

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

# GULF COAST *Gardening*

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TEXAS  
MASTER GARDENER  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION  
Galveston County





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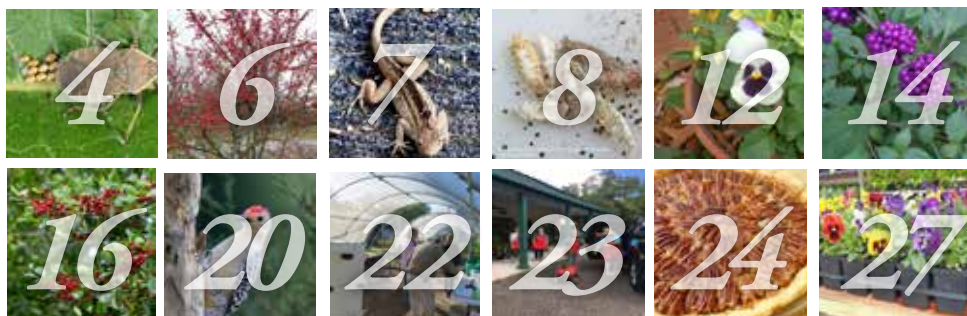


By Camille Goodwin  
MG 2008

**2020 Memes, an inexplicable year:** I told my wife how thankful I was to have someone I enjoyed to be quarantined with. She said "Must be nice"! Does anyone know if we can take showers yet, or should we just keep washing our hands? This lockdown can go three ways, you can come out a hunk, a chunk or a drunk! I stepped on my smart scale this morning and it said: Please use social distancing, one person at a time. Doing nothing is hard, you never know when you're done. Earth is closed today. Thousands of parents learned the teacher was not the problem! 2020 was a win for introverts. I don't like the fact that my chances of survival seem to be linked to the common sense of others. So, in retrospect, in 2015, not a single person got the answer right to "where do you see yourself 5 years from now?"

I'm one that's usually sad the years pass so quickly; however, like everyone else I won't be sorry to see the conclusion of 2020. With this last issue of *Gulf Coast Gardening* for the year, we end with some great educational articles and ideas for the New Year ahead. No issue is complete without features on insects! Do you know the differences between squash bugs and stink bugs? Though similar, they have different preferred diets and touch almost every vegetable we try to grow. Learn to identify and control them on page 4. On page 8, the Casemaking Clothes moth is featured along with a video of the larva pulling its red case because it's been eating red wool carpet! I think I could have lived the rest of my life without knowing about this one!

After insects, another aggressive invader, the brown anole lizard, has made our green anole lizards seemingly disappear. Page 7 tells us about this Caribbean intruder, how far it's spread and where our green lizards hide. Our Gulf Coast was threatened by several tropical events this past hurricane season. Do you wonder what happens to birds when storms arrive? I heard a local Galvestonian, on the news say, he only evacuated when all the birds left the island and there was only silence with no avian activity. When birds were still around, he didn't think the storm would be too bad. I have no clue if that's accurate, but the piece on page 20, shared with us by Texas Birder, Gary Clark with photos shared by Kathy Adams Clark tell us about bird behavior in storms. Many Galveston landscapes were submerged with potentially damaging saltwater from storm tides this season. The story on page 17 provides some help to limit the after-effects of salt water damage.



Considering new plant material for your landscape? Options to consider might be the Possumhaw Holly (page 16), American Beautyberry attracts pollinators (page 14), and the beautiful Chrysanthemum (page 10). Once again, Donna Ward doesn't want us resting on laurels, letting our past gardens fade into obscurity, she gives us a to do list of tasks to continue achieving beautiful yards, including ideas to add color from trees, bulbs and flowers to plant, ornamental grasses for movement, vegetables, herbs and how to protect our tropical plants before winter (page 12).

After you've completed Donna's list, travel to the Palace Rose Garden in Sydney, Australia (page 13). This modern rose garden uses new rose selections and Integrated Pest Management techniques to reduce the chemicals old roses need to remain beautiful. Enjoy meeting Gayle McAdoo and Trish McDaniel on page 18 to see how they came about their "Green Genes." In spite of the pandemic, MGs are social distancing and accomplishing much at our Discovery Garden, page 22.

Finally, two fun things to know about – our Association placed in all seven categories of the Extra-Large Counties division at the Texas Master Gardener Association State Conference. See our successes on page 25. Do you like to read? You might be interested in participating in the "Green Thumb Book Club." See how it works and sign up on page 21.

*Godspeed to us all as we journey into 2021, may it be our best year yet!*

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Cover:  
Photo courtesy of MG Dr. Margaret Canavan



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**We encourage your articles!**

**Due the 20th of each month.**

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Thanks for your interest!

# ask a master gardener...

## Insect Problems?

### Q&A – Are they Squash Bugs or Stink Bugs?



By Hedy Wolpa  
MG 2018

We know that insects are important because they help keep all of nature in balance. However, insect pests that eat their way through our gardens are unpopular with those of us who are trying to maintain a productive patch of fall or spring vegetables. Squash bugs and stink bugs can be frequent, unwanted visitors in the garden when our seedlings and transplants are establishing themselves. All are considered polyphagous, with an excessive desire to eat and causing damage to a wide variety of plants.

Looks are deceiving! The adult versions of these pests look similar and are often mistaken for each other. They are both insects of the Hemiptera order, are similar in their shield shape, and they both have a nasty odor when crushed, disturbed, or frightened. Both squash bugs and stink bugs pierce and then suck plant juices from veggies, fruits, and other vegetation, injecting a toxic substance into the plant tissue which causes pitting, discoloration, and even deformity of the plant. The puncture sites also allow pathogens and other disease organisms to enter the fruit or vegetable and cause internal rot.

A closer look at each of these destructive species may be helpful to both novice and experienced gardeners. Both species are...well, they're just stinkers!

Squash bugs, *Anasa tristis*, (Fig. 1) are especially fond of winter and summer squash, zucchini, pumpkins, melons, and cucurbits. Adults are 1/2 inch or longer, and are brown or gray, shield-shaped, but slightly more elongated than stink bugs. Squash bug eggs are yellow-bronze in color and they'll appear in a cluster on the underside of plant leaves in the "V" of a leaf vein. When the nymphs emerge, they can be found clumped together to feed, but later instars (there are 5 total) find them as solitary feeders. The nymphs are wingless and pale green, turning to brownish-gray with black legs and antennae. Adult squash bugs can live through the winter in sheltered places under plant debris and rocks. In spring they attack cucurbit plants to feed and then mate, continuing their life cycle. There may be two or three generations in one growing season, and interestingly, all the life stages of eggs, nymphs, and adults may overlap, and all can be seen at the same time during peak growing season.

Stink bugs are especially fond of tomatoes, peas, beans, peppers, okra, peaches, pecans, and even some weeds and grasses. Some will also prey on other insects and caterpillars, making them a beneficial insect in gardens. There are several stink bug varieties in our area, including the southern green stink bug, *Nezara viridula* (Fig. 2), the brown marmorated stink bug, *Halyomorpha halys*, (Fig. 3) and the rough body stink bug, *Brochymena arborea* - this one is the beneficial bug, (Fig. 4). Their shield-shaped bodies are broader than the bodies of squash bugs. Stink bugs cause two types of damage: In plants such as young green tomatoes, the cells at the site of stink bug feeding are killed by the toxic saliva injected into the plant. This area of the fruit stops expanding, while the cells around the dead cells continue to expand by increasing their water content. The result is deformed fruit that appears to have dimples. This type of damage has been called "cat facing." And when ripened or nearly ripened fruit is injured, the injection of toxic saliva kills a cluster of cells that later forms an off-color hard mass in the fruit, reducing fruit quality and producing a bad flavor to the fruit.



Squash Bug



Southern Green Stink Bug



Brown Marmorated Stink Bug



Rough Brown Stink Bug





## — frequent unwanted visitors in the garden

Southern green stink bug adults are 1/2 inch long and are solid, light green with a narrow yellow or orange edge along the shield. Immature stages vary in color from black for very small nymphs to green for larger nymphs with a distinctive pattern of whitish spots on the abdominal segments.

Rough body stink bug adults are grayish-brown with checkered border beneath their wing covers, shield-shaped and 1/2 inch long. It is considered beneficial because rather than eating plants, they feed on other insects. It looks very similar to the brown marmorated stink bug, but the difference can be distinguished by comparing the shoulders of both species. The beneficial's shoulders are armed with multiple spikes. The pest insect has smooth shoulders. They feed on and help control moths, caterpillars, harmful beetles, aphids and many other pests without hurting plants or people.

Brown marmorated stink bugs are invasive pests from Asia that appeared in the United States around 2001. Approximately 5/8 inch long and various shades of brown, they have lighter bands on antennae and darker bands on the rear of the front wings, and bluish or coppery depressions on the head and pronotum. Their shoulders are smooth. They are especially destructive to citrus and a variety of fruits and vegetables.

Say goodbye to the little stinkers! And now for the good part, and the reason why most MGs are reading this article.....how to get rid of stink bugs and squash bugs! An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, but you already know that early detection of eggs and nymph activity is a signal to get into action, since the adult insects are so hard to eradicate once they appear.

- Remember to clean out plant debris during the spring and summer growing season to reduce the sites where bugs can hide.
- During the fall and winter, clean up plant material where insects may overwinter.
- Check the undersides and stems of leaves, even when plants look healthy, to find the eggs in clusters along leaf veins.
- Spray leaves, top and underneath, with insecticidal soaps to kill eggs and nymphs (Fig. 5).
- If only a few plants are affected, hand-pick and kill nymphs by dropping them into a pail of soapy water.
- Trap adults by laying out boards or sheets of newspaper. Insects will group under them at night and you can collect and crush them in the morning.
- A cordless, hand-held vacuum is an excellent tool to capture eggs, nymphs, and adults. Use one that is not too powerful so the plant isn't damaged. Dump the insects into a pail of soapy water.
- If the infestation is critical, and you need to use pesticides, the best time to apply is early in the morning or late at night when bee activity in the area is low. Suggested active ingredients include azadirachtin (neem), pyrethrins, lambda-cyhalothrin, beta-cyfluthrin, or imidacloprid. Always follow the pesticide label directions attached to the pesticide container you are using; remember - the label is the law!



Photos by GCMGA Digital Library

# Plant of the Month

## Possumhaw Holly - *Ilex decidua*



By Lisa Davis  
MG 2018

If you have been in a store lately or had the radio on, you're bound to have heard Christmas music. You may have even played some of your own collection at home. Have you heard, "We Need a Little Christmas"? Angela Lansbury first sang it in the musical "Mame" in 1966; Johnny Mathis followed in 1986; Andy Williams belted it out in 1995; LeAnn Rimes put a country twang on it in 2015. The first line of the song is "Haul out the Holly." Others have raised their voices in song about the holly plant in "The Holly and Ivy," "Holly Jolly Christmas," and "Deck the Halls." The Possumhaw Holly is a native plant ranging from East Texas to western regions of the state. It is on the Texas Superstar list and can be located in the Discovery Garden by taking a leisurely walk to the North end of the Discovery Garden. You may want to consider this plant and join Lansbury, Mathis, Williams, and Rimes as you haul out your own holly. The green leaves and red berries will add festive holiday cheer to your home.

**Common Names:** Meadow Holly, Prairie Holly, Swamp Holly, Winterberry, Bearberry

**Location:** North end of the Discovery Garden: Back, Back 40

**USDA Hardiness Zone:** 5 to 9

### Plant Characteristics

Type: Deciduous shrub

Family: Aquifoliaceae

Height: to 12 feet

Spread: 6 feet

### Bloom Information

Bloom Color: whitish

Bloom Size: inconspicuous

Bloom Time: on female plants in March, April, May

Fruit: red, appears on female plants in November or December when the foliage drops. Fruit lasts until mid-March

### Culture

Exposure: full sun to part shade

Soil Moisture: moist; tolerates poor drainage and a variety of moisture conditions

Soil Description: prefers acidic but will grow in a wide variety of conditions

Drought Tolerance: high

Tolerates Deer: moderate; whitetail deer consume leaves & twigs

Maintenance: low; prune to shape in spring, no serious disease or insect problems

### Benefits

Wildlife Use: nesting site, nectar for insects, fruit eaten by birds, deer, & small mammals such as raccoons & opossums

Garden Uses: winter ornamental, plant in groups as a hedge, accent tree, bonsai. Select female plants if the red fruit is desired as males are fruitless. A male is not needed as a pollinator.

Propagation: easily propagated from seeds; unable to determine gender until plants flower at 2-4 years.



Photo by GCMG Digital Library



# Brown Anole Invasion

## *what's happening to our green anoles?*



By Kaye Corey  
MG 2001

Remember when we kids played with the little green lizards (anole) we referred to as chameleons because they could change their color from green to brown? Now a brown anole (*Anolis sagrei*) has invaded the native green anole's (*Anolis carolinensis*) habitat, aggressively competing for food, and sending the native Carolina greens to the treetops.

I watched a green anole on our fence changing its color to brown and then racing in front of a brown anole to safety. When I saw a brown anole with a green anole in its mouth, it was time to find out what was happening! I found widespread research, but no control of the brown anole invasion is in sight.

Brown anoles are native to Cuba, Bahamas, Honduras and Cayman Islands and were introduced in the Florida Keys in the 1880s. In the 1970s, brown anoles were sold in Florida as pet lizards. Researchers believe the habitat range has been aided by the accidental transporting of the brown anoles' eggs in live plants across state borders and by motor vehicles in general. Browns anoles are now present in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, California and Hawaii.

Brown anoles are highly invasive and multiply rapidly. The displacement and population reduction of green anoles will cause an imbalance in a wide variety of habitats. Brown anoles transmit parasites to new environments. They are transmitting invasive parasites or bacteria that are fatal to the native lizard population.

Male brown anoles (Fig. 1) are light brown with darker brown markings on its back and grow 7-to-9 inches in length while the females (Fig. 2) are 3-to-6 inches. Females have a light brown stripe that runs up their backs. This species also changes color from brown to black. When males are defending territory or courting, they flash a bright red-orange dewlap. Both sexes have a dewlap, but it is smaller in the female and rarely extended.

Brown anoles live 4-5 years, reaching sexual maturity a year after hatching. They breed in the summer months and the female will lay 1 or 2 eggs every 7 days. The eggs are round, white with hard shells about the size of a pea. Females bury and abandon the eggs in soil. The eggs hatch 4 weeks later (depending on environmental conditions). The hatchlings are totally self-sufficient from their beginnings.

Most reptiles molt in one large piece, like a snake. However, brown anoles molt in small pieces and then eat the molted skin to replenish its calcium. Their diet includes crickets, moths, ants, grasshoppers, cockroaches, mealworms, spiders and waxworms. They even eat other lizards like skinks and the naïve Carolina green anole (Fig. 3) and their eggs. If near water, they will eat small fish. In fact, they will eat

most anything that will fit in their mouth. Unfortunately, my butterfly caterpillars fit in their mouths.

When threatened by some predators (such as birds, cats and rats), a brown anole's tail can become detached during the encounter and the tail continues to move thus distracting the predator. The brown anole will grow a new tail if it loses it. Brown anoles will also bite, hiss and urinate, if provoked. Predators include rats, snakes, birds and larger animals such as cats. My husband with his Daisy rifle might also be a threat....



Photos by Bryan Corey

# Casemaking Clothes Moth...



By Laurel Stine  
MG 2002

**Question from our Hotline:** My husband saw these “grains of rice” along the baseboard near his recliner. He said they were moving! Well, they haven’t moved for me, but they certainly are peculiar. What are these?

These are the larvae of Casemaking Clothes Moths (*Tinea pellionella*). People have mistaken them for rice and orzo, as well. And, yes, they can move, so your husband was correct.

Casemaking Clothes Moths are found throughout the world. Clothes moths are major pests because their feeding habits damage fabrics and other items made of natural fibers. Clothes moth larvae have the ability to digest keratin, which is a principal protein in wool, feathers, fur, hair, upholstered furniture, animal and fish meals, milk powders, and most animal products, such as bristles, dried hair, and leather.

Larvae will also infest or feed on lint, dust, paper, cereal products and materials soiled with oil, dried meat extracts, and insect remains. Clothes moth larvae can feed on mixtures of natural and synthetic fabrics. However, they cannot feed on materials made of pure synthetic fibers. In nature, clothes moth larvae have been found infesting pollen, hair, dead insects, and dried animal remains.

Clothes moths were far better known to our grandparents than they are

to most of us. The use of synthetic fibers in carpets and clothing and increased sanitation has greatly reduced reports of this once common pest.

Casemaking Clothes Moth larvae create a silken tube (case) to protect themselves from the environment and natural enemies. They remain with it throughout the entire larval stage until it finally uses the same case to pupate in. The case consists of silken material produced by the larva intertwined with fibers from the material it is feeding on.

As the larva grows, it will enlarge the case by making a slit on both sides of the case and inserting triangular sections of new material. In this same fashion it will increase the length of the case by adding new material to either end.

The larva will drag the case with it as it feeds. It will thrust out its head and thoracic legs and pull the case along with it. Immediately prior to pupation, the larva will often seek a protected site such as a crevice, wall or often the ceiling of the room of the infestation.

Here is a video of the larva in action: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dO\\_gxYqMPtw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dO_gxYqMPtw)

Adult clothes moths are buff colored and about 1/4 inch long. They are seldom seen; they avoid light and remain hidden. They do not feed or cause any damage. When disturbed, clothes moths try to hide by flying to a dark corner or by hopping or running for cover.



Casemaking larva and silken tubes



Casemaking Clothes Moth adult



# ... a major pest

The life cycle of the clothes moth can last from two months to two years, with males outliving females and continuing to mate throughout their lives. The adult female lays eggs singly or in groups on products that the larvae will consume, but these eggs are not glued very strongly and can easily be dislodged. Each female moth can deposit from 100 to 150 eggs, depending on temperature, and eggs will hatch in about five days.

The larval stage varies greatly according to environmental conditions such as temperature and food supply. When fully grown, the larva stops feeding and spins a tough, spindle-shaped cocoon in which to pupate. The pupation period lasts from eight to 10 days in summer and three to four weeks in winter.

The most important method of clothes moth control is good housekeeping. Clothes moths can be controlled by various methods, including periodic cleaning, proper storage of susceptible articles, dry cleaning and laundering, freezing, heating, and/or fumigating with dry ice. Clothes moths are most often found on items that are not stored properly. All susceptible articles should be brushed and cleaned periodically, especially items that will be stored for any length of time, and placed in airtight containers. Dry clean items, such as woolen sweaters, before they are stored. The vacuum cleaner is a good tool for regularly removing woolen lint or hair from floors, shelves, and drawers.

Also, inspect areas for the presence of clothes moths, such as attics, ventilation ducts, and other areas where insects and dust accumulate.



Fabrics damaged by clothes moths.

Clothing bags, cedar closets, and cedar chests only provide protection when stored materials are free from infestation. Eastern red cedar contains an oil that is able to kill only small larvae with no effect on large clothes moth larvae. Pheromone traps are also available for use.

Crack-and-crevice or spot treatment with insecticides may be necessary when clothes moths become established in the home. Apply sprays according to label directions, and do not apply directly to clothing. Sprays are effective when properly applied to surfaces as spot treatments. Most sprays that list clothes moths on their label contain pyrethrins, which provide quick knockdown of clothes moths.

Sprays should be directed to all known or suspected breeding places. Clothing should be removed from closets and drawers before spraying interior surfaces. Some insecticides have an oil base and should not be sprayed on silk, rayon, or other fabrics that stain easily.

For severe infestations, it may be necessary for a pest control company to fumigate the structure. Tight closets, trunks, or chests can be mothproofed by application of moth balls at the rate of 1 pound per 50 cubic feet of space. Moth balls should be kept away from children and pets.



Dong-Hwan Choe, Dept. of Entomology, UC Riverside  
Used by permission

Feeding cases from casemaking clothes moth larvae, *Tinea pellionella*.

# The Chrysanthemum

## Symbolizes fidelity, optimism, joy and long life

(Editor's Note: this is a reprint of Jan's article in the *Galveston Monthly*)



By Jan Brick  
MG 2001

*The Chrysanthemum symbolizes fidelity, optimism, joy and long life. Red for love, white for truth and loyal love, and yellow for slighted love.*

We had decided that summer was going to last forever. It was difficult to get motivated in the extreme heat of August and September but, finally, in the first week of October, our thoughts turned to the garden and the tasks awaiting us there.

Although we may have very warm temperatures well into the fall months, we can hardly restrain ourselves as the garden centers feature the latest in annuals, perennials, and bulbs.

When thinking of fall blooms, we often begin with chrysanthemums, the flower of November. Chrysanthemums were first cultivated in China as a flowering herb in the 15th century BC and then in Japan around the 8th century AD. The Emperor of Japan became so enamored of the chrysanthemum that he adopted it as his official seal, and a "Festival of Happiness" continues to be held to celebrate the plant. Chrysanthemums have a wealth of meaning associated with them; fidelity, optimism, joy, and long life. The red chrysanthemum

conveys love, while a white one symbolizes truth. Chrysanthemum flowers bloom in various forms; daisy-like, pompoms, or button-shaped, and the blooms encompass a wide range of colors, including white, purple, yellow, orange, and red.

There are two basic groups of chrysanthemums, garden hardy and an exhibition type. Garden hardy mums are perennials capable of being wintered over in the ground in most areas; exhibition varieties are not as sturdy. Garden hardies are defined by their ability to produce an abundance of small blooms without staking, and the capacity to withstand wind and rain. Exhibition varieties often require staking and over-wintering in a dry cool environment.

Plant chrysanthemums in full sun in well-draining soil that has been enriched with compost and do not overcrowd; good air circulation reduces the chance of disease. Chrysanthemums bloom in response to the photoperiodic action of shorter days and longer nights. Planting near the artificial light of street lights or night lights may interfere with the plants' cycle. The faded blooms should be removed regularly to help prolong flowering.



The Chrysanthemum - Red for Love - White for Truth and Loyal Love - Yellow for Slighted Love



### Interesting facts about Chrysanthemums include:

- Chrysanthemums are one of the most popular flowers in the world, next only to the rose
- Australians traditionally give their mothers chrysanthemums on Mother's Day.
- The chrysanthemum is the official flower of Chicago.
- The Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum is a Japanese honor awarded by the Emperor.
- Chrysanthemum plants have been shown to reduce indoor air pollution by the NASA Clean Air Study.
- In Chinese cuisine, the yellow or white chrysanthemum flowers are boiled to make tea, while the leaves are steamed or boiled and used as greens.
- The flowers when pulverized can be used as a natural source of the insecticide pyrethrum.

Autumn is a favorite gardening period, when many plants undergo a resurgence of growth and bloom. A little trimming will encourage this new growth in your summer annuals. Then, while we enjoy this recovery from the nearly stifling temperatures of the summer months, we can perform those housekeeping duties of the garden that prepare for the introduction of the annuals of fall.

Weed and clean your beds and pots of decaying plant matter. Cut back overgrown foliage and deadhead plants with dried-up blooms to make them more attractive. Develop a plan; decide where you want your new plants, then prepare your flowerbeds with the addition of compost thoroughly mixed into the existing soil.

Add mulch to clay soil and humus or peat moss to sandy soil to increase the water holding capacity and drainage. With your beds prepared and organized, you are ready for the trip to the garden center. Choose high quality healthy plants with dark green foliage and signs of bud development. Avoid tall leggy plants. Choose those that are smaller and more compact as they will develop better root systems to sustain vigorous new growth.

Cool season plants will perform best in well-drained areas that receive ample sun. More sun generally leads to more blooms and hardier plants.

#### Other Fall Favorites

*Asters*  
*Dianthus*  
*Gaillardia* (blanket flower)  
*Ruellia* (Mexican petunia)  
*Autumn sage*  
*Flowering cabbage*  
*Larkspur*, *Johnny-jump-ups*  
*Snapdragons*

## OTHER FALL FAVORITES



Aster Daisy



Dianthus



Flowering Cabbage

# Trowels & Tribulations In a Suburban Garden

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



By Donna Ward  
MG 1996

Finally, Mother Nature has sent summer on its way, but that doesn't mean we can sit in front of the fireplace with cocoa and cookies. There's plenty going on out in the garden that needs attending. The creepy crawlers are looking for a comfy spot to spend the winter, so removing leaves, twigs, dead annuals and other debris that will give them a place to hide should be on our list of things to do.

If by chance you lost a shade tree and that gorgeous azalea bed is now subject to sunburn, there couldn't be a better time to move them or maybe plant some new ones. They should be on sale about now. Same goes for camellias. Just be sure to keep new plantings mulched and moist to prevent winter damage. And while you're shopping at your favorite nursery keep in mind that it's also an ideal time to plant a new tree or two in your landscape. Some folks may make fun of our lack of fall color, but there are a few trees that will provide some impressive fall hues. Drummond red maple, crape myrtle, golden raintree, Japanese maple and red oak are a few you might consider.

Before you go home you might want to check on some flowering bulbs. Anemone, ranunculus, calla and Easter lilies can go in the ground now. You have time to refrigerate tulips for planting on Christmas and New Year's Day. Refrigerate them in a paper bag but keep them away from fruit as the ethylene gas emitted especially from apples will cause them to rot.

We've been admiring the smiley-face pansies in the nursery for some time, but resisted purchasing them as they don't like warm weather – well now is the time! Pansies are heavy feeders and we want their display to be spectacular. A time-release fertilizer in the planting hole is your best bet for an eye-catching exhibit. Avoid feeding with blood



Photos by MG Donna Ward

Pansy

meal as some suggest, as it attracts night-roaming critters. A backdrop of yellow snapdragons behind purple or blue pansies will make your neighbors green with envy. If you plant snapdragons you might want to pinch out the tops and force them to take on a more bushy form. If you need to reset, trim back or plant new spring blooming perennials the sooner the better. Cut the stalks to the ground to encourage root growth.

Those tropical plants that have done so well outdoors this summer need to avoid winter's temperatures should we by chance have an actual winter. Let's just err on the side of caution and bring them indoors. If some of the leaves drop off suddenly, don't panic, they are adjusting to their new environment. It would help to mist them occasionally as they are lacking the humidity they appreciated outdoors in your garden. Be careful with your watering, don't overdo.

If like me, you enjoy cooking with herbs - dill, cilantro, fennel, mint, oregano, lemon balm, chives, parsley, rosemary and thyme are just a few waiting for you at the nursery.

How about a little motion in your garden? Ornamental grasses will give you some movement in the slightest breeze. They not only have little or no disease or insect problems, but once established need little or no fertilization and survive on minimum watering. Their wavy plumes and eye-catching colors make your landscape attractive and also provide food for wildlife. Two of my favorites are purple fountain grass and Mexican feather grass. They have good color and are of a manageable size. They add texture and movement to your garden all winter – prune them back in late winter or early spring.

Not much to do in the veggie garden this month, but if you enjoy radish, spinach, turnips, peas (English and snap), mustard, beets, cabbage and broccoli (transplants of the latter two), it's your time to plant. November is guaranteed to keep us gardeners super busy.



Mexican Feather Grass



# A Visit to the Palace Rose Garden - Royal Botanical Gardens, Sydney, Australia



By John Jons  
MG 2003

Located on the edge of Sydney's (Australia) central business district (CBD) is the Royal Botanical Gardens. Within the gardens is a public rose garden called the Palace Rose Garden that contains around 2,000 roses.

This is the ninth version of the rose garden to be planted in the botanical gardens as a result of the popularity in growing roses in Australia. The design and maintenance of this current rose garden is based upon the gardening practices of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The previous botanical rose gardens were enclosed in hedgerows with many varieties of roses, in particular, "old fashioned" (old garden) roses. The maintenance of those rose gardens was considered a challenge "due to plant selection, garden design and diseases, and pests that took advantage of Sydney's humidity."

The current practice of using Integrated Pest Management in the rose garden involves the garden's horticulturalists planting "modern roses in 'Formal,' 'Romantic,' and 'Flamboyant' themed beds interspersed with complementary plants to increase biodiversity and attract beneficial insects such as lacewings and predatory ladybirds. This is part of an Integrated Pest Management strategy to reduce the use of chemical fungicides and other types of pesticides. A parasitic wasp, bred and released by our plant pathology unit, has proven very successful in controlling the rose aphid, a major garden pest and vector for spreading disease on roses."

The rose garden was completed in 2006 and has now become one of Sydney's most popular venues for garden weddings.

Across the main walkway from the rose garden are the Botanical Gardens' Trial Gardens, where the gardens' horticulturalists are testing new plant varieties from plant breeders worldwide to determine which

plants perform the best in the local region. This plant trialling (evaluation process) was also noted at Adelaide's Botanical Gardens for the selection of new roses being considered for introduction into Australia. )

To see more pictures of the entire rose garden go to YouTube - "A Visit to the Palace Rose Garden, Royal Botanical Gardens, Sydney, Australia" [https://youtu.be/a59syjHe\\_Rw](https://youtu.be/a59syjHe_Rw)

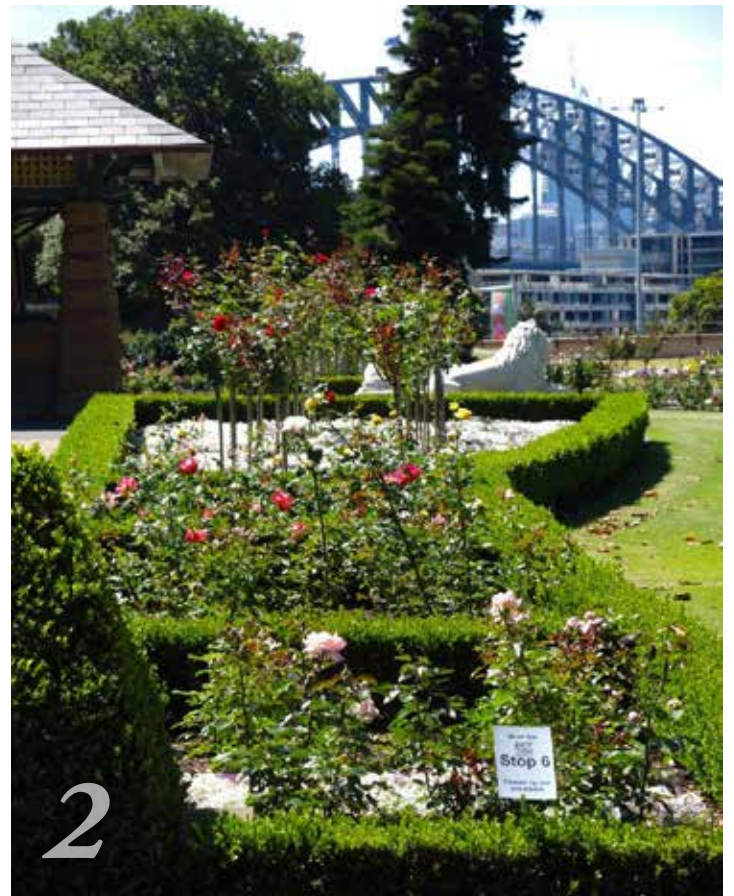
Photos: All photos by J. Jons © 2020

- 1) Rose Garden Trellis with Climbing Roses
- 2) Rose Garden view with Sydney Harbor Bridge in the Background



1

Photos by J. Jons © 2020



2

# American Beautyberry outshines all the other colors in the garden



By Elayne Kouzounis  
MG 1998

The American Beautyberry tries to outshine all the other colors in the garden.

The striking fruit of the 4-foot-tall Beautyberry is produced best in long hot summers when planted in groups. The Beautyberry is a showstopper in September and October when the conspicuous clusters of small 1/8-inch purple fruit are at their peak against a green backdrop of leaves. They bloom for several weeks after the leaves have fallen in autumn. The oval, pointed leaves, which are arranged like ladders on either side of

the stems, turn yellowish, or sometimes pinkish, before dropping off. Flowers of the Beautyberry are small and clustered which can be white, pink, blue or violet flowers in July and August — mine are white. These flowers are quite popular with native pollinators (especially native bees), so you will be able to enjoy the pleasant humming sound if you approach the Beautyberry plant when in flower. The flowers, mostly hidden by the leaves, are followed in the fall by the clusters of bright purple or white berries. Since the leaves turn yellow and drop in early autumn, the brightly colored fruits are conspicuously displayed. The Beautyberry is a native shrub found from Maryland to Texas and Oklahoma. There is a white-fruiting form (lacteal) which is especially outstanding when planted in conjunction with the purple-fruited species. There are excellent plantings of this rare variety, which is said to “come true” from seed, at Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, Georgia. The berry has been said to be edible, but is not very tasty.

The Beautyberry is best massed in the mixed or shrub border. There are about 140 species of Beautyberries that grow around the world from Asia to South America. I am specifically referring to American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*).

Plant Beautyberry in well-drained, ordinary soil and in full sun or dappled shade. Either tip prune to tidy it up or prune it to the ground in late winter. Pruning to within 4 to 6 inches off the ground in early spring will create new shoots; only these produce flowers and fruit. *Callicarpas* are easy to grow from soft cuttings or seed and are easily transplanted. I have them planted in the ground all around our house — north, east, south, and west. Wherever you plant them as long as they have several hours of sunshine they will do well. I have tried containers but for some reason they do not do as well as in the ground. First the leaves are not healthy looking and the berries are not nearly as vibrant.

Raw fresh beautyberries have a very unique flavor that is hard to compare to anything else. They are mildly sweet and have spicy notes somewhat similar to Asian five spice. Yes, indeed beauty berries are edible. They are just not something you will want to eat raw by the handful. However, they are quite good once cooked and properly prepared. Picking beautyberries is easy when you realize how tiny they are. One person holds a basket underneath the Beautyberry branch while the other person strips off the entire clusters with one hand and holds the branch steady with the other. Move to the next branch and continue, the berries ripen from green to bright purple color in the late summer-early fall. Berry clusters should be completely purple



Photo by MG Elayne Kouzounis



when picked, which means beautyberry picking season starts in early October in my garden.

Beautyberries can be propagated from cuttings or grown from seed. You can also find plants at your nursery. Cut 6 to 8 inch stems from mature Beautyberry plants in the winter 6 to 8 weeks before the plant has broken dormancy. Dip the bottom 3 inches in root hormone then stick in small container filled with damp potting soil. Store outdoors and make sure to keep soil damp but not wet.

Native plants tend to have long-established mutual beneficial relationships with native animals. This is one reason why birds such as cardinals, woodpeckers, and mockingbirds, eat beautyberries throughout the winter. In my garden even the blue jays enjoy the berries. The birds then poop out Beautyberry seeds far and wide, helping the next generation of Beautyberries spread. Also, Beautyberries are quite popular with deer. Beautyberries are a host plant for native moth species and make ideal overwintering habitat for other insect species.

Most people (myself being one of them) despise mosquitos and ticks. Crushing Beautyberry leaves in your hand and rubbing the leaves on you is a highly effective single-ingredient mosquito and tick repellent. This comes from the USDA researchers. Three repellent chemicals were extracted during a 12-month study — *callicarpenal*, *intermededeaol* and *spathulenol*. The research concluded that all three chemicals repulse mosquitos known to transmit yellow fever and malaria.

Consider this Tip from Felder Rushing:

Boggy soils need not be dull when you consider shrubs that actually love low, wet soils. Start with a large wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), add an evergreen Florida anise (*Illicium floridanum*), and a Beautyberry, surround that with two or three sweet shrubs (*Calycanthus floridus*), and let the shrubby ground cover Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginia*) run. You will have year-round color, texture, and a bona fide one hundred percent native woodland bog garden.

Be grateful to those who make us happy; [per saying by Marcel Proust] they are the charming Gardeners who make our souls blossom.

Just as a bud will bloom in time, a Friendship blossoms too; with nurturing and loving care, Friendships will stay true.

### Beautyberry Jelly

Beautyberry jelly can be made from the native American Beautyberry shrub. It makes a gorgeous sweet gift for everyone on your list.

Prep Time – 5 minutes -  
Cook Time – 40 minutes  
- Additional Time 1 day  
- Total Time - 1 day 45 minutes



### Ingredients

1 quart beautyberry shrub berries  
1 packet Sure-Jell Pectin  
3 cups sugar  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

### Instructions

1. Wash and dry berries.
2. Place berries in a heavy saucepan and cover with water.
3. Bring to a boil and then simmer on low to medium heat for 20 minutes.
4. Strain berries from liquid.
5. Add sugar according to Sure-Jell's suggestion. I had 2 1/2 cups of juice so I added 3 cups of sugar.
6. Add lemon juice and Sure-Jell.
7. Bring to a boil and stir until thickened. About 15 mins or more, making sure to stir so that it does not burn on the bottom.
8. Pour into clean sterilized jars. Let sit for 24 hours or move to a canning bath container for a longer shelf life.
9. Place in the refrigerator. Last for about one month.

### Nutrition Information: Yield: 40 Serving Size: 1

Amount Per Serving: Calories: 69 Total Fat: 0g Saturated Fat: 0g Trans Fat: 0g Unsaturated Fat: 0g Cholesterol: 0mg Sodium: 3mg Carbohydrates: 18g Fiber: 1 g Sugar: 16g Protein: 0g  
Nutritional information for the recipe is provided as a courtesy and is approximate only. We cannot guarantee the accuracy of the nutritional information given for any recipe on this site.

<https://hearthandvine.com/beautyberry-jelly/>

# Tree Stories:

## Savannah Holly



By Dr. Margaret  
Canavan MG 2003

'Tis the season to “deck the halls with boughs of holly.” Evergreen holly trees with seasonal red berries have been a traditional winter favorite for centuries. Civilizations as diverse as Rome and the Druids, through modern times, have used the red and green of holly for color during the dark days of December.

The Romans sent holly as goodwill tokens during their feast of Saturnalia. Druids believed it to be a refuge for woodland spirits. Holly is a staple of Christmas cards, carols, and decorations. This refers to a crown of thorns, and Christ's blood at crucifixion, which in legend turned holly's white berries to red.

About 480 species of holly worldwide are in tropical to temperate zones. Recently I discovered a new-to-me holly right here in my own neighborhood, when a neighbor showed me a tree he had just planted in a narrow and partly shaded space: Savannah Holly (*Ilex x attenuata* “Savannah”).

I then realized that a striking group of trees I've admired for several years is comprised of Savannah hollies. Galveston College has a beautiful row of them in the inner courtyard. They are now loaded with shiny red berries that are striking with the deep green leaves.

This North American native holly is a beautifully shaped tree that develops a narrow pyramidal or columnar shape. The moderate growth rate allows them to reach 35-feet in eight years in the right conditions, with a spread of 6- to 10-feet. Inconspicuous white flowers appear in spring followed later by heavy clusters of red berries that persist through fall and winter on female plants.

Savannah holly can thrive in a variety of conditions and has potential for the home landscape. Sun increases berry production, but part shade is tolerable. A variety of well-drained soils will work with a slightly acid soil preferred. The tree has high drought tolerance and moderate salt tolerance. Gardeners will enjoy the lack of thorns, tree litter, or problematic surface roots, plus minimal pruning needs. Pests and diseases are not major problems.

The tall and narrow shape is ideal for home landscapes with limited space. Savannah can be used as hedges, in tree lawns, and street trees. In public spaces its limited footprint can be suitable for parking lot islands, road median strips, and sidewalk cutouts.

Bright berries make an excellent food source for birds and other wildlife. Many nurserymen propagate from female trees so most nursery trees have berries. (A word of caution: leave the berries for wildlife because they can cause digestive problems, especially for children.) People have found use for holly berries and wood as well. Native Americans used preserved berries as decorative buttons and for barter. The wood can be used for making canes, scroll work and furniture, and has been substituted for ebony in inlay work when stained black.

If you need a tree for a small space Savannah holly may be a perfect gift for your home landscape. We can all benefit from more trees. So, plant on, and Season's Greetings, everyone.



Photos by MG Dr. Margaret Canavan

*Margaret Canavan is a Galveston resident, a Certified Master Gardener, and a board member of the Galveston Island Tree Conservancy.*



# Saltwater could cause danger to trees

A reprint By KERI HEATH of The Daily News



Nancy Greenfield, a Galveston County Master Gardener, uses a garden tiller to aerate the lawn in the backyard of her West End home before adding gypsum Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2020. Greenfield's backyard was one of many along the coast inundated by saltwater during Hurricane Laura and again last week during Tropical Storm Beta. Photo by JENNIFER REYNOLDS/The Daily News

## GALVESTON

Although the island sustained limited structural damage from Tropical Storm Beta that made landfall on September 21, gardeners are urging people whose properties were inundated to check their trees and other foliage.

Some West End areas, including Jamaica Beach, were subject to several days of storm surge and the salty water could damage garden plants and trees if they are not properly cared for, experts said.

Palms and oleanders are resistant to saltwater, but many other plants and trees can be damaged if exposed to saltwater for too long, said Nancy Greenfield, a member of the city's tree committee and a long-time advocate for trees.

"The big thing is people need to treat their yards," Greenfield said. "(Plants and trees are) going to die if they had saltwater on them. It was just too much."

Residents whose yards were flooded by storm surge should water down the plants in their yard to flush out the saltwater, she said. Because too much water can sometimes wash away nutrients, residents should fertilize their yards, she said. And the key is to treat the yard early after the saltwater inundation, she said.

"People need to do it now," Greenfield said. "They need to turn their sprinkler on and if they don't have a sprinkler, they need to get out there with a water hose."

Galvestonians are especially aware of damage saltwater can have on

greenery.

The island lost 40,000 trees during Hurricane Ike in 2008. Since 2009, the Galveston Island Tree Conservancy and the city's tree committee have planted about 19,000 trees to replace those lost in the storm.

The longer trees sit in saltwater, the worse the effects, according to the Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension Service. Most trees are able to withstand about 36 hours of submersion in saltwater, but recurring flooding can cause injury to the trees, according to the service.

Younger trees may also be more sensitive to saltwater than fully grown trees, according to the service.

Luckily, most of the island avoided the storm surge, said Matt Hannon, who has been involved in restoring island trees.

"You can tell there's been saltwater intrusion because of the dead grass," Hannon said.

But the saltwater didn't completely soak the ground because the area has gotten rain lately, he said.

That was one of the reasons for such significant loss after Hurricane Ike, he said.

"We didn't have rain for two or three months," Hannon said.

Although there are probably some plants that suffered from Tropical Storm Beta's surge, people can turn on the hose and flush out most of the saltwater, he said.

What is yet to be seen is whether area plants face another challenge in a colder winter, Hannon said.

Often heavy storm seasons can lead to colder winters, which could pose a challenge for plants, he said.

"We'll wait and see what happens this winter," Hannon said.

*Editor's Note:* Nancy stated that there are also preparations in advance of inundations that can help mediate plant and tree damage by salt water. Trees should be watered deeply prior to the storm in order to minimize salt water uptake by the roots during inundation.

For more information, Nancy suggests checking out Dr. William M. Johnson's article below:

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/recovery/Flooding%20Can%20Affect%20Landscape%20Trees%20by%20WilliamJohnson.html>

# Green Genes

## family, new neighbors instill love of gardening



By Karolyn Gephart  
MG 2017

Master Gardener Gayle McAdoo (Class of 2005) is a city girl who grew up just three miles north of Downtown Houston. But her grandparents lived close by and had a very small garden area with a tiny fish pond, pigeon coop and all sorts of plants.

“Some of my favorite childhood memories are of my grandfather whistling in the garden; he was so happy there. And the dianthus that grew by their front porch - my grandmother called them little carnations,” Gayle fondly recalls.

Her family eventually moved to the suburbs and her dad started planting. “My father planted two pecan trees, a fig tree, a live oak tree, bluebonnets with an assortment of other plants from our old house. Over the years I have nurtured those plants, eaten the fruit and propagated the seeds to spread their abundance,” Gayle said.

She is married to Stewart McAdoo (Class of 2012) whose father and niece both attained degrees in Horticulture from Texas A&M. “In the early years of our marriage Stewart’s dad had a huge vegetable garden and eight producing pecan trees at their home in Houston. He was a great resource for information long before we became MGs. Plus, we always had an abundance of vegetables (and pecans) to eat,” she said.

Gayle’s personal love is herbs. “For as long as I can remember I have had an interest in herbs. I cannot identify where it came from, perhaps from being aware early on that aloe vera might help with burns. Although I have studied herbs and their culinary and medicinal properties for

many years, I do not consider myself an expert. I have found that the more I think I learn about herbs, the more herbs have to teach me.”

She has taken classes from two master herbalists, Luccia Bettler (in Houston, deceased) and Jeanne Rose (from California, published author on herbs and aromatherapy). “My interest in essential oils and blending for fragrance led me to contribute to the GCMG publication *Herbs for the Upper Gulf Coast of Texas*. I wrote the chapter on “Herbs and Scent” and the tidbit on “catnip.” I appreciate that Cookie Oberg (the publication’s editor) encouraged me to write at a time when I was still dizzy from chemotherapy,” Gayle said.

“I have also enjoyed helping in the herb booths at plant sales and participating in the blessing of the garden at the Moody Gardens Herb Fair. Lucia would be pleased, as she was someone who blessed local gardens on numerous occasions.”

Before the pandemic Gayle had been working with 4th and 5th graders in her local elementary school’s (Robinson Elementary in Clear Creek ISD) Junior Master Gardener program. “The kids were enthusiastic in their exploration of the connection between earth, garden and table. They loved getting their hands dirty digging in the soil. We developed a fairly large vegetable and herb garden, had guest speakers from GCMG, and participated in a district wide farmer’s market. In 2016, we received an award (3rd place) from the Texas Master Gardener Association for our program,” Gayle said.

When GCMG Treasurer Dick Wettling told her during her initial interview for the MG program that “Gardening is great therapy,” she agreed. “I like encouraging others to try new things, to expand their





knowledge, to find their passion, what works for them,” Gayle said. She took this advice and made it a career.

A former high school math teacher (Hitchcock High School, Clear Lake High School). Gayle is a licensed therapist who helps clients with relationship issues. She is currently practicing as a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT), licensed professional counselor (LPC) and licensed chemical dependency counselor (LCDC) in Clear Lake City. Her office is in Clear Lake City and she has been practicing since 1978. She also worked for a children’s shelter in Galveston, Texas City and Dickinson from 1978-81.

Originally from Wichita, Kansas, MG Trish McDaniel came to Galveston in 1979, for a change of scenery. “I fell in love with the island, then the man I married, and haven’t budged since. We currently reside a few blocks from Seawall Boulevard in the Denver Court neighborhood,” Trish said.

She met her husband Mike on the steps of the Galveston Art Museum, where they were both taking photography classes in 1980. While her husband grew a successful local business, McDaniel Construction, now celebrating 40 years, McDaniel grew into a one-woman property owner/manager with up to 82 units through the years.

Unlike so many GCMGs, Trish did not have any familiar connections to gardening and came to love it in her adult years through the planting of the seed of appreciation by an extraordinary woman named Kent, a neighbor.

“In 1986, Mike and I had the great fortune to move into a house next door to the late great Mrs. Kent Curtis, who had recently retired after selling her Seaside Nursery on 45th Street. The woman who sold us the house was archly soured on this neighbor and warned, “That woman will let anything grow in her yard and all through your fence,” Trish said.

A close friendship followed. “I first met my new neighbor one evening as she was out watering the front beds. I teased that I had already, “heard about you and your reckless ways.” Her stunned expression quickly turned to a wry grin, and I was blessed with the magical friendship of a beloved local legend. She was blessed with getting rid of an annoying neighbor,” Trish said.

That which “grew all through her fence” became Trish’s favorites - Kent’s copious gloriosas; along with a vintage, robust arbor of Muscadine grapes. “As I got to know Kent, I was honored to be invited to her weekly forum of the Woodrow Widows, as they called themselves. This inner sanctum of age-old comrades bestowed rich accounts of current and historical who’s who in Galveston as well as local goings

on. Discussions on gardening were always on slate. Like reading a great book, my little world was enriched with every visit,” Trish said. Through the years Trish would come home from work to find a new arrival in what she considered her meager backyard landscape planted by, as it happened, MG Philip Fox, Kent’s trusted gardener.

The GCMG program came into her life in 2001. “I came to know about the Master Gardener program through my periodic use of their marvelous “help line.” I was grateful to be accepted into the MG program in 2001. It was my hope to give back to this amazing organization and learn from folks highest in their field, Dr. Johnson and cream of the crop Aggie horticulturalists. What a privilege,” Trish said. Looking back, Trish remembers well her cherished first baby steps into gardening:

*“Did you find something new in your garden today?”*

*Yes, ma’am, thank you!*

*Ahem, don’t forget to water it, dear.*

*No ma’am!”*



# Hurricanes and birds

Editor's Note: We were granted permission to reprint this article, which originally appeared in the Houston Chronicle on September 26, 2020, and is written by nature columnist Gary Clark with photographs by Kathy Adams Clark. Gary is the author of *Book of Texas Birds*, with photography by Kathy Adams Clark (Texas A&M University Press, email him at: [Texasbirder@comcast.net](mailto:Texasbirder@comcast.net)). Kathy Adams Clark teaches online photography classes. Details at [www.kathyadamsclark.com](http://www.kathyadamsclark.com)



During a lull in the winds of Hurricane Rita back in 2005, a ruby-throated hummingbird flew through the rain to get to our hummingbird feeder.

But a tree where a red-bellied woodpecker had taken refuge in a nesting cavity crashed onto our roof overnight, and the woodpecker was nowhere to be seen by daylight.

An irrepressible hummingbird might be able to endure a tropical cyclone as do many of us. Other birds like a hardy

woodpecker may see their lives upended the way some of us do.

Songbirds like bluebirds and house finches seek safety from a tropical storm by sheltering themselves within trees and bushes. Dense vegetation and sturdy limbs shield birds from strong winds while specialized tendons in their feet lock them securely onto a perch.

Woodpeckers seek refuge in tree cavities because their feet aren't designed for perching on limbs.

But tree limbs and twigs will suddenly break off from the force of a hurricane, sending a violent swirl of vegetation clobbering songbirds. And trees harboring woodpeckers inside a hole get uprooted or snapped in two.

Songbirds that survive a massive hurricane may find a critical shortage of wild fruits and seeds for nourishment.

Roseate spoonbills living along the coastline may escape the brunt of a tropical storm by flying inland or by getting blown inland with advancing winds. Other coastal birds like laughing gulls and Forster's terns may stand their ground behind sand dunes while facing directly into the wind. Yet many coastal birds perish.

No bird is safe from a hurricane. Hurricanes hit at the worst time for migratory Neotropical songbirds like warblers and thrushes on their way to Latin America from late summer through autumn. When those birds begin flying across the Gulf of Mexico and encounter a hurricane, disaster looms.

Questions persist about how migratory birds cope with hurricanes. Do they fly around a storm? Do they head into the eye of a hurricane for calm winds? Or do they delay their migration until the storm passes?

Sometimes, yes to the questions. But data are insufficient for firm answers.

We do know that migratory birds often get trapped in hurricane winds and perish at sea or get blown far off course. A massive group of migrating chimney swifts were trapped in Hurricane Wilma during 2005, and nearly all perished save for a few that somehow wound up in Western Europe.

Dead birds after a hurricane may go unseen because their light-weighted bodies and hollow bones get torn to smitheries.

Pelagic birds like shearwaters, petrels, and gannets living on the open sea often get trapped in a hurricane's eye but may starve to death because they can't catch fish in giant ocean waves.

Coastal birds like brown pelicans blown far inland may starve from lack of waterways with appropriate fish and may have difficulty navigating back to Gulf shores.

Hurricanes destroy forested acreage where songbirds live and flood coastal marshes with saltwater that kills plants and organisms vital for marshland birds like rails and gallinules.





# Green Thumb Book Club



By Lisa Davis  
MG 2018

Love to read a book, learn about gardening, the history of gardening or the movers and shakers in the world of botany?

If your answer is yes, then join us in our new “Green Thumb Book Club!” This is a great opportunity to add Continuing Education hours.

Each year we shall read 6 books chosen by the help of YOU! The format is simple; each book will be read over the course of two months.

The first half of the book will be read and we will allot 2 hours to discuss the book chapter-by-chapter asking a volunteer to summarize one-two chapters and ask questions related to those chapters. For our first book, Lisa Davis and Lisa Belcher will cover the first half of the book to give everyone an idea of how the future Book Club meetings will run.

If you just want to read the books and discuss them but would rather not summarize or ask questions about the chapters, that's okay too! Due to the current situation with COVID, we will be meeting virtually until we can safely meet in a group setting. Meetings will be the last Wednesday of each month from 1:00-3:00 pm.

Below are some recommendations for the 2021 Green Thumb Book Club. Please choose your 6 books you would be interested in reading. The 6 books having the highest interest will be selected for our book club. E-mail your preferences to Lisa Davis at [lnicklow@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lnicklow@sbcglobal.net)

This will allow time to tally the results, relay that information to participants and locate the book titles. ALL of the books selected can be purchased, used, online.

<https://hpb.com/books/>

<https://www.powells.com/used>

<https://www.betterworldbooks.com/>

As well as Amazon sellers market



**MASTER GARDENER  
GREEN THUMB  
BOOK CLUB**

## BOOKS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

(a detailed summary about each book will be included in an upcoming e-mail.)

1. *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants* by Doug Tallamy
2. *The Bulb Hunter* by Chris Wiesinger
3. *Gardener's Essential* by Gertrude Jekyll
4. *Garden Flora* by Noel Kingsbury
5. *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben & Jane Billinghurst Illustrated version
6. *The Impressionist Garden* by Derek Fell
7. *Native American Gardening: Buffalobird Woman's Guide to Traditional Methods* by Gilbert Wilson
8. *Our National Parks* by John Muir
9. *Passalong Plants* by Felder Rushing & Steve Bender
10. *The Plant Hunters: The Adventures of the World's Greatest Botanical Explorers* by Carolyn Fry
11. *A Rich Spot of Earth: Thomas Jefferson's Revolutionary Gardens at Monticello* by Peter J Hatch and Alice Waters
12. *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson
13. *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens
14. *Wicked Plants: The Weed That Killed Lincoln's Mother and other Botanical Atrocities* by Amy Stewart

**Please reach out to Lisa Davis with any questions!! We are excited about the Green Thumb Book Club!**

# The Discovery Garden Update

What a year this has been. We have had several near misses from several hurricanes that devastated our neighbors in Louisiana. At one point we had a hurricane plowing across the Gulf, and a cold front set on our back porch, while the Coronavirus Pandemic continued to ravage the country. On a more positive note, if you haven't heard, our Galveston County Master Gardener Association was presented with seven awards from the Texas Master Gardener Association.



By Tom Fountain  
MG 2008

In the garden, life moves on: the fall gardens beds are planted, we have set our clocks back, and we have experienced a few chilly mornings. The need to get out of the house and get a little fresh air and sunshine brings many of the Master Gardeners out to work and to take care of the garden. In Fig. 1, Kevin is pictured hard at work tilling beds getting them ready for fall planting. Later Larry, Clyde, Julie and others were putting in broccoli, cabbage, and squash plants into the freshly tilled beds (Fig 2). This is also a good time of year to thin out some of the plants in the flower beds like Carol and Bronia are doing in Fig. 3.

In the Aquaponics Garden, now is the time to start lettuce, snow peas and a few other cold tolerant plants. Pictured in Fig. 4, Briana and Kaye are planting lettuce seeds in the floating beds while Gene is explaining how the system works to one of the new gardeners. Gene is very good about helping others learn about the Aquaponics Garden. In Fig 5, he is showing MG Interns Ann and Danna how to check and read the pH value of the water in the fish tank.

There are always a lot of projects and chores to do at the Discovery Garden. Sometimes repairs are necessary on an irrigation system. In Fig 6, Jesse is working with Sue repairing the drip irrigation in the Butterfly Garden. Sometimes fixtures like the gazebo need maintenance. Other times there may be more interesting activities like helping with a fun, bug night at the garden. In Fig. 7, Hedy and Fran are describing what kind of bugs our visitors might see in our garden at night.

The garden weather over the past few months indicates the average temperatures have been over 3 degrees above normal. Rainfall on the other hand has been less than half our normal amount. The Weather Service's extended forecast indicates a La Nina climate pattern will continue. So temperatures are likely to be above normal throughout this winter with rainfall below normal. The drought forecast indicates drought conditions will likely develop in the next month or so. I am looking forward to seeing you in the garden again no matter what the weather. So stay safe and healthy and we will see you soon.



Photos by MG Tom Fountain



# Plant Sale in Photos



By Kathy Maines  
MG 2017

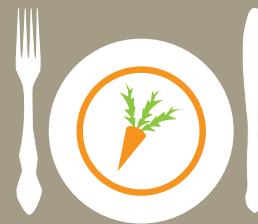


Photos by MGs Kathy Maines and Sharon Zaal



# Seasonal Bites

## easy recipes



By Sandra Gervais  
MG 2011

It's now officially autumn. Thanksgiving is on the horizon, but where is the cooler weather? Being from the Deep South, I'm not looking for really cold, but just something to remind us that we have another season besides hot and humid. It would give us all something different to enjoy and remind us that we've made it through everything that 2020 has thrown at us.

So here are a couple of simple recipes for our underused ovens. The first is a chicken "sheet pan bake" from Pillsbury; use whatever vegetables your family likes. The second is a custard style pecan pie from Jackie Auer. Both will have your kitchen smelling great.



### *Chicken-Vegetable Sheet Pan Bake - 400 degrees*

- 8 bone-in chicken thighs, skin removed
- 2-3 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1 pound baby potatoes, quartered
- 1 onion, roughly chopped
- 1 red pepper, chopped (mild or hot)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 teaspoon fresh thyme (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- 1-2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt (more or less to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper (more or less to taste)

Oil a 10 x 15 edged sheet pan.  
Toss chicken and vegetables with oil to coat, using more if needed.  
Rub on herbs and seasonings.  
Spread out in pan, leaving 1-inch clear around edge.  
Bake 45 minutes or until chicken is thoroughly cooked, stirring occasionally.



Note: You can add more vegetables such as carrots, mushrooms, etc. but use a bigger pan so they don't get crowded and steam. You may also need to increase oil.

For even more flavor, use bacon or duck fat instead of oil. I like to make this with fresh rosemary bits tucked in with chicken.

### *Pecan Pie (custard style) 375 degrees*

- 1 large package of vanilla or chocolate "Cook and Serve" pudding mix (not instant)
- 1 cup white Karo syrup (can use Karo Lite)
- 3/4 cup evaporated milk
- 1 slightly beaten egg
- 1 cup or more of pecans
- 1 9-inch prepared pie shell (bought or homemade)

Mix pudding mix and syrup in a large bowl.  
Gradually add evaporated milk.  
Add egg and mix until well blended.  
Add one or more cups of pecans.  
Pour into pie shell.  
Bake 40-50 minutes or until top of pie is firm and is just starting to crack.  
Cool 3 hours.



# Gardening awards bloom despite COVID

Editor's Note: This is a reprint from *The Daily News* of an article by Carla Peoples

Members of the Galveston County Master Gardener Association gathered October 8 at the Carbide Center Discovery Garden in La Marque to celebrate wins in the Texas Master Gardener Association 2019 Awards Program

COVID-19 took the bloom off of the 2020 Texas Master Gardener Association state conference, which was canceled to safeguard against spread of the coronavirus. But winners of the association's 2019 awards program were announced at a Zoom meeting on August 21.

Members the Galveston County Master Gardener Association placed in all seven categories competing in the "Extra Large Counties" category and met on Oct. 8 at the Carbide Center Discovery Garden in La Marque to celebrate.

Winners were: Linda Steber, Robin Collins and team for their *Gulf Coast Gardening* newsletter (Fig. 1) (first place, Written Education category); Ira Gervais for Growing Tomatoes in the Texas Gulf Coast Region, a three-part seminar series (third place (Fig. 2), Educational Program category); Gene Speller and team for "A Root-Knot Nematode Control Study: Years 2017-2019 (Fig. 3) (first place, Research category); Denny Noh, Briana Etie and team for Discovery Garden Explorers — St. Matthew's (Fig. 4) (first place, Youth/Junior Master Gardener category); Jim Waligora and team for Discovery Garden Memorial Composting Station (not pictured) (third place, Project category); Etie (Fig. 5) (third place, Outstanding Individual category); and Galveston County Master Gardener Association (Fig 6) (third place, Outstanding Association category). Here to present the awards was Louie McDaniel TMGA President (Fig 7).





# bulletin board



## Volunteer Opportunities

For the **Master Gardener Hotline** contact Ginger Benson by email at [galvcountrymgs@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

GalvCity Master Gardener Discovery Garden - Hitchcock, TX, USA

67°F HIGH: 67°F at 08:11 AM LOW: 59°F at 12:00 AM

Wind: 0 mph High gust 6 mph at 07:54 AM

Humidity: 91% Feels like 69°F

Rain: 0.00 in Seasonal Total 37.55 in

Barometer: 30.32 in Hg Rising Slowly

Don't forget to put the link for our weather station on your smart phone and computer:

<https://www.weatherlink.com/embeddablePage/show/269c8db099654c0fa522d3420104b173/wide>

## 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 Herman Auer - 409-655-5362 or [hauersrmga@yahoo.com](mailto:hauersrmga@yahoo.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

Contact Herman Auer - 409-655-5362 or [hauersrmga@yahoo.com](mailto:hauersrmga@yahoo.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](mailto:galvcountrymgs@gmail.com) to find out the schedule and join her team.

SmugMug

To see lots of photos of what the Galveston County Master Gardeners are up to, we now have access to browse and search photos in SmugMug. Use the following link in your favorite web browser to access: <https://gcmg.smugmug.com/>

Please see the

Texas Master Gardeners Website for details.

By visiting the website you can find up-to-date

information on Advanced Training Programs that were added in

between editions of the newsletter. [txmg.org](http://txmg.org). You may download

the application forms from that website. **Note** all applications for

the Advanced Training Programs 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](https://smile.amazon.com) - Choose Galveston County Master Gardener Association as your charity. Save [smile.amazon.com](https://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





# Cooler Weather means time to plant pansies

Editor's Note: This is a reprint of Dr. William M. Johnson's article in the *The Daily News*



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

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 plant 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 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 also are 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 range 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 because of 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-pack units or by the individual plant. Purchase stocky plants with at least four or five 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. Every Galveston County garden has a place for them. 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](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston)



*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. Plant them in large drifts or masses or as pockets of color to brighten up a dreary winter landscape.*

# 2020 GCMGA ~~cancelled~~ Monthly Meetings



By Judy Anderson  
MG 2012

## December Master Gardener Meeting

As we come to the end of the year, we can all agree it has been a very strange year. We have all become good at being flexible. We may not be having our big celebrations, but we are celebrating the special events. We will miss our Holiday Party with Alan and Mikey Isbell this year, but we will have Holiday in the Discovery Garden. Mark your calendar for Tuesday, December 8, at 12:00 p.m. Bring a dish to share and enjoy the festivities.

Please join us for the White Elephant Gift Exchange on the patio. To participate, bring a gardening gift, wrapped, for a man or woman, valued at \$10.00.

To continue our MG Holiday Traditions, bring an unwrapped gift for a boy or girl to donate to the Family Shelter in Galveston. Mike Isbell donates the gifts to the shelter after the MG Holiday party. This year there are even more families in need so if you can share this will be a good opportunity.

Due to current COVID guidelines, the luncheon will be limited to 50 (Master Gardeners Only). Please RSVP Judy Anderson at 281-480-2038 or email [jande10198@aol.com](mailto:jande10198@aol.com) with the MG name and dish.



Be **KIND**,  
Be **RESPECTFUL**,  
Be **HEALTHY**  
the Master Gardener Way.

**Facemasks**  
**REQUIRED**  
When Visiting  
Our Discovery Garden



**HOPE TO SEE YOU IN THE GARDEN**  
**MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIRED**

### 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.

