

THE COLOR ISSUE

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TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Galveston County

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

Colors in Our Gardens



MG Kevin Lancon

It's that time of year where a multitude of colors in our landscaping can create an uplifted spirit in in all of us making us feel joyful and happy. Gardening is good for the soul, and it can inspire the artist in all of us and give us a renewed sense of optimism. This issue is focused on color in the landscape, from eyepopping annuals and perennials to stunning feature plants and much more. At GCMGA, our mission is to educate and inspire others about gardening, and hopefully this edition will do just that.

We invite you visit us at our Discovery Garden in Carbide Park in La Marque on any Thursday morning. At the site you can see many of the colorful plants that grow particularly well in our area, Master Gardeners there will be eager to share their knowledge and passion for gardening. We also love to engage in public speaking opportunities, such as garden clubs, local nurseries, youth events and other public events, so remember this if the need arises. We also invite you to attend one of our exciting (free) educational seminars or give our Gardening Help Desk service a try. We can assist you with any of your gardening questions.

I hope you enjoy this issue and invite you visit our web site at <https://txmg.org/galveston> and also our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/galvcountymg/> for more information on upcoming events and activities. We also thank you for supporting the Galveston County Master Gardeners and hope to see you soon.

Kevin Lancon

GCMGA President



Seashell cosmos (*Cosmos bipinnatus*) in the Discovery Garden MG Pam Hunter



MG Karolyn Gephart

Colors of Spring

This issue is about color. Your yard is a palette of colors you choose to use. This time of year, a visit to a nursery or plant sale can bring excitement and joy from seeing all the blooming plants. I am currently celebrating the purchase of a new pink cereus from the February Master Gardener plant sale. Two months later it had eight blooms on it with the first opening recently. The joy that pink bloom brings is contagious! The huge bloom lasted two full days. My last pink cereus could not survive the three day freeze two years ago and none I have purchased until now have offered blooms. Color me HAPPY! Inside this issue, MGs share their favorite plants in colors they choose. Welcome Briana Etie as Seasonal Bites writer/producer. She followed former column writer Sandra Gervais and enjoyed her recipes in each issue. Now Briana is wearing the chef's hat, and we are all excited. Learn how insects see color by Hedy Wolpa and travel to Dallas Botanical Garden and Penang, Malaysia without the drive or cost of airfare. See what's blooming in Linda Steber's yard and in the Discovery Garden Per-

gola. We created this issue to make you excited about the many colors of Spring! Enjoy!

Karolyn Gephart



Pink cereus bloom (*Epiphyllum ackermanii*) MG Karolyn Gephart

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CONTENTS IN THIS ISSUE

MAY / JUNE 2025 • ISSUE 249

LET'S TALK ABOUT COLOR

- 4 Red by Marilyn Haupt
- 6 Pink by Karyl Mehlman
- 8 Yellow by Linda Barnett
- 10 White by Becky Jaschek
- 12 Purple by Bronia Michejenko
- 14 Blue by Sandy Klaud
- 17 Texas Superstar of the Month: Plumbago
- 18 How Insects See Color

REGULARS

- 20 Let's Compost
- 21 What's Blooming in My Garden
- 22 Meet an MG: Bronia Michejenko
- 24 Gardening Help Desk: Poison Ivy
- 25 Photos: AgriLife Cabana
- 26 Travel: Dallas Botanical Garden
- 28 Travel: Penang Botanical Gardens
- 29 A Peek in the Pergola
- 30 Seasonal Bites
- 31 Book Review
- 35 Photos: Ball High Tour

MGs

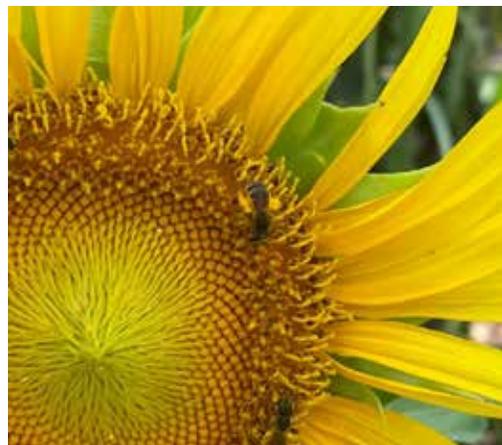
- 32 Upcoming Events
- 34 Recertification
- 36 Judy's Corner



Purple MG Debbie Brady



Red MG Debbie Brady



Yellow MG Pam Hunter



Cover photo of Gerbera daisies is by Shan Revak GCMG Database



Contact Us

Extension Office

281.309.5065
txmg.org/galveston/gcmga_hotline/

Gardening Help Desk

281.309.5061

Speakers Bureau

txmg.org/galveston/speakers-bureau
and
gcmg.speakersbureau@gmail.com

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The Power of Red



Marilyn Haupt
GCMG 2019

There is no limit to the number of gorgeous options to choose from when planning and planting a garden. A landscape or patio can be painted with multicolored plants or highlighted with just a few colors of your choosing. The use of red herbaceous plants, bushes, and trees in the garden offers a striking display especially when they are used in contrast to the

other vegetation around them. Using red against a backdrop of green will provide a richness of color as they are complementary colors. Red is both powerful and eye catching. Strategic placement of such plants in your garden can serve to draw the eye of the beholder across the canvas that is your garden.

Described below is a variety of plants, unique in size, shape, and shade of red. They can offer interesting structural characteristics to your garden. A couple of these plants are Texas Superstar® plants. They are plants that have been tested and proven to perform well across the state. (www.texasuperstar.com)

Salvia 'Roman Red' (*Salvia splendens x darcyi*) is a stunning perennial that stands almost 3 feet in height. Its base is a small bush of green leaves from which long, vertical shoots stretch to the sky. The shoots are lined with a multitude of small, elongated, red flowers. It prefers well drained soil, requires little water, and is drought tolerant. It should be placed in a sunny or partly sunny spot. It grows up to 38 inches in width, making it perfect for a garden border or bed. This salvia is a pollinator favorite. You will enjoy watching bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds visit your garden.

Red yucca (*Hesperaloe parviflora*) is perfect for a sunny, dry open area. This Texas Superstar® plant is an evergreen, perennial succulent. Its base is a clump of long, narrow, soft leaves that appear spiky in shape. This portion of the plant can reach 2 to 3 feet in height. When in bloom from late spring to early summer, long stems reaching up 5 to 8 feet tall will protrude from the leafy clump below. These stems produce soft, red tubular flowers that bloom along their sides to the tip. This plant is pollinator friendly. Being a succulent, the red yucca requires well drained soil and very little water. Watering approximately every 2 to 4 weeks is suggested. This plant would serve well as an anchor to a garden bed. Multiple red yuccas could be used as a partition between spaces or as a backdrop to smaller plants.

If looking for a shrub, firebush (*Hamelia patens*) may be of interest. Firebush is an evergreen that produces 1 to 1-1/2-inch wide, scarlet red, tubular flowers. These flowers bloom

among the branches from June to November. It prefers full sun and will bloom better in this amount of sunlight. This bush is drought tolerant and will grow in a variety of well drained soils. It can grow up to 15 feet tall and 6 to 8 feet wide. Keeping firebush trimmed will maintain the desired size and will promote blooming. This shrub is also a Texas Superstar® plant.

The red coleus (*Solenostemon scutellarioides* 'Redhead') is a beautiful ornamental annual. It displays its soft, serrated, and deep red leaves from spring into the fall. It can grow up to 3 feet tall and 2 feet wide. This plant will die with the first freeze but with some planning, it can easily be propagated for use in the springtime. The simplest way is to take 4 to 6-inch cuttings and place them directly in soil or water. The cuttings, if in water, will root within 7 to 10 days at which point it can be placed in soil. Keep the cuttings in a warm place until the weather is warm enough again to plant them outside. Red-head coleus can tolerate sun to shade, but it prefers not to be exposed to direct afternoon sun. Keep the soil moist and well drained. The redhead is just one variety in the coleus genus. Other varieties are variegated and include a number of colors including green, silver, pink, and yellow. Planting this variety along with others can provide a wow factor for a bed, border, or container.

Finally, the red bottlebrush tree (*Callistemon citrinus*) offers a fun burst of color high above ground. These trees can grow up



Coleus 'redhead' U of Maine Cooperative Extension

“...Red is both powerful, eye-catching...”

to 15 feet tall. The spread of the foliage and flowers can reach 10 to 15 feet in width. The shape of flowers resemble bottle brushes, hence the name. The flowers are prominent in color—an attraction to pollinators. The flowers bloom from spring through the summer. Bottlebrush trees prefer the full sun and are drought tolerant. They are commonly used as a screen in landscaping, along roadways and in parking lots. In a garden, they would not only provide interest and a splash of color but also a bit of whimsy. Be warned that a hard freeze can knock the shrubs to the ground and if extended, may kill it.

Hopefully, this article provided some colorful and sustainable options for you to consider when planning your garden with touches of red.

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Red yucca MG Frank Resch



'Roman Red' Salvia Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences



'Little John' dwarf bottlebrush GCMG Database



Firebush Bexar County Extension

Pretty in Pink Confederate Rose



Kay Norcross-Mehlman
GCMG 2022

When is a rose not a rose? When it is a Confederate rose, which is really a hibiscus (*Hibiscus mutabilis*).

Confederate rose is a perennial plant that appears with its large pink flowers in many landscapes even though it is said to be scarce at most local nurseries. I got mine in a Galveston County Master Gardener online sale and wondered what to do with it. It was about four feet tall and looked fragile. I didn't think it would survive the southwesterly winds off the Gulf, so I put it on the northwest side where the soil is not great. That turned out to be just as breezy and soon we were staking it and hoping it would survive. Winter came and it went dormant. But with spring came abundant new growth. Nice growth it was, but when other plants that looked like hibiscus bloomed freely, my new Confederate rose just grew more branches and leaves. Not until August did we see a flower. It was fluffy white, a hybrid double, and by the end of the day it was a beautiful pink. Other branches sprouted the same growth, and I soon had a beautiful ten-foot many-limbed bush that was nearly a tree. This is the life cycle of the Confederate rose.



Bush in bloom Billy Jenke

The Confederate rose originated in China and was introduced to European gardens by 1690. It is a fast-growing shrub or small tree native to China and Taiwan. How it came to the South is not clear, but apparently it was widely used in landscaping in the 1800s. It is believed the common name was derived from the plant's use in southern regions of North America because its big blooms resembled the fluffy, old-fashioned garden roses of the South. Plant historians say Southerners with little to spend on landscaping following the Civil War used the Confederate rose in cemeteries. The origin of its name is in question. Some claim that the blooms were given to Confederate soldiers returning from the war.

This lovely flower blooms in late summer and fall. Single flowers last for only a day, but double flower hybrids often last for two or more days. The plant produces hundreds of blooms during a season always on new growth. Flowers begin as dense white blooms that become rose-colored over a day or so. The plant likes well-drained, acidic soil to thrive and needs six to eight hours of sun or artificial light and warm temperatures to change color. If kept in the refrigerator, blooms will remain white until exposed to light. It is a hardy plant, survives a frost, and comes back from the roots in the spring. It is

winter-hardy from mid-Arkansas south. It can be pruned to remain a bush or can grow with branches reaching eight to fifteen feet tall in USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 9 and 10. The plant is easily propagated in water or in soil from cuttings after the danger of frost is passed. Apply a balanced fertilizer every four to six weeks. It can be grown in containers if pruned aggressively.

Color change in flowers was first written in 1887 when Charles Darwin forwarded a letter from his colleague Fritz Muller to the British science journal, *Nature*, describing color change in lantana blooms after pollination. It is now known that flowers change color for a variety of reasons, including aging, soil pH, light exposure, and temperature. Human perception of color is dependent upon wavelength and relies on just one retinal molecule, retinal. We perceive color in a small spectrum of wavelength, namely 300 to 700 nanometers. The three major

“... hundreds of blooms during a season”

pigments involved in color changes in plants are carotenoids, anthocyanins, and betalains.

Carotenoids are a class of yellow, orange, and red naturally occurring pigments synthesized by plants, algae and bacteria. The color expressed depends on the plant's DNA. As a group, carotenoids have been associated as a benefit to people suffering from various disorders, something that individuals should discuss with their physician.

Anthocyanins are a group of red to blue flavonoid pigments found in plants. In their presence, colors of pink, red, purple, and blue appear in flowers, fruits, and vegetables. Anthocyanins change color by changing their molecular structure with changes in pH. They can be used as pH indicators, a feature unique to molecules of the flavonoid group.

Betalains are the least-studied of the flavonoids but seem to have important roles in promotion of leaf health and pollination.

The Confederate rose can fill a variety of aesthetic roles and is often used alone or as a plant that stands out in the landscape. Beneficial complementary plants that highlight its unique features and colors include butterfly bush or summer lilac (*Buddleja davidii*) and black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*). Salvias and coreopsis work well also and attract pollinators to any landscape or garden.

The Confederate rose is a hardy plant that one should try – and prepare to be delightfully surprised.

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Beautiful double bloom *Margie Jenke*



Two colors *GCMG Database*

The Yellow Flower: Sunshine for Your Garden



Linda Barnett
GCMG 2015

Yellow flowers are bright, cheerful, and embody the essence of sunshine, joy, and warmth for your home or landscape. Yellow flowers make me happy, like little sunbeams in every bloom. They are often associated with happiness, friendship, and new beginnings. Their vibrant hue signifies positivity and energy, making them a popular choice for celebrations and gifts.

In some cultures, yellow flowers hold unique meanings.

Let's explore a few of my favorites.

Sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*)

Sunflowers, with their towering stems, are perhaps the most statuesque yellow flowers. They symbolize adoration, loyalty, and longevity. Sunflowers are known for their ability to follow the sun's movement, a phenomenon called heliotropism, which adds to their sunny disposition. They grow in full sun and bloom in the summer. They attract butterflies, birds, and bees. Sunflowers also make excellent cut flowers and are used often in large arrangements. The flowers can also be grown for their nutritious edible seeds. From their iconic value in art, such as Van Gogh's paintings of sunflowers, to their familiar sightings next to roads, in fields, and throughout areas where other flowers do not seem to grow, the plant is recognizable in all sizes and heights. A popular sunflower, which is one of the few that are a perennial, is Maximillian (*Helianthus maximiliani*). When several plants are grown together, it boasts a striking appearance. One plant can produce from 12-30 flowerheads. Native bees and honeybees are drawn to it. Many species of birds love the seeds of this sunflower. A Texas native, it does best in full sun and is tolerant of most soils with

no need for fertilizer. Due to weak stems, it is a good idea to stake this variety. Blooms last up to four weeks.

Marigolds (*Tagetes* spp.)

Marigolds are vibrant and hardy annuals, often used in gardens for their bright color and pest-repellent properties. They symbolize creativity, passion, and positive energy. Marigolds are also used in cultural and religious ceremonies, particularly in Mexico during the Day of the Dead celebrations. Marigolds thrive in full sun and attract all kinds of pollinating insects. They will bloom for months; deadheading will encourage the plant to continue blooming abundantly. Marigolds require good drainage and have abundant blooms in the fall.

Daffodils (*Narcissus* spp.)

Known for their trumpet-like shape, daffodils bloom early in the spring and symbolize renewal, new beginnings, and hope. They are often used to mark the end of winter and the arrival of warmer weather. Daffodils are a fall-planted bulb and some in USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 9b have proven that they will come back year after year. Many of these are of a category of daffodils called Tazettas, which have multiple blooms per stem and a sweet fragrance. These include 'Grand Primo' (white/yellow cup), blooming in the Discovery Garden's bulb bed before the freeze this year; 'Italicus' (white/yellow cup); and 'Chinese Sacred Lily' (white/yellow cup). Other varieties must be planted annually. They are great for planting between shrubs, as a border, or even in pots. One thing to remember, you should not remove the leaves until they turn yellow. Like other flowering bulbs, daffodils use their leaves to store energy in the bulbs for next year's flowers. Plant daffodil bulbs in



'Julia Child' Antique Rose Emporium



Marigolds P!xabay.com

“...little sunbeams in every bloom”

October or November to have them bloom in the spring. Roots develop during the cold winter months and foliage develops in the spring. Good root systems and developed foliage encourage good blooms. Plant the daffodil bulbs in soil depth that is twice the diameter of the bulb. The distance between each bulb should be the diameter of the bulb. A large concentration of daffodils planted closely together can provide a profusion of yellow blooms resulting in a sizeable pop of color.

Yellow Rose (*Rosa* spp.)

While many other rose colors have romantic or serious connotations, yellow roses are a symbol of platonic love, friendship, and happiness. It's no surprise that these roses are often given as a gesture of appreciation for a friend or to express congratulations or gratitude. Proper care is essential to prolong the beauty and brilliance of yellow roses. If gifting fresh cut yellow roses, trim the stems at an angle before placing them in water and change the water every couple of days. Keeping them out of direct sunlight and removing any wilting petals will extend their life. Yellow roses thrive in USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 8b to 9b where they can produce vibrant blooms and lush foliage. Yellow roses prefer temperatures between 60 and 75 degrees during their growing season but can tolerate temperatures up to 100 degrees. To grow your own yellow roses, plant them in a sunny spot with well-drained soil. These roses need 6 to 8 hours of direct sun to develop buds. If buds do not open normally, nutrients are needed. Granular fertilizer and foliar fertilizer will correct the problem. Pruning them regularly will help with their shape and encourage blooming. If high temperatures remain consistent, the rose

can get stressed so provide adequate water and mulch to help. Varieties for zone 9b include 'Nacogdoches' or 'Grandma's Yellow', 'Buff Beauty' climbing rose, 'Garden Sun' climbing rose, 'Lady Banks' double yellow climbing rose, and 'Julia Child™' shrub rose. All but the 'Lady Banks' variety offer fragrances.

Yellow flowers are more than just a colorful addition to gardens, they carry with them deep meanings of joy, hope, and renewal. In summary, whether you are a seasoned gardener or simply a lover of nature's beauty, yellow flowers are sure to brighten your day and bring a touch of sunshine into a yard.

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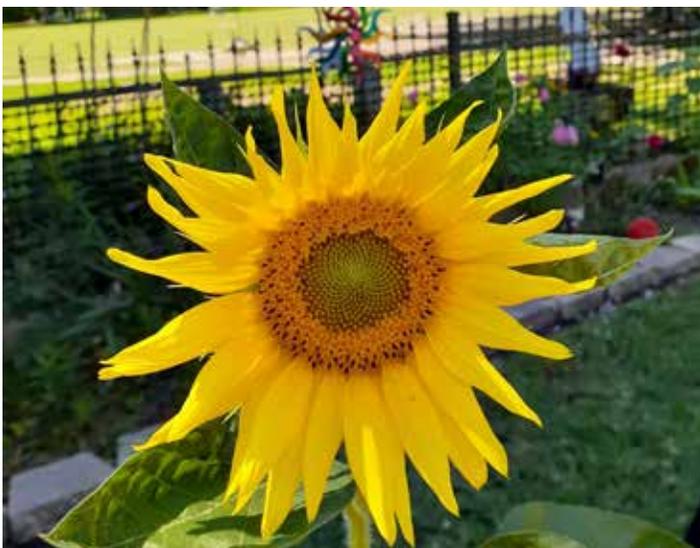
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GCMG Database.



Sunflower MG Linda Barnett



Daffodil Pixabay.com

White Flowers Brighten Landscapes and Our Moods



Becky Jaschek
GCMG 2023

A group of researchers has published a couple of very interesting articles regarding the impact flowers and their colors have on our emotions and feeling of well-being. Flowers in general were shown to improve our feeling of well-being. The findings reinforce what many gardeners already know—flowers make us happy. White flowers are unique; the study found them to be both the most relaxing color and very uplifting.

White blooms provide the perfect touch for your outdoor spaces. Whether you are looking for eye-popping contrasts, wanting to brighten an area or seeking a beautiful, calming oasis, white flowers can play an important role in accomplishing those goals. White flowers have the unique ability to both complement and provide contrast with other features of the garden as well as make a small space appear larger. They contrast nicely with greenery, other colored plants and virtually any color blossom to brighten an area and accent the colors. They can brighten up dark areas of the garden or can provide calming unifying effect in gardens that contain a lot of colors. White flowers even have a cooling effect on a garden's look during the hot summer. The elegant all-white flower garden can create a peaceful classic garden oasis.

There are many ways to incorporate white blooms into your yard, garden or patio containers. information about some of my favorite white blooming plants.

Annuals

Annuals can produce a profusion of white blossoms that will grab the attention of humans and pollinators alike.



Lobularia 'White Stream' Texassuperstar.com

Vinca 'Cora Series' (*Catharanthus roseus*), also known as periwinkle or Madagascar periwinkle, is a sun-loving drought resistant plant that produces an abundance of showy blooms from spring through summer. The plant grows 14 to 18 inches tall and 18 to 20 inches wide with glossy green leaves. The Cora® Series is a Texas Superstar® plant because of its resistance to the aerial fungus, Phytophthora, which had limited the use of this species in Texas gardens. Cora® Vinca comes in a beautiful pure white or even a polka dot version that has a red dot in the center of the white flower. Cora® Vinca can be used in flower beds, as edging, ground cover or in containers. They tolerate heat and humidity and are even deer and rabbit resistant.

Sweet Alyssum or Lobularia 'White Stream' (*Lobularia maritima*) is a low-growing and spreading plant with well-branched stems of small gray-green leaves that creates a mat or mound of white clusters of small white flowers. Alyssum works well as a groundcover, or in the foreground of a flower bed that delivers a wonderful sweet, perfumed scent that bees love. It's especially nice in a container or hanging basket placed in an area where you can smell it and enjoy watching the activity of the busy bees. This Texas Superstar® hybrid is heat tolerant and will bloom all summer long. Its water requirement is moderate and is tolerant of soil types that are well drained. Shear the plants after the first bloom to encourage a second bloom.

Perennials

White perennials are gorgeous accent plants that can draw attention to a certain feature or provide beautiful crisp contrast to their surroundings.



Mallow GCMG Database

“...ability to both complement, contrast...”

Swamp Mallow or Rose Mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*) grows 3 to 7 feet tall and 2 to 4 feet wide with large white flowers, having a red center. Snipping the tips of the stems as they grow encourages branching. Swamp mallows are late starters in the spring but grow quickly and bloom all summer. While they don't have a strong pleasant scent, they do attract hummingbirds, native long-tongued bees and many butterflies, so pollinator activity is visible even from a distance. They love full sun and may not bloom if there is too much shade. They prefer moist soil, but, with regular watering, can be grown in the regular garden areas or even large containers. They are perfectly happy to add a bright, happy focus to a wet area of the yard or water feature. You can deadhead the short-lived flowers as the plant generates new flowers daily during peak blooming season. These mallows are root hardy, just trim back the stems in the spring and mulch them once per year.

The Texas Spider Lily (*Hymenocallis liriosme*) is a gorgeous plant that loves to have wet feet. It blooms from mid-February through the summer with large white blooms formed by three petals and three sepals that join to form six tubes that extend out from the bloom out giving the appearance of spider legs. They have a wonderful fragrance that attract pollinators. The long one-inch-wide glossy green leaves spread out in lily fashion to form the base of the plant. There are native and cultivated varieties. Of these, 'Tropical Giant' starts blooming later in June and is cold hardy to temperatures in the single digits. Spider lilies are a dramatic addition to a water feature, rain garden or other wet areas. Keep them moist in the spring and apply mulch to help maintain moisture level.

Other types of white flowering plants to explore include:

Vines: Star Jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*) and Moon Flower Vine (*Ipomoea alba*).

Shrubs: Gardenia and Bridal Wreath

Trees: Crepe Myrtle, especially the Natchez variety (*Lagerstroemia indica x fauriei* 'Natchez') that may smell like lotus and Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*).

I hope you feel inspired to add some relaxing beauty to your space. Have fun!

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Texas Spider Lily TAMU AgriLife Extension



Vinca Pixabay.com

Purple: Royal, Luxurious, Creative



Bronia Michejenko
GCMG 2015

Purple is a soothing color often associated with royalty, luxury, and creativity. As a secondary color on the color wheel, it is a blend of red and blue. The hues can be warm or cool. Blue-leaning purples tend to be cooler whereas red-leaning purples create a warmer effect.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* plant colors result from the way pigments within their cells interact with sunlight. Color is a quality of light, derived from the selective absorption and reflection of specific wavelengths. Chlorophyll gives plants their green color, while anthocyanin pigments are responsible for reds and purple hues. Plants with anthocyanin are considered more resistant to diseases and insects as well as having many other benefits.

Below are a few purple plants, including a winter annual and some easy-to-care-for purple perennials, that can enhance your garden.

Pansy (*Viola x wittrockiana*)

One of my favorite winter and early spring flowers is the pansy, which is derived from the hybridization of the European Johnny-jump-up (*Viola tricolor*) with other wild violets. Pansies come in a variety of colors, including purple, burgundy, white, yellow and orange. In Texas they are considered a winter annual, blooming from November through March. Their flowers can reach up to four inches in diameter. Pansies thrive in temperatures below 65 degrees at night and do not tolerate hot temperatures. While they can be grown from seed, many gardeners prefer buying seedlings and mature plants. Pansies require a well-drained, enriched soil and some shade to stay



Coleus

healthy. Plant them along garden bed edges or in containers. Fertilize frequently for large and showy flowers. With a little attention, pansies reward gardeners with vibrant blooms that brighten up the winter months.

Duranta (*Duranta erecta*), Golden Dewdrop, Sky flower, Pigeon Berry

Duranta, a Texas Superstar® plant, is a heat and drought tolerant perennial, requiring minimal care once established. This evergreen shrub is in the Verbena family and can grow 10 to 20 feet tall, so it will require pruning to keep it compact. The plant has purple blooming racemes, a flower cluster with the separate flowers attached by short equal stalks at equal distances along a central stem. The flowers at the base of the central stem develop first. They gracefully drape downward from the leaf branches during summer to fall. It is a rapid grower with flowers that attract, bees, hummingbirds and butterflies during summer; in the fall, it sports yellow berries that attract birds. I planted duranta beside my plumeria (*Frangipani*) and golden thryallis (*Galphimia glauca*). The purple duranta flowers cascade beautifully beside the plumeria blooms with the thryallis adding a contrasting yellow color. Duranta will freeze but will return from the roots. Mulching can help prepare it for the cold but a hard freeze like what occurred in 2021 can kill them. Trim the shrub up to 3 inches from the ground in the spring. Duranta is tolerant of most soil types and blooms best in full sun. It is pest and disease resistant and propagates easily from softwood cuttings. Add a little elegance to your garden with this easy-to-care-for shrub.

Volcano Bush (*Lespedeza thunbergii* subsp. *Thunbergii* 'Little Volcano') Bush Clover



Duranta

“...hues can be warm or cool”

Last October I returned from vacation to a stunning display of arching, cascading branches filled with purple pea-like blooms on my volcano bush. This deciduous shrub, a cultivar in the Fabaceae (pea) family, is heat and drought tolerant and easy to maintain. It thrives in full sun in soil with medium moisture and good drainage. The shrub produces showy pea-like purple blooms in the spring and again from late summer into fall. Although it may die to the ground in a freeze, it quickly recovers once the weather warms up. As it flowers on new stems, the shrub can be trimmed to the ground in the spring to produce an abundance of blooms. The small trifoliate dark green leaves turn into a grand display of gold in the fall. It has no serious pest or disease problems. Volcano bush attracts bees and serves as a caterpillar host for the Silver Spotted Skipper. At the end of the summer when most plants are dwindling, the volcano bush puts on a noticeable show.

Coleus (*Coleus x hybridus*)

Coleus is a member of the mint family, Lamiceae, primarily grown for its vividly colored foliage, not its flowers. I use mine as a ground cover around my plumeria and other flowering plants to decrease weeds and add texture to the landscape. The leaves of this plant are amazing, shades of maroon, purple, pink, and green with many intricate patterns. Coleus produces purple wispy blooms, but many gardeners remove the blooms to prevent seeding and promote foliage growth. In most of Texas, coleus is considered an annual as it does not tolerate the cold temperatures. Coleus traditionally has been thought of as a shade plant, but new cultivars are sun-tolerant. Plant in well-draining soil, use an all-purpose fertilizer, and

water when the top 1 to 2 inches of soil feel dry. The larger the leaves, the more water the plant needs. Pests and diseases are usually not an issue. Coleus is an easy and eye-catching addition to any garden.

Purple plants are available in many shades. Pairing purple with pink or white shades has a softening effect, while pairing with orange and yellow adds drama and contrast. Cooler blue purples are calming and can create a sense of depth in your landscape. The deepest purples are the closest to resembling black in the plant world. Purple attracts bees, butterflies, and other pollinators and many species may see purple better than other colors, making it a good choice for a wildlife-friendly garden.

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Pansies



Volcano

The Rare Color of Blue in Flowers



Sandy Klaud
GCMG 2023

Indigo, powder blue, and midnight; these shades echo the vastness of the sky and the depths of the ocean, but blue is the rarest color among plants. Not a common flower color, it provides a natural signal that guides pollinators to collect nectar and pollen. Blue flowers attract pollinators like bees due to their color vision being sensitive to blue and ultraviolet (UV) wavelengths. This makes blue flowers stand out against green foliage. The pollinators see it as potentially high nectar content. Adding blue flowers to your landscape can attract pollinators to your yard. Three popular Texas Superstar® plants yielding blue flowers are the bluebonnet, Gregg's Mistflower and Blue Daze.

The Texas Superstar® plant program is defined as a partnership of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Research, the Texas Department of Agriculture, and the Texas nursery industry (TNLA). It is a program that identifies outstanding plants with proven performance in most Texas regions. These plants must also show superior performance under Texas' tough growing conditions. Plants are put through field trials and receive little soil preparation, reasonable watering, and no pesticides to identify which plants are low maintenance and hardy. The criteria for selecting a Texas Superstar® plant include the plant must: 1) be attractive and useful to the gardening public; 2) be unique and offer desirable and ornamental characteristics not usually available in commonly sold plants (i.e., able to perform in the heat of Texas summers or be pest resistant); 3) consistently perform for most Texas gardeners regardless of their expertise and growing locations; 4) be as pest resistant as possible (deer proof is a bonus); 5) be able to be propagated and mass-produced in sufficient numbers to

meet consumer demand; and 6) be so attractive in the sales container that it “sells itself” to consumers who have never heard of the attributes.

The three blue flowering plants grow well in USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 9b.

Bluebonnet (*Lupinus texensis*)

The most popular flower in Texas and the official state flower in Texas is the bluebonnet. I have lived in Texas only two years and I am fascinated by them.

Characteristics:

Common Name: Texas Bluebonnet, Texas Lupine, Buffalo Clover, Wolf Flower

USDA Plant Hardiness Zone: 4-11

Height: 2 feet

Blooming Time: March to mid-May

Bloom Description: Showy blooms with a delicate scent that are in seven separate colors

Light requirement: Sun

Water: Low

Maintenance: Low

Propagation: Bluebonnet pods produce many seeds annually making seed dispersal large. Can be left to seed on its own or by a seed treatment called scarification. Another way: you can put the seeds in the freezer overnight and the next day drench with boiling water to crack seedcoats.

Problems: No problems with insects or disease.

Texas Superstar® selected in 2022



The latest Texas Superstar – Blue Daze – is known for color and ability to perform well in the Texas heat (Texas A&M AgriLife Research photo by Brent Pemberton)



Pollinators like bees and butterflies are attracted to bluebonnets for their nectar (Michael Miller/Texas A&M AgriLife)

“...attracts pollinators due to their color”

Culture:

They are survivors. These native wildflowers can survive extreme droughts, intense heat and occasionally freezing temperatures. There are 50-plus flowers gathered on each stem which can be 6-8 inches in height. Considered an annual, these Texas Superstars® are easy to grow. They have a deep taproot system which is why they can reach into the ground to make it through the hardest, most difficult soil conditions. Because they are considered legumes (family of peas, beans and peanuts) they can fertilize the soil, benefiting surrounding vegetation. Poorly producing plants sometimes respond to additional *Rhizobium* (a bacterium in the soil) applications. Because of their blue petals, it attracts bees and butterflies for their nectar. Colors in 2025 include natural blue, intense blue of ‘Lady Bird Johnson Royal Blue,’ pink form of ‘Abbot Pink,’ maroon of ‘Alamo Fire’ aka ‘Aggie Maroon,’ light purple of ‘Grant’s Maroon,’ dark purple of ‘Purple Heart,’ and bright red of ‘Henry’s Red.’

Historian Jack Maguire wrote, “The bluebonnet is to Texas what the shamrock is to Ireland, the cherry blossom to Japan, the lily to France, the rose to England and the tulip to Holland.”

It was once thought that Spanish priests brought these blue lovelies from their homeland, but this is not so. Their only horticultural task was planting them around their newly established missions in Texas. This particular species of bluebonnets is found growing naturally in Texas—and *no place else!*

Texas has six state flowers, all bluebonnets. Despite the differences in color, all are considered the state flower. They are all species classified within the genus *Lupinus*. In 1901 the Texas Legislature chose by unanimous vote *Lupinus subcarinosus* (“generally known as buffalo clover or sandy bluebon-

net”) as the Official State Flower of Texas. This type of bluebonnet was later challenged. So, in 1971, the state governing body named all six species to be the state flower and included “any other variety of bluebonnet not heretofore recorded.”

To create your own plot of bluebonnets, start with either chemically scarified (scored) seeds or bluebonnet transplants. Late October to November is the ideal time to plant seeds in Galveston County. As Dr. William M. Johnson, former Galveston County AgriLife Extension Horticulturist, wrote, “Once an area is established, and with a little care, such as not mowing them until after their seed pods have opened, you’ll be treated to a yearly grand floral display in your own landscape.”

Gregg’s Blue Mistflower (*Eupatorium greggi*)

Characteristics:

Common Name: Blue mistflower, Texas Ageratum

USDA Plant Hardiness Zone: 7-9

Height: Up to 2 feet

Spread: 2.5 feet

Blooming Time: March to November

Bloom Description: Feathery blooms in powder blue although described often as more lavender than blue with a misty appearance

Sun: Full sun to mostly sunny location

Water: Low to medium. Medium irrigation needed during summer heat

Maintenance: Low

Propagation: By seed or root division. Can also be divided and moved after last frost

Problems: No problems with insects or disease. Poisonous to livestock

Texas Superstar® selected in 2024

Culture:

This Texas native wildflower is a dieback herbaceous perennial. It will tolerate many well-drained soils but does not like wet soil. The plant is drought tolerant. It likes to live in groupings and is suitable for xeriscaping. Root-hardy to 0°, it spreads aggressively by shallow rhizomes if in compatible growing conditions. The mistflower attracts many species of butterflies including queen butterflies and migrating monarchs. Queen butterflies need the flower for reproduction.



Gregg's blue mistflower is an excellent addition to any pollinator garden. Their long blooming period provides a food source for butterflies as they make their fall migration (Mike Arnold/Texas A&M AgriLife)

“...rarest color among plants”



The Aggie bluebonnet William M Johnson

As the butterfly pollinates the flower, the flower provides a molecule that in two ways enables the butterfly to reproduce. During mating, the male queen passes *intermedine*, a natural nectar compound, to the female as a “nuptial gift” that once again manifests itself as a toxin, rendering her eggs unpalatable to predators

Blue Daze (*Evolvulus gomeratus*)

Characteristics:

Common Name: Blue Daze, Brazilian dwarf morning glory, shaggy dwarf morning glory, and Hawaiian blue eyes.

USDA Plant Hardiness Zone: 9-13

Height: 9-18 inches

Spread: 2-3 feet

Blooming Time: June to frost

Bloom Description: Sky blue funnel shaped flowers which close at night or on cloudy days

Sun: Full sun

Water: Medium

Maintenance: Low

Propagation: Stem cuttings

Problems: No known disease or insect problems

Texas Superstar® selected in 2020

Culture:

In USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 9-11, Blue Daze is a tender perennial. It can be grown in hanging baskets and containers or in the ground as a ground cover, border or bedding plant. It needs well drained soil and will tolerate a wide range of soils including poor nutrient level soils and sandy soil. It is great for coastal areas.

Dr. Jerry Parsons, Texas A & M University professor and AgriLife Extension specialist emeritus, did an internet search on blue flowers, discovering African blue lily to plumbago to rosemary and sweet pea to verbena. He found many, but admits he probably missed quite a few. It was Parsons who created a Texas flag planting using red, white and blue bluebonnets as well as creating the maroon bluebonnet for Texas A&M.

For more blue flowers, explore Parson’s article at his Plant Answers column: <http://www.plantanswers.com/blueflowers.htm>

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Texas Superstar® Plant of the Month: Plumbago



Patty McElhany
GCMG 2022

Common Name: Cape Plumbago, Cape Leadwort

Scientific Name: (*Plumbago auriculata*)

Plumbago, sometimes called “Skyflower,” was added to the Texas Superstar® plant program in June 2005. It is a favorite among Texans because of its profuse exquisite sky-blue flowers.

This low maintenance perennial thrives in the hot, humid Texas summers, blooming from May until frost. In the southernmost part of the state, it may produce blooms year-round, being evergreen. While it is frost-sensitive, a freeze generally only causes die-back; it will recover in the warm spring weather. A beautiful plumbago embellishes the grounds of the Galveston County AgriLife Extension office in La Marque, having recovered each year from the winter freezes. Technically a shrub, the plumbago can be trained to vine with its delicate stems.

The Texas Superstar® program is an Aggie-inspired program that tests plants to be successful and desirable for Texas gardens. The need for the program was realized in the early 1980s when retail plants recommended for Texas landscapes were often more suitable for northern climates. Texans needed plants that could survive the state’s weather extremes including the heavy rainfall and droughts, grow in a variety of soils and pH ranges, and be readily available in nurseries. Plants that make the cut are truly “superstar” performers that can survive and thrive in the diverse climates and terrains of Texas. For more information visit the Texas Superstar® website at <https://texassuperstar.com>.

USDA Hardiness Zones: 9a —11b

Origin: South Africa

Sun: Full sun (6 or more hours) to part shade (2 to 6 hours)

Soil: Well-drained; alkaline soils (high pH) can cause yellowing leaves from mineral deficiencies

Water: Water regularly until established

Size: Height —3 to 4 feet tall; Width — up to 5 feet wide; grows quickly and can be pruned regularly throughout the year

Flowers: Tubular, 1 to 3-inch sky-blue flowers with 4 to 5 petals per ray; pale to bright green leaves; blooms in full sun and even considerable shade

Propagation: Seed

Pests: Curling of leaves can be caused by tiny insects called

chilli thrips (*Scirtothrips dorsalis*); cottony cushion scale and mites can occasionally be a problem but do not affect the health of the plant

Attributes: Attracts butterflies and deer resistant

Planting: Plant anytime of the year in a container, as a hedge, or in a mass planting in a drought-tolerant garden or rock garden; grows in sprawling mounded shapes providing the most color and beauty when given room to grow; while technically a shrub, can be trained to vine with its delicate stems; allow 6 to 12 feet apart when planting

Toxicity: Medium, as most parts of the plant are poisonous to humans; skin irritation with redness and blistering possible; contact dermatitis

Fun facts: The blooms produce sticky hairs on the flower calyx and children often take the sticky flowers and make earrings with them. The names plumbago and leadwort have been found in history of ancient Roman naturalist, Pliny the Elder; the ethereal bluish hue of the plant flowers reminded him of lead, resulting in the name Plumbago which is Latin for “resembling lead.”

Final thought:

Keep the plumbago in mind when designing or adding to your garden or landscape. You won’t go wrong with this Texas Superstar®.

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www.texassuperstar.com



Plumbago MG Stacy Mills

The World of Color and Light for Insects



Hedy Wolpa
GCMG 2018

The world is full of color and light for all of us with the precious gift of sight. It's the same for insects as they search for food, habitat, mates, and safety from predators. Insects use their eyes in much the same way as humans, but the anatomy of the insect eye is vastly different. Insects view the world with the help of ultraviolet light reflectance and use nectar guides in flowers in a unique way that benefits them as well as the flowers they help pollinate.

Both insect eyes and human eyes have lenses and photoreceptors. Light enters through the lens and then travels through nerve sensors to the brain to create a visual image. A critical difference between insect eyes and human eyes is the lens, or lenses in the case of insects. Humans have a single lens in each eye. Our two eyes work together, typically looking in only one direction at a time, to send information to the brain to create one visual image. Insects have multiple faceted lenses in each eye, called ommatidia. Each lens in each compound eye senses an image, creating hundreds and even thousands of images for an insect to process. These multiple images are transported by nerve pathways to the brain and come together so the insect sees a single image. Processing these many images makes insect eyes, called compound eyes, more complex

than human eyes. Compound eyes can detect and distinguish colors, and they can be bichromatic or trichromatic. Most insects are bichromatic, seeing only a mixture of color pigments instead of pure colors. Humans and some bees and butterflies are trichromatic, seeing a wider spectrum of pure colors.

Multiple lenses inside insects' compound eyes are great at detecting movement, too, enabling them to see in many directions at once. This is why trying to swat at a housefly is so difficult. When we watch bees gathering pollen, we notice that they are attracted to flowers that are moving in the wind because the many lenses in their eyes are sensing motion, which they see as a flickering pattern. A dragonfly's vision, with 30,000 lenses in each compound eye, is very acute, enabling them to catch their prey while they are in flight. Compare this to a housefly with 3,000 lenses in each eye, or an ant with 2,000 lenses. It's not surprising to understand how insects are so specialized in the way they are able to see and navigate their world, from the ground or from hundreds of feet in the air.

In addition to two compound eyes, which appear as large bulging globes on an insect's head, most insects also have up to three additional simple eyes, called ocelli. They're located on top of the insect's head in a cluster. They act as photoreceptors that perceive light, dark, and shadows. Simple eyes help



Daylily nectar guide indicators *Pixabay.com*



Dragonfly compound eye has 30,000 faceted lenses *Pixabay.com*



Housefly compound eyes detect movement



Wasp compound eyes and simple eyes *Pixabay.com*

“...anatomy of insect eye is vastly different”

insects navigate using sunlight and the horizon to find mates, or to return to their home base, or to search for food and prey.

Human eyes have a feature, the iris, that controls the amount of light that enters a single lens in each eye. This action helps the eye focus and produces a clear image. Insects see images slightly out of focus, even with thousands of lenses in each compound eye, because their eyes bring in less light. The amount of light entering the eye is important, but so is the range of visible light on the electromagnetic light spectrum. Human eyes receive light waves from red to violet on the color spectrum. Insect eyes receive light waves past violet into ultraviolet, but they cannot clearly detect the colors at the red-orange range of the color spectrum. This is especially true for bees. And yet, pollinating insects, especially bees, are attracted to colorful flowers and plants as they seek nectar and pollen. This is where ultraviolet light waves are beneficial for insect pollinators' eyes.

Nectar guides are the markings on flower petals that lead insect pollinators to the nourishment they seek. It is the ultraviolet light and its reflective properties on petals, as seen by insects, that expose the nectar guides to help insects find the fastest pathway to nectar and pollen. Flowers accumulate ultraviolet pigmentation on their petals and sepals that insect eyes can see, but human eyes cannot. These pigments appear as light or dark patterns, dots, and stripes which look like a

landing strip to pollinating insects that easily locate a flower's central source of nectar.

Botanists and researchers believe that plants have evolved to attract pollinating insects to their flowers with reflective pigment properties on their petals. Flowers and vegetables depend on pollinating insects since they help ensure that pollen moves from flower to flower. It makes sense to have plants that pollinators are readily attracted to, so go ahead and plant as many colorful, flowering varieties as possible. Even if the flowers appear solid-color and ordinary to our human eyes, be assured that pollinating insects are using their ability to discern nectar guides to benefit themselves and the flowers.

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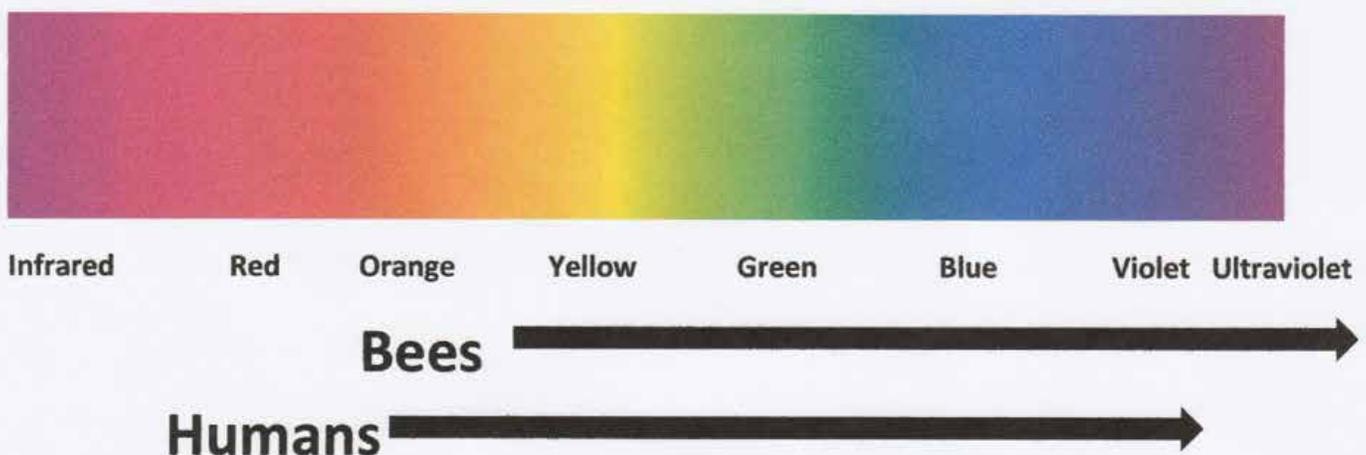
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Bee Vision vs. Human Vision



Bee vision vs. human vision Courtesy of Sharla Riddle, Bee Culture magazine

A Composting Interview with Master Gardener Steve Holliday



Christie McGrath
GCMG 2023

What type of composting system(s) do you use?

I use a two-bin system due to space limitations. One side is for the active/hot pile and the other for finishing and using. My bins are made from hardwood pallets and are about 4-feet square and high. I placed them on the north side of my small greenhouse to insulate them and add a bit of heat in the winter.

Composting Process

What kinds of material do you add to your compost?

I use shredded oak leaves and grass clippings from my and my neighbors' yards. I also bury my kitchen scraps and coffee grounds in the hot pile.

How do you balance greens and browns?

I layer about equal amounts of shredded oak leaves and green grass clippings to start, then mix them up with my turning tool weekly or so. The turning tool has folding prongs at the bottom that open as you pull it out. It mixes and aerates the pile. I also have a perforated 4-inch pipe in the middle of the pile for aeration and wetting the center/bottom of the pile as needed.

Do you measure your compost temperature?

I have a long-stemmed compost thermometer.

How often do you turn or mix your compost?

About once a week or when the temp drops significantly.

Do you have a regular schedule for these compost activities?

I usually check it every day or two.

Challenges and Solutions

Have you faced any challenges (e.g., pests, smells)? How did you handle them?

I had a problem with rats in the pile when I was covering it with cardboard. I removed the cardboard and now am more careful to bury the kitchen scraps deeper in the pile.

Do you change how you manage composting in the winter?

Greens, grass clipping and such, are harder to find during winter, so things slow down a bit. One of the MGs suggested I add some high nitrogen fertilizer to heat things up, so I do that in the winter sometimes. Also I placed my piles next to my greenhouse to insulate and add heat.

Results and Benefits

How long does it usually take for your compost to break down into usable soil?

2 to 3 months.

How do you use the finished compost in your garden or plants?

I add about an inch to my raised beds before planting my veggies in the spring and fall. I also mix screened compost with sand to make my own potting soil.

Have you noticed any improvements in your plants or garden since you started composting?

Definitely. I also use my compost to make aerated compost tea for my garden and potted plants. I haven't had to use any chemical fertilizers or pesticides for the last two years. Compost makes healthy soil. Healthy soil makes for healthier and insect/disease-resistant plants.

Personal Reflection

What do you enjoy most about composting?

Not wasting all the leaves and grass clippings my neighbors throw away. I'm saving the planet AND saving money!

Would you encourage others to compost? Why?

Sure. It's good for you, the planet, and your plants.

Do you have any tips for beginning composters?

Start small and let your pile teach you what works best. Also check out the various composting community groups on Facebook for ideas and problem-solving.

What inspired you to start composting at home?

I had 16 raised beds for veggies, instead of grass, in my backyard in San Antonio and didn't want to buy compost every year for them.

Steve Holliday is a Galveston County Master Gardener (Class of 2022). He lives in El Lago.



Steve's Bins and Thermometer MG Steve Holliday

What's Blooming in My Garden?



Linda Steber
GCMG 1991

As a fair-weather gardener, my yard thrives on the principle of survival of the fittest. In May and June, it showcases blooms like Thryallis (*Galphimia glauca*), Rosa 'Meisweldom' (commonly known as Sweet Drift Rose), Pink Coral Vine (*Antigonon leptopus*), and even the hardy dayflower weed (*Commelina virginica*), which refuses to be left out. Joining this colorful display are Duranta (*Datura stramonium*), Hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*), Daylilies (*Hemerocallis lilioasphodelus*), and Hamelia (*Hamelia patens*), adding their own charm to the mix.



Meet a Master Gardener: Bronia Michejenko



Trish McDaniel
GCMG 2001

It was a cold, gusty day soon after January's freeze when Bronia Michejenko greeted me at her home for the interview. She lives on the edge of Sydnor Bayou on Galveston Island in a bright high-rise two-story house with unobstructed views of both the bayou and Moody Gardens Golf Course. We both knew we had met before, but it took a second or two to come

to the common denominator –pickleball, which we both play in town at the city's McGuire-Dent Recreation Center.

Once inside, Bronia led me to the kitchen. In her soft English accent, she offered a cup of hot tea, which she then served from a charming tea service, a gift from her mother. She topped the tea off with a slight pour of pomegranate juice (worth repeating) and offered me a McVitie's Digestive biscuit, a lovely not-too-sweet cookie (also worth repeating). We sat in the corner of her kitchen where the windowsills were adorned with thriving propagations of silver squill (*Ledebouria socialis*), orchids (*Orchidaceae*), and primroses (*Primula*).

Born in Leeds, West Yorkshire, England, Bronia was the only child of Polish parents. While serving in the Polish Army during WWII, her father was taken prisoner by the Red Army and pressed into forced labor in Siberia. During that time, her mother, with hundreds of thousands of other Polish girls, was removed from her home by the Nazis and forced to work on farms in Germany that supported the Third Reich. After the

war, her parents, two remarkable survivors, ended up in the UK, where they met for the first time.

After earning her Associates Degree of Nursing at the age of 21, Bronia set out on her own, seeking employment in the United States. She was recruited at a hospital in the small Texas town of Vernon. Moving from the United Kingdom to a rural town on the Oklahoma border where the pace was slow and the culture very different, Bronia was warmly welcomed into her new community. She worked to attain her bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing through a University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) work study curriculum. Since her UK credentials were not initially recognized, she persevered and started from the beginning. She specialized in geriatric medicine, eventually retiring from UTMB Galveston in December 1998.

For the last 18 years of her life, Bronia's mother lived with her at her waterside home. They enjoyed spending time in the pool at sundown. Much was shared, and Bronia gained more understanding of the history and adventures of her mother and father's lives. After her mother passed, Bronia planned a journey to return her ashes to Leeds, where her final resting place would be beside her husband. The trip included visits with her family in the UK and Poland, as well as a significant travel itinerary. From Southampton, she and Paula, her partner of 30 years, cruised to Ireland, Scotland and France, where they visited Versailles and Normandy, then on to Madera, Portugal.



Bronia in her doorway

“...avid gardener, writer, watercolor artist”

The ship then sailed across the Atlantic and stopped at Antigua, St. Thomas and the Grand Cayman Islands on their way back to Galveston.

Paula and their pets soon joined us in the living room. When talking with Paula, I was delighted to learn that she and a few local friends were responsible for introducing pickleball to the island. While competing at the 2013 Senior Olympics in Cleveland, Ohio, placing second in badminton, they discovered other participants playing an unfamiliar game, and brought it home. This fast-paced sport is now enthusiastically enjoyed by a myriad of locals and returning snowbirds.

An accomplished artist, Bronia works in watercolors and oils. Many of her works are on view in the living room, foyer and kitchen. Her use of light is particularly wonderful in the reflective composition of a water bird with reeds. Above the kitchen hangs her portrait of her mother—revealing an intimate yet strong, straight forward gaze.

Bronia was bestowed with the love of gardening from her mother who was an avid gardener. At her first home in Vernon, besides her introduction to tornados, she also learned about which plants could grow in her strange new world. Living on the island has been a great challenge with learning to manage clay and sandy soil, salt air, wind and hurricane floods.



An accomplished watercolorist

She became a Galveston County Master Gardener in 2015. As an MG volunteer she devotes time to the Discovery Garden greenhouse and propagates plants at home to contribute to the Master Gardener Grown plant area available at our MG plant sales. Being an avid writer, she provides many gardening articles for Gulf Coast Gardening publication.

Despite the January freeze, Bronia gave me a detailed tour of her extensive garden. Before the freeze she had pulled vast amounts of plants from the ground. With barely enough room for the car, her garage is bursting with plumerias and other tropicals. With words instead of paint, Bronia illustrated a clear vision of what will be replanted and replaced. In-ground garden survivors include Queen palms (*Syagrus romanzoffiana*), Asian pear (*Pyrus pyrifolia*), bird of paradise (*Strelitzia*), volcano bush (*Lespedeza liukuensis*), a large Peggy Martin rose (*Rosa* ‘Peggy Martin’) and many other rose varieties. Tucked in and around are various types of lilies (*Lilium*), coleus (*Plectranthus scutellarioides*) and ginger (*Zingiber officinale*). A side bed holds a kitchen garden with kale, cabbage, and collards (*Brassica oleracea*).

A variety of hibiscus plants are in her garden, including one named after her, “Bronia’s hibiscus.” It came from a cutting that did not resemble the original plant and was officially declared a new variety by Dr. William M. Johnson, Galveston County Extension Agent (Horticulture) at the time. It was given its name by the MG propagation team. Visitors to the Discovery Garden can see it growing there.

Bronia’s passion for gardening, art and community continues to inspire others around her.



Water bird in reeds painting. All photos by MG Trish McDaniel

Gardening Help Desk: What do I do to control Poison Ivy?



Ralinda Fenton
GCMG 2023

Poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) is an undesirable plant that is best to eradicate as early as possible. The earlier you catch it, the easier it is to eliminate. Poison ivy contains urushiol oil which causes painful reactions. Here are some important facts for dealing with poison ivy.

The first line of defense is learning to recognize poison ivy. It has three leaves at the end of each stem. At maturity, the leaves are green, 2 to 4 inches long, with edges that are mainly smooth and rounded with pointed tips. The plant spreads easily by its underground rhizomes and by birds and other animals eating its berries and spreading them in their droppings. Poison ivy grows as a vine and as a shrub, frequently attaching itself to other plants, trees or structures. Poison oak is very similar and has the same rash-causing oil. Because exposure to these plants can be very painful, it is best to avoid and eliminate them when possible.

If you come in contact with poison ivy, it is important to act within 15 minutes, if possible, as the oil will bond with your skin after that time period. Pour rubbing alcohol on exposed skin and rinse thoroughly with a good deal of cool water. Never use hot water because that opens the skin pores allowing the oil to be further absorbed. Do not rub or scrub the skin because doing so can spread the oil further. After you have rinsed thoroughly, take a shower with soap and warm water. Wash all the clothing you were wearing as well as any garden tools or pets that may have been exposed. This procedure may seem like overkill, but the oil can remain on surfaces for a long time.

If you recognize poison ivy or poison oak on your property, eliminating small infestations can be accomplished manually. Take proper precautions before you start the removal. Wear protective gloves like neoprene or latex and wear a long-sleeve shirt, long pants and appropriate shoes. Be sure to wash any clothes worn when exposed or working to remove the poison ivy. Dig up the plants with a spade, ensuring you get all the rhizomes. Never burn poison ivy because its urushiol oil will vaporize into the smoke and can cause nasal or lung irritation to anyone who inhales it or can cause a rash over their entire exposed body.

Established poison ivy is much more challenging to eliminate. According to Dr. William M. Johnson (*AgriLife Today*, 2020), "It could take multiple applications of multiple herbicides to fully eradicate the plant." Spray the foliage with an herbicide containing glyphosate or triclopyr or a combination of dicam-

ba plus 2,4-D. Apply carefully, as these chemicals can kill other desirable plants, and cover them with plastic sheets or bags for drift protection. Thoroughly apply herbicide to the foliage in late spring or early summer. Treatment during the growing season works best because the plant is absorbing liquid and nutrients for growth. Be sure to dispose of the dead plants, handling them with care, as the leaves still contain the poison urushiol oil.

Applying herbicides during other times will help manage it, but it will not eliminate it. If treatment occurs during less optimum time, alternate herbicides and treat multiple times for the best results.

Although poison ivy is a dreaded plant, you can eliminate it with persistence and create a safe, enjoyable outdoor space.

Additional resources: www.tpwd.texas.gov/publications/nonpwdpubs/young_naturalist/plants/poison_ivy/

www.galveston.agrilife.org/files/2018/05/5-16-18-Poison-Ivy-Leaves-of-Three-Let-It-Be-by-Dr.-William-M.-Johnson.pdf

Reference:

Russell, Adam. "How to Avoid and Remove Poison Ivy." *AgriLife Today*. 8 September 2020. www.agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2020/09/08/how-to-avoid-and-remove-poison-ivy/

Gardening Help Desk is available to anyone who has a gardening question or concern. Call 281-309-5061 or email gcmghotline@gmail.com with your questions/issues.



Poison ivy Martha Bigley

Groups Work Together to Educate Kids at the AgriCabana

Galveston County Master Gardeners were part of a large group of volunteers who participated in the AgriCabana event April 17, 2025, in the Discovery Garden in Carbine Park, La Marque. The event involved fourth grade students in two schools from Santa Fe ISD totaling 10 classes. All County AgriLife Extension Agents and staff for each program area participated (4-H Youth & Development, Family Community & Health, Coastal & Marine Resources, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Horticulture, Better Living for Texans) along with Extension Volunteers from all program areas (4-H Committee Members, Master Wellness, Galveston Bay Master Naturalist, GC Beekeepers Committee, and GC Master Gardeners).

Everyone worked together to provide education about the commodities that make up a taco. Many children were asked

where a tomato or cooked chicken originates. The common response is “the store.” Horticulture Extension Agent Boone Holladay and a team of MGs explained that it comes from a live chicken raised on a ranch or tomato grown in a field by a farmer or gardener. This way the students learn about the importance of agriculture in their daily life. They asked the children, “What is your t-shirt made of?” Cotton. Cotton is grown in fields by farmers. And so on. The stations each class visited included Beans, Water, Vegetables, Beef, Cotton, Chicken, Dairy, and Bees.

MG volunteers included Wendy Baldwin, Lynne Slaton, Donna Merritt, Extension Agent Boone Holladay, John Ely and Kevin Lancon.

All photos by Jill Jessen



Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden - An Exemplary Garden in the Lone Star State



Barbara Lyons
GCMG 2014

I enjoy making memories and exploring beautiful botanical gardens during cross-country road trips or close-to-home destinations. While I was attending advanced training in Tarrant County to become a “Master Gardener Vegetable Specialist” back in 2016, my husband, Ed Beazley (MG 2014), was busy visiting notable Texas barbecue restaurants and scoping out gardens in the area for us to visit after my training concluded. We chose the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden (DABG), located at 8525 Garland Road, Dallas, www.dallasarboretum.org. It spans 66 acres of horticulture display along the shores of White Rock Lake.

Unlike many gardens, the Dallas Arboretum requires timed tickets to manage crowds and parking. If using Reciprocal Admissions Program (RAP) benefits, email reservations@dallasarboretum.org with a photo of valid RAP garden membership card, proposed date and time of intended visit, number of guests, and your zip code to secure RAP admission. On-site parking is currently \$15 and can be arranged online at the garden website.

DABG is open year-round, offering something special in every season. The mission of the garden encompasses historic preservation, education, and research.

As with many of the public gardens I have visited and written about in previous articles, the Dallas Arboretum & Botanical Society, Inc. was founded by forward-thinking people with the notion of preserving and expanding existing garden spaces and plant collections, being incorporated as a non-profit in 1974. Three years later, the Dallas parks board suggested the DeGolyer property, which the city had purchased from Southern Methodist University. Two years later, the city acquired the adjacent land and home of the Alex Camp family, increasing the lakefront shoreline and total acreage. With support from the public and business community, the garden opened in 1984. While the Dallas Arboretum calls itself a “young” garden, it is among the older ones in Texas, with Fort Worth Botanical Garden being the state’s oldest.

Two sections of the garden particularly stand out. One of my personal favorites is the Nancy Rutchik Red Maple Rill, featuring two acres of Japanese Maples in a stream-side setting. I have a fondness for maples for they remind me of my childhood years in New York State where maples were abundant, but not typically the Japanese varieties. This section provides some shady areas which surely can welcome relief from the Texas heat.

The goal of the garden is to research plant varieties that grow well in the Dallas climate, hardiness zone 8, featuring hot summer and potentially very cold winter seasons. Since 2002, it has been one of the sites for an “All-American Selections (AAS) Trial Garden.” The AAS program was developed in 1932, with a mission “to promote new gar-



Crape Myrtle Allee



DeGolyer home and garden



Great Garden View

“...well worth a trip north on I-45”



Lay Family Waterwall and Pond



Maple Rill



Sunken Garden and sculpture midview. All photos by Barbara Lyons

den varieties with superior garden performance judged in impartial trials in North America.” Annual winners include both national and regional. DABG is one of the few representing hot climates. The trials include both vegetables and flowers—“between 3000-5000 plants per year from over 50-150 plant breeding companies,” depending on the year. The purpose is to find plants, both edible and ornamental, which are heat tolerant. Trial results are available at www.dallasplanttrials.org,

benefiting commercial plant growers and breeders, as well as home gardeners. I find that growing AAS winners is much more productive for my own garden than trying varieties that may not be optimal for our environment. Research into heat tolerance is important as we face the effects of climate change.

Below are additional highlights.

A Tasteful Place includes a garden, kitchen, and pavilion to highlight locally grown food in its allotted 3.5 acres. Cooking demonstrations are offered and three food tastings daily.

The Jonsson Color Garden is 6.5 acres of seasonal flowers and plants in large displays of color.

Rory Meyers Children’s Adventure Garden is eight acres of fun and educational opportunity for children of all ages.

The McCasland Sunken Garden displays a focal point bronze sculpture, “Chico y Chica de la Playa,” and fountain. Being in a secluded location makes it suitable for weddings and other special events.

The Martha Brooks Camellia Garden displays over 200 camellias and over 50 different cultivars.

The Boswell Family Garden boasts a large rose collection.

Crape Myrtle Allee is a natural tunnel of trees that creates a stunning backdrop for photographs.

Not surprisingly, this garden also hosts a Christmas-themed evening event, “Holiday at the Arboretum,” between November and January, which we were fortunate to take part in while visiting our Dallas-based daughter in 2023. *Southern Living* magazine termed it as “Texas’ Best Christmas Event.” This festive gala will be the subject of a future article, as it is well worth a trip north on I-45.

While in the Dallas area, make time to visit this stellar example of an arboretum and botanical garden. No matter the season, the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden never disappoints.

References:

- www.all-americanselections.org
- www.dallasarboretum.org
- www.dallasplanttrials.org

A Visit to the Penang Botanical Gardens, Malaysia



John Jons
MG 2003

Penang is a Malaysian island located off the northwest coast of Malaysia. Covering 114 square miles—twice the size of Staten Island—it is connected to the Malaysian mainland by an 8.4-mile-long toll bridge. Penang is densely populated with most of its residents living on the eastern side of the island in the city of George Town. Major urban development has been limited to this area while the rest of the island remains protected. Penang's interior is dominated by six hills that are covered in rich, dense, green tropical dipterocarp rain forest. The tallest hill, Flagstaff Hill, rises 2,700 feet above sea level. This hilly terrain serves as a water catchment area and is home to a protected rainforest that has thrived for over 130 million years. From our hotel in bustling downtown George Town, we could see the edge of the dense rainforest canopy cascading down the hillside about four miles away.

We visited the Penang Botanical Gardens, located at the base of Penang Hill. The garden covers 71 acres in a natural amphitheater setting in the hills. It focuses on growing heritage plants and the unique local flora and fauna—containing over 500 species of plants. It is the only garden of its kind in Malaysia. Within the garden visitors can enjoy an aroid walkway, stream-fed lily ponds, a sun rockery, a palm collection, an herb garden, a formal garden, and four dedicated plant houses showcasing collections of cactus, bromeliads, ferns and begonias. As we wandered throughout the garden, we came across long-tailed macaques and dusky leaf monkeys, giant black squirrels, anteaters, turtles and many butterflies.

The garden has a fascinating history. It is the oldest and most renowned botanical institution in Malaysia. Originally established in 1794 by the British spice trade, it was one of two gardens in Penang dedicated to growing spices. By 1800, there were over 1,300 plants in the gardens, one of which special-



A series of archways with flowering *Bauhinia kockiana*, commonly known as the Orange Bauhinia or Kock's Bauhinia

ized in pepper plants. After a delivery of 15,000 clove and 1,500 nutmeg plants, along with canary nut and sugar palms, the gardens were enlarged. By 1805, the delivery and planting of more spice plants resulted in over 71,000 nutmeg and 55,000 clove plants with more canary nut and sugar palms. Eventually, the gardens were sold, and the plants were removed and replanted elsewhere.

In 1822, the gardens were re-established as a vegetable kitchen garden. The current botanical garden was established in 1903 as a horticultural research facility specializing in developing potential commercial crops and providing horticultural advice. Over time these responsibilities were transferred to the Agricultural and Forestry Department and the gardens were then transformed into a public botanical garden. The gardens experienced multiple different layouts and soil restoration efforts but were eventually neglected and left to deteriorate even as their collection of plants continued to expand. In 1921, a new garden assistant supervisor, Frederick Flippance, undertook the task of re-landscaping the gardens. A formal garden was established in 1936.

During World War II, while under Japanese occupation, the gardens were repurposed as a debris site and munitions factory. In 1945, following British reoccupation, restoration efforts began. By 1956, the gardens were restored to their original splendor and turned over to the Penang State Government. Since then, the garden has evolved into a botanical and research facility. Today, the objectives of the garden includes providing horticultural advice on Malaysian plants and landscapes, as well as hosting programs that focus on the historical and cultural heritage of the plant collections and the gardens themselves.

To see more pictures of my visit to the Penang Botanical Garden - see the video "A Visit to the Penang Botanical Garden, Malaysia" <https://youtu.be/Pa9jbxq8TZI>



Sengkuang trees located throughout the gardens
All Photos by MG Jon Johns

A Peek in the Pergola: Spring



Pam Hunter
GCMG 2018

May and June are delightful months in the pergola area of the Discovery Garden maintained by Galveston County Master Gardeners. Entering the garden from the gate near the parking lot, the pergola with its vivid colors of blooms is the first area visitors will see. Photographs on this page include pink four o'clock flowers (*Mirabilis jalapa*), Hedychium ginger (*Hedychium gardnerianum*), Gerbera daisies (*Gerbera*), beautiful purple stock (*Matthiola*), fragrant Belinda's Dream rose (*Rosa* 'Belinda's Dream'), and a cheery sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*).

All photos by MG Pam Hunter

SPRING



Four O'Clock



Hedychium ginger



Gerber Daisy



Stock



Belinda's Dream



Sunflower

Seasonal Bites: Tomatoes Two Ways



Briana Etie
GCMG 2017

At the beginning of the season, I anticipated the first big tomato for a BLT or the perfect juicy burger. Very soon I will have tomatoes on the kitchen counters and find myself incorporating tomatoes into daily dishes. I hope everyone is having bountiful tomato harvests. Here are two recipes that use tomatoes in a delicious way. Deb Brizendine, our GCMGA Treasurer and kitchen volunteer, prepares her Southern Tomato Slab Pie recipe for our Thursday lunches. I have brought the Pesto Pasta Salad for Master Gardener Salad Thursdays. Enjoy!



Pesto Pasta Salad "Caprese Style"

Ingredients

16-ounce box of Penne Pasta
8-ounce package of Mozzarella Pearls
10 ounces of Balsamic salad dressing
5 tablespoons of prepared pesto
1 pound of Campari tomatoes sliced into wedges
1 ounce of fresh basil

Instructions

Prepare pasta as instructed. While pasta is cooking, drain water from Mozzarella pearls and add to a mixing bowl. Add pesto and salad dressing to the mixing bowl. If you use the optional sliced chicken breast add them to the mixing bowl now. Toss to incorporate the pesto and dressing to coat all the cheese. Slice tomatoes and place them in a separate bowl. When pasta is cooked, rinse several times with cool water and allow the pasta to drain completely. Add pasta to the mixing bowl and toss until pasta is coated with dressing and pesto. Chiffonade the basil leaves, leaving a few tiny leaves for a garnish. Add tomatoes and basil tossing carefully to prevent the tomatoes from separating. Use fresh ground pepper and fresh grated Parmesan Reggiano cheese on top and garnish with saved smallest basil leaves.

If you prepare and refrigerate for more than one hour, wait to add tomato and basil. Refrigeration can cause "chilling injury" to both the ingredients.

Optional

Use seasoned cooked chicken breasts sliced into thin strips



Southern Tomato Slab Pie

Cheesy, herbaceous classic Deep South Tomato Slab Pie is made in a sheet pan for easy baking and serving and is great for feeding a crowd!

Ingredients

For the Crust: I use a premade pizza crust or a Pillsbury rollout pizza crust or even crescent rolls. When using crescent rolls, do not separate; roll dough onto pan lined with parchment paper and press the seams closed.

For the Filling

2 C Sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
2 C Four cheese Mexican, shredded {Or any cheese combination}
1 ¼ C mayo
2 cloves minced garlic
¾ C chopped green onions {or scallions}
½ C sliced basil ribbons {julienne}
4 ripe tomatoes, chopped

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and move oven rack to the low position. In a bowl, mix the Sharp cheddar cheese shreds, mayo, garlic and scallions/green onions. Chop tomatoes into bite sized pieces and place in a colander and sprinkle with salt. Let sit for about 5 minutes as the salt will draw out more of the moisture. Squeeze the tomatoes to remove as much moisture as possible.

Roll dough out onto parchment paper on a jelly roll pan. Turn the edges of the dough under and crimp with a fork against the rim of the baking pan. Spread the cheese-mayo mixture over the surface of the crust. Sprinkle the chopped tomatoes evenly over the mixture; then sprinkle the basil ribbons over the tomatoes. Cover the surface of the pie with the four-cheese Mexican shred mixture.

Bake on the low rack for 30 minutes, until crust is golden and the cheese has melted. Cool for about 5 minutes, then cut and serve.

Hints to prevent a soggy pie:

Squeeze as much juice from the tomatoes as possible; use Roma tomatoes as they are more 'meatier' than most tomatoes. Shred your own cheeses; pre-shredded cheeses have a waxy coating and leaves the surface oily. I sometimes add chopped jalapenos and bacon to my pies.

Book Review: *A Year of Garden Bees and Bugs* by Dominic Couzens and Gail Ashton



Lisa Belcher
GCMG 2014

The book *A Year of Garden Bees and Bugs* sounds like your usual book of creepy or non-creepy crawlies that prowl and fly around your backyard garden. I'm sure many of you have multiple books just like this on your reading shelf at home. This book however, is not like any book I have ever read, and I'm betting one unlike you have ever read

as well. The authors, Dominic Couzens

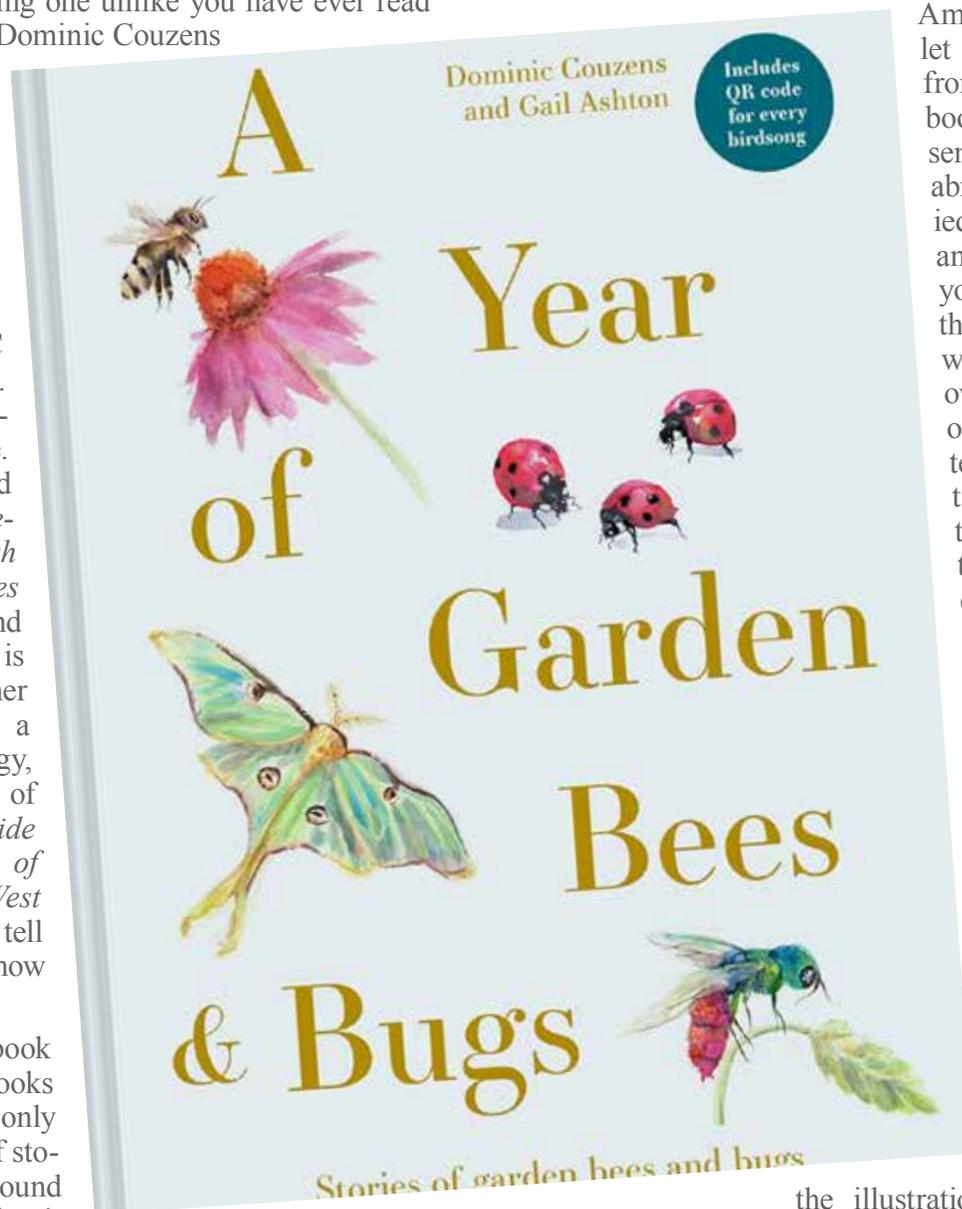
and Gail Ashton, respectively, are experts in both wildlife and the insect world. Couzens is a British author and journalist who has written for numerous publications including BBC Wildlife magazine. He is also a professional field trip guide. Among his published works include *The Secret Lives of British Birds*, *The Secret Lives of Garden Wildlife*, and many others. Ashton is a wildlife photographer and writer. She has a passion for entomology, and is the co-author of *An Identification Guide to Garden Insects of Britain and North-West Europe*. I write this to tell you that these two know their facts.

What makes this book different than other books on this subject is not only its layout: 52 weeks of stories of insects from around the world, but also what is at the *beginning* of each chapter. The first page of every chapter has a beautiful watercolor illustration of the insect. The famed British illustrator, Lesley Buckingham, provided splendid artwork throughout this book. Another

unique feature is its QR code you can scan on your phone. Once scanned, you will see a short audio video of the featured bug or bee in that chapter. I will warn you, once you start scanning these QR codes, it will definitely lead you to many of hours spent on YouTube watching even more videos of these unique insects.

Not all bugs and bees featured can be found in North America, but don't let that sway you from reading this book. The chosen insects from abroad are varied, interesting, and will have you, at times, either wishing they were here in your own backyard, or seriously contemplating if it is time to book that trip to Australia that has been on your "list of places to visit."

If the names peacock jumping spider, violet carpenter bee, and foam grasshopper intrigue you, the last completely terrifying this author, then this book is right up your alley. Just wait until you see



the illustrations, watch the video, and read the highly informative, at times whimsical stories of each of them. You too will be recommending this to a gardening friend. Our book club really enjoyed this book and hope you do as well.



Horticulture May Events

Aromatherapy & Cleaning with Herbs

5/03/25 9:00am - 11:00am

Gulf Coast Gardening Seminar

Explore which herbs help to promote emotional, physical and spiritual well-being. Also, using essential oils as ingredients to create household cleaning products to reduce the use harsh chemicals in your home.

To register, visit: <https://galveston.agrilife.org/events/>



Be a Superstar with Perennials & Per-Annual

5/10/25 9:00am - 11:00am

Gulf Coast Gardening Seminar

Learn which Texas Superstar® plants can live longer than 2-years and tropical perennials as annuals. These plants are heat resistant, require minimal care, and will add curb appeal to your home garden.

To register, visit: <https://galveston.agrilife.org/events/>

Plumeria Propagation

5/10/25 1:00pm - 3:00pm

Gulf Coast Gardening Seminar

Come celebrate beautiful plumerias and bring a little paradise to your home garden. Learn successful techniques to cultivate plumeria trees and their lovely flowers.

To register, visit: <https://galveston.agrilife.org/events/>



Open Public Garden Days

Every Thursday, 9:00am - 11:00am

Gardening with Master Gardeners

The Discovery Garden will be open to the public for visitors and gardening questions.

Location: in Carbide Park, 4102 Main St, La Marque, TX 77568

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

Galveston County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
4102-B Main Street (FM 519) La Marque, TX 77568
<https://galveston.agrilife.org> 281-309-5065



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Horticulture June Events

Successful Container Gardening

6/14/25 9:00am - 11:00am

Gulf Coast Gardening Seminar

Explore the practical and useful option of container gardening. Discussion will include plant locations, categories, maintenance, benefits and more. Enjoy a how-to demonstration for inserting plants into various containers.

To register, visit: <https://galveston.agrilife.org/events/>



Be a Superstar with Woody Shrubs and Trees

6/28/25 9:00am - 11:00am

Gulf Coast Gardening Seminar

Learn which Texas Superstar® plants are proven to survive in our Gulf Coast area. These plants are heat resistant, require minimal care and add beauty to your home's landscape.

To register, visit: <https://galveston.agrilife.org/events/>

Be a Superstar with Specialty Plants

6/28/25 1:00pm - 3:00pm

Gulf Coast Gardening Seminar

Explore Texas Superstar® Specialty Plants. Included will be hearty ornamentals, vegetables, herbs, citrus and grapes for discussion. These select plants perform well in our Texas climate and without need for pesticides or fertilizers.

To register, visit: <https://galveston.agrilife.org/events/>



Open Public Garden Days

Every Thursday, 9:00am - 11:00am

Gardening with Master Gardeners

The Discovery Garden will be open to the public for visitors and gardening questions.

Location: in Carbide Park, 4102 Main St, La Marque, TX 77568



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2025 Master Gardener Recertification Hours

Browse online to the members only webpage to review all hours: <https://txmg.org/galveston/membersonly/>

| Date | Name of Program | Speaker | MG CEUs | # MGs |
|-----------|---|---|---------|-------|
| 1/4/2025 | Designing & Growing an Herb Garden | Donna Merritt, Briana Etie | 2.00 | 12 |
| 1/4/2025 | Wedge Grafting | Hazel Lampton | 2.00 | 5 |
| 1/14/2025 | MGA Jan. Mtg: Looking Ahead | Kevin Lancon, Sue Bain | 1.00 | 76 |
| 1/14/2025 | Citrus Quarantine presentation | Janis Teas - TDA Inspector | 1.00 | 64 |
| 1/16/2025 | Lunch & Learn - Roselle, Unusual Culinary Herb | Donna Merritt | 0.50 | 28 |
| 1/18/2025 | Growing Great Tomatoes, Pt. 2 | Ira Gervias | 2.00 | 13 |
| 1/18/2025 | Anyone Can Grow Roses | John Jons | 1.50 | 10 |
| 1/30/2025 | Controlling the 10 Most Common Weeds | Brock Sanford, CEA - ANR | 0.50 | 41 |
| 2/4/2025 | MGA Feb. Mtg: Figs | Donna Merritt, John Mitchine | 1.00 | 62 |
| 2/6/2025 | Lunch & Learn - Microgreens | Briana Etie | 0.50 | 30 |
| 2/8/2025 | Herbs for Beauty | Donna Merritt, Briana Etie | 2.00 | 20 |
| 2/8/2025 | Backyard Citrus | Robert Marshall | 2.00 | 15 |
| 2/13/2025 | Lunch & Learn - Grapevine Propagation | David Eskins | 0.50 | 40 |
| 2/20/2025 | Lunch & Learn - Garlic Trial | Micheal Reed, Kevin Lancon, John Mitchiner | 1.00 | 31 |
| 2/22/2025 | Growing Avocados | Hazel Lampton | 1.00 | 7 |
| 2/22/2025 | Irish Potatoes | Kevin Lancon | 2.00 | 9 |
| 3/6/2025 | Lunch & Learn - Tool Time | Tim Jahnke | 0.50 | 28 |
| 3/8/2025 | Tomato Stress Management, Pt. 3 | Ira Gervias | 2.00 | 5 |
| 3/8/2025 | Spring Vegetables | Gene Speller | 3.00 | 9 |
| 3/11/2025 | MGA March Mtg: Bees | Ed Boyer | 1.00 | 52 |
| 3/13/2025 | Lunch & Learn - Sea Grant | Brandi Keller | 1.00 | 35 |
| 3/22/2025 | Chile Peppers from A to Z | Gene Speller | 2.00 | 7 |
| 3/22/2025 | Herb Propagation | Donna Merritt, Briana Etie | 3.00 | 17 |
| 3/27/2025 | Lunch & Learn - Pineapples | Ann Ross | 0.50 | 26 |
| 4/3/2025 | Lunch & Learn - Home Food Preparation | Ginger Benson | 0.50 | 24 |
| 4/5/2025 | Making Herbal Teas & Tisanes | Donna Merritt, Briana Etie | 2.25 | 16 |
| 4/5/2025 | You Too Can Be a Superstar Gardener | Sue Bain, Karen Nelson | 2.00 | 5 |
| 4/8/2025 | MGA April Mtg: Pollinator Garden Area Open House & Native Plants presentation | Pollinator Garden Area Team & Lauren Simpson | 2.00 | 38 |
| 4/10/2025 | Lunch & Learn - Building Earth-Kind Soil | Steve Holliday | 0.50 | 25 |

2025 Recertification Hours for MGs

Total CEUs (Hours)

40.75

Last Updated: April 10, 2025

MG Only Activities (# of MGs)

750

Reminder: In order to maintain your status as a certified Texas Master Gardener, each year you must complete a minimum of 10 hours continuing education, as well as 20 service hours. Additionally, those hours must be reported through the online Volunteer Management System or other means.

Ball High Tour

For several years Environmental Science students from Ball High School in Galveston visit the Discovery Garden, take a tour of the facilities and garden beds and complete a project for the Master Gardeners. This year's group arrived April 1, 2025.



Students at work *MG Briana Etie*



MG Judy Anderson discusses Earth-Kind plants *MG Herman Auer*



MG Kevin Lancon shares vegetable facts *MG Herman Auer*



Group *MG Briana Etie*



MG Lynn Shook works in greenhouse with group *MG Herman Auer*



MG Vickie Hall shares plant knowledge *MG Briana Etie*

Judy's Corner: Galveston County Monthly Meetings



Judy Anderson
GCMG 2012

May

Graduation and Recognition

2025 seems to be a year of change and that is true for the Galveston County Master Gardeners monthly meetings. The graduation and recognition meeting will be held in May at the home of Mikey and Allen Isbell in Galveston.

It will be an opportunity to recognize and honor the accomplishments of our MG friends.

The social will begin at 5:30 pm, followed by dinner and concluding with the graduation and recognition program. Beef brisket will be provided as the entrée. Bring appetizers, sides, salads, and desserts for the potluck.

An evening in the Isbell's lovely yard is always a treat with the flowers in bloom and the fish swimming in the koi pond. It should be a fun evening for everyone. Don't miss it.



June

Hosted by Sven and Kathleen Bors-Koefoed

The June GCMG Backyard Meeting will be in Friendswood at the home of Sven and Kathleen Bors-Koefoed. The home is landscaped with many of the passalong plants from their friends and family. They have fond memories of their climbing roses; Peggy Martin and the Chickencoop rose were from dear family members and an unnamed red was a special find. The mock orange in the front of the house is from his grandmother who lived in LaGrange. Kathleen has a collection of amaryllis she inherited from her mother. When we visit in June, the forest of plumerias will be on display along with the Rose of Sharon bushes, grape vines, fig trees, and a canoe of water hyacinth. Visit the bees and the compost area for a little inspiration.

To keep everyone comfortable there are shaded areas and the buffet will be set up indoors. Please remember to take dishes home after the meeting. Appetizers, salads, sides, entrees and desserts are welcome. Bring a chair along with your potluck dish to enjoy an evening with master gardener friends where we don't have to think about weeding. Be sure and say "hello" to Buddy and Ziggy, the fur babies in the home.

Mark your calendar and we will see you there.



Galveston County 2025 Monthly Meetings

June 10 PM

Backyard with Sven and Kathy Bors-Koefoed and potluck

July 8 PM

Fish Fry and Plant Swap

August

How Spending Time in Nature Improves Our Health Jay Maddock PhD. FAAHB Houston Methodist Institute & T A&M Environmental Health/Public Health

September, 9 PM

October 14 PM

November 10, lunch

December, 9 PM

Caruthers Garden and Dinner in Seabrook

Backyard with Stacey Phillips and potluck

Annual Meeting and potluck

Holiday Party hosted by Mikey and Allen Isbell