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"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." - Thomas Edison

Do you think Thomas Edison was talking about gardening? Now that we've gotten past the crispy part of late summer, the seeming unrelenting rain of late, plus a weird cold November day with sleet, my gardens look like they have 10,000 things that don't work! Yet, here we are almost marking the end of another calendar year, so it's time to start over with new landscape ideas! Our GCMGA has had another busy and successful year thanks to our incredibly talented and graciously giving of their time Master Gardeners who endlessly volunteer, inspire and work to provide advice and educate our community on gardening and horticulture. If we are not the best group of MGs, I'm not sure who is!

As this year winds down, this edition of our newsletter educates us on several relevant issues before we close the door on 2018. The Q&A on page 4 investigates Woolly oak leaf galls; quite a chemical process goes on to develop the gall, read where they come from and if they need treatment. The Q&A on page 5 presents an interesting insect, the Two-Striped Walking Stick. A cat I once had, encountered an unfortunate incident with one.



In our continuing series "What I Learned in the Discovery Garden" read about Jelly Palms and its fruit (page 6). You might learn a new word and can try a new recipe as well!! Find out about an old-fashioned favorite, the striking Dutchman's Pipe Vine on page 7. There is always something fascinating, sensational and educational in our Discovery Garden. Hedy Wolpa tells us what she learned in Advanced Entomology Training (page 8). Jan Brick presents the landscape friendly, southern pass-along plant, the Grand Crinum lily to us on pages 10 -11, accompanied by several varieties that you might like in your own garden.

Fall is just about everyone's favorite time of the year, Elayne Kouzounis helps us celebrate Fall's colors (pages 12 - 13) with pumpkins, chrysanthemums, crotons and a recipe!! Besides gardening, you probably can tell I love recipes. These last few months of the year are not the time to goof off – Donna Ward (page 9) offers tips on getting our landscapes in shape for the fall and winter

season, so we won't be behind in the spring. She also provides some excellent gift ideas if you have gardeners on your gift list.



by Camille Goodwin
MG 2008

Enjoy meeting Master Gardeners Denny and Nancy Noh on page 15. If you don't already know this energetic couple, they bring considerable talents to our Association. Three of our most personable MGs (Frank Resch, Linda Barnett and Patsy Jewell) are showcased in the story on page 16, detailing how they came by their green genes. John Jons continues his travels to rose gardens around the world. In this issue he writes about his visit to the lovely Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania and re-counts his surprise captivation with the fountain gardens. He shares a link to his YouTube video so we can enjoy his trip too.

If you like plants that look good whether in bloom for several months, or add a tropical touch to your yard, checkout the story on page 25, Lisa Davis educates us on the Firespike. It might be just what you're looking for. Our Aquaponics garden has

received generous donations of both growing systems and plants. Read about Commissioner Ken Clark's strawberry plant donation and how well they're growing in tower gardens donated by Melissa Terrell (page 20). Catch up on the Discovery Garden Update (page 21), Seasonal Recipes (page 22), view photos from our October plant sale and checkout all volunteer opportunities, upcoming events and calendar updates. Dr. Johnson closes out this year in his Last Word article about Pansies on page 29. As always, the Newsletter team solicits your comments and requests regarding our newsletter. Send your comments and thoughts to LINDA STEBER steber8@msn.com.

I'm Looking forward to seeing everyone in 2019!! As we enter the holiday season, I offer this toast to all our remarkable Galveston County Master Gardeners --

Good times, good friends, best gifts, life sends! Cheers!!

Inside This Issue...

- 2 **Intro** by MG Camille Goodwin
- 3 **How to Reach Us**
- 4 **Question and Answer - Can you tell me what what this is?**
It is all over my oak trees? by MG Intern Fran Brockington
- 5 **Two-striped Walking Sticks** by MG Kathy Maines
- 6 **The Jelly Palm** by MG Kay Sandor
- 7 **Dutchman's Pipe Vine** by MG Intern Pam Hunter
- 8 **Entomology Advanced Training** by MG Hedy Wolpa
- 9 **Trials and Tribulations** by MG Donna Ward
- 10 **The Island Garden. The Gran Crinum** by MG Jan Brick
- 12 **Celebrate the Colors of Fall** by MG Elayne Kouzounis
- 14 **Attracting Beneficial Insects to Your Garden** by MGPat Forke
- 15 **Meet a Master Gardeners Denny and Nancy Nob** by MG Barbara Canetti
- 16 **Green Genes Passed Down to Master Gardeners** by MG Karolyn Gephart
- 18 **Longwood Gardens** by MG Jon Johns
- 19 **Master Gardeners In the News**
- 20 **Growing Strawberries in the Aquaponics** by MG Briana Eite
- 21 **Discovery Garden Update** by MG Tom Fountain
- 22 **Seasonal Bites** by MG Sandra Gervais
- 23 **Recertification Hours** by MG Ginger Benson
- 24 **GCMG June Meeting Minutes** by MG Bernice Shirey
- 25 **Plant of the Month** by MG Lisa Davis
- 26 **Upcoming Events**
- 27 **Fall Plant Sale 2018**
- 28 **Bulletin Board** by MG Linda Steber
- 29 **Last Word - "Rain Showers Mean Greater Possibility for Mosquitoes"**
by Dr. William M. Johnson
- 30 **2018 Monthly Meetings and Invitation** by MG Judy Anderson



Cover:
Cuphea and Honey Bee
Photo courtesy of MG Margaret Canavan



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Thanks for your interest!

Q&A ask a master gardener

Can you tell me what this is? It's all over my oak trees.



By Fran Brockington
MG Intern 2018

Recently, on a cloudy, rainy day in the Discovery Garden in Carbine Park, Hedy Wolpa and I, as 2018 MG Interns, were supporting three knowledgeable Master Gardeners at a follow-up to the annual Fall Plant Sale. As we were discussing whether the sun would eventually come out from behind the clouds, a very nice woman came over with a plastic bag in her hand and handed it to me.

“Can you tell me what this is? (She had a distressed look on her face) it’s all over my oak trees, and I don’t want them to die.”

There were several small live oak leaves in the bag that had quite a few golden, fuzzy, 1/2” balls attached to the them. Others were detached and quite *squoshed*. You could see little black dots in them. It looked to me like they might be... galls.

As we looked at and discussed what these might be, I pulled out my cellphone and looked up galls on <https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu>. I found images of the “Woolly Oak Leaf Gall.” I was able to tell our visitor that the galls were not going to destroy her oak trees. She looked relieved to hear that!

In the Gulf Coast Gardening newsletter from November 2010 there was an article by Camille Goodwin on Oak Galls. She covered many types of Oak Leaf galls including the “Woolly Oak Leaf Gall.” She mentions that many callers to the Master Gardener Hot Line, as well as visitors to the Galveston County Extension office, are concerned about these growths occurring on their oak trees.

The Woolly Oak Leaf Gall

These galls are formed on live oaks by the *Andricus quercuslanigera* wasp. The gall consists of woolly cells, clustered in bunches with other woolly oak galls. Woolly Oak Leaf galls look like a dense wad light brown wool attached to the mid-vein of the leaf and occasionally are found on the lateral veins. These galls are prevalent in summer and have hemispherical or irregular tufts, 1/2 “ long of whitish or reddish wool covering, with 2–6 irregular brown, seed-like kernels on the underside of the leaf.

Galls are abnormal plant growth or swellings comprised of plant tissue. Galls can be caused by man-made injury or by more than 2,000 species of gall-making insects. Gall-making wasps are attracted to oaks because they are long-lived and widely distributed in North America.

The female *Andricus quercuslanigera* wasps lay their eggs in the buds, during the spring. This causes the buds of live oaks to form the galls. While their larvae mature, the gall protects them as use the host plant’s nutrients. The adult leaves the gall through exit holes. The vacated space is almost

immediately occupied by small spiders and other beneficial insects such as lacewing larvae, ants or parasitic wasps. Thus, old galls can house beneficial insects that feed on insect pests.

In general, galls and gall-making insects are not considered pests and are not a threat to plant health; chemical control is usually unnecessary. Heavy infestations may distort leaves. There is no need to remove the galls from a tree. However, some twig and branch galls can cause damage to small trees. Timing of any application of pesticide is critical. The only sure way to prevent galls is to choose plants that are not hosts to gall-making insects. Once the gall begins to form in the spring, the insect inside them is protected. There are several species of parasitic wasps that are natural enemies of the gall-making insects. Pesticides can kill these beneficial insects. If galls are unsightly, they can be removed by hand or pruned away.

There are several other types of oak galls in addition to the Woolly Galls, including the Marble Oak Leaf Gall, the Gouty Oak Leaf Gall, the Leafy Oak Gall, and Oak Apple Galls.

We felt good being able to inform our visitor that her Woolly Oak galls usually are not harmful. As we sat there helping a few more visitors, we saw progression of the sun, as it came out from behind the clouds!

Thank you, Linda Steber for encouraging me to learn more about what we find in our gardens!



Photos courtesy of GCMGA Digital Library



Two-striped Walking Sticks

What I learned in the Discovery Garden!



By Kathy Maines
MG Intern 2018

What in the world is that? Is it some type of crawfish? Is it some type of scorpion? It looks like a walking stick! And what is that on top of it? Is it another walking stick?

All of these questions and more were being asked by Master Gardener Phil Haught and me while we were completing some cleanup chores at the Discovery Garden on a warm morning last August. We were working behind the shop when we discovered this strange-looking bug (or bugs) on the interior of a cinder block we were moving.

Dr. Johnson was inside the shop. It was a bit amusing to see Phil waving his arms through a back window as we signaled for Dr. Johnson to come and see what we had found. What we learned in the Discovery Garden that day is that these strange bugs were indeed walking sticks and the creatures in question were a species of walking sticks that are commonly known as Two-striped Walking Sticks. I also have discovered that they have some very interesting traits.

Two species of Two-striped Walking Sticks are commonly found on the Texas Gulf Coast: *Anisomorpha buprestoides* and *Anisomorpha ferruginea*. *Anisomorpha buprestoides* is large and stout with conspicuous longitudinal black stripes (hence its common name). Females average 67.7 mm (2.66 inches) in length; males are much smaller and more slender, averaging 41.7 mm (1.64 inches) in length. *Anisomorpha ferruginea* is smaller in size, paler in color and lacks the conspicuous strippings.

While Two-striped Walking Stick is the most commonly used name, other common (and rather descriptive) names for this insect include Devil's Riding Horse, Prairie Alligator, Stick Bug, Witch's Horse, Devil's Darning Needle, Scorpion, and Musk Mare (additional discussion on the latter name will follow).

The Two-striped Walking Stick looks more like a dark stick or branch and is usually found on plants. I learned that it is common for gardeners to encounter Two-striped Walking Sticks as mating pairs with the smaller size male riding on top of the larger female. A mature male will attach himself to a female, even if the female is not yet mature, to be sure he has a mate. They stay together until one of them dies. In the fall, females lay their eggs on or in the ground and cover them with sand. Very young Two-striped Walking Sticks are green and turn dark as they mature.

All walking sticks are herbivores and feed on the leaves of trees and shrubs. This is where they can usually be seen most often in the fall of the year. They prefer crepe myrtles, hibiscus, rosemary and oaks but will feed on other plants as well.

In addition to using color to provide camouflage for protection from their predators (including ants, beetles, birds, mice, opossums, etc.), Two-striped Walking Sticks can squirt a strong-smelling defensive spray that causes pain and irritation to the eyes and mucous membranes. This is where the name musk mare came from. The fluid is produced in two glands located on the thorax (Figure 3) and can be squirted 12-to-15 inches with accuracy when threatened or disturbed (I wish I had known this before we found our specimens). There have been instances in humans where the discharge caused pain, redness and temporary blindness. First aid is to immediately flush with water.

These Walking Sticks can also regenerate lost legs and are one of only a few insects that can do this.

Keep your eyes open. If you visit our Discovery Garden, be prepared to learn something new. You never know what you might learn (and in the case of Master Gardeners, what you might be assigned to write about).

Photos courtesy of MG Kathy Maines



The Jelly Palm

What I learned in the Discovery Garden!



By Kay Sandor
MG Intern 2018

One day in August, when I finished my MG Intern assignment at the Butterfly Garden on the North End of the Discovery Garden, I was drawn to the Earth-Kind Garden by this seductive, sweet, scent. It was coming from, of all things, a Palm Tree! I learned the palm was called the Jelly Palm or the Pindo Palm (*Butia capitata*). The tree had a heavily laden frond that was loaded with sweet smelling, little apricot-like fruit. I pulled one off and popped it in my mouth. I was rewarded with an incredible flavor that is hard to describe. The Jelly Palm frond can grow to about 4-5

feet long and be filled with 50-100 fruiting branches. I asked Judy Anderson, Earth-Kind Area Leader, if I could take the frond home to try making some Jelly Palm jelly. She generously obliged me.

As I later described this fruited palm frond “discovery” to Dr. Johnson, Master Gardener Program Coordinator, and Sharon Zaal, President of the Master Gardener Association, they simultaneously informed me it was not a frond; it was an inflorescence. I had never heard that word before, so I began to read and explore. I learned that an inflorescence is a group or cluster of flowers or fruit arranged on a stem that is composed of a main branch and a complicated arrangement of branches. For example, I learned that the Elderberries that I forage in the alleys of Galveston, have an Umbrel Inflorescence.

The Jelly Palm is an example of a Panicle Inflorescence (see photo below). Most palms have panicle inflorescences. I’m always eager to learn from the experts in the Discovery Garden and since I added another new word to my gardening vocabulary, Dr. Johnson wanted me to write about it.

Now for some details about this amazing palm. The Jelly Palm tree is originally from Argentina and Brazil. It has pinnate leaves that arch inwards toward its thick trunk and it grows slowly to a mature height of 15 feet. These palms thrive in full sun with a well drained sandy or clay loam soil. The Jelly Palm flowers can be yellow, or red, or white and occur in groups of two males and one female flower. The Jelly Palm fruit is banana yellow with a rosy blush. They are tart and sweet with a mixed flavor of apricot and pineapple and are often foraged. Now, this is what you’ve all waited for . . . the Jelly Palm Jelly Recipe!

Prepare the Juice

Gather the stalk of fruit when the first fruit begins to fall from the tree. Put the stalk in a plastic clothesbasket and let the fruit ripen outdoors until it begins to fall off the stalk, usually in a day or two. Cover it with screening to keep flies away. Rinse the fruit thoroughly and remove the “caps” on the fruit. Fill a large pot with the fruit, leaving several inches at the top. Cover the fruit with water, bring it to a boil, and then cook at medium heat for 1 hour, uncovered. Let the fruit cool for an hour. To collect the juice, scoop portions of fruit and juice into a cheesecloth over another container and squeeze the bag. Discard the pits. (This will be messy). You may notice that your juice

may vary in thickness. The solution is to combine all of it into one pot or bowl and stir to get a more homogenous batch.

Making the Jelly

5 cups Jelly Palm juice
Juice of 1 lemon
1 box of Sure-Jell fruit pectin
5 cups sugar
1/2-teaspoon butter, to prevent foaming
2 drops of red food coloring



First taste the juice. If it needs to be stronger in flavor, boil it, stirring constantly, to concentrate. Then combine the palm juice and lemon juice, and stir in the pectin using a whisk. Add food coloring. Heat to a boil and add the sugar all at once; stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Add butter. Bring to a rolling boil for 1 minute. When cooking is completed, pour jelly into half-pint hot sterilized canning jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Wipe the rims of the jars with a dampened clean paper towel; tighten sterilized two-piece metal canning lids and process for 5 minutes in a Boiling Water Canner.



Elderberry Umbrel Inflorescence



Jelly Palm Fruit. Photos courtesy of MG Kay Sandor.

Dutchman's Pipe Vine

What I learned in the Discovery Garden!



By Pam Hunter
MG Intern 2018

Here in our Master Gardeners Discovery Gardens we have an unusual plant. It is called a Dutchman's Pipe Vine (*Aristolochia macrophylla*). If you are looking for a unique plant for your garden, try a Dutchman's Pipe Vine. This plant is a woody, deciduous and vigorous vine that produces flowers shaped like curved pipes and large heart-shaped leaves. *Aristolochia* is a large plant genus with over 500 species that is the type of genus of the family Aristolochiaceae. Its members are also known as Birthwort, Pipevine or Dutchman's Pipe and are

widespread and grow in the most diverse climates. Dutchman's Pipe is native to the southeast of the United States however, it is also found in the northeast as well as the Ontario, Canada area. This plant species resides largely in the Cumberland and Blue Ridge Mountains of southeastern United States.

Dutchman's Pipe Vines are suitable for gardens in USDA zones 4 through 10. This plant is 10 to 15 feet in length but can get as long as 35 feet in the perfect growing conditions. For garden uses it will quickly provide dense cover for sun porches, verandas, pillars, posts, trellises, arbors, fences or walls. This plant grows best in moist, well-drained soil, in full to partial sun. The biggest need of the Dutchman's Pipe Vine care is plenty of water. Do not allow soil to dry out completely when caring of Dutchman's Pipe Vines in containers.

Although the flowers make interesting conversation pieces, they are usually hidden by the dense foliage and are somewhat inconspicuous. The large heart-shaped leaves alternate along a woody stem. The flowers are mottled green and burgundy.

The genus name comes from the Greek word *aristos* meaning best and *locheia* meaning childbirth or delivery in reference to the fact that plants of some species within this genus has a flower structure which more closely appears to resemble a human fetus in the womb than a pipe. It has served in the past of the source of ancient plant preparations used for treatment of pain and infections due to childbirth. An interesting tidbit of the Dutchman's Pipe Vine information is its one-time use as an aid to childbirth because of its resemblance to a human fetus. This leads to another of the vine's name, Birthwort. In traditional Chinese medicine, *Aristolochia* species are used for certain forms of acute arthritis and edema.

Dutchman's Pipe Vine needs to be fertilized annually in Spring and pruned as necessary to keep the plant under control. Pinch back young growth to promote thicker plants. Dutchman's Pipe Vine does not have any serious pests or disease problems.

This plant is not frost-hardy but will remain an evergreen vine in warmer climates. In most USDA growing zones, the plant may be grown in a

greenhouse. Mulch around the base if there is a threat of frost to protect its roots.

Dutchman's Pipe Vine are also host plants to the Swallowtail butterflies and provide habitats that are beneficial for insects. Many species of Dutchman's Pipe vine are eaten by the caterpillar larvae of Swallowtail butterflies, thus making them unpalatable to most predators. Dutchman's Pipe Vine has evolved with chemicals that are at a minimum distasteful to those who would eat it. Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillars are among the few creatures who can process these chemicals without harm to themselves.

You can grow Dutchman's Pipe Vine from seed. Plant them indoors in seed flats and transplant outdoors when the soil has warmed to 60 degrees F. You can also propagate Dutchman's Pipe Vine from stem cuttings. Take them in Spring when growth is new, root in a glass of water. Change the water frequently to prevent bacterial build up. Transplant the stem to soil when it has a thick clump of roots.

If you ever find yourself in our Discovery Gardens, please come by the Pergola Garden. We'll be happy to show you this wonderfully unique plant!



Dutchman's Pipe Vine



Photos courtesy of Dr. William M. Johnson

What I learned at the Master Volunteer Entomology Advanced Training!



By Hedy Wolpa
MG Intern 2018

There was absolutely nothing that could keep me from saying “YES!” in response to Dr. Johnson’s email inquiry about my interest in the entomology advanced training classes offered at Texas A & M in College Station this past September. I’ve chased and collected things that creep, crawl, fly, hop, buzz, and bite since I was a very young girl, with my parents helping me dip my catches in jars of formaldehyde, and then leaving me to organize and pin them into cardboard cigar boxes.

So I joined Galveston County Master Gardeners Laurel Stine and Nancy Greenfield at the Rollins Urban & Structural Entomology Facility for 4 days of intense classroom sessions taught by some of the university’s most esteemed instructors and doctoral candidates, including Dr. Robert Puckett, the program leader. We took three field trips during the week including a daytime trip to the spectacularly landscaped campus Garden Project, a 40-acre teaching garden where we were allowed to wander and collect insects, and an evening trip to Lick Creek Park for a white-sheet insect collecting session after sundown. Each participant received a copy of the Kaufman Field Guide to Insects, a collecting sweep net, a kit of jars, implements and chemicals, a magnifier, and pinning supplies. We also had a tour and lecture at the Honey Bee Research Facility near campus, followed by a session on bees and pollinator conservation.

Entomology doctoral students gave us a tour of the Urban & Structural Entomology Facility laboratories and each presented an overview of their field of study. I was amazed to learn about their research on fire ants, termites, scorpions, and roaches. Dr. Joan King’s work with the decapitating fly, *Pseudacteon bifidus*, was fascinating, and extremely important for Texas and other southern states as the fly is poised to become a significant bio-control agent against fire ants. Dr. King is also a talented photographer and one of my favorite sessions was her presentation of insect photos, mostly taken with her iPhone! I’ve already employed some of her techniques for framing shots, editing, and enhancing insect photos.

We were introduced to Dr. Erfan Valfaie and his engaging presentation on beneficial insects, biological control, and pest reduction with the use of natural pest enemies. We learned that conservation helps develop natural habitats; that a natural predator/prey interaction is possible to accomplish; that a new concept for releasing natural pest enemies is in production with cards impregnated with predators such as parasite wasps.

We learned how to collect, euthanize, pin, and label insect specimens, followed by an introduction to high-powered microscopes and their value in identifying insect orders and families. Dr. Puckett guided us through a lesson on using dichotomous keys while studying our specimens. As we moved through each couplet of questions to determine our insect species, I was reminded of the books we read as kids called “Choose Your Own Adventure”!

When I interviewed for the Master Gardener program last January, I was asked what I enjoyed most about gardening. My answer included the revelation that I am as interested in the insects I encounter in the garden as I am in the plants I’m tending, and that I always assume that the insects are important participants in the cycle of plant growth/production. The opportunity to attend the entomology training helped reinforce this for me, with these three takeaway points:

Insects are everywhere, seen and unseen.

- their existence is critical to all other forms of life on the planet.
- Helpful or harmful, we should consider their value before deciding how to protect or to eradicate them from our homes and gardens.

The entomology advanced training classes have encouraged me to continue to be both curious and fearless in my insect collecting. I’m most grateful to Dr. Johnson for the opportunity to attend and to Dr. Puckett and his entire team for their expertise.



Entomology Advanced Training - learning to use microscopes to aid in identifying insects



Laurel Stine and Hedy Wolpa at the Honey Bee Lab and Apiary



Hedy Wolpa, Nancy Greenfield, Laurel Stine visit the insect collection at Texas A & M. Photos Courtesy Hedy Wolpa.

Trowels and Tribulations In a Suburban Garden

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



By Donna Ward
MG 1996

It's difficult to think about gardening while planning for the holiday season which is on our doorstep. Cooler weather encourages us to stay indoors and bake cookies, wrap presents (What - your shopping isn't finished?), and convey invites for that spectacular holiday dinner you have planned. But - Mother Nature doesn't care about your indoor household tasks. Her idea of your responsibilities is doing what you neglected to do in November. For instance, those old flower beds still need to be cleaned out, or maybe add new ones. When was the last time you turned that compost pile? Nobody but yourself to blame come spring when it's not ready to be forked into the veggie bed. If some perennials didn't do as well as anticipated, they might need to be raised and reset. Day lilies especially have a tendency to dig themselves in deeper as seasons pass. Tired of those same old azaleas and camellias that are showing their age - how about yanking them out and trying a new variety and color? But if you like those you already have in your landscape just remember to keep them well mulched and watered to prevent winter damage. Both of these southern beauty's roots are close to the surface and very susceptible to temps both hot and cold. And for goodness sake, don't put away the garden hose - more plants die over winter from lack of water than cold temperatures.

Nurseries still have plenty of pansies, so put in a few more if needed. You do know that if you feed them and keep them dead-headed (remove faded blooms) they will continue producing those smiley faces. While still perusing the nursery, you might want to pick up a few transplants of snap dragons, dianthus, primroses, nasturtium, California poppies and delphiniums.

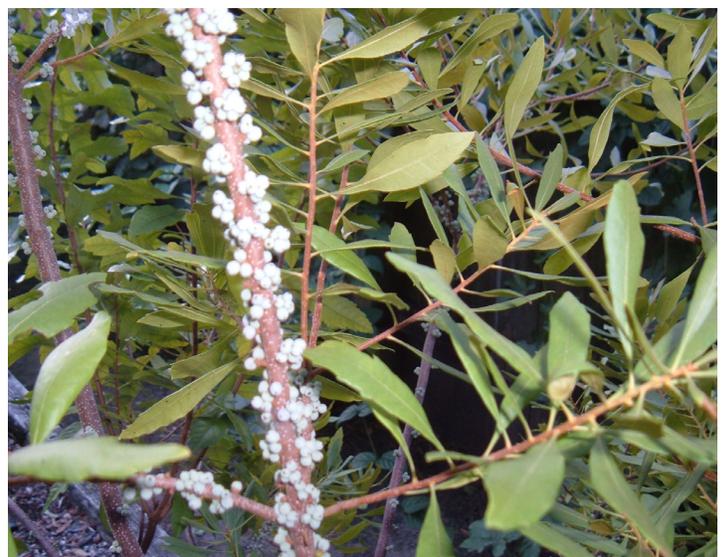
Veggie gardeners can take a breather. Only two things want to go in the garden this month - English and snap peas.

How about a few last-minute holiday gifts for the gardener on your list? One of the hottest items this year is the elbow length gardening gloves. How about a soaker hose to get water down to the roots of trees and shrubs where it belongs - instead of running off of the lawn and into the gutter? Splurge a little and get your favorite gardener a good pair of by-pass pruners. They do the job much better than the anvil type. Better to 'cut' than 'crush.' Every gardener appreciates a new set of hand tools. Surely, we have all left some out in the rain, or bent or broke a handle or two - and of course there's always the tool that was inadvertently tossed into the trash can or compost pile. A nice birdbath was appreciated by an elderly family member last year, and this year he'll get some binoculars to help identify the bathers. Since most shrubs are on sale right now - how about a few to attract birds to the garden? Dwarf wax myrtle, American beautyberry, holly and elderberries will get their attention, and mockingbirds will perform all kinds of acrobatics to pluck the purple lantana berries. If your birdwatcher is elderly, offer to do the planting for him or her. You can't go wrong with a book on birds or butterflies for our area, and every gardener needs a gardening book written especially for our locale. Hopefully these are a few gift ideas to buy or put on your own wish list. Don't forget to plant those pre-chilled tulip bulbs on Christmas Day. Let somebody else deal with the leftovers and dirty dishes - you've got gardening to do!

Happy Humbug!



Professor Sargent, Camellia - Full Blossom



Wax myrtle berries. Photos Courtesy Donna Ward.

The Island Garden

The Grand Crinum!



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

Tough to kill...easy to care for...show stopping blooms...does this plant belong in your garden?

Crinum asiaticum and its cousin *Crinum americanum* are commonly called grand crinum, crinum lily, spider lily, cemetery lily, or swamp lily. This is a large perennial clump-forming herb thought to originate from tropical and sub-tropical Asia and Africa that has naturalized along the coastlines of Florida and Texas. The foliage of the crinum resembles that of amaryllis though less delicate with a more coarse appearance. Through summer and fall months, blooms appear in shades of white, pink, red, striped and multicolored; several have a sweet fragrance in the evening hours. Crinums have been a southern tradition for generations, handed down from family members to their children as well as to neighbors and friends; a true “pass-along” treasure only seen occasionally in plant nurseries. This long-lived gem requires little care and has been spotted languishing about in abandoned country home sites and cemeteries, totally neglected but thriving and flourishing.

Plant in well-draining soil in full sun to part shade; water regularly and use a balanced liquid fertilizer occasionally. Intermittent maintenance will keep your crinums tidy and orderly. Prune off flowers that have faded to encourage the buds to produce more blooms. (Do not cut off entire stem until all buds have ceased to bloom.) To enjoy your crinums as cut flowers bringing their beauty and fragrance inside your home, snip a stem at the base keeping all the buds opened and closed for an extended display period. Any leaf spots or damage to foliage by caterpillars can be removed easily by clipping effected areas. Crinum foliage is often left to decompose naturally and is quickly replaced with new growth in the spring. This faded foliage can provide some insulation against cold snaps, however frost damaged foliage does recover in short time.

There is a crinum type for everyone even some it seems especially for those gardeners who do not favor these oversized beauties. The “Ellen Bosanquet” is a vigorously multiplying hybrid that produces large reddish-purple blooms on two foot stalks that emit a delightful spicy fragrance. Its rosette of wavy, glossy, tropical looking foliage is a lovely addition to a garden even when not in bloom. This crinum is considered one of the finest for the home garden. Another Bosanquet crinum is the “Elizabeth Traub” which features four foot stalks and especially fragrant large dark rose-pink flowers with a dramatic white throat.

The much sought after “Sangria” crinum presents red wine colored or dark purple foliage in four foot tall clumps topped with four foot spikes of rosy pink blooms, a most striking sight in any setting. Crinum “Sangria” is more winter hardy than other purple leaf hybrids.

White crinums include, the *Crinum jagus* known as “St. Christopher Lily” a definite show-stopper with leafless stalks amid upright dark green leaves to three feet in height with a matching spread making it a perfect border or accent plant. The white blooms resemble tulips and are exceptionally fragrant. Another white, the “African Queen” forms a one foot tall compact rosette of deeply ruffled glossy green foliage crowned with sturdy three foot stalks of red-striped buds that open to pure white pendant type tubular blooms.

The amazing “Lil Stinker” crinum is a most unique specimen that blooms in the late afternoon to early evening with clusters of twelve or more flat-faced buttery yellow, deliciously fragrant blooms; by morning the blooms age to white with a yellow throat. With a continued display





from August through October, your garden will be the envy of all neighboring gardeners. Crinum “Lil Stinker” is truly stunning.

For those gardeners enchanted by the celebrated striped crinums, two outstanding varieties are recommended. It has been said that you have not enjoyed the best until you have invited the “Bayou Belle” into your garden. Its clump of very upright glossy green foliage is topped with three foot stalks ending in beautiful white out-facing blooms heavily striped with burgundy pink. A striking specimen, the “Red Flare” sports an upright fountain of four foot glossy green foliage that serves as a background for the forty inch flower stalks that are topped with large flat out-facing red and white striped fragrant blooms... this is a dazzling and dramatic specimen.

Touted as a crinum for those who do not like crinums because of their size and space requirements, a compact dwarf variety to consider is the “Star Power.” Eighteen to twenty-four inch stalks rising from glossy clumps are topped by clusters of “cherry red buds which open to reveal pure white, star shaped, sweetly fragrant flowers with pink petal backs and contrasting pink anthers.” This drought tolerant crinum is genuinely astonishing.



Although all parts of the crinum are poisonous if ingested, research continues on the possibilities of any effect crinums may have on health issues. They are known to contain components that are antibacterial, antifungal, anti-asthmatic and antiviral. The bulbs may act as a laxative while the seeds show promise as having properties for use as diuretics and the leaves for skin infections, inflammation, healing of wounds, boils and bleeding control. One day, crinums may be not only beautiful to behold but may also impact our well-being.

If you are looking for a versatile landscape plant that makes an exceptional statement, that is practically indestructible, consider adding a few crinums to your landscape. This bulb-forming perennial is prized by gardeners but taken for granted by the general public. These plants with their enormous size and imposing lily-like blooms are blessed with exquisite beauty. Bear in mind as well the crinums’ sustainability and hardiness, virtues all in its favor...withstand extreme heat (can even grow on the beach or in dunes), blazing sun as well as cold spells, and will survive floods of saltwater. Their versatility is boundless, public sites...think medium strips, pathways, specimen plants in the corner of the yard, borders, and mixed perennial beds, large container plants. If growing in a container, remember that these plants like to be pot bound with the shoulders and neck of the bulb exposed. One may surmise that all crinums are huge and take up an inordinate amount of space, not always so. There are varieties from thirteen inches to six feet in height all exhibiting various shades of colors white, pink, rose, yellow and stripes of multi-hues. No need to be concerned about the color of your thumb... these plants are perfect for black thumbs, green thumbs, new gardeners as well as the more experienced among us. Try one.



Tips for growing

Crinums look majestic and impressive when planted alone as a specimen plant but are definitely downright imposing when placed in large groups. Space up to four feet apart as the foliage will spread and drape away from the stalk. Foliage that becomes unkempt looking may be trimmed off, removing from the bottom at any time. Although they are drought resistant, crinums prefer consistent moisture from regular watering. Crinum bulbs can be as large as ten inches across and will benefit by division and transplanting. This is best done in winter months while the plant is dormant.

Photos courtesy of MG Wygrys

Celebrate the Colors of Fall



By Elayne Kouzounis
MG 1998

The fall harvest is overflowing with wonderful symbols of autumn. The glorious orange-colored pumpkins, the beauty of chrysanthemums flowers, and colorful croton leaves.

The chrysanthemum is one of the oldest flowers. History tells us that it was mentioned by Confucius in his writing some 500 years B.C. During all these centuries, the chrysanthemum has experienced periods of decline in popularity, only to return with greater force and vitality than

ever before.

There has always been an interest in hardy chrysanthemums. Specifically, the persistent effort to develop types that were not only vigorous and robust, but that were lusty bloomers before frost. Additionally, there are chrysanthemums that often bloom in July. They come in a wide range of luscious colors, in singles and doubles, and can be flowered the same year from seed sown in the green house during January. In addition, all the other types have been improved upon in some manner. The globular-shaped pompons are called “buttons” and “pompons” when larger. The smaller “buttons” are the hardier of the two.

Chrysanthemums are sun-loving plants, and for this reason, they should be planted where they have sun the majority of the day. The south side of a wall or building is ideal to hold the heat and protect them from frost. The single varieties are especially adapted to use on sunny terraces and in courtyards, as the heat of stones or brick forces their growth. They like a circulation of air, sunlight, well-drained ground, and respond to superphosphate, or a good commercial fertilizer.

Old plants should be divided in the spring as soon as growth starts. The divisions should consist of only one or two sprouts taken from the outside of the clump. They should be spaced fifteen to eighteen inches apart and dusted regularly. Some types should be pinched back. Pinching should start by removing the terminal buds when the plants are three or four inches high and should continue after each three or four inches of growth is made. This means that several pinches would be made during the season of growth of the plant. Discontinue pinching early varieties the beginning of autumn; late varieties a few weeks later. Several successive pinches will result in much heavier growth and bloom. This will produce plants with a more sturdy and stocky development, thus relying on little to no staking. If, however, you fail to pinch the plants adequately, be sure to stake and tie them up before they fall down and develop crooked stems.



Photo courtesy MG Elayne Kouzounis



Chrysanthemums demand quite a bit of food and moisture. It is best for all types to be fed every two to four weeks and watered with sufficient frequency to maintain adequate moisture. There are several liquid plant foods now available at the garden stores. Continue feeding until color begins to show in the blooms. Flowers come in a range of colors including white, pink, maroon, yellow, bronze, and even lavender!

Crotons are grown for their beautiful foliage. They prefer to be in partial shade, with moist, well-drained soil. Their leaves are thick, leathery and ovate, and can get up to 12" long. The leaves are green and yellow maturing to several different shades of red. Their flowers are inconspicuous. People grow them primarily for their dramatic foliage. They are a tender plant so bring them inside if temperatures dip below 46 F. They are so beautiful grown in containers and used as specimen plants.

Now a few tips on selecting, cooking, and decorating your autumn pumpkin. Inside the house, I will take my collection of pumpkins crafted from pottery and straw, as well as a fabric one that a friend made from a worn orange chenille bedspread, stuffed tightly, tied with twine to create the classic pumpkin shaped, and topped with a felted wool stem and carefully place them all about. Then, I will go to the store and look over all the pumpkins ranging from petite to giant and select one for my front porch. I will display my pumpkin with a shock of cornstalks and a

pot or two of yellow chrysanthemums. This will be my tribute to Fall, a visual reminder of the season I love.

If you prefer to use fresh pumpkin while it is available, choose a dense, sweet variety called a sugar or pie pumpkin. After washing the exterior, cut open and remove all of the seeds. To roast, cut the pumpkin into large chunks, rub with oil (I use vegetable oil) and place in a baking pan or a Pyrex and bake at 400F for 35 to 45 minutes, or until fork tender. To steam, cut the pumpkin into wedges, add water and place in a sauce pan fitted with a steamer basket for 20 to 30 minutes. To boil, place wedges in a large saucepan with boiling salted water, cover, and cook over medium heat for 20 minutes. With each of these methods, cool the pumpkin, remove the outer skin, measure the amount needed, and proceed with the recipe.

My own recipe with no measurements: Purchase a medium size pumpkin and cut the top round off. Remove seeds. In a large bowl, add 1 stick of room temperature unsalted butter, several tablespoons of sugar (amount depending on your sweet tooth), some cinnamon, raisins, pecans, apples, and a little nutmeg. Stir until well mixed. Add this filling to your pumpkin and bake at 300F until the pumpkin is soft to your touch. Then place the entire pumpkin on a platter, open the top, stir and serve! It is delicious with ice cream or simply by itself.

My hope is that you enjoy the glory of these cooler and colorful autumn days.



Attracting Beneficial Insects to Your Garden



By Pat Forke
MG 2010

Did you know that 97% of insects most commonly seen in our gardens are considered either beneficial or innocuous? Nature has provided us with all kinds of assistance for our horticultural ambitions. The use of beneficial insects to help manage insect pests has been a mainstay among gardeners for a very long time. Beneficial predators and parasitoids are the most important biological means of controlling pests in and around our homes, yards, gardens and crops.



During extended periods of dry weather, place a sufficient amount of small rocks or gravel in a bird bath to provide these insects with a foot pad from which to drink safely.

Like any living thing, insects need shelter. We can provide suitable shelter by leaving some leaf litter in landscape beds. Periodically replenishing mulch in landscape beds gives ground-dwelling allies a place to hide when they need to. In general, the greater the diversity of plants in a landscape, the more likely diverse types of beneficial insects will establish residency.

There are numerous advantages to this method of control. It requires minimum effort by the gardener. It helps prevent the development of pesticide resistance in target insects. It does not contribute to environmental pollution. It aids in maintaining a more natural balance in our ecosystem. In addition to insect predators and parasitoids, the role of the pollinators is vital to our existence.

The role of pollinators is widely known and appreciated. Pollinators have long been recognized for their contributions to mankind's welfare and comfort. Without pollinators, there would not be many of the crops we depend on for our daily existence. The Honey Bee is the most well-known pollinator but there are other pollinators also important. These include the Hover Flies that do double duty as beneficients. They not only pollinate flowers but, as larvae, they prey on aphids and other soft-bodied insects. We gardeners can attract and keep our natural friends in our yards and gardens by following some common sense approaches.

Use disease resistant plant varieties. Keep your plants healthy by providing appropriate sunlight, moisture, drainage, and air circulation. A stressed plant is a vulnerable plant. Mulch properly to conserve water, to reduce the weed problems and to help improve the soil. Avoid improper fertilization by having your soil tested to see what and how much amendment it really needs. The adults of many beneficial insects, such as bees, Lady Beetles, Hover Flies, and parasitic wasps feed on the nectar and pollen produced by flowering plants. Including such plants in the garden will help ensure that these friends will stick around long enough to lay their eggs on your vegetation. Then, the larvae will consume aphids, caterpillars, mealybugs, cutworms, thrips, and other insect pests.

These plants provide easily accessible nectar and a good landing strip. Choose a variety of plants that bloom at different times during the growing season. Aim to vary color, scents, textures and plant height. Remember your flowers can be planted in your vegetable garden and your herbs can be planted in your flower beds to encourage a variety of locations for your beneficients.

Beneficial insects are almost certainly already in your yard and garden. Before using any pest control strategy, it is vital to identify accurately what is really causing the problem and what will really remedy it. County extension personnel, reference books, fact sheets, on-line resources and other horticulturists can assist in this process.

Periodically inspecting your plants will go a long way in preventing and controlling enemy invasions. Frequent inspections will enable you to find pests while they are still immature and not quite so numerous. Catching them early often results in the use of non-toxic or low toxic methods of control. Use of non-chemical controls whenever possible is the best choice. These might include pruning, hand-picking to remove insects, covering plants with netting, and using forceful watering.

If insecticides are called for, be certain you know your product. Read the label. What does it kill and on which plants is it safe to use? Use the amount and application interval as directed on the label. Use the least toxic chemical that will achieve your goals. Horticultural oils and insecticidal soaps might be a good option. Remember that beneficial insects are still insects. Broad spectrum insecticides that wipe out a wide variety of pests will almost certainly impact beneficients as well.

Plants that are the most attractive to beneficial insects include:

Apiaceae (commonly referred to as the carrot or parsley family) – Includes plants such as dill, parsley, fennel, caraway, cilantro and Queen Anne's Lace with umbrella-shaped clusters of small five-petaled flowers.

Asteraceae or Compositae (commonly referred to as the aster or sunflower family) – Includes asters, marigolds, dahlias, daisies, cosmos, calendula, coreopsis, tansy, yarrow, zinnia and sunflowers. These plants are characterized by flowers composed of rays around a disk-like center.

Brassicaceae (commonly referred to as the mustard family) – Includes plants such as sweet alyssum, nasturtium, candytuft.

Meet Master Gardeners Denny and Nancy Noh



By Barbara Canetti
MG 2016

Neither Denny nor Nancy Langston-Noh had a burning desire to be a Master Gardener. In fact, they admit they knew very little about gardening and even less about the organization. But upon entering the Class of 2016 and fulfilling all of the internship requirements, the couple has embraced their roles as Galveston County Master Gardeners, and are using their former career talents to make the organization better.

Denny, a native of Southern California who moved to Texas to work in the aerospace industry, retired from Boeing in 2008 after more than 42 years. His role there was administrative, focusing on Human Resources and finance. His gardening expertise was limited to a few containers on the patio at their home in Nassau Bay.

“We really didn’t know what the program was, but we felt it was something we could do together,” said Denny. “It was an overwhelming amount of information – I felt like I was in school again.”

He has concentrated his volunteer time with the Master Gardeners as a vice president in the Public Education area, setting up the free seminars MG host for the public. He has expanded the program outside the Carbide Center building to Bacliff, Friendswood, Galveston and other community centers, bringing gardening information to the public where they live.

“I found I could channel my organizational, human resource and science skills into this program,” he said, adding he stepped out of his own comfort zone by agreeing to lead the program. “We are using our life experiences and putting them to good use here.”

Besides his role with the MG, Denny also volunteers at the League City Garden Club (treasurer) and is very active at M.D. Anderson’s Sarcoma Center and patient-family advocacy center. He also is documenting procedures for the MG seminars to assist future program coordinators who take over the tasks when he steps down.

Nancy, a native of Alvin who grew up in Southeast Houston and recently retired as a registered nurse after 48 years, is bringing her medical background into her gardening awareness. She still teaches CPR at her company, Bay Coast CPR, but also leaves time for her quilting hobby. “There is therapy in the joy of gardening and I know it can improve your health,” she said, noting the exercise involved as well as the mental well-being of spending time outside and growing plants. “This program has opened our eyes of what we can do to help others.”

Nancy recently agreed to co-chair the Master Gardeners speaker’s bureau, and helps to spread the message of good gardening practices throughout the county by enlisting talented fellow gardeners to speak about all-topics garde



Photo courtesy of MG Barbara Canetti

The couple, who have been married for 21 years, agree that the sharing of information about gardens, gardening and plants has been more fun than they imagined.

“There is so much more to learn,” said Nancy. “We have learned so much, but it has been the sharing and volunteering part that we both enjoy the most.”

They do plan to expand their garden at home – more raised gardens for vegetables and additional ornamental plants on the patio. But for both of them, their attention is directed to the outreach that the Galveston County Master Gardeners offers.

“We have made some good friends within the organization,” said Denny. “But, through the seminars and other programs we have met some fascinating people who we would not have known if it wasn’t for this program. We’ve just learned a lot.”

Green Genes Passed down to Master Gardeners



By Karoyln Gephart
MG 2017

Frank Resch Master Gardener 2007

The holidays are a time for being thankful and sharing gifts with others. Master Gardeners seem to do both all year. So often the end results of their garden work at the Discovery Garden is given to food pantries or shared with others and every time a new seed grows or a plant provides a bloom or a fruit, a gardener is thankful.

Master Gardeners are special people with a focus and a mission that doesn't need Ancestry.com or 23andMe to see where in their past their gardening DNA derived.

Frank Resch became a MG in 2007 but had experienced quite a bit of gardening and growing things as a child. Resch grew up in Marshall, Texas in Harrison County. Both sides of his family came to the county in the 1840s and 1850s and were all involved in agriculture.

They were flexible as trends changed, including cotton, food crops, cattle and now mostly pine timber that Resch himself raises.

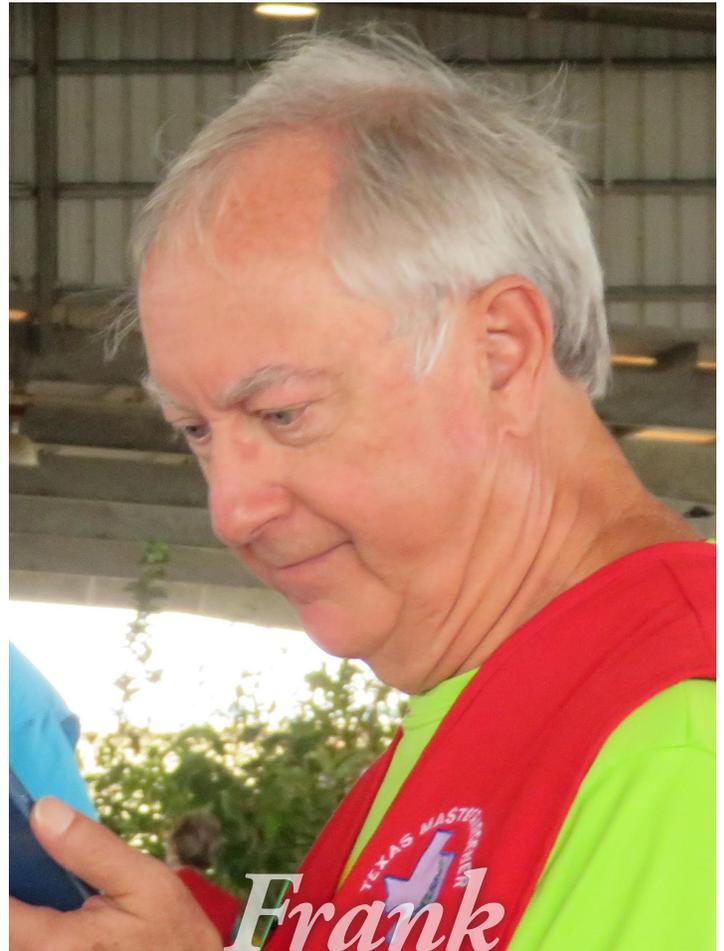
"When growing up my job was to feed the cows after school. I have been told that successful cattle ranching is 90 percent growing grass and 10 percent cattle genetics," Resch said. "We had a truck garden for a couple of summers. I also worked in a plant nursery (Verhalen's) *sticking sticks in the ground* several springs."

Resch, a retired chemical engineer, is currently on the GCMG Advisory Board and a member of Gardeners by the Bay garden club in Clear Lake. His specialty these days along with his pine tree farms is growing mostly the things one can eat. He currently has 71 different varieties of fruits, nuts and berries with much of it in Harrison County where he spends time that is divided from his home in Clear Lake and there. He also grows citrus, fruit trees and vegetables in Clear Lake and enjoys the fun of growing plants that can be challenges to grow in Galveston County.

"I have had many failures but tried to learn from each one," Resch said. "In my original garden plot in the Discovery Garden, my weeds grew better than those in Dr. J's plot."

Linda Barnett Master Gardener 2015

Gardening was an inherited love for another MG also, Linda Barnett. Two aunts and Baton Rouge make up the garden path to Barnett's heart. Barnett is the main ingredient in the successful Discovery Garden kitchen.



She loves flowers and her garden is filled with them.

It all goes back to two aunts that loved growing flowers. Then as an adult, Barnett and her husband moved to Baton Rouge and the garden gene kicked in even stronger.

"My husband said I went nuts over gardening while there," Barnett said. Her great grandparents were plantation farmers in Opelousas, Louisiana.

In Louisiana she met friend Jane Carter. In 2000 the two families moved to Texas and one day found out they were only 15 miles apart. The two decided to join a MG program and applied at Harris County. After two rejection letters, they started studying other programs.

"We did our homework and judged MG programs by their MG newsletter. Galveston County of course won," Barnett said. "We drove to La Marque, met Dr. J who interrogated us and the rest is history." Barnett is part of the MG Class of 2015.

Barnett lives in Crosby with Carter in Atascocita. True dedication and love sends her to the Discovery Kitchen each week. Barnett originally took on the entry way gardens with Carter but her love of cooking and baking drew her to the kitchen.

Barnett is a decorator who specializes in Christmas. This is her time of year and her kitchen talents are gifts she gives year round to all MGs in Galveston County.



Patsy Jewell
Master Gardener 1991

MG Patsy Jewell has many fond memories of her grandparents and mother who she can see provided her with an innate love of gardening.

“I have fond memories of both of my grandparents. They were an inspiration to me as a young child to want to continue gardening in my own yard from their example and many experiences with them,” Jewell said. “My paternal grandfather in Hitchcock planted many pecan trees on his acreage over 100 years ago and they are still standing. I have fond memories of gathering the pecans and then helping with cracking and shelling them. At Christmas our family would go to his acreage to find our Christmas tree.”



A Galveston BOI (born on the island), Jewell’s maternal grandparents lived in Oklahoma where they grew vegetables, had a chicken yard and filled a root cellar with canned fruits and vegetables they grew.

“I guess my mother was my biggest inspiration for my love of digging in the dirt. She worked daily in her yard. It was beautifully landscaped and she always had something blooming. A weed only lasted minutes in the flower beds because of her daily shadow. She also passed on her love of gardening to my two grown sons as they enjoy their flower gardens in their homes as well,” Jewell said.

Jewell retired from AMOCO Chemicals (BP) in Texas City where she worked as a payroll clerk and was known as Payroll Patsy. Her skills from there are given to the MG program when she works as cashier at the plant sales. Jewell and her sister Linda Steber were graduates of the MG Class of 1991 and both have been extremely active for 27 years.

“I enjoy working as cashier in the plant sales, attending the monthly seminars and I have attended many of the state conferences. I have also enjoyed working in the Discovery Garden with Judy Anderson and working with our incredible leader, Dr. Johnson,” Jewell said.

Her favorite plants to grow in her garden are daylilies, blood lilies, plumeria and succulents.

“But my favorite tree in my garden is my Bottle Tree, a surprise for me made by my husband, Butch to put in my flower bed,” Jewell said.

Longwood Gardens

The City of Tyler's Municipal Rose Garden



By Jon Johns
MG 2003

Longwood Gardens is a botanical garden located in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, about forty miles west of Philadelphia. The garden covers 1,077 acres and has over 11,000 different plants and trees. It includes many different feature and purposeful plant gardens, a 7 acre woodlands garden, an 86 acre wildflower meadow, multiple garden water features, a spectacular fountain display, a 4.5 acre conservatory (greenhouse), an open air theater capable of seating 1,500 with a 10-foot water curtain in front of the stage, a 10 acre solar field (which generates 50% of the garden's needed electricity) and restaurants. It has a yearly budget of \$50 million and a staff of 1300 employees, students and volunteers.

The Peirce family initially developed the property into an arboretum in 1798 that included plants they had collected and some that they had acquired from the region's leading botanists. By 1850 the arboretum claimed to have one of the finest collections of trees in the nation. The Peirce family's heirs lost interest in the arboretum and the property passed through several owners. Then was eventually purchased by a lumber mill owner for the timber. The threat of losing the trees resulted in Pierre du Pont (of the du Pont family and the president of the DuPont company) purchasing the property in 1914. He then spent the rest of his life developing the gardens. He renovated the original Peirce house, added fountains, and built an outdoor theater and the conservatory. He hired famous landscape architects to create many of the unique gardens and water features that were often inspired by his world travels. Even after his death in 1954 and to the current time, the garden continued to engage famous landscape architects and urban landscape planning firms to design gardens and provide advice.

The gardens attract over 1 million visitors a year. It hosts hundreds of horticultural, performing arts and seasonal events each year. The garden's staff conducts ongoing plant trials and research. Plus, the garden offers many educational programs, a professional horticultural program, a graduate program and internships.

My intent on visiting the garden was to see the rose displays. To my surprise while looking at the roses, the water fountain display began in the fountain garden. I subsequently enjoyed a thirty-minute, massive and spectacular show of dancing water fountains. The fountains consist of 1,719 jets with water displays reaching over 175 feet. I then visited the main conservatory which contains 20 gardens and hallways packed full of over 4,600 different plants displaying both blooms and all kinds of exotic foliage framed within outstanding plant relative layouts. Also in the conservatory is a pipe organ that has over 10,010 pipes and is regularly used for organ concerts. At the side of the conservatory I came across man-made, tiled pools with many varieties of waterlilies. As I left the conservatory I walked through a part of the wildflower meadow, then through the woodlands garden and into the many different, colorful and very well manicured gardens, and by many garden water features and fountains. I spent about four hours at the gardens, and I am not sure that I saw all that it had to offer. Overall, it was a well worthwhile visit. If you would like to see what I saw on my visit - go to my YouTube video titled "Enjoying Longwood Gardens." <https://youtu.be/IMY9GfSBffU>



The Conservatory



The Fountains



The Italian Garden



The Lake. Photos courtesy MG John Jons © 2018

★ ★ ★ In the NEWS ★ ★ ★



The initial installation stage of what is now called the Discovery Garden started in 2005 after much brush and tree removal. Fruit trees were planted, raised vegetable beds were built and a pergola, a gazebo and other hardscape were constructed to make the Discovery Garden a garden. Since that time, a gazebo and other hardscapes were constructed to make the garden whole.

The last item that was needed was a bridge over which visitors and Master Gardeners could enter the garden from the parking lot.

Two dedicated Master Gardeners stepped up to the plate to make this happen. We now have a beautiful arched entryway that provides a grand entrance to the garden from the south. We thank them for their for your generosity in donating this beautiful addition to our Discovery Garden.



The votes have been cast - our resident peacock has a name - Mr. Peabody. He is enjoying hanging out in the Discovery Garden for photo opportunities showing his magnificent tail feather display.

On November 17, 2018 a team of Galveston County Master Gardeners lead by Kisha Murphy, MG 2016, were on the scene of the Galveston County Health District's launch event for its newest initiative – Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL). HEAL is one of the biggest initiatives the GCHD district has been part of and is aimed at making Galveston County the healthiest in Texas.

Thank you for showing participants that growing your own vegetables is not only possible regardless of where they live but that it's great fun too!

Kudos for helping to make Galveston County the healthiest county in Texas and showing our community that leading a healthy and active lifestyle can be fun for the entire family!



Head over to Facebook to see photos of the event & share it with your friends!
<https://www.facebook.com/galvcountrymg/posts/2291413490929412>



Congratulations MG Robin Collins on Second Vice President Position for Texas Master Gardener Association. Took office in College Station on December 1, 2018.

Growing Strawberries in Aquaponics!



by Briana Etie
MG 2017

The Aquaponics Hoop house received donations this year. We received two tower gardens from Melissa Terrell MG 2014. We have recently installed them within the Aquaponic unit. We also received donations of strawberry plants to grow in the tower gardens within the Aquaponic system. Ken Clark our Galveston County Commissioner serving Precinct 4, donated 50 bare root strawberries plants.

On Thursday, November 8th we installed 40 strawberry plants in the Grow Towers and 10 plants in Media Bed 3. By Monday, Gene Speller observed the plants were already showing signs of improvement. The pictures with Ken were taken on the day we installed them. The pictures of the plants were taken on the following Tuesday. By February we should see plump strawberries.

We have placed each bare root strawberry in a 2-inch net basket with the roots to the bottom of the basket and we have used the clay fired media pellets to anchor them in the basket. The baskets are all installed into the Grow Towers. The Grow Towers have a large base that holds 20 gallons of water and heaters that have been filled with the Aquaponic water. The Grow Towers use small pumps to pump water to the top of the tower where the water percolates down through the net baskets. We are monitoring the nitrates, temperature and water levels.

Growing strawberries in our hot Texas weather requires them to be planted in the fall. Most strawberry farms near our area were planted in October.

Strawberries flower and fruit in cool to warm temperatures, 60-80 degrees F. There are two very different fruit bearing categories of strawberries; June Bearing and Day Neutral. There are not as many short-day, or June-bearing annual, strawberries suited to USDA hardiness zone 9 as there are day-neutral varieties. June-bearers primarily develop flowers in the early spring from buds that were developed during the previous fall, or under short-day conditions. June-bearing cultivars usually produce more fruit per plant than other types. Day Neutral strawberries are also called ever-bearing. Ever-bearing strawberries usually produce fruit under long-day conditions. However, they do not produce a lot of runners, and therefore will not spread easily. Day Neutral cultivars will produce under any day-length, though temperatures above 70° F will usually decrease flowering.

Ken Clark donated Albion, a Day Neutral, ever-bearing variety. Albion is known for its high yields of large to very large fruit. The fruit has a high sugar content, giving them a wonderful sweet flavor. I find it is a great berry for preserving or serving fresh. The plant grows upright with moderate runners reaching 2 to 3 feet, so it's a versatile choice for growing in the garden or hanging baskets. Resistance to Verticillium Wilt, Phytophthora Crown Rot and some resistance to Anthracnose Crown Rot makes it a good choice for organic gardeners. This variety is capable of very high yields when given extra watering and nutrients.

We are hoping this variety will perform well for our first try at growing strawberries aquaponically. Please come out and visit us and observe our progress at the Aquaponic Hoop house in our Discovery Garden. We welcome visitors most Thursdays from 9 – 11 am.



The Discovery Garden Update



By Tom Fountain
MG 2008

Summer is only a warm memory. We had an Arctic cold front which produced below freezing temperatures, a little sleet and a few snowflakes. In (Fig. 1) Clyde is looking at frozen fall tomatoes, while Vicki waters some winter vegetables. Over all, our temperatures have been a little above normal. However, rainfall totals were well above normal. Our October and November rainfall were more than 24 inches above normal around Galveston County or equivalent to half a year's normal rainfall. The rainfall was the result of the abundant tropical moisture that produced thunderstorms and heavy rains. Looking at the extended outlook through January, we can expect temperatures and rainfall to be near seasonal averages.



Between rains the greenhouse crew had a successful Discovery Garden sale. In (Fig. 2) Lisa, Sharon, and Glynn were helping customers during the sale. The greenhouse crew is already making plans on how to up their game, and what they are going to start growing for next season.



Despite the rain and mud the business of gardening still goes on. This includes changing out plants, watering, and harvesting. David in (Fig. 3) is on a ladder gathering the last of the persimmon crop as rain threatens. In (Fig.4) Jan brought a friend to tour the garden. Joanne and Donna were showing off the Butterfly Garden. Phil the tractor guy is seen in (Fig. 5) collecting the debris that Tish spent hours cleaning out of the Serenity Garden. Phil is one of those helpful people around the garden who always seems busy hauling soil, mulch, and garden debris.



After some earlier problems in the Aquaponics garden, the floating beds are starting to green up. Also, the garden towers donated by Melissa to the Aquaponics garden have now been activated. In (Fig.6) Briana is planting strawberries in the last of the towers. Meanwhile, Gene is checking the chemical balance and recording the results. Hopefully the resident peacock won't find strawberries as likeable as he seems to find the Lettuce.



The seasons of celebration have arrived even at the Discovery Garden. The Thanksgiving Luncheon is our annual celebration of the garden harvest and our garden family. In (Fig.7) Tim and Ed are frying turkeys for the luncheon, and as always, the food was wonderful and abundant.

I hope you have a wonderful time celebrating with family and friends this holiday season and we will see you in the garden.

easy recipes

Seasonal Bites



By Sandra Gervais
MG 2011

This month I've got some recipes for easy single-serve desserts. The first one comes from Galveston County Master Gardener Kathy Maines. She brought chocolate "Cake Balls" to last year's Christmas party for the Master Gardeners in Galveston. They were a definite hit. Some MGs never got any. The second is for "Mini Cheesecakes." Both can be put out with the coffee and no serving is required. Easy

Chocolate Cake Balls



Make a 9x13 inch chocolate cake. It can be from a box or your favorite scratch recipe. Cool completely—about 1 hour. In a large bowl, crumble the cake completely.

Add 3/4 cup of cream cheese frosting to the crumbs and mix well in a large bowl. Again, you can use canned frosting or make your favorite from scratch. Roll into 1-inch balls and place on a wax paper-lined cookie sheet. Freeze about 45 minutes or until firm. Place in refrigerator to keep chilled.

Melt 20 ounces of chocolate chips, almond bark or candy melts. This can be done in the top of a double boiler or in a microwave. If using a microwave, do 6-8 ounces at a time, uncovered, in a microwaveable bowl. Heat on High power for 1 minute and 30 seconds. Stir. Continue microwaving and stirring in 15 second increments until smooth and fully melted.

Remove 1/3 of the balls from the refrigerator at a time. Use two forks to dip and roll each ball in chocolate coating. Place on wax paper-lined cookie sheet. Decorate with sprinkles or chopped nuts if desired. Refrigerate cake balls about 10 minutes to set coating.

Melt the next batch of coating and dip the next 1/3 batch of remaining balls, place on wax paper and chill in refrigerator. Repeat until all balls are coated and chilled. Keep in airtight container. Serve at room temperature.

Note: if coating becomes too thick to coat balls, reheat for a few seconds in microwave.

Mini Cheesecakes



Ingredients

24 paper cupcake liners
24 vanilla wafers
16 ounces of cream cheese, softened
3/4 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon vanilla
toppings—chopped nuts, fruit pie filling, fresh fruit, etc.

Put liners in cupcake pan.
Put 1 vanilla wafer in bottom of each.

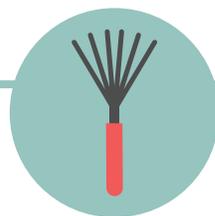
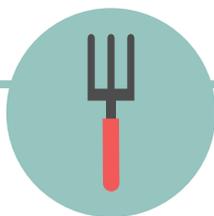
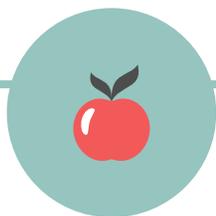
In small bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar, eggs, lemon juice and vanilla until light and fluffy.

Fill liners 2/3 full with cream cheese mixture.
Bake in 375 degree oven for 15-20 minutes or until set.

Top each mini with nuts, fruit pie filling, or fresh fruit.
Chill.

Serve at room temperature.

Note: adjust to your taste. We like more lemon juice in our filling and fresh berries on top. Or if you prefer a graham cracker base, make a batch and press into liner bottom.



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.

2018 Master Gardener Recertification Hours

Date	Name of Program	Speaker	MG CEUs
1/6/2018	Growing Avocado and Papaya	Jerry Hurlbert	2.75
1/6/2018	Growing Peaches in Galveston County	Herman Auer	2.50
1/11/2018	Collection and Storage of Budwood for Grafting	Sue Jeffco	1.25
1/11/2018	Discovery Garden Lunch & Learn - Tomato Project	Briana Etie & Erhard Goerlitz	0.50
1/13/2018	Growing Great Tomatoes	Ira Gervais	2.00
1/13/2018	Kitchen Gardening	Mary Demeny	2.00
1/18/2018	Wedge Grafting	Sue Jeffco	1.00
1/20/2018	Successful Spring Vegetable Gardening	Herman Auer	2.50
1/20/2018	Small Yards, Small Trees	Sandra Devall	1.50
1/23/2018	Garden Tool Talk	Tim Jahnke & Henry Harrison III	1.75
1/25/2018	Grape Pruning	David Cooper	1.25
1/25/2018	Discovery Garden Lunch & Learn - Community Beds	Bobbie Ivey & Clyde Holt	0.25
1/27/2018	Growing & Using Herbs	Tricia Bradbury	2.00
1/27/2018	Texas Tuff Plants	Sandra Devall	1.25
1/30/2018	Anyone Can Grow Roses	John Jons	1.00
2/3/2018	Simply Succulents	Paula Spletter	2.50
2/3/2018	Growing Backyard Citrus	Robert Marshall	2.00
2/8/2018	Discovery Garden Lunch & Learn - Hops & Weeds	John Jons	0.50
2/10/2018	Planting Fruit Trees	Herman Auer	2.00
2/13/2018	2018 Spring Plant Sale Preview	Karolyn Gephart	0.75
2/15/2018	MG Class - Botany	Jayla Fry	4.00
2/20/2018	MG Class - Plant Pathology	Dr. David Appel	4.00
2/22/2018	Rose Pruning	John Jons	1.00
2/22/2018	Discovery Garden Lunch & Learn - Butterfully Garden	Judy Anderson	0.25
2/24/2018	Growing Blueberries	Dr. David Cohen	1.50

Use this link to see the entire list.

https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/2018_MG_Recertification_Educational_Credit_Hours.pdf

October 2018 Meeting Minutes



By Sharon Zaal
MG 2015

President Sharon Zaal opened the meeting at 5:30 pm. Members enjoyed a pot-luck meal after Denny Noh gave the blessing.

Proposed Bylaws revisions were distributed to those present and will be voted on at the November meeting.

Nominating Committee members were announced for the upcoming elections as follows:

- Dr. William Johnson -Sharon Zaal
- Frank Resch -Ginger Benson

MG Deb Hale introduced the upcoming initiative at the Fall Plant Sale to reduce consumable single-use products and support recycling plastic bottles and soft drink cans.

Ira Gervais reported on preparations for the October 20th Sale. Karolyn Gephart ran through the presentation she will be making at the plant sale seminar.

The meeting was closed at 7:30.



Plant of the Month in the Discovery Garden for November - Firespike, *Odontonema strictum*



by Lisa Davis
MG Intern 2018

If you are looking for a spectacular plant, something that is wonderful for three seasons, a magnet for hummingbirds or a nectar plant for butterflies, look no further than Firespike, *Odontonema strictum*. This native of South America and Mexico is a beautiful, evergreen shrub which decorates the Fall landscape with crimson red flowers that bloom until the first freeze. Firespike is one of the few plants that produces gorgeous flowers in the shade. Plants grown in the shade will produce taller leaf stalks while those grown in full sun will bloom more heavily. Firespike has lush, shiny green foliage in the spring and summer and makes a lovely screen or border plant with shorter plants in front. If space is limited, try growing it in a container. It is easy to grow with no serious pests. A fun fact about this plant is that the African country of Burkina Faso uses Firespike to treat hypertension. For a closer look at this outstanding plant, head over to the Earth-Kind bed in the Discovery Garden.



Common Names: Firespike, Cardinal Guard, Mexican Fire Spike Bush, Scarlet Flame

Location in our MG Discovery Garden:
Earth-Kind Garden (located on the north end)

USDA Hardiness: 8b-11

Plant Characteristics

Type: herbaceous

Family: Acanthaceae

Height: in ground to 4 feet, to 3 feet in containers

Spread: 2-3 feet

Bloom Information

Bloom Color: red

Bloom Size: 9-12 inch panicles with inch-long tubular flowers

Bloom Time: late summer to first freeze

Culture

Exposure: part shade for taller leaf stalks to full sun for heavy blooming

Soil Moisture: drought tolerant once established, can reduce watering in winter

Soil Description: grows well in a wide variety of moist, well-drained soils

Salt Tolerance: none

Planting: year-round, space 24-36 inches apart

Tolerates Deer: no

Maintenance: Apply a light sprinkling of a complete fertilizer every 4-6 weeks during the growing season for in-ground plants. Apply liquid fertilizer weekly to container plants.

Benefits

Wildlife Use: hummingbirds & butterflies

Garden Uses: mass plantings, fill in area quickly, cut flowers

Propagation: divisions or cuttings, spread underground

Interesting Notes:

Do not confuse with Firebush located in the Pergola of the Discovery Garden. *Odontonema callistachyum* has pink and purple flowers.

Photos courtesy of MG Linda Steber

Upcoming Events January 2019

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 409.281.5065 or email galvcountrymgs@gmail.com

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

JANUARY

GROWING BLUEBERRIES

Saturday, January 12
9 – 10:30 a.m.

galvcountrymgs@gmail.com
for registration

Galveston County Honorary Master Gardener Dr. David Cohen, an accomplished home-grower of blueberries by avocation and practicing physician by trade, will present this educational program. He has an impressive "blueberry patch" as part of his home landscape and has gained considerable hands-on experience with successfully growing blueberries under the Gulf Coast region growing conditions. Topics presented will include variety recommendations for this area, site selection and preparation, planting, spacing, fertilizing, and pruning requirements. Also, harvesting and understanding the problems and costs of growing blueberries in this region will be covered. Location of presentation: Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park, 4102-B Main Street (FM 519), La Marque TX 77568; GPS location: 29.359705,-95.003591

BACKYARD CITRUS

Saturday, January 12
9 – 11:00 a.m.

galvcountrymgs@gmail.com
for registration

Galveston County Master Gardener Robert Marshall's presentation will feature the following topics: variety selection of citrus trees that grow well in this area, root stocks, nutrients, diseases (citrus canker and citrus greening), insect problems, control of birds and critters, and freeze protection. Marshall has years of experience in many facets of growing and propagating citrus trees in this Gulf Coast area. Many of the citrus trees included in the presentation will be offered for sale as transplants at the Galveston County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale on February 16, 2019. Location of presentation: Crystal Beach Fire & Rescue, 930 Noble Carl Drive, Crystal Beach TX.

KITCHEN GARDENING

Saturday, January 19
1 – 3:00 p.m.

galvcountrymgs@gmail.com
for registration

Galveston County Master Gardener Mary Demeny will present vegetable gardening in the backyard with an emphasis on gardening on a smaller scale close to the back door, as well as making use of inter-planting vegetables in flower beds and pots. Attendees will benefit from her 60+ years of experience with vegetable gardening. Bring a notebook as she will provide a considerable amount of practical information from her years of experience. Location of presentation: Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park, 4102-B Main Street (FM 519), La Marque TX 77568; GPS location: 29.359705,-95.003591

"TEXAS TUFF" PLANTS

Saturday, January 26
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

galvcountrymgs@gmail.com
for registration

Galveston County Master Gardener Marie Leal's presentation will cover plants that grow well in our Gulf Coast area. Discussion topics will include how to choose healthy, hearty plants for your landscape, as well as planting and caring for them. Location of presentation: Rosenberg Library, 2310 Sealy Street, Galveston, TX 77550

HERBS FOR THE GULF COAST

Saturday, January 26
1 – 3:00 p.m.

galvcountrymgs@gmail.com
for registration

Galveston County Master Gardeners Nancy Langston-Noh and Briana Etie will present herbs that grow well in the Gulf Coast garden, growing tips, propagation, and uses. Location of presentation: Rosenberg Library, 2310 Sealy Street, Galveston, TX 77550

WEDGE GRAFTING

Saturday, January 26
9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

galvcountrymgs@gmail.com
for registration

Galveston County Master Gardener Sue Jeffco will teach wedge grafting, a simple and easy grafting technique. Rootstock and bud-wood preparation, taping technique, after-care, and insider do's and don'ts will be included. This class will be entirely hands-on with plenty of practice time and one-on-one instruction. Tools and grafting tape will be supplied, but if you prefer, you may bring your own sharp knife and pruners. Location of presentation: Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park, 4102-B Main Street (FM 519), La Marque TX 77568; GPS location: 29.359705,-95.003591

SAVE THE DATE for

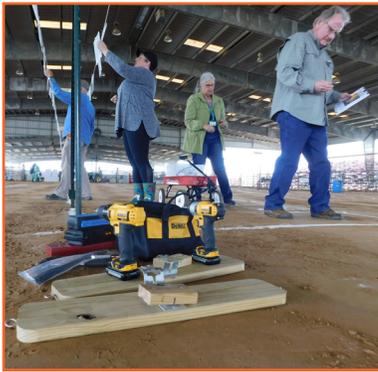
GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER SPRING PLANT SALE

Saturday, February 16

8 – 8:50 a.m. – Informational presentation about plants for sale
9 – 1:00 p.m. – Plant sale

Choose from thousands of plants adapted to the Texas Gulf Coast growing area. Volunteer certified Master Gardeners will be present to answer your questions. Customers are urged to bring their own wagons to transport their chosen plants. Location: Galveston County Fair Grounds in Jack Brooks Park – Rodeo Arena (large covered arena), Hwy 6 and Jack Brooks Road, Hitchcock, TX. For additional details and updates visit <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html>

2018 Fall Plant Sale





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 Jennifer Pinard at jpinard@tlc-tideway.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.

Advanced Training

Fruit and Nut Trees for South Texas (Home Fruit)

February 8 - 9, 2019
Hosted by Gonzales, Ft. Worth, TX
<https://txmg.org/events/advanced-training-home-fruit-south-texas>

Winter Citrus Seminar

February 9, 2019
Hosted by Victoria,
<https://txmg.org/events/victoria-county-winter-citrus-seminar-with-monte-nesbitt>

Click on each class for further details

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Tour Guides for Thursday Public Access and Tour of our Discovery Garden

Our Demonstration Garden is open for touring by the general public on each Thursday from 9:00 - 11:00 am. MGs are needed to serve as tour guides for our Discovery Garden.
Contact MG Denny Noh at 281.723.2830 or dnoh@aol.com 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

AgrilLife Extension Office Discovery Garden needs volunteers!

The gardens around the AgrilLife 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 AgrilLife 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.

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.



Here is a great way to support our GCMGA. Amazon will donate 0.5% of our personal purchases to Galveston County Master Gardener Association. All you have to do is: Go to smile.amazon.com - Choose Galveston County Master Gardener Association as your charity. Save smile.amazon.com to your favorites. - Always start from this site to do your Amazon shopping. - You should see your chosen charity in the top bar on Amazon's website. - If you have any problems, search smile on Amazon's website



Cool weather means time to plant pansies

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

A round of real fall weather conditions has at last arrived. Evening and nighttime temperatures are dipping into the mid-thirties giving hope that fall will finally begin to feel like fall, even in the Texas Upper Gulf Coast region.

One of the benefits of living in the Texas Upper Gulf Coast region is that we can plant pansies now for enjoyment in the winter landscape. Pansies are a remarkable annual capable of surviving our coldest winter temperatures then bouncing back with vigor when warm weather returns.

Pansies have become the most popular cool season annual used to provide a dependable winter and early spring color display for Galveston County landscapes and gardens. Their versatile use in the landscape, easy culture, and abundant blooms make them quite worthy of their popularity.

Now through early December is the ideal time to be planting pansy transplants. Pansies require soil temperatures between 45 degrees and 65 degrees Fahrenheit for best growth. Pansies planted after soil temperatures drop below 45 degrees Fahrenheit show stunted, pale green leaves, little growth and little or no flowering. Cold-stressed root systems are less efficient in taking up nutrients.

On the other hand, pansies planted too early and exposed to warm temperatures often appear yellow; the stems stretch and the new growth will appear as small rosettes at the ends of stems. As a result, the plants flower poorly and are more susceptible to frost damage or disease.

Even though they may look delicate, pansies are tough plants as they are one of the few flowers that withstand cold temperatures (down to the single digits) and still provide a spectacular show when temperatures warm up.

Pansies thrive during our mild winters. They will continue to provide blooms



Pansies have become the most popular cool season annual used to provide a dependable winter and early spring color display for home landscapes.

Photos courtesy of Dr. William M. Johnson

through the spring season which is their peak performance period.

Pansies should be located in areas that receive full sun or only partial shade. The soil should be well-turned to a depth of 8-to-10 inches and the addition of organic amendments, such as garden compost or composted manure is beneficial.

Pansies are susceptible to several root rot diseases and they require good soil drainage for optimal performance. Therefore, the bed level should be raised several inches above the existing ground to ensure good surface drainage in areas that are not well-drained.

Pansies lend themselves to a wide range of applications in the home landscape. They are popular in large formal plantings, as borders, and in planter boxes. They are also popular as background or fill-in annuals for spring bulbs. Their long season of bloom is excellent in providing rich, colorful blooms from the spring season to the bloom season of early summer annuals.

The pansy has one of the widest ranges of flower colors of any garden annual. Included in the wide color range are red, purple, blue, bronze, pink, black, yellow, white, lavender, orange, apricot and mahogany. Flowers may be single-colored, streaked, or blotched.

Some flowers have petals with crinkled-ruffled edges, while others are smooth. The F1 hybrids offer an extended bloom time lasting well into spring due to their heat tolerance.

Today you will find a wide array of pansy varieties. Different breeding companies produce entire series of pansies, with names like Majestic Giants (one of my favorite series), Antique Shades, Nature, Matrix, Panola, Skippy, and Bingo, just to name a few. Each series sports varieties with and without faces.

Choose healthy, fresh plants for planting. Most transplants are sold locally in multi-pak units or by the individual plant. Purchase stocky plants with at least 4-to-5 strong leaves.

Space individual plants 6-to-10 inches apart to provide a solid mass of color. Be sure that the top of each transplant's potting mix is about 1/4 inch below the soil line. However, do not plant too deeply as the tender plants become more susceptible to root rot.

To keep pansies blooming profusely, fertilize lightly every month with a general purpose, complete fertilizer (such as 13-13-13) or a slow release fertilizer such as Osmocote. To maximize flower production, be sure to keep spent flowers pinched off.

Water the newly planted pansies well. Mulch pansy beds with shredded pine bark to provide a distinctive background contrast that enhances the green foliage and colorful flowers.

Pansies are easy to grow and will reward a homeowner's efforts with an abundance of color. There is a place for them in every Galveston County garden. Plant now and enjoy their smiling faces in your fall, winter, and early spring garden.

Dr. William Johnson is a horticulturist with the Galveston County Office of Texas AgriLife Extension Service, The Texas A&M System.
Visit his website at aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston

2018- 2019 GCMGA Monthly Meetings



By Judy Anderson
MG 2012

December 11, 2018

December 11, 2018
Please join the Galveston County Master Gardeners for the December Holiday celebration at the home of Allen and Mikey Isbell. Get into the seasonal festivities by participating in the White Elephant Gift Exchange; bring a gardening gift valued under \$5.00 for a man or woman. Also, unwrapped children's gift will be collected for a local shelter. Bring a pot luck dish for the holiday feast. Dress up in casual or your festive attire and join the party.



New Galveston County Master Gardener officers will be installed during the evening. Check your e-mail for the invitation with more details.

January 8, 2019

Join the Master Gardeners at the Extension Office for a traditional New Years Pot Luck Meal. Plans for the year ahead will be discussed along with upcoming events. Mark Tuesday, January 8, 2019 on your calendar to celebrate the New Year with the Master Gardeners.

MG Judy Anderson thanks MGs for hosting backyard meetings.



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



FEEDBACK

We Want Your
Feedback



We would love to hear from you. Send us your comments or suggestions for future articles, or just let us know how you are using our newsletter. To make sending feedback easy, just click on the button with your response

