically” as this was not the case for the 2017-2018 winter season. On January 17 and 18 this year, temperatures dipped below freezing across much of the Texas Upper Gulf Coast, including Galveston County. The

unusual weather conditions prompted school closures, contributed to a large number of vehicle accidents and sparked a water-conservation crisis of sorts in some areas because of a large amount of burst water pipes.

The Galveston County Master Gardeners participated in an online survey developed by MG Monica Martens to assess freeze injury sustained by plants in the home landscapes and gardens of Master Gardeners residing across Galveston County and adjoining counties. A total of 59 Galveston County Master Gardeners reported on damages done to their landscape plants and gardens because of the low temperatures in January. As you can well imagine, location and various forms of protection had a huge effect on which plants survived.

Throughout the county, most tropics (particularly plumerias and some types of hibiscus) did not fare well unless they were inside or covered. The temperatures in the northern part of Galveston County dipped down to 25 degrees the week of January 1 and then down to 20 degrees the week of January 16. The temperatures remained near or below freezing for several days.

The southern area of Galveston County (Galveston Island and nearby areas) fared better but still lost many tropics and succulents. The temperatures in the city of Galveston area dipped to 30 degrees the week of January 1 and then down to 25 degrees the week of January 16. The next edition of our Gulf Coast Gardening newsletter will have an article on the damages inflicted on plants in our Discovery Garden.

Following is a list of questions included in the online survey and a summary of Master Gardeners’ assessments on freeze damage:

Question 1: Describe any losses or freeze damage done to trees.

Galveston

- Dead: Pygmy palms, papaya tree, hibiscus, Pride of Barbados
- Damaged: Lime, lemon, Esperanza
- Unaffected: Oleanders, oranges, bottlebrush, roses and grasses, most trees, figs, plum, peach, satsuma, Meyer lemon, figs, pomegranate, kumquat

La Marque

- Dead: Neem trees, Moringa trees, bananas, Barbados cherry tree, nectarine tree, peach tree
- Damaged: Mexican lime, Esperanza, duranta, lantana, shrimp plant and Ixora

Texas City

- Dead: Plumeria, dwarf palm, key lime, avocado tree, plumeria
- Damaged: Meyer lemon, small Norfolk pine
- Unaffected: Avocado

Dickinson

- Dead: Bananas (top growth...survival of below-ground portions to be assessed in spring)
- Unaffected: Trees

Alvin

- Dead: Key lime

Nassau Bay, Kemah, Seabrook

- Dead: Plumerias, hibiscus, angel trumpets, Bird of Paradise, Crepe myrtles, Ti plants, bottlebrush, Bird of Paradise, succulents, crotons, plumeria
- Damaged: Fig tree, citrus, avocados, bananas

Clear Lake, League City, Houston

- Dead: Persian lime (6 years old), variegated Ficus Benjamin (was covered), Meyer lemon, queen palms
- Damaged: Banana, avocado, Meyer lemon, Papaya (kept covered), citrus, crepe myrtles, bottlebrush, queen palms, various palms
- Unaffected: Magnolias, pines, vitex, figs, plums, pomegranate, palm trees, oak tree

Friendswood

- Damaged: Queen palms, oleander, plumeria, Eureka lemon, bananas
- Unaffected: Orchid tree

Question 2: Describe any losses or damage to shrubs.

Galveston

- Dead: Aloe, succulents, orchids, Turk’s cap
- Damaged: Rangoon creeper, lorepedalum, crepe myrtles, Barbados cherries, plumbagos, dwarf pomegranate, Alamanda, Bishop’s cloak
- Unaffected: shrubs, gardenias, mountain laurels, night-blooming ligustrum

Texas City

- Dead: Ginger, Ti plants, hibiscus, asparagus fern bush, pink oleanders, Jatropa
- Damaged: Acalypha copper plant

Clear Lake, League City, Houston

- Dead: Lantana, Barbados cherry, red mallow, Turk’s cap, swamp rose mallow, bottlebrush
- Damaged: Sago palms, Hollyberry bush, firecracker, azalea, bottlebrush, hummingbird bush, Texas sage, firespike, American beautyberry, shrimp plant, yesterday today and tomorrow, Turk’s cap, drummond cherry, bottlebrush, plumbago, cestrum, azaleas
- Unaffected: Hollys

La Marque

- Dead: Mexican heather, blueberries

Dickinson

- Dead: Variegated canna, Little Volcano Lespedeza, lantana, salvias, pentas, variegated ginger, Turk's cap, shrimp plant, ragoon creeper, thryallis, hamelia
- Damaged: Hamelia patens dwarf, Cassia corymbose, Erythrina X bidwillii

Nassau Bay, Kemah, Seabrook, Bacliff

- Dead: Pentas
- Damaged: Bamboo Oldhamii, Bamboo Alfonse Karr, hibiscus, yesterday today and tomorrow, bougainvillea
- Unaffected: Most shrubs

Crosby (Harris County)

- Damaged: Dwarf little johns

Friendswood

- Damaged: Gardenia

Question 3: Describe any other plant damage.

Galveston

- Dead: Dutchman's pipe, Wedelia, Wandering Jew, four o'clocks, grapevines, all unprotected ferns, Cuban oregano, plumbago, hibiscus, kalanchoe, potted succulents, African violets
- Damaged: Bougainvillea, ginger, red honeysuckle, porterweed, aloe vera, bananas, foxtail fern, African iris, herbs, periwinkles
- Unaffected: Maiden hair fern, figs, roses, succulents,

La Marque

- Dead: Large schefflera in pots, spider plants, peace lily, aloe vera, pentas, coleus, dragonfruit, grapes, succulents, pothos ivy

Texas City

- Dead: Aloe vera plants, mother-in-law tongue, ferns, basil (in ground), spider plant (in ground), Swedish ivy, dragon fruit, trumpet vine
- Unaffected: Herbs brought into garage, crepe myrtles in pots

Dickinson

- Dead: Herbs
- Damaged: Day lilies, ginger

Alvin

- Dead: Mona lavender, Salvia Spiny, aloe vera
- Damaged: Chrysanthemum, amaryllis

Houston, Clear Lake, League City

- Dead: Mona lavender, jacobinas, passion vine, caladiums, agapanthus, amaryllis, Brazilian purple button bush, philodendrons, bird of paradise, desert rose, crown of thorns, Katie ruellias, African violets, succulents, Mother-in-law tongue
- Damaged: Bird of Paradise, dwarf pygmy palms, ginger, bananas, plumeria, Salvia garanitica, philodendrons, bougainvillea, canna lily, spider plants, day lilies, elephant ears, lantana ferns, crinum, brugmansia, elephant ears, angel trumpets, lily of the Nile, begonias, lantana, justicia, hummingbird bush, hibiscus, beauty berry and lily of the Nile, passion vine, Yukon yellow potato tops
- Not affected: perennials, day lilies, herbs, Louisiana iris

Crosby (Harris County)

- Dead: Begonias, liriopse, butterfly bush
- Damaged: Hydrangea, geraniums

Kemah, Bacliff, Nassau Bay

- Dead: Maidenhair fern, variegated liriopse, plumeria
- Damaged: Foxtail fern, firecracker, Katy ruella, butterfly weed,

agapanthus, sago palm, kalanchoe, variegated ginger

Friendswood

- Dead: Jatropas, plumbagos, turks caps
- Damaged: Hibiscus, pentas, milkweed, lantana, foxtail ferns

Question 4: Any additional information you found of interest.

Galveston

- A four-year old avocado survived covered with sheets and plastic.
- Jasmine was severely damaged.
- Oleanders, Russian Olive and Texas Sage did fine.
- Herbs, amaryllis, figs, roses and weeds are thriving.
- Asparagus, rosemary, oregano, daylilies, fennel, mint and chives did well.

La Marque

- Only plants that survived without damage were in the house.
- Knockout roses, pomegranates, Easter lilies did well. Palms, strawberries, mint, and bulbs suffered some damage but are recovering.

Texas City

- Two white oleander trees, the fig tree, two small avocados and citrus trees did well. Lost 80% of potted plants.
- Dill and Acalypha Copper Plant were total loss but most shrubs, vegetables and begonias are doing well.
- Satsuma and N33 orange had no damage even though the temp range was 21-23 F.
- Many plants were damaged but are coming back: purple porterweed, violas, snapdragons, day lilies, Louisiana iris, amaryllis ragoon creeper, russelia and tropical milkweed

Dickinson

- Several plants did well: Louisiana iris, Eriobotrya japonica 'Cop-pertone' loquat, pineapple guava, Nandina domestic, Mediterranean fan palm.
- Most succulents survived but lady slipper and crown of thorns died.

League City, Houston, Clear Lake

- Cast iron plants, oleanders Calypso variety, Chinese holly bushes, large ligustrum trees did well.
- A covered vegetable garden survived well.
- Crinum Ellen bosanquets are coming back.
- Trailing jasmine, rosemary, and oregano had no damage.
- Hydrangea survived along with several varieties of bulbs.
- Aloes and sanserverias appear dead.

Friendswood

- Rain lily and fan palm survived.
- These did well: English ivy in pots, Ixora, rosemary, azaleas, dianthus in pots, oregano, roses, iron plants, shrimp plants, citrus, ferns, bottlebrush, bay tree, fig tree.

Question 5: What were some cold protection techniques you provided.

- Plastic covers, blankets, tarps, freeze blankets.
- Moved plants into garage, porch, potting shed with heater, near house.
- Dug up plumerias, cleaned dirt off roots and hung upside down by south-facing wall with a tarp covering (Dickinson).
- Kept plants well-watered and mulched before and during freeze.
- Used freeze blanket with shop light inside for large staghorn fern (Houston).
- Took cuttings of some plants.
- Plumerias left in ground were wrapped and used Christmas lights (Texas City).
- Frost cloth on all fruit bearing trees (Alvin).

Things learned from “SIMPLY SUCCULENTS” Class



By Susan Meads-Leahy - MG 2001

On February 3, 2018 Paula Spletter, a Texas Certified Master Gardener and also the Creative Director for North Haven Gardens in Dallas presented SIMPLY SUCCULENTS “The Plants that Drink Responsibility” to an almost full class at the AgriLife Extension Office. This presentation was incredibly informative and engaging. There were beautiful door prizes and she shared some of her own personal succulents with the class after demonstrating how to divide and prune succulents.

I learned that almost everything I was doing with my succulents was WRONG! However, after attending this presentation I am back on track and things are looking up for my plants. So many of us lost a variety of plants during the freeze and succulents, due to their water content, suffered the worst. When selecting succulents, make sure the plants look healthy with no indication of diseases. The leaves should be plump to the touch and always try to select pots that have multiple plants so you can share them with friends! The best containers to use are clay as they are porous and breathe; however, you can use almost any container. Ceramic pots are colorful and come in many shapes and styles. Be careful if you are using glass containers as they do not have a drain hole and well-draining soil is critical to succulents.

My favorite quote from this presentation “Succulents tend to be much more forgiving if planted in an inappropriate pot.” My kind of plant!

For soil, you can purchase soil that is specific to cactus/succulents and good for small projects but can get expensive if you have a large collection you are re-potting. Paula does suggest you use this particular mix when trying to root cuttings. For containers (under 8”), she suggests you use ½ potting soil and ½ pumice (which has minerals) or perlite. Regular potting soils with no added fertilizers are okay to use but you must amend with compost, coarse sand, pea gravel, or expanded shale. If planting in the ground, Paula suggests adding contractor sand which helps with drainage.

While drainage is important when planting succulents, they will die faster from overwatering than under-watering. If possible, use rainwater a little at the time – water deep rather than frequently. It is also best to let the plants dry out (and we aren’t talking the Sahara here) between watering. Succulents prefer a low nitrogen fertilizer and there are fertilizers that are made specifically for succulents. Paula recommends using a plastic condiment bottle which can be picked up at most any dollar store for both watering and fertilizing. For fertilizer, she recommends “Cactus Juice” from Amazon but make sure you only fertilize at ¼ strength, regardless of which fertilizer you choose to use (https://www.amazon.com/Grow-More-3130-Cactus-Juice/dp/B000ZOICVA/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1520274269&sr=8-2&keywords=Cactus+Juice+Fertilizer). These plants need to be fertilized every 6 weeks.

So, like me, you pick up one of your succulents and a leaf falls off – DON’T throw it away! You can create your own “pizza” of babies or use an egg carton. It is very important that you never put freshly cut succulents into the soil. You must allow them to harden at the “root” where they fell/or were cut off. Once hardened, you can lay the plant on top of the soil and the root system will form from the stem. You need to place the “nursery” in a medium to bright light area with no direct sunlight. Mist the babies daily to keep the soil moist but not wet. After some time, the original leaf will fall off – don’t pull it off as that could damage the plant.

There was much “mutual love” between Paula and all the Master Gardeners present at her class. I strongly encourage anyone who sees this class come up on the schedule in the future to attend. It is fun, informational, hands on and you won’t regret meeting Paula - she was an absolute delight! I wonder if I still get credits for attending the same class twice? Regardless, I’ll be at the next one too – hopefully, with some interesting “vessels” to show off my handiwork as well! Hope to see you there...



The Discovery Garden Update



By Tom Fountain
MG 2008

Spring has charged into the garden, and most of the fruit trees and flowers are blooming. The potato, squash, onion, and lettuce plants are once again turning the garden beds green. We had a cold wet January with 8 to 10 days of below freezing temperatures while local rainfall was slightly above normal; this combination of weather factors wreaked havoc

on a lot of tropical plants in the garden. Since January the temperatures have become warmer than normal and rainfall is a little below normal. Our extended outlook indicates temperatures will continue above normal and rainfall will continue below normal.

We have had lots of visitors too, and have provided many tours of our Discovery Garden. The new class of MG Interns visited our Discovery Garden to learn the art and science of rose pruning from John Johns (Fig. 1). The Greenhouse Team's plant sales also brought a lot of visitors and much of the left-over plant inventory was sold. MG Robert Marshall and MG Denny Noh (Fig. 3) are giving a garden tour to a large group of visitors from Friendswood.

Most of you know we are always busy around the garden. MG Clyde Holt and MG Bobbie Ivey (Fig. 2) are harvesting cabbages produced from Greenhouse Team-grown transplants. MG Jim Edwards, MG Bobbie Ivey and MG Clyde Holt (Fig. 4) are mulching a great looking bed of potatoes. MG Mary Gonzalez and the Greenhouse Team members continue to work on getting new bedding plants started. The Aquaponics Garden has been doing great and they have added several new plants to the growing tubs. The tomato and pepper plants are doing quite well in their aquaponic tubs. Recently a photographer from the Galveston Daily News visited the Discovery Garden to take pictures for an article they are writing about our Aquaponics Garden. MG Robin Collins and MG Briana Etie (Fig. 5) watch as the newspaper photographer takes pictures of MG Gene Speller working on one of the beds.

MG Henry Harrison started a new series of informational workshops conducted after lunch; the educational presentations are aptly called "Lunch & Learn!" MG Camille Goodwin and her spouse Ken (Fig. 6) are giving us the rundown on finding and understanding the information we receive from the Davis weather station he installed in our Discovery Garden.

This mild spring weather is a good time to be in the garden. It's also a place to enjoy good company, learn new things and get a little workout. So come on out to the garden.



easy recipes

Seasonal Bites



By Sandra Gervais
MG 2011

Once again Texas weather is messing with our heads.
Is winter truly over?

Are we finished with frosts and freezes? Is this spring or just a teaser?
So let's make some comfort food, something that can ignore Mother Nature's whims. Meatloaf and field peas taste good any time of year and in any weather. And they both are topped with bacon, everyone's favorite comfort food.

Meat Loaf

(From the Dear Abby newspaper column)



Ingredients

2 lbs. ground beef
1 cup seasoned bread crumbs
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1/3 cup ketchup
1/3 cup water
1 teaspoon garlic powder
2 eggs, lightly beaten
Salt
Pepper
4 strips of bacon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Directions

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients except bacon.
Shape into a loaf and place in 9 x 5 inch loaf pan.
Arrange bacon strips on top.
Bake for 60 minutes.

Note: Have fun with this simple recipe, add what you like and make it yours!
Add extra Italian herbs, jalapeños, green onions, more spices, salt and pepper to taste.
It can also be shaped into a loaf and baked in a sprayed baking dish where it may even cook a little faster.
Leftovers make great sandwiches.

Yields: 6-8 servings

Henry's Field Pea Casserole

(This is not our Master Gardener Henry's recipe; he says he doesn't cook. It's a Louisiana recipe that I've had for a while and don't remember where it comes from.)



Ingredients

2 cans of field peas or black eyed peas with liquid
2-3 large ripe tomatoes, sliced
3 large onions, sliced
2 large green peppers, chopped
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese
6 slices of bacon
Salt and pepper to taste

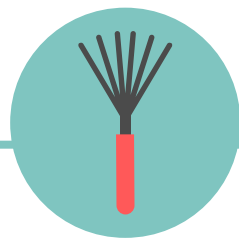
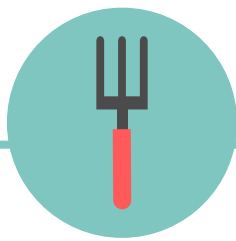
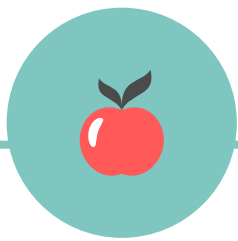
Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Directions

Lightly spray 9 x 13 baking dish.
Place cooked peas with liquid in baking dish.
Mix in chopped green peppers.
Top with a layer of tomatoes.
Cover with a layer of onions.
Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.
Place raw bacon on top.
Cover tightly.
Bake for 1 hour at 400 degrees.
If desired, uncover and broil to make bacon crispy.

Note: 3 cups of freshly cooked peas can be used but remember to add some of the liquid also.
Add more or less onion to taste and throw in hot peppers if you like it spicy.

Yields: 6-8 servings



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.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Name of Program</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>MG CEU's</i>
1/6/18	Growing Avocado and Papaya	Jerry Hurlbert	2.75
1/6/18	Growing Peaches in Galveston County	Herman Auer	2.50
1/11/18	Collection and Storage of Budwood for Grafting	Sue Jeffco	1.25
1/13/18	Growing Great Tomatoes	Ira Gervais	2.00
1/13/18	Kitchen Gardening	Mary Demeny	2.00
1/18/18	Wedge Grafting	Sue Jeffco	1.00
1/20/18	Successful Spring Vegetable Gardening	Herman Auer	2.50
1/20/18	Small Yards, Small Trees	Sandra Devall	1.50
1/23/18	Garden Tool Talk	Tim Jahnke & Henry Harrison III	1.75
1/25/18	Grape Pruning	David Cooper	1.25
1/25/18	Discovery Garden Lunch & Learn - Community Beds	Bobbie Ivey & Clyde Holt	0.25
1/27/18	Growing & Using Herbs	Tricia Bradbury	2.00
1/27/18	Texas Tuff Plants	Sandra Devall	1.25
1/30/18	Anyone Can Grow Roses	John Jons	1.00
2/3/18	Simply Succulents	Paula Spletter	2.50
2/3/18	Growing Backyard Citrus	Robert Marshall	2.00
2/8/18	Discovery Garden Lunch & Learn - Hops & Weeds	John Jons	0.50
2/10/18	Planting Fruit Trees	Herman Auer	2.00
2/15/18	MG Class - Botany	Jayla Fry	4.00
2/20/18	MG Class - Plant Pathology	Dr. David Appel	4.00
2/22/18	Rose Pruning	John Jons	1.00
2/22/18	Discovery Garden Lunch & Learn - Butterfly Garden	Judy Anderson	0.25
2/24/18	Growing Blueberries	Dr. David Cohen	1.50
2/24/18	How to Grow Native Milkweed	Barbara Keller-Willy	2.00
3/1/18	Discovery Garden Lunch & Learn - WeatherLink	Gene Speller & Ken Goodwin	0.50
3/1/18	MG Class - Plant Hybridization & Weed Management	John Jons	3.00
3/6/18	MG Class - Insect Identification & Management	Dr. Robert Puckett	4.25
3/8/18	Discovery Garden Lunch & Learn - Garden History	Jim Edwards	0.50
3/9/18	MG Class - Vegetables	Tom LeRoy	4.00
3/13/18	MG Class - Soils	Dr. Sam Feagley	4.00
3/15/18	MG Class - Fruit & Citrus	Herman Auer	3.50
3/17/18	Tomato Stress Management	Ira Gervais	2.25
3/17/18	Composting	Jim Gilliam	2.00
3/22/18	Fig Tree Pruning & Propagation	Terry Cuclis	1.25
3/20/18	MG Class - Urban Pesticide	Dr. Don Renchie	3.50
3/22/18	MG Class - Plant Ecology & Environmental Stewardship	Dr. Barron Rector	4.00
3/27/18	MG Class - Organic Gardening	Robert 'Skip' Richter	3.00
3/29/18	MG Class - Urban Forestry	Lanny Dressen	4.00

2018 Recertification Hours for MG's

Total CEU's (Hours)

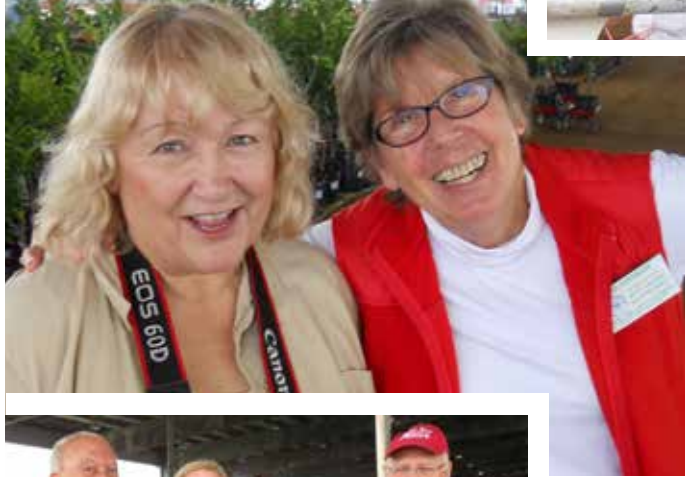
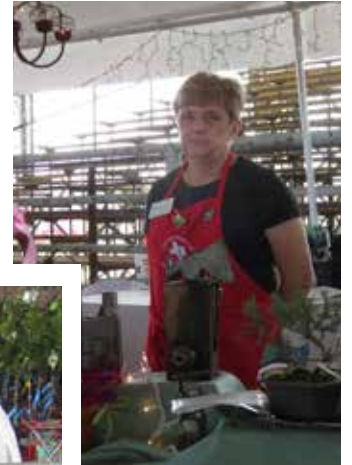
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Galveston County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale 2018







Upcoming Events - April 2018

Galveston County Master Gardener Educational Programs for Interested Gardeners

The following 2018 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>

Dear GC Master Gardeners,

In April there will be one free educational class offered by the GCMG program. It will take place in a new location in Bacliff in the newly constructed County building, the Bayside Community Center (more information, below). This will provide an opportunity to people in that area of the counties to attend our very informative classes.

We ask each of you, especially in the Bacliff area, to post this class with the new location on Facebook and/or NextDoor pages.

Thanks and best regards,

Nita Caskey

Vice-president for Media Relations

Galveston County Master Gardener Association

APRIL

GROWING CUCURBITS

Saturday, April 28

9 – 10:30 a.m.

galvcountymgs@gmail.com

to pre-register

Long-time Galveston County Master Gardener Herman Auer will present a program on growing cucumbers, summer squash, cantaloupe, winter squash, and others. It will cover the problems that many of us have: selecting the right location for planting, cucurbit diseases, insects, and tips to make growing easy and successful.

Lunch and Learn

Something new has been added to the MG luncheons on Thursdays at the Discovery Garden and it is called "Lunch and Learn." Jim Edwards is pictured sharing his knowledge of the history of the Discovery Garden - just another attraction to entice you to join us at the Discovery Garden.



By Bernice Shirey
MG 2002

Monthly Meeting Minutes

January 9, 2018

The January meeting of the Galveston County Master Gardener Association was held at the extension office.

Clyde Holt asked the blessing.

Welcome to new association President, Sharon Zaal.

Sharon spoke about the importance of reporting volunteer hours.

Galveston County will be building restroom facilities probably across the street from Discovery Garden.

The Association will be upgrading the compost area and using it as a teaching facility in memory of Ken Steblein.

Members were reminded that there is a link online regarding the 5-year plan for the association.

There was a reminder that the Texas Master Gardener Association Conference is in April at College Station and members who want to participate should get their tickets right away.

Ira Gervais is to be the chairman of the 2 plant sales this year.

Henry Harrison coordinator of the Discovery Garden needs more people in the garden "PICK A TEAM!"

Frank Resch spoke about the advisory board.

Ira showed new Galveston County Master Gardener logo.





bulletin board



Volunteer Opportunities

For the **Master Gardener Hotline** contact Ginger Benson by email at galvcountrymgs@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 <http://www.moody.org/libbie-s-place-senior-day>. 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.

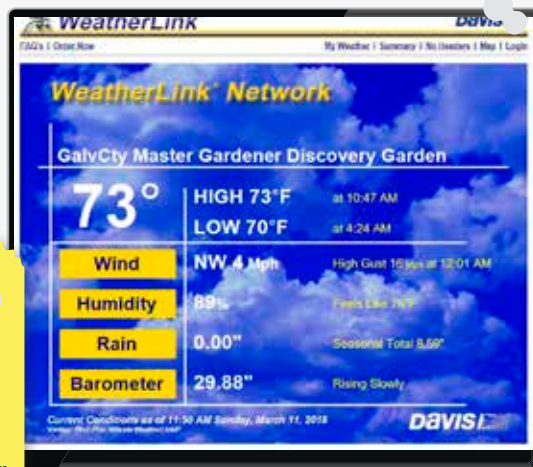
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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 develop and deliver presentations on various horticulture topics of interest to the public in our surrounding communities and our Master Gardeners. Classes are given at the Extension Office on Tuesday evenings and on Saturday. This is an excellent opportunity to contribute, develop and use skills from life experiences as well as contribute to one of the main GCMG missions of Education. We have experienced GCMG Mentors and Specialist available to guide and support. Please contact if you have any questions and so we can get you scheduled to present a class. Volunteers are also 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 galvcountrymgs@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



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The Discovery Garden

Knowledge Not Shared is Knowledge Lost
GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

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Crane flies look like Texas size mosquitoes

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
of the Interstate 45.)

When does spring arrive here in Galveston County? That depends on whom you ask and how they gauge the arrival of spring. For some gardeners, the distinctive flush of flowers produced by Texas redbud trees is a sure sign. For others, it's the delightful smell of grape chewing gum produced by blooms from Texas mountain laurel shrubs.

For others, it's the first sighting of bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush flowers along the roadways. (I have been noticing a patch of Indian paintbrush flowers along Duroux Road in La Marque just south

of the Interstate 45.) For me as a horticulturist it's all of the above and then some as I am an entomologist by way of local necessity and by several undergraduate classes under the tutelage of Dr. William Drew, professor of entomology at Oklahoma State University. Entomology is the study of insects and the insect that I watch for as a harbinger of spring is the crane fly.

Yes, you read that correctly. I use crane flies showing up this time of year as a signal that spring has sprung. I can now get into full spring gardening mode by planting some veggies and mowing the lawn (well, what's left of my St. Augustine lawn grass after the freezing temperatures last month).

I get numerous inquiries about the overabundance of giant mosquito-like insects occurring in local landscapes during this time of year. I can identify this insect without even seeing it, based solely on the description of sometimes apprehensive residents.

The initial question goes something like this: "What is that big insect with the really long legs that looks like a giant Texas mosquito?"

Before I can answer, a follow up question is often asked: "Do they bite?"

These mosquito-like flies are called crane flies. Crane flies indeed look like Texas-sized mosquitoes and have been incorrectly called mosquito hawks. (The term "mosquito hawk" generally refers to dragonflies.)

Adult crane flies live for only a few days and do not feed at all or feed on nectar from flowers.

Crane flies in this area are tan in color. The body of a crane fly adult measures about half an inch in length. Crane flies have almost absurdly long legs that can measure over 3 inches across from the tip of one leg to the tip of another. Crane flies are very fragile creatures, and although they come equipped with six legs, it's very common to find them missing one or more legs. Larvae are a grayish-brown color and may be found in compost piles, in the soil or moist environments where they feed on decaying organic matter.

Some residents report clusters of crane flies flying about the front door of their home, awaiting an opportunity to gain entry into the home with you. Crane flies are strongly attracted to outdoor lights at night including porch lights. I normally have the challenge of coming up with a digital photo to accompany

my news columns. Sometimes this is a problem but not so for this week's column. All I had to do was step outside of my office in Carbide Park. Crane flies were so abundant a few days ago that several flew into my car for a free ride home to meet their cousins.

The main thing to remember is that the immature and adult stages of crane flies are harmless. In fact, their biology is such that their contribution to our ecosystem is largely beneficial because the larvae feed on decaying-organic matter and thus assist in the biological decomposition process.



Photo courtesy of Dr. William Johnson
Homeowners across the county have reported an abundance of flying insects known as crane flies. Despite similarities, crane flies are neither mosquitoes nor mosquito hawks.

2018 GCMGA Monthly Meetings



By Judy Anderson
MG 2012

May

Brett and Rani Cunningham invite the Galveston County Master Gardeners to the May Backyard Meeting in their garden. In a historic residential area, Brett and Rani have created a butterfly habitat in their garden, but like many Gulf Coast residents, their garden has suffered with the freeze damage of the past winter. We can look forward to seeing the new habitats designed to welcome the butterflies into the Cunningham garden. Bring a dish to share

and enjoy a beautiful spring evening in old Galveston.

June

It's Graduation for the 2017 Master Gardeners! It is also an opportunity for special recognition of deserving Master Gardeners. Mikey and Allen Isbell welcome the Master Gardeners to their home each year for this traditional occasion. This is a June backyard meeting designed for arrival at 7:00 p.m. when the summer breezes will provide a little comfort from the heat of the day. It is a garden party where you will find the appetizers and adult beverages in the gazebo. The ice cold drinks will be waiting in the claw foot tub. The pot luck will be set up in the Green House. This occasion always features a variety of delicious food presentations. Mark your calendar for this Garden Party.

May	Backyard visit to home of Raini and Bret Cunningham
June	Graduation and Recognition at home of Mikey and Allen Isbell
July	Extension Office, Pot Luck; "Historical Trees" presented by Leslye Mize
August	Moody Mansion
September	Backyard visit to the home of Melissa and Barry Terrell
October	Plant Sale Presentation
November	Annual Meeting at the Extension Office
December	Holiday Meeting at the home of Mikey and Allen Isbell

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



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