

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

GULF COAST *Gardening*

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Hopefully by the time you read this newsletter, the sun and warm temperatures have returned. I do not know about you, but I can hardly wait to play in the soil. My gloves and trimmers are waiting. I have the list of plants I need to purchase and I have redrawn several times how I want the beds and pots to look. I know what I need to trim and what needs to go to the compost pile. Even pulling weeds in the sunshine and warm temperatures is appealing. However, for now, I am waiting, waiting, waiting, and spending those gray days looking through seed catalogs, reading past issues of the Master Gardener newsletters and perusing colorful gardening books.

We have numerous articles to help with your spring planting. I would start with the articles on the spring sale on Saturday, February 16. We have some FAQ about our sale. There is also a reminder that help is just as far away as your phone. Our hot line at 281 534-3413 is available for any question you might have. Also the Extension Office in Car-bide Park has a wide range of printed horticultural materials. Another article on the plant sale gives more detailed information on what types of plants will be available.



To create interest in your landscaping, consider planting a rainbow garden. In this article you will find a list of colorful veggies, blooms and heirloom plants, along with ideas for working with a young person to create this interesting garden. If you are not pleased with how some of plants did over winter, check out the list of hardy plants in the Winter Color in the Garden. This article offers an extensive list of those plants that will do just fine if they are neglected over the cold months.

Bulbs are an important part of any landscape and are not only beautiful but require very little care. This article offers a year-long plan for adding and caring for bulbs. Trees are a very important part of your landscape and care must be taken to ensure a healthy, long-lasting tree. In her article, Margaret Canavan, offers may tips for caring for your trees.

Our Master Gardeners have many talents and are committed to improving our surroundings and

sharing their knowledge. We have several articles that offer you the opportunity to become more acquainted with Galveston County Master Gardeners and their many accomplishments. Be sure to check out Sandra Gervais' recipe for cornbread and soup. What a great addition to those gray days. Travel along with Pam Jahnke to Mexico to explore Oaxaca and their beautiful gardens. Also explore the Maplewood Rose Garden in Rochester, New York, with John Jons' article and suggested YouTube.

In Master Gardeners are Leaders, you will learn not only what it takes to lead our organization but also some of the many activities our Galveston County Master Gardener Association supports. If you are a Master Gardener, consider stepping up and leading. If you are not a Master Gardener, consider becoming one. Carolyn Gephart is a great example of a Master Gardener who has stepped up. Learn about the many activities



By Pat Forke
MG 2010

Karolyn is involved in and what her interests are.

Three other Master Gardeners, Ann Anderson, Cindy Croft and Pat Forke, share how grandparents started them on a path to a love of gardening. Being Green is important to Master Gardeners and, in this article, we share some ways we follow-through on our commitment to improving our environment.

Our Discovery Garden at Carbide Park is a physical manifestation of all that Galveston County Master Gardeners know and are able to accomplish. Our garden is continually changing and growing. Read about what is happening in the garden and also about the contributions of Phil Haight, Julie Cartmill and Robert Marshall to the orchard.

Your comments, feedback and questions are always welcome by Linda Steber at steber8@msn.com.

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Cover:
Caladium Lemon Blush
Photo courtesy of GCMGA Digital Library



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Due the 20th of each month.

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Thanks for your interest!

My Discovery Garden

Can you tell me what this is? *Sphinx Moth*.



By **Ronnie Corley**
MG Intern 2018

While pulling pepper plants in my “Discovery Garden” at home last November I noticed a large chrysalis, (picture 1), that I never recollect seeing before. Rather than trying to identify it immediately, I decided to take a picture and engage my fellow 2018 interns, as I consider them a very good resource! I sent an email to everyone, copying Dr. J as well and asked, “what bad boy made this?” Within two minutes a reply came back with Hawk Moth and in two hours a picture of an identical chrysalis with Sphinx Moth. Then

came the inevitable assignment from Dr. J, for as he says, “Knowledge not shared is knowledge lost.”

The chrysalis is the pupal stage of the Carolina Sphinx or Hawk Moth, *Manduca sexta*. It is found throughout the continental United States more predominately along the Gulf Coast., also in southern Canada, Central America, and the Caribbean. The genus name *Manduca* comes from the Latin word for gluttonous, describing the larval stage’s, (picture 2), voracious appetite and the species *sexta* means six-fold, referring to the six pair of yellowish-orange spots located bilaterally on the abdomen of the adult moth. The caterpillars are the infamous tobacco hornworm, the stage which I am sure many of us are well too familiar with. They feed almost entirely on solanaceous plants, (tobacco, tomato, peppers, potatoes, etc.) It seems as if tomato plants are fine in the evening and on the next inspection they are defoliated! Non-stop eating machines. I remember, when I could hear well, actually listening to them chewing the leaves. They are camouflaged very well due to their green color and one may first notice their droppings as evidence they are present. They can be identified by the diagonal white and black stripes on their side and a red pointed “horn”, which is harmless, on the posterior body segment.

The eggs are laid singly on the leaves of the host plant, are approximately 1/16th inch, and are pale green turning to white when ready to hatch in 2-8 days. The larvae emerge and eat the egg sac, then go to work on the plant. They go through a total of four or five instars before reaching a size of about 3.25 in. The final instar pupates in the soil or leaf litter and in 19 to 21 days the moth emerges. One life cycle takes 49-56 days, (picture 3). Two generations are common in our area. When the days grow shorter and cooler the pupae will go into diapause, (a dormant stage), and overwinter.

The moth is the adult stage and they are active at dawn and dusk. It is sometimes referred to as a Hummingbird Moth due to its hovering ability and size, which can be a wing span of 3.75 to 4.75 in. When at rest the wings are folded back giving it a triangular appearance. After emerging and mating in three to four days females can lay up to a thousand eggs over their lifetime of several weeks. Ironically, the moths are good pollinators.

Species: *sexta*

Genus: *Manduca*

Family: Sphingidae

Order: Coleoptera

Class: Lepidoptera

Phylum: Arthropoda

Kingdom: Animalia

The Hawk Moths have the longest tongue or proboscis of any moth or butterfly.

The most efficient form of control is T&F. T&F was taught to our Intern class in the tomato trials by Ira Gervais. It stands for thumb and forefinger and requires careful, regular inspection. *Bacillus thuringiensis* or Bt is a good organic biological control. Use it early, because more than likely they will come. Natural enemies of tobacco hornworm larva are paper wasps, parasitic wasps, lacewing and lady beetle larvae. The

pupa can also be invaded, which happened in the case of my chrysalis, but I failed to capture that. Oh the cruel world of insects! I’ll keep looking to see that happen again.

Selected References and further reading:

http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/field/tobacco_hornworm.htm

<https://entomologytoday.org/2013/12/14/how-to-tell-the-difference-between-tomato-and-tobacco-hornworms/>

[https://wardsci.com/www.wardsci.com/images/Tobacco_Hornworms\(1\).pdf](https://wardsci.com/www.wardsci.com/images/Tobacco_Hornworms(1).pdf)



Photo by Fran Brockington



Photo by MG Intern Ronnie Corley



Photo by Lisa Brummett

Plant Sale Facts

Facts about the 2019 Spring Plant Sale



By Karolyn Gephart
MG 2017

Spring is around the corner and gardeners, get ready! The 2019 Galveston County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale will be from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., February 16, at Jack Brooks Park in Hitchcock. The educational presentation to give a plant overview will be at 8:00 a.m.

To prepare everyone for the sale and for those who will be there for the first time, here are some FAQs that may be helpful.

Q: Where is Jack Brooks Park?

A: Jack Brooks Park is located on State Hwy 6 at the Galveston County Fairgrounds. It is the site for the Galveston County Fair and Rodeo each year in March. The address is #10 Jack Brooks Park, Hwy 6, Hitchcock, TX 77563. See Flyer on Page 28 for directions and more information.

Q: Where can I find out what plants will be at the sale?

A: You have several opportunities to get excited about the sale and to make a list of what you will be seeking when the gates open and you see the 100s and 100s of plants. The website is <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/>. As soon as available, the list of plants will be posted there. On the day of the sale at 8:00 a.m. an overview with photos and information will be presented in the Ed Pickett Hall (beside the arena).

Q: Will there be information about the plants for shoppers?

A: Everyone who attends the sale will get a plant catalog that offers information on all plants at the sale. The educational presentation at 8:00 a.m. will provide information and there also will be Master Gardeners scattered throughout the sale arena among the plants, usually near those plants with which each is most familiar. For additional information, stop by the Information Booth.

Q: If a buyer purchases several large items, such as fruit and citrus trees, will there be help loading into vehicles?

A: Wagons are available for shopping and when it is time to get your purchases in a vehicle, Master Gardeners will be on hand to help you load them. There will be a limited supply of wagons so feel free to bring your own.

Q: Cash and Credit Cards?

A: Cash, checks, debit cards and credit cards are all accepted.

Q: What can a buyer do if he/she has questions after the sale, during the plant's life cycle?

A: Plant specimens for cultural, disease and insect identification, as well as weed and other plant identifications, may be submitted to the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office. All specimens should be sealed in a plastic bag, if possible, your name, address and telephone number included.

Master Gardener volunteers are available to answer telephone questions on horticulture Monday thru Friday at 281-534-3413. The AgriLife extension office is your resource for a wide range of printed horticultural material. Publications are available on everything from planting a vegetable garden to stamping out fire ants. These publications are free and the public is encouraged to come by and help themselves to these reference materials.

Q: Where is the Extension Office located?

A: The Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office is located at 4102-B Main Street (FM 519) in La Marque, Texas. From I-45 South, take Exit 10 West (FM 519) about one mile. The office is located inside Carbide Park is on the left as you drive into the park.



Spring Sale 2019



**By Tish Reustle
MG 2008**

Gardening, like marriage or a relationship, has been said to be the “triumph of hope over experience” and every spring the Galveston County Master Gardener Association proves the point by having the first of its two annual sales. Some gardening books try to tell us that perennials are best planted in the fall but here in Texas we know that any time the climate cooperates with mild temperatures and a little rain is DEFINITELY the time to plant. With that being so, in February the Jack Brooks Park Arena will be filled with fruit trees, herbs, vegetables and, yes, perennials. While we cannot predict in December exactly which species of flowers and shrubs will be available from the nurseries, we do know many of the types of plants that are regularly offered in this

locale because they have proven to sell well and, more importantly, to thrive in the climate and soils of Coastal Texas. If the plant is familiar to most people and can be found in any local DIY store, we look for new varieties and unusual colors and always try to pay close attention to the overall health of the plant and its suitability to our area.

Shrubs are the background of most landscapes and, like most people; we love those that flower. With that in mind we always offer Arabesque and Butterfly azaleas, Leslie Ann camellias and the Kleim's Hardy gardenias. To bring the butterflies and birds in we include plants such as Buzz Midnight buddleia, Shrimp plant, and Musical Notes clerodendron. To provide background for smaller plants we offer Hannah Ray bottlebrush, Christmas Berry and Snowball viburnums. Esperanza, Rock Rose, and the tri-colored Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow are also tried and true members of this group. Rose bushes are beloved by many and Belinda's Dream and Peggy Martin always do well in this area. While not technically shrubs, the Black Coral and Frydek elephant ears are certainly big enough to make a statement in any garden. For stunning flowers to impress the neighbors we can recommend ground orchids such as Nun's Cap, Lady Slipper and Chinese Ground.

If all these are too big and bold for your taste, we offer smaller perennial flowers such as Gerber daisies, coneflowers, salvias and angelonias. To attract the butterflies, we have bee balm, guara, and, of course, tropical milkweed. When the native milkweeds are available, we add those to our inventory. Most of the grasses enjoy the sun as well and we usually have Gulf Coast Muhly, Gold Bar, and Blue-eyed Grass to mix in with the flowers.

“Wait,” some of you are saying, “Enough of the flowers, I have nothing but shade, SHADE!” We can help you with that too as we always offer a variety of ferns such as Japanese Painted, Rabbit's Foot, Lemon Button and Bird's Nest. The Matchstick bromeliads and Peacock gingers will also work in shaded areas.

If you are looking for ground cover, we offer colorful jasmines such as Salsa and Snow-in-Summer. If you are a lover of gray plants, we have Stemodia and Ponyfoot. Bronze or variegated Ajuga is generally available as well.

If you need a plant to cover a wall or fence you should check out the Passion Vine, Mexican Flame Vine, Bleeding Heart Vine and the beautiful Rangoon Creeper we offer.

Finally, after a winter of gray skies we all look for some color in our lives. Accordingly, every spring we try to offer just that in the form of brightly colored geraniums in pots and incredible hanging baskets of bougainvillea and begonias in pinks, purples, oranges and white. You have to see them to believe them! They sell out quickly so come early and buy plenty to celebrate hope and spring.



**Camellia -
photo courtesy Mona Ray**



**George Tabor Azalea -
photo courtesy Linda Steber**



Mexican Flame Vine - photo courtesy Gloria Johnson



Clerodendrum Bungei - photo courtesy Herman Auer



Gardenia - photo courtesy Margie Jenke



Milkweed - photo courtesy GCMGA Digital Library

The Orchard

In the Discovery Garden!



By Pat Forke
MG 2010



By Julie Cartmill
MG 2007

Have you been to our Discovery Garden at Carbine Park recently? It is open for the public on Thursday mornings from 9 until 11. Also on Thursdays you will find a large number of Galveston County Master Gardeners hard at work. Although we are in the winter cycle, you will see the

beginnings of several ambitious projects that will result in beautiful after pictures within the next several months. The transformation that is taking place right now is amazing.

Walk past the beautiful garden plots overflowing with winter vegetables of all types and head to the orchard area. There you will find ten rows of raised beds ten feet wide and about 100 feet long. These rows are planted with fruit trees of all sorts and an assortment of scattered perennials and annuals. These beds are covered with pine bark mulch and watered with an irrigation system. There is power available in one row to help warm the more cold-sensitive trees. On Thursdays, you will find a small army of master gardeners pruning, weeding, keeping the bed edges straight, removing trees and planting others.

Another project underway in the orchard area is a resting area complete with wooden benches, potted citrus trees, landscape plants and a water fountain. This oasis will allow visitors to sit and overlook the area while touring the orchard.

What is the purpose of all this, you might ask? Why all the hours of labor by the master gardeners? Measuring the beds, spreading the 40 plus yards of mulch, carefully pruning and checking for insect or weather-related damage, removing damaged plants and choosing and planting new trees are just some of the tasks done by these gardeners. Why are these gardeners doing all this only to have so much destroyed by an Ike, or a Harvey, or uncharacteristic multiple days of below freezing temperatures?

The primary reason for all this activity can be summarized in one word and that word is knowledge. And remember that characteristic of knowledge - knowledge not shared is knowledge lost. Our Discovery Garden is where we learn what plants do well in the Galveston County area and how to best care for these plants. While the most abundant type of tree in our orchard are citrus trees, there are also a multitude of other trees. Trees are chosen based on what is available for the public to purchase at our fall and spring plant sales. These trees provide a great visual on how particular varieties will look as they mature. They also provide an opportunity for experimentation by master gardeners in such areas as using different root stocks, altering the PH of the soil and how to best deal with the sometimes wrath of Mother Nature.

The orchard also provides an opportunity to share the knowledge of good cultural practices in both small and large yards while looking at actual, maturing trees. Pruning techniques, choosing the area for planting, dealing with mulch and weeds and other plants around your tree can be illustrated. And, do you have questions about fertilizing, fruit production, blooming and setting of fruit? These are just some of the master gardeners that are available on a weekly basis to share their knowledge with fellow gardeners: Pam and Tim Jahnke, Robert Marshall, Sue Jeffco, Kevin Lancon, Phil Haught, David Cooper and Julie Cartmill. We are open on Thursdays from 9 - 11. Come look around and ask questions. We look forward to sharing our knowledge with you.



Master Gardeners Phil Haught, Julie Cartmill and Robert Marshall



Photos courtesy of Dr. William M. Johnson

Using Bulbs in Your Landscape for Color all Year Long!



By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008

As the Team Lead for ordering bulbs for our Master Gardeners' plant sales, I am always asked a version of the same question: I have a patio home or townhouse with limited gardening space. Can I use bulbs for interest and color in my landscape; or how can I have color in my gardens all year long? Special thanks to Brenda Beust Smith, the Lazy Gardener, for sharing this info from her Lazy Gardener and Friends Newsletter and to both Dodie Jackson and Linda Gay for their expertise.

According to Dodie Jackson of the Houston Garden Club and Horticulturalist Linda Gay bulbs are the perfect choice in our region for color throughout the seasons. Consider planting bulbs that both naturalize (multiply and return each season) in our area and intersperse them with annual bulbs that complete their lifecycle in one season.

For early to mid-spring blooms, plant:

Daffodils: Avalanche, Monal, Carlton, and Fortune

Paperwhites: Italicus, Earlicheer, Galilea, Grand Primo, Campernelles and Chinese Sacred Lily

Tulip: Clusiana and Lady Jane

Smaller bulbs: Lucojum, Ipheon, Ixia, Scilla, Spraxis, Dutch Iris and Roman Hyacinth

For late Spring and Early Summer try planting:

Amaryllis, Calla Lily, Byzantine Gladiola, Gloriosa Lily, Bearded Iris, Louisiana Iris, Watsonia, Scadoxus, Triumphator Lily, or other Longiflorum Asiatic lilies

For late Summer and into Fall plant:

Oxblood Lily, Lycoris, Day Lily, Crinums, Gingers

For late Summer and into Fall plant:

Oxblood Lily, Lycoris, Day Lily, Crinums, Gingers

For year-round color try:

Rain Lily

Sally McQueen Squire's book: *"A Gardener's Guide to Growing Bulbs on the Gulf Coast"* remains one of my absolute favorite reference guides on bulbs. I am sharing her thoughts on gardening by the holidays, also provided by Brenda Beust Smith, and reset for 2019!

LABOR DAY (Sept. 2, 2019)

Start tilling new beds or rejuvenating old beds, allowing adequate time for soil to settle before our big bulb planting season ahead!

COLUMBUS DAY (Oct. 14, 2019)

Add dirt to bulb beds if the soil has settled. Start amaryllis in containers so they will bloom for the holidays. Then plant them in the garden, in a raised area, in the spring.



Lemon Blush



Puppy Love



Eucomis

HALLOWEEN (Oct. 31, 2019)

Plant: Agapanthus, allium, anemone, bletilla, lycoris, ranunculus (claws down!), crocus, Dutch iris, freesia, leucojum, milla, muscari, sparaxis and watsonia. Learn about all these in Sally's book.

VETERANS DAY (Nov. 11, 2019)

Start 'Paperwhite' narcissus in shallow dishes filled with pebbles for holiday blooms. Continue planting additional bowls every two weeks, to extend blooming season. The later you plant the bulbs, the shorter time until blooming. If you plant bulbs on Feb. 5, they will bloom about Feb. 22.

THANKSGIVING (Nov. 28, 2019)

Plant: Daffodils and pre-refrigerated hyacinths in the ground. Unchilled hyacinths can be planted anytime in hyacinth glasses or containers and refrigerated until the roots fill the glass. Start amaryllis bulbs in pots in a lowlight area for holiday blooms.

NEW YEAR'S EVE (Dec. 31, 2018)

Start planting tulip bulbs that have been refrigerated at least 4-6 weeks. Tulips can be planted anytime until Feb. 13. Why not on Feb. 14, you ask? Because that's the traditional day for pruning roses in the garden.

NEW YEAR'S DAY (Jan. 1, 2019)

Plant all the bulbs you forgot to plant in the fall - especially those tulips and hyacinths! They won't bloom in the refrigerator.

VALENTINE'S DAY (Feb. 14, 2019)

Don't worry about bulbs. This is the day to prune your (grafted) roses.

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY & President's Day (Feb. 18, 2019)

Caladiums can be started in flats inside so they will be ready to put into the ground on Easter. Alstromeria, if you haven't planted them already, need to go into the ground quickly. Stagger gladiolus planting at two-week intervals to produce a long season of color.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY (Mar. 17, 2019)

Oxalis (those 4-leaf clovers sold in grocery stores love our gardens!) Dahlias can be started now but tubers usually require a full season of growing before producing flowers.

EASTER SUNDAY (Apr. 21, 2019)

Plant amaryllis and caladiums in the ground now. Don't plant caladiums earlier because these rot too easily in cold soil. Amaryllis will naturalize here; no need to lift.

MOTHER'S DAY (May 12, 2019)

Plant achimenes. Crinum and cannas can be planted any time, except the dead of winter.

MEMORIAL DAY (May 27, 2019)

Okay to plant caladiums this late if you use plants.

So, there you have it! Bulbs are the perfect choice for color throughout the year, in your gardens. Bulbs are extremely popular at our plant sales. We've placed a large order for our February 16, 2019 sale (summer bloomers) and will have many beautiful bulbs to help you get started adding beauty to your landscapes.



Gloriosa



Tuberose



White Lava Elephant Ear

Plant a Rainbow Garden for Children



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

What more fun could there be than planting a Rainbow Garden with your children or grandchildren? What better way to create an interest in the whole gardening process with youngsters than planting a Rainbow Garden? Cultivating colorful crops is sure to gain their attention and inspire their imagination. A flower garden bed or a vegetable garden corner can be easily achieved, perhaps even one of each.

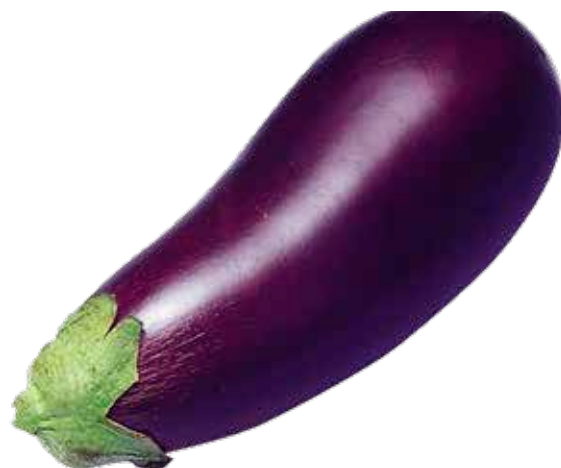
Selecting a rainbow spectrum can be a special project for you and your child by way of a visit to a local nursery or plant shop or by the perusing of plant catalogs for more unusual varieties. The objective and goal is to stimulate and encourage this fertile young brain with an interest and awareness of how gardens not only bestow beauty to the world but also provide needed food-stuffs for our health and welfare with a little effort and determination. That is what gardening is all about.

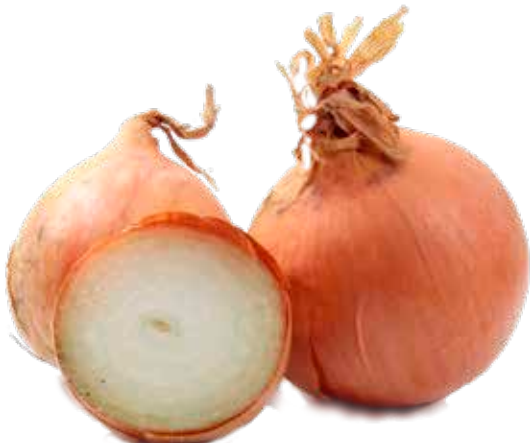
To arouse their creativity and imagination, suggest themes or the use of distinctive designs in the planning process. Consider exploring unique configurations for your garden, a garden in a rainbow shape, or in a circle with spokes of colors grouped together like a wagon wheel. Use whimsical décor throughout the plot with painted rocks, a fairy collection, or some toy trucks driving along pathways, garden décor, decorative labels or signs that the youngsters can create themselves. Make this activity fun and educational at the same time. Learn how to arrange plants in complementing color ranges...check out the color wheel on the internet as a teaching tool.

If you are short on space, the use of potted plants can add height and depth even shaping an arched bed to follow with the rainbow plantings. A choice of colorful plants can be as simple or as complex as you and your little novice determines. Select from packets of mixed plant seeds, a variety of plant species in one color, or one species in various colors, mix edible plants with ornamentals for a full rainbow garden experience.

Select plants that grow well in your area and share like conditions in growth habit, i.e. light, moisture and soil requirements. Include plants of differing shapes, sizes, textures and fragrances. Choose companion plants that will grow well together, red radish next to red tomatoes for example. Read the labels carefully to determine how big the plant will become and then plant accordingly so one variety does not overwhelm another or overcrowd the space. Try setting out containers of pre-grown plants to see what the end result will be before actually putting the plants in the ground.

The notion of planting a Rainbow Garden is an appealing concept as that garden becomes its own work of art that includes a layout of plants and flowers in every spectrum of a kaleidoscopic assemblage. Not only is the configuration attractive to you, your children and other onlookers, it is also an alluring delight to bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Bees love the blues and purples while the butterflies and hummingbirds are drawn to red and orange. Select one, two or even several varieties from the following lists and create your own Rainbow Garden. Enjoy the experience with your children while opening their eyes and unlocking their imaginations.





A Rainbow of Veggies

Blue/purple: eggplant,

Red: strawberries in pots...tomatoes, radish, beets, red peppers

Yellow: squash, banana peppers,

White: onions, potato

Green: green beans, zucchini, cucumber, green pepper

Orange: carrot, sweet potato

A Rainbow of Blooms

Red: Geraniums, Coleus, Cosmos, Zinnia, Begonia

Orange/Yellow: Lantana, Cosmos, Marigold, Butterfly Weed, Daisies, Sunflowers

Green: Bells of Ireland, Mint, Catnip, Rosemary, Basil, assorted Grasses

Blue: Salvia, Morning Glories, Plumbago

Purple: Salvia, Lavender, Petunia, Verbena, Pansy, Thyme

White: Daisies, Moonflower, Dusty Miller

Pink: Tea Roses, Stargazer Lily

Heirloom Plants in Rainbow Colors

Royal Burgundy Beans is a purple variety of bush beans with a strong resistance to pests and disease; loves full sun, ready to pick in fifty days. Very pretty on the plant but the color will fade to green when cooked...delicious in salads.

Golden Beets are popular heirloom varieties with several variations including Touchstone with gold flesh that retains color after cooking and Boldor which is a very bright golden-yellow color that is hardier with vigorous growth. Another unusual type of beet is the Baby White Albino, it originates from Holland and has a very sweet taste and is great for cooking and eating with a dab of butter added.

Rainbow Carrots are grown in a range of interesting colors. Mixed seed packets can be purchased on the internet from True Leaf Market that include "Atomic Red", "Bambino Orange", "Lunar White", and "Solar Yellow. They will reach maturity in seventy days.

Black Nebula Carrots is a very dark hued carrot that retains its color when cooked and will make a stunning dark purple drink that turns to pink when a drop of lemon is added to it.

Lemon Cucumbers, (*cucumis sativus*) have an unusual round shape and pale yellow skin. Fun to harvest and serve as a side or in salads.

Moon and Stars Watermelon has a "dark green lumpy, bumpy rind with bright yellow patches. Its sweet bright red flesh is a "true taste sensation". Yellow Pear Tomato produces a perfect bite-size snack with a colorful pear-shaped fruit and mild sweet flavor.

Garden Themed Books for Young Gardeners

"The Edible Rainbow Garden" by Rosalind Creasy

"Planting A Rainbow" by Lois Ehlert

"I Can Eat A Rainbow" by Annabel Karmel

Winter Color in the Garden



By Elayne Kouzounis
MG 1998

Some gardeners regard winter as a dull, colorless season - a time to retreat indoors and dream of spring; however, with a little planning, you can create a garden to provide visual pleasures throughout the frigid months. Choose plants that provide color and texture with evergreen foliage, beautiful bark, or colorful berries.

Evergreen trees and shrubs are the backbone of any frost-to-thaw garden. They provide a soothing green background from spring to fall for the more colorful annuals and perennials. After the frost kills the last of the fall flowers, the evergreens are still there to remind you of spring and summer. Choosing a variety of evergreens with different foliage colors can also add shades of blue (Plumbago) and gold (Calendula) to your winter plantings. Some deciduous trees and shrubs also offer winter beauty in their colorful stems, fruits, and berries. Likewise, many ornamental grasses are wonderful in the winter with their graceful, arching foliage, and fluffy seed heads. You can even experience fragrance in your winter garden as a few shrubs that blossom during the colder months as their sweetly scented flowers bring a touch of spring to the crisp winter air.

An extra dividend in a winter garden is watching the winter birds that come to eat the berries. If you decide to put out bird feeders, place them out of the reach of prowling cats. After you once begin to feed the birds, food should be placed for them daily until spring arrives. They should

then be able to find an ample supply of insects to meet their needs. Even when the berries are gone, you will still enjoy the beautiful horizontal branching structure of the Almond Verbena, Indian Hawthorn, Juniper, Dwarf Colorado Spruce with its steely blue foliage, as well as the Red Orchid and Redbud trees.

January is a good month when it comes to planning. Very soon the seed catalogs will come in. These are really fine pieces of literature for the gardener. They may be overwhelming to you with so many choices; however, if you really plan to be an avid gardener, you will use them carefully then file them away for future reference. Catalogs contain vast amounts of effort, time, and patience. Go into the composition of these catalogs which are sent to you, free, so that you may select the offerings of the season. Some of the catalogs will offer new flowers, many of which are your old friends in new and improved garb. The gardening magazine will give you the story of each year's newest offerings. Do not plunge too heavily into new offerings but do remember that old adage, "Be not the first by whom the new are tried, nor yet the last to lay the old aside." While trying out some of the new and more difficult offerings, have the major portion of your garden devoted to your old friends, tried, true, and ease of culture.

We have had several very cold winters and this list I am sharing with you is what plants actually survived in my garden. I never provided winter protection for these plants. A tip I always like to repeat and to remind everyone about is to always try to water before a freeze.



Blue Rosemary



Chinese Lantern Hibiscus



Firespike



Hamelia



Honeysuckle



Ligularia

The cold season does not last forever!!! Happy Winter!!!!

Jatropha (*Jatropha integerrima*) - Provides beautiful red bloom clusters of winter color to your landscape. It is a tropical looking plant and is drought tolerant in our hot summers.

Shrimp plant (*Justicia brandegeana*) - A deciduous to perennial plant. It has a most interesting bloom, resembling a shrimp's profile. The variety 'Chartreuse' has yellowish green bracts and is my favorite.

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) - Demands very little care. I have a rosemary plant at my entryway by the street. In the summer I do water it once a week. Blooms are blue and so beautiful. I have had this care-free plant for many years.

Turk's cap (*Malvaviscus arboreus*) - Red blooms resemble a man's Turkish hat. It can handle drought and temperatures in the 20's. Attracts hummingbirds and butterflies.

Ligularia - Shines in the shade with its round evergreen foliage and daisy-like flowers. If it freezes, it comes back. An amazing plant.

Firespike (*Odontonema strictum*) - Beautiful green glossy foliage with crimson-red blooms in the fall. Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. It comes back after a freeze.

Bleeding Heart Vine (*Clerodendrum thomsoniae*) - Likes shade and has beautiful red corollas. Cold weather does not kill it.

Gingers (*Curcuma*, *Alpinia*, and *Zerumbet* varieties) - No matter what the weather, gingers bounce back. Alpinia is the beautiful shell ginger, Zerumbet is the variegated ginger, and the Curcuma is a cone-shaped flower that blooms early in the year like the pink ginger plants from Hawaii.

Almond Verbena (*Aloysia virgata*) - Vanilla-almond scent with white flowers into winter. If it freezes, it comes back quickly. Attracts butterflies. A personal favorite.

Yesterday, Today, & Tomorrow (*Brunfelsia pauciflora*) - Fragrant blooms. In three days this profuse bloomer will open deep violet, to light violet, then white. Mine has never frozen.

Bay Laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) - One of the most beautiful and aromatic of all trees. I have enjoyed mine for over 50 years and have never protected it from freezes or when subject to drought.

Trailing Purple Lantana (*Lantana montevidensis*) - Constant bloomer and has never frozen. It is also drought resistant.

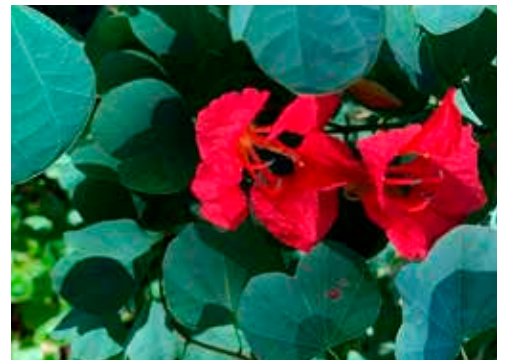
You can always plant pansies and cyclamens as they are beautiful along with snapdragons and poppies. Lastly, let us not forget our lettuces and vegetables that contribute an array of vivid colors in a winter garden.



Nandina



Ramie



Red Orchid Tree



Round Leaf Begonia



Turks Cap



Yellow Rose

What's Growing in the Greenhouse?



by Briana Etie
MG 2017

The greenhouse is preparing for our upcoming Galveston County Master Gardener Spring Sale. We are growing herbs and some flowering plants for the Master Gardener Grown section of the Spring sale too. The Galveston County Master Gardener greenhouse grows most of the herbs that are sold at the Spring Sale and the herbs we bring to the Moody Garden Herb fair. We are growing basil, parsley, herb leaf celery, thyme, rosemary (upright and weeping), salad burnet,

onion chives, oregano (Cuban and Greek), stevia, lemon balm, lemon grass, marjoram and yarrow. We have Lion's tail and Chinese Lantern hibiscus, Arabian Lilac, Black and Blue Salvia, Persian Shield, Canna Lily and Angel trumpets for the Master Gardener Grown Section of the Spring Sale.

We are growing spring flowers that will be available for our greenhouse monthly sale in March. We will have, Gerbera, African, and Shasta daisies, gazanias, pentas, salvias and Angelonia.

Glenn Diket, our tomato man, seeded trays of tomatoes and peppers for our Greenhouse Monthly Sale. Mary and Glenn chose some sweet and hot varieties of peppers. Most of the tomato varieties he selected are under 65 days to mature. Celebrity, Perone, Early Girl, Bush Early Girl, Juliet (red), Chocolate Cherry and New Big Dwarf. We have some new varieties, Little Napoli is a Determinate Roma, 60 - 65 days. Perfect for containers on patios. We also seeded a new variety called 42 days. It is a 1 oz cherry size red variety matures in 42 days.

The hoop house, next door to our greenhouse, has undergone a make-over. It was due to a maintenance coat of paint, thanks to our construction crew members, Sharon Zaal, Kathy Maines and Rachel Montemayor it looks new again.

Mary Gonzales, the greenhouse team leader, asked that we budget for the ends of the hoop house to be closed during the winter months. This will allow us to harden off the herbs we grow for the sales in February. February can be a cold month. Galveston County's last frost date is between February 11th and 20th. With ends of the hoop house closed we can prevent the cold wind tunneling through, allowing the herbs continued growth. Cold climate can bring our warm season herbs to stop or slow their growth. The young herbs grow best in our greenhouse but need to acclimate to our outside temperatures before the sale. In our efforts to keep the cold wind from chilling our young plants we are changing the top from the 70% shade cloth that has been protecting our plants to a light diffusing top that will allow more light to benefit our growing season.

We look forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming sales and hope we can have continued success with our herbs, tomatoes, and flowers.



Take Trees Into Account When Planning Major Changes



**By Dr. Margaret
Canavan
MG 2003**

For years I've walked the neighborhood with my dogs on their favorite routes. Doing so, I've come to know houses and neighbors, friendly (and some unfriendly) dogs and also notable trees. I particularly enjoy our iconic live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*). In recent months, I've spotted a favorite tree in trouble.

This particular oak is a beautiful, large, and old one, a true Galveston treasure. It graces the front yard of a well-maintained historic home on a quiet block. This tree was cared for following the deluge of Hurricane Ike and seemed to have no ill effects.

Oaks in areas with less extensive saltwater flooding actually had a better survival rate than other species.

Lately, the tree is showing increasingly obvious signs of decline. The once-glorious canopy is gradually becoming less dense, with distressed-looking leaves. The trunk has large areas of bark browning and breaking away from the tree. This is a tree in trouble. The likely reason?

A couple of years ago, the homeowners decided to put in a swimming pool. No one can argue with that, as a pool is a delightful addition to life in steamy Galveston summers. The pool area was excavated with the heavy equipment required to do the job. The homeowners protected the area within 3- to 4-feet of the tree's trunk.

However, structural and feeder roots extend out to the edge of a tree's canopy and beyond. The pool was near enough the oak that many of those roots were removed. Heavy equipment compacted the soil over the root zone, which squeezed out the space in the soil needed for oxygen and water to reach the feeder roots.

If the homeowner calls the Galveston County Master Gardener hotline about the tree, one of the questions she or he will be asked is "Has there been any construction, or change in landscaping around the tree?" The answer will, of course, be yes. That hotline receives many such calls about trees and other landscape plants that have been damaged due to unintentional injury or misuse of lawn chemicals. Damage may take months or years to become obvious.

Of course, I have my fingers crossed that the tree will be able to recover. Perhaps with the advice of a certified arborist, the homeowner could be given ideas for treatment or remediation. But once the damage begins to show, it's often too late to save an injured tree. The better plan is to consider trees before changes are made in order to avoid such pitfalls when possible.

We learned a valuable lesson with Hurricane Ike: we cannot take our trees for granted. While they're mostly tough and durable, even a tree that has stood for 20 or 100 years is a living thing that needs proper conditions to thrive. For those in the urban landscape, that means we must manage them carefully and appropriately. If we treat them right, trees will continue to give us beauty, shade and oxygen for years to come.

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



Ethnobotanical Garden in Oaxaca, Mexico



By Pam Jahnke
MG 2015

Flying into the southern Mexican city of Oaxaca in October, if you have a window seat you notice vast patches of brilliant orange and yellow amidst the varying shades of green. These are fields of cempasuchiles or long-stemmed marigolds, the flowers most evocative of Día de los Muertos, a uniquely Mexican holiday celebrated on November 1 and 2. Marigolds are one of many important crops in this region that is one of the world's agricultural birthplaces. A few miles from the city is the cave where the oldest cultivated seeds were found, 10,000 year-old squash seeds. Oaxaca's indigenous people are known for their textiles, ceramics, artworks, cuisine and complex use of plants.

Oaxaca is a beautiful colonial city, the capital of Oaxaca State, located in a high broad valley, the most biodiverse region of Mexico. My family and I have been visiting there periodically for at least 30 years. In the late 1990s we visited the Oaxaca Ethnobotanical Garden of native plants, newly opened in the center of the city adjacent to a 16th century monastery. It looked like a bare collection of agaves, cacti and other succulents set into the red dusty soil. The plants were unlabeled and we weren't captivated by this garden. We wondered what it would look like after a few years of growth. Over the years we haven't been able to visit again as the garden now accepts only visitors accompanied by guides and tours in English are available just three times weekly. This restriction came about because of people stealing or damaging rare specimens in order to grow and sell them.

We made a trip to the garden a priority on our recent visit with several other Master Gardeners and we were impressed with the garden and the two-hour educational tour. In the early 1990s, the monastery was abandoned by the

military, leaving the area open to development. A group of local artists and intellectuals led by the famous artist Francisco Toledo promoted the idea of developing a garden that would tell the story of the peoples' relationship to the plants that contributed to their history. This idea eventually won out over the government's wish to build a hotel and parking area. The garden was designed by Alejandro de Avila Blomberg who is experienced in anthropology, biology and linguistics. He became its first director.

From the garden the city is hidden from view and noise by the thick, high monastery walls surrounding the five acres. It is organized into climactic zones and areas representing the history of people interacting with plants for food, medicine, textiles and building materials. Food plants include beans, herbs, tomatoes, amaranth and agave for mezcal. There are living examples of the progenitor of modern corn, a plant without "ears" of corn, as well as plants used for the Oaxacan corn and cacao drink tejate. The passionate guide explained the history of the parasitic scale insect, cochineal, which secretes a purplish red fluid, used for paints and fabric dyes. During the Spanish conquest, Oaxacan cochineal became an important part of the world economy, second only to silver as an export. The cochineal insects live on prickly pear cactus and my fingers were darkly stained when the guide placed one on my hand and told me to squish it. There is a certain artistic presence in the garden as well. The plant beds, with their jagged "stepped" design, echo the architectural designs at the nearby Mitla archeological site. There are also modern improvements in the garden. A unique new greenhouse protects bromeliads and orchids using geothermal cooling. The garden staff is also working to provide a web-based catalog and information on all of the plants within the garden.

I hope you have a chance to visit this unique garden. For official information including days and times of tours go to jardinoaxaca.org.mx.



Geothermal greenhouse keeps bromeliads and orchids at a constant temperature



The city fades away from inside the garden



Decorated with marigolds



Cochineal on prickly pear cactus pads



Getting ready for Día de los Muertos with native marigolds



Trowels and Tribulations

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



by Donna J. Ward
MG 1996

There's something relaxing about spending your day curled up on the couch looking through gardening catalogs and planning for spring's burst of green and the end of gray, dismal days. Our New Year Resolutions are a vague memory by now and we need a new direction in which to channel our efforts. Start by tossing out all of the catalogs which arrived in December and January from the East Coast and the upper Midwest. No matter how enticing the descriptions and photography may be in these publications – much

of it won't grow here. Stick with your local, reputable nursery for plants suitable for our locale. Many of the large big box stores in our area also have a nursery department, but be aware that their home office is in another part of the country, and they may be buying similar nursery stock for all of their stores regardless of location. So before purchasing, be sure that tree or shrub will flourish in your neighborhood. The AgriLife office gets a multitude of calls each year at this time asking "Will (fill in the blank) grow in my yard?"

Drive around your neighborhood, and if you don't see any of your desired specimens growing there, they probably won't. But if they will, February is the time to get them planted and developing a strong root system before Mother Nature makes demands to produce blooms or leaves. I can't emphasize enough how important it is that your newly planted tree or shrub becomes established before its first summer in your landscape.

Remember those plumerias that you dug up and stored in the garage over the winter? Well, it's time to repot them and put them outside on mild days. Be careful though, they are true tropicals, and will succumb to a cold snap. Be prepared to bring them back into a sheltered area should less than acceptable temperatures be predicted.

I guess everybody knows that February 14th is the traditional day to prune roses. Prune all floribunda, grandiflora and hybrid teas on this date. Don't

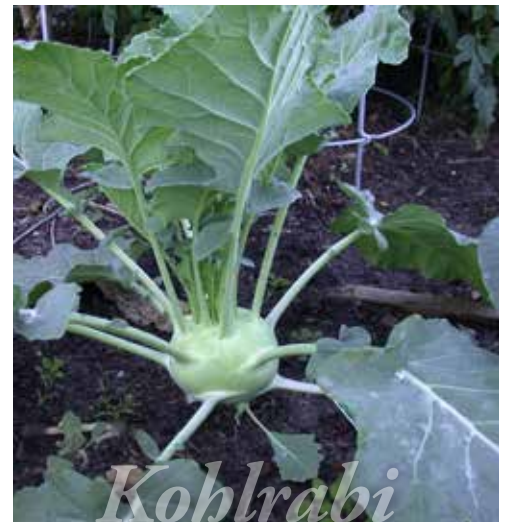
get over anxious to trim up the climbers – wait until after they have finished their bloom cycle. Fertilize later this month and continue every 30 days through June. Keep the soil moist; spray for aphids, mildew and blackspot every 10 days to 2 weeks. And don't forget a good top dressing of mulch. Roses take a lot of TLC, but that fragrant bouquet on your kitchen table makes it all worth while.

Sooner or later warm temps will awaken the St. Augustine, so be ready. Take the lawn mower now to have the blades sharpened. A sharp blade cuts, while a dull blade tears; not a good look for your lawn.

You've always had a hankering to live on a small farm, and your thoughts these days lean toward diggin' up some dirt – the vegetable garden variety of course. Build that raised bed that you didn't get around to building last spring. Was one of your New Year resolutions a commitment to eat healthier? You're in luck. February is a prime month to put in a vegetable garden, and you can't get much healthier than your own vegetables - picked at their prime and eaten before the vitamins and minerals dissipate and the sugars turn to starch. And I don't have to tell you just how much better they taste than those picked too early, trucked across country, gassed, waxed, refrigerated and generally abused.

So get to the closest seed rack and pick up a package of beets, collards, kohlrabi, mustard, lettuce, radish and spinach. Mid-February has always been the best time to put in seeds of sweet corn. Plant a few of your seeds in each hill. A corn bed needs to be planted in a square configuration. Long skinny rows don't pollinate very well. By planting early, you get the corn before the worms do. For broccoli and cabbage, you'll need transplants.

So put down those catalogs, put on your overalls, pick up the spading fork - it's time to get diggin'



Meet Master Gardener Karolyn Gephart



By Barbara Canetti
MG 2016

Karolyn Gephart sometimes surprises herself. She didn't know she could successfully grow plants, give advice on growing plants or even speak publicly about gardens, gardening and plants. It took her 17 years after hearing about the Galveston County Master Gardeners program to finally apply but in 2017 she completed course requirements and is now a certified as a Master Gardener.

Asked if she had been a serious gardener her whole life, she simply says, "no." But the winter freeze last year taught her valuable lessons and she quickly learned which plants would come back and how to nurse others back to health.

"That was the reason I gave in class for what I wanted to be able to do," said Gephart. "What I didn't know was that I would learn so much more about so many things. It was like being in college again and having professors open up new worlds for students.

"I also gained a new family of friends who mean so much to me and who are such great role models."

Before retiring from Friendswood ISD in 2016 as the district communications director, Gephart was a high school teacher at Texas City High School, teaching an assortment of five communications-related classes. She grew up in Texas City but now lives with her husband Joe and son Adam in Friendswood on a ¾-acre plot of land. She is active with the Friendswood Heritage Gardeners, where she serves as historian.

"We have lots of trees (both citrus and oaks). I have one square-foot garden area and many container plants on our patio," said Karolyn. "We do our own landscaping and mowing which is becoming a rare thing to do at homes now. Since becoming a Master Gardener, some friends assume she is an expert on all-things-gardening.

"It started when the classes started and friends asked all sorts of questions. Dr. Johnson taught us to use A&M info only and don't give advice, give facts. That stuck with me and I go to that website regularly," she said. "I was a bit worried about being at the Information Table at the plant sales because of the one million and more topics buyers could ask that I wouldn't have a clue. All it takes is a phone for research and a run around the arena to find Master Gardeners. I survived."

Since becoming a Master Gardener, Karolyn said she enjoys growing ferns, especially staghorn ferns, orchids, African violets, all types of bulbs, herbs, cherry tomatoes in all colors and shapes, as well as Earth Kind roses.

One thing Karolyn never set out to do was to become a speaker. But after doing a simple PowerPoint presentation, she realized it was something she was comfortable with. She was asked to prepare and deliver the plant sale overview to perspective customers before the semi-annual sale began.

"It was like diving into the deep end. But one time and I was hooked," she

said. "I have also started doing topical talks at the extension office and at garden clubs. I have a Container Gardening and Gardening 101 presentations planned for this spring."

But there is one thing she says she has had nothing but disasters with and that's cooking!

"I will never be as wonderful a cook as everyone else in the Master Gardener program," she said. "I have gone to the Discovery Garden on Thursdays and appear to be there for work, but I am really there to SEE and TASTE what can only be described as the best homemade comfort food ever! Fresh from the gardens, made with love. It is unbelievable. I usually bring fruit salad – note the degree of difficulty – none."



Roses in Snow



By John Jons
MG 2003

Have you ever seen a rose garden covered in snow? With the neatly laid out pattern of rose beds, the brown leafless rose stems poking delicately skyward above the snow, amongst the sculptured arbors, fountains, benches and other garden items – it quite a serene and beautiful site.

For those of you that may be not familiar with roses and snow, I have produced a YouTube video titled “A Rose Garden in the Winter.” - <https://youtu.be/7H01p1CDv-M> This video features the Maplewood Rose Garden, in Rochester, NY, with the rose garden under a fresh blanket of snow.

Like many cities, Rochester, New York has a rose garden. Each year in June the city hosts an annual rose festival that features rose vendors, workshops, etc. The garden covers about an acre and has around 5,000 roses and over 300 varieties all planted in beds that are neatly aligned.

Rochester used to be known as the “Flower City” due to two legendary 19th century nurserymen, George Ellwagner and Patrick Barry who started a nursery trade in Rochester that in its day (1860) was the largest nursery operation in the world.

Like most great gardens and flower displays they are hard to simply describe in words. So, I took lots of photos of the rose garden in summer and made a YouTube video titled “Rochester’s Maplewood Rose Garden, Rochester, New York” - <https://youtu.be/EPeZOTta3OI>



Green Genes Passed Down to Master Gardeners



By Karoyln Gephart
MG 2017

Gardeners many times can look back at their ancestors and see a common thread that binds them together. It can be a love of certain things that seems to run in their family as well as a recurring gift of being able to do things well.

Three Galveston County Master Gardeners reminisce being influenced and taught by grandparents and how the love of gardening given to each of them has impacted their lives.

Master Gardener Ann Anderson

Master Gardener Ann Anderson is a second generation BOI (Born on the Island) and considers her surroundings paradise. She is most influenced by good gardening practices in her island environment.

"I bought my house back in 1980 just as it was being transformed from an old fishing camp to a livable family home. The camp on the south shore of Offatts Bayou was the center of my teenage years growing up in Galveston – skiing, sailing and exploring the beauty of the island. The house was surrounded by beautiful fragrant oleander," Ann said.

Oleanders have a special meaning to her.

"First, it is the sheer beauty that plants and trees bring to our world. I am always aware of the beautiful welcome that oleanders have on the median I-45 as I arrive on the island. These hardy plants grow all over the world, but none warm my heart like those on Galveston Island," Ann said.

"Then there's the impact of restoring the thousands of trees lost to Hurricane Ike. I applaud our partners at the Oleander Society for their work and the Tree Conservancy for their programs to re-green Galveston."

She inherited a love of beauty that started with her grandparents.

"My grandparents settled in Galveston before the turn of the century and stayed here through the challenges of the first half of the 1900s," Ann said.

But she left the island for a while. After graduating from Ball High School, Ann left for college and then lived in New York City and Boston for 15 years. She returned and after she retired from UTMB in 2012, she became a Master Gardener (Class of 2013).

"What a wonderful transition it was. The Master Gardener training program was fabulous, of course, but the relationships and the new friendships were the most meaningful to me. It is remarkable to see the great things that can happen when we all roll up our sleeves and work together."

The Master Gardener Annual Spring and Fall Plant Sales are perfect examples to Anderson when volunteers of all ages, experiences, knowledge and abilities come together, contributing their time and expertise to accomplish a common goal.

Her gardens at home also bring her joy.

"There's nothing quite like having fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs to share and to prepare fabulous food. I know my lemon pound cake is delicious because we grew those Meyer lemons right here at home." "Also, I love having gardens that welcome birds and butterflies. Seeing the hummers enjoying our beautiful bottle brush tree or the monarchs dining on our milkweed brings real joy. Our gardens are to be enjoyed, shared and celebrated. They are an extraordinary gift."

Anderson is not the only MG who blooms on the island.



Master Gardener Cindy Croft

Master Gardener Cindy Croft grew up in Houston but considers herself a Galveston Island Girl now.

“I used to make fun of people that lived here and never went over the causeway.... now I understand,” Cindy said.

Cindy became a Master Gardener in 2009. She enjoys herbs and edible landscaping. She loves the classes the MG program offers and finds that there is always something new to learn.

Cindy retired from teaching science.

“I still love the many disciplines, but plants have a special place in my heart.” Cindy comes from a family of gardeners and plant lovers.

“My great grandparents and my grandparents each had a plant nursery so I was introduced to gardening at an early age. The greenhouses always had a particular smell to me. In hindsight, it was the smell of the earth, good dirt and likely some compost as well,” Cindy said.

Their influence started her gardening at an early age.

“I started my collection of house plants when I was 11.” “I have always had plants wherever I have gone. We have an unspoken bond that sometimes becomes spoken when I am telling them how great they look or I am apologizing for not watering them in a timely way.”



Master Gardener Pat Forke

Grandparents were also instrumental in giving Master Gardener Pat Forke a love of gardening.

“Every visit to my favorite grandmother’s home in Yoakum, Texas, began with a walk around her yard. I was updated on all the plants as we smelled the gardenias, enjoyed the many colors of the sweet peas, checked out the potted geraniums and gathered fruits and vegetables for me to take home,” Pat said. That love led her to the Galveston County Master Gardener program.

“There is no better place to learn how to create a beautiful and healthy outdoors than a master gardening program. I am very proud to be a Galveston County Master Gardener and I like to think that my work with Linda Steber on the newsletters has helped to spread the knowledge.”

Pat is part of the Class of 2010. She grew up in San Antonio and Corpus Christi and has always been within walking distance or a short drive to the Texas Gulf Coast.

“Being outdoors and enjoying nature is possible most of the year in this area. The outdoors has been a part of our family activities for as long as I can remember, from walking on the beach, fishing or swimming in the gulf, working in the garden, to just sitting outdoors and enjoying our surroundings.” She believes that enjoying the outdoors goes hand in hand with improving the outdoor surroundings.

“I believe if you can still see your house, you do not have enough plants! To have healthy plants for your and your neighbors’ enjoyment and for the benefit of the insects and other critters means knowing how to take care of your plants and your environment.” Pat said. “I believe gardening should be required learning for all and I do my best to pass on what I know to my children, grandchildren and anyone else who will listen. So, when my friends or family come to visit, we start in the yard.”



Master Gardeners are Leaders



By Sharon Zaal
MG 2015

Every Master Gardener knows that when a garden is up and growing, a certain level of care is required for it to reach its full potential. If the Galveston County Master Gardener Association were a garden, and if you were a visitor, you would find an abundance of harvest and beauty within that could only be realized with the caring hands of the gardeners who tend it. Members of the leadership team, behind the Galveston County Master Gardener Association (GCMGA), provide those remarkable “caring hands” and are committed to keeping the organization vibrant and growing. With their special efforts and the daily support of our fellow

Master Gardeners, GCMGA will continue to deliver programs and services vital to the quality of life in Galveston County.

Every organization, regardless of industry, needs a strong leadership team to succeed. This is especially true for nonprofits where there is the need to rally volunteers around a common mission. As I begin my second year as President, I am truly excited about the individuals that have made a commitment to lead GCMGA. I am proud to be a part of, and proud to introduce your fellow Master Gardeners comprising the core Leadership Team for 2019:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President (2018-2019)	Sharon Zaal	MG 2015
Senior Vice-President (2019-2020)	Kathy Maines	MG 2017
Secretary (2018-2019)	Briana Etie	MG 2017
Assistant Secretary (2019-2020)	Joanne Hardgrove	MG 2016
Treasurer (2018-2019)	Ed Klein	MG 2013
Assistant Treasurer (2019-2020):	Debra Brizendine	MG 2015

DELEGATES (Texas Master Gardener Assoc.)

State Delegate I (2018-2019):	Velda Cuculis	MG 1987
State Delegate II (2019-2020):	Terry Cuculis	MG 1987

APPOINTED

1st Vice-President-Education Programs	Dennis Noh	MG 2016
2nd Vice-President-Education Programs	Nancy Langston-Noh	MG 2016

These individuals are volunteers and leaders, contributing much to the organization beyond the capacity of the position named here. They represent the best of Master Gardener volunteerism with their work throughout the organization – Libbie’s Place, Educational Seminars, Greenhouse, Aquaponics, Shop, Monthly Meetings, Orchard, Kitchen, Plant Sales and more. Successful organizations involve members, volunteers, and leaders who engage their talents and interests. Master Gardener volunteers and leaders all have important roles in the organization and are dependent upon each other to fulfill their roles.

While the positions listed above do not reflect ALL of the leadership roles in the organization, our governing document, the GCMGA Bylaws, does require and describe these vital “core” positions with very detailed job descriptions. For those Master Gardeners contemplating a new leadership role, the first question often asked is, “What does the person in that position do?” While every MG has online access to review the Bylaws in more detail, a thumbnail overview of each position may be useful here:

PRESIDENT: As an Officer of the Corporation, the President provides leadership and oversight of the day to day operations of the organization; Presides over meetings; Collaborates with County Extension Agent-Horticulture to support the Master Gardener program, lead MG horticulture activities, fill leadership positions, and form committees; Works with Treasurer to prepare budgets; Presents budgets to Board of Directors; Puts in place insurance; Signs checks; Approves purchases and signs contracts.

SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT: The Sr. Vice-President is also an Officer of the Corporation and assists the President; Presides at meetings in the absence of the President; Attends meetings as requested; Advises the Coordinators for Volunteer Activities, Fund-raising and Grants; Works with the Treasurer to develop a long-range plan for creating additional funding for the Corporation; Signs checks in the absence of the President; Supports the CEA-HORT in operating the County Master Gardener Program.

SECRETARY: As an Officer of the Corporation, the Secretary is responsible for maintaining records of official business, safekeeping of official documents, maintaining attendance records for all meeting, maintaining a current list of member names, contact info and status, providing an official list of Active members' the Texas Master Gardeners Association in February of each year, reporting the minutes of the Association meetings, insuring elections are in line with Bylaws. With the exception of reporting minutes of the monthly meetings, much of the hands-on duties of this position are in fact performed by the CEA-HORT Admin Assistant, with the Secretary's support and review.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY: The Assistant Secretary is also an Officer of the Corporation and is responsible for assisting Secretary, presiding in Secretary's absence, and providing Parliamentary Authority.

TREASURER: The Treasurer is an Officer of the Corporation and is responsible for establishing procedures for receipt and disbursement of funds, setting up bank accounts, paying bills, presenting annual financial reports, preparing for the annual audit, assisting with budgets, working with CPA to prepare & submit tax return, preparing financial reports, and reconciling bank accounts.

ASSISTANT TREASURER: The Asst. Treasurer is also an Officer of the Corporation and is responsible for assisting the Treasurer, assist with bookkeeping entries, assisting with financial reports, and signing on the banking accounts.

STATE DELEGATES: The State Delegates are not Officers of the Corporation. Each serves as duly elected representatives of the Corporation at all quarterly and annual meetings of the Texas Master Gardeners Association, and reports to the members all pertinent information and activities of the state association.

1st VICE-PRESIDENT FOR PROGRAMS & EDUCATION:

1st VP for Programs & Education is not an Officer of the Corporation, but is responsible for establishing the calendar of educational programs, gardens, tours and events under the guidance of the CEA-HORT, advising committees responsible for educational programs for the citizens of area communities.

2nd VICE-PRESIDENT FOR PROGRAMS & EDUCATION:

2nd VP for Programs & Education is not an Officer of the Corporation, but is responsible for assisting the First Vice President, and being the liaison for speaker requests.

Amongst Master Gardeners, “Mentoring” is highly valued, and most MGs shift easily between Mentoree and Mentor, when the situation changes from needing knowledge to sharing knowledge. One might ascertain from this list of leadership positions, that the concept of mentoring is indelibly imprinted on the organization, noting that every position is supported by an assistant or alternate. While this concept provides backup for critical jobs, it also creates the perfect learning environment for MGs to successfully take on new leadership roles with an assured positive experience.

Although volunteering opportunities can be fun, carrying out a project successfully or meeting a goal requires a sense of commitment on behalf of the leader. Leadership is so much like gardening. A master gardener fosters growth by paying attention to the details, working hard, investing time, and practicing consistent habits.

There are many areas of the organization in need of champions and leadership. You are a Master Gardener. This, plus your sense of commitment, talents and interests, mentoring resources, and an organization of support, prompts the question - “Are you ready to lead?”



Sec & Asst Sec: Briana & Joanne



1st VP & 2nd VP: Denny & Nancy



Pres & Sr. VP: Sharon & Kathy



Treas & Asst Treas: Ed & Debra



TMGA Delegates: Velda & Terry

The Discovery Garden Update



By Tom Fountain
MG 2008

During our winter season we have had an Arctic cold front or two that produced several days of below freezing temperatures. Over all, our average temperatures have continued a degree or two above normal. Rainfall averages were also above normal by an inch or two around Galveston County. The extended weather outlook for our area through March indicates,

temperatures will likely continue to be average, or a little above seasonal normal, and rainfall will continue to be above average.

Despite the cool weather, a little sunshine will bring our gardeners out to work in the Discovery Garden. Here (Fig. 1) Jim and Wes are shown weeding one of the cabbage beds. In (Fig. 2) Tim is assisting Phil, who has a load of mulch for the orchard beds, so they will be ready for the spring. Thankfully, we had a trustee crew that helped with spreading the mulch. Repairs and maintenance are always necessary as in this picture (Fig. 3) of Ken tackling an electrical problem in the garden.

Our garden is a living thing, as such it's always changing and growing, and sometimes needs a little updating. Recent updates include adding gravel in the parking area, which made a great improvement to that area, and some additional netting was added to the aquaponics garden, mainly to keep out a two-legged visitor with wings. Also, a new improved cover and side curtains were added to the hoop house. (Fig. 4) Sharon is explaining to Kevin, Joseph, and Ronnie, how the cover retainer works to secure the cover. In (Fig. 5) Ronnie is installing one of the retainers.

This time of year, the greenhouse is a busy place with all hands taking care of plants and repotting. Our gardeners are busy growing nice plants to take to the spring plant sale. (Fig. 6) Briana and Lisa are pictured repotting and feeding the plants.

Gene added a little iron to the floating beds in the Aquaponics garden and they greened up very nicely. Also, the strawberry plants, in the garden towers in the media beds, have been covered with very nice strawberries and a few are beginning to look pink. These strawberries have been growing a lot faster than others planted in the garden at the same time. (Fig. 7) Pictured is Gene in the Aquaponics garden through the netting.

You don't need an invitation to come to the garden, there are always plenty of things to do here no matter what your interest. Master Gardeners come on out and visit our garden family and dig a little soil and stay for the lunch and a visit.



1



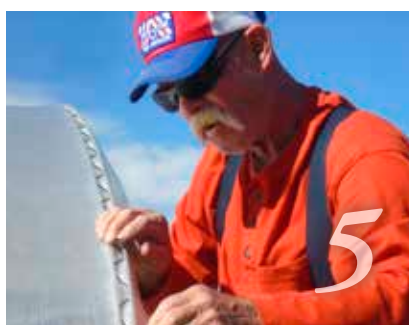
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3



4



5



6



7

Photos courtesy of MG Tom Fountain

Being Green



By Deb Hale
MG 2003

Anyone who knows a Master Gardener understands that they are busy, creative souls who seem to think non-stop about improving our environment. So naturally, when they gather together, the subject invariably turns to the importance of being a steward of our earth. This has been the case with several of our MGs who, after deep discussion, have developed a proposal for enhancing our stewardship through an enhanced recycling effort."

A growing core of us propose our organization demonstrate stronger environmental stewardship in our practices, whether it's at the Discovery Garden, our plant sales, our monthly meetings, our community educational seminars, our annual intern classes, our quarterly board meetings. We recognize we currently recycle cardboard, plastic, and aluminum at the Agri-Life office, and the recycling of plastic and aluminum, plus composting at the Discovery Garden. We foresee how the formation of a spirited Green Team will manage current efforts and build collective efforts to encompass water conservation, ecology, and environmental horticulture.

"As a leader of Heritage JMG Kids (Junior Master Gardeners) in Friendswood, we teach Ecology and Environmental Horticulture. We teach the children they have a responsibility to take care of our world. We do this with hands-on activities working with nature that include habitats, water conservation, recycling, composting and Eco-Art projects," says Kaye Corey.

A more direct response comes from Denice Franke, "Recycling—why? Because it's the right thing to do! My mother recycled long before it was politically correct. Repurpose was an action, not a mere word or concept. We are stewards of the earth. As GCMGs we must practice better care for the earth which we depend upon. We need to respect it, not disregard it. Plastics start in our hands and end up on our streets, in our waterways, on our undeveloped land, and on down the food chain."

A new endeavor requires a dedicated investment of time and energy. Many GCMG supporters for developing a Green Team already have multiple commitments within our organization and in their communities. Therefore, we propose:

- An invitation or appointment of two to four 2019 Interns who have a keen interest in starting a new project about environmental stewardship to work with a similar number of experienced MGs to assess our practices and design a strategic plan to implement new practices.
- Asking all GCMGs to bring their own beverage cup for coffee, water at all events. This helps reduce our use of single use plastics and expanded polystyrene aka Styrofoam.
- Provide a simple meal kit, consisting of a lightweight plate, metal fork and spoon, to all GCMGs. The kitchen team debuted their \$3.00 kit at our October 2018 plant sale. See accompanying picture. This measure will cut our financial expense of purchasing disposable items as well as significantly reduce our trash at all the above-mentioned Master Garden events.

- Encourage MGs to always bring their items mentioned in points 2 and 3. We will continue to provide some inexpensive disposable items in case someone forgets their meal kit. Also, our fancier
- monthly meetings (June graduation, August, December holiday) we will provide nicer table settings.
- Promote MGs bringing their own reusable containers for "take-out" from food events held at the Discovery Garden.
- Use large Igloo dispensers for water at semi-annual plant sales and strategically place them around the arena. This could eliminate our purchase of cases of single use plastic water bottles.
- Did you know Americans purchased 11 billion plastic beverage bottles in 2015? That's 346 bottles per person. More veterinarians routinely x-ray animals (domestic and wild) due to small pieces of plastic lodged in the animals' gastrointestinal tracts.
- Reproduce and circulate Ken Steblein's 75 WAYS to LIVE a GREENER LIFE!
- Invite a strong ecological steward to speak at a monthly meeting and educate us with current info.

"Two of our most beloved Master Gardeners, Anna Wygrys and Ken Steblein, were exemplary stewards of our environment, and they worked diligently and tirelessly to help others understand the importance of reusing, reducing, and recycling to assist communities to become self-sustaining," remarked Lori Boydston.

We seek your support in "being a good example for our current Junior Master Gardeners and 4-H-ers," adds MG Bebe Rizo while addressing the desire to honor the legacies of Ken and Anna, who influenced her in implementing proactive steps to protect the environment.

Let us individually and organizationally become purposeful role models for our neighbors and our community who visit the AgriLife grounds, the Discovery Garden, and biennial plant sales." Our respect for gardening parallels taking interest in our natural surroundings and healthy living. Positive efforts to sustain and improve our environment is a responsibility and privilege. Thanks for going 'green,'" says Loretta Osteen, our office recycling coordinator.

Send your feedback to galvcountymgs@gmail.com



easy recipes Seasonal Bites



By Sandra Gervais
MG 2011

At the moment, the weather is relatively mild and pleasant here in Galveston County, with some trees leafing out and a few hardy plants blooming. But we've been here before. Just when you think winter is over and it's safe to plant for spring, Mother Nature comes howling in to do her worst, bringing days of freezing

temperatures, ice, wind, and little sun. So, let's be prepared.

Weed a bit, sharpen tools, drool over seed catalogues. And think of preparing hearty winter meals instead of gardening. These two recipes would go very well together on a bitter day.

Our January Master Gardeners meeting showcased some delicious and different ideas for winter food. Linda Garren-McKillip's Yummy Cornbread is a hearty version that adds in vegetables and yes, it still had people coming back for more.

Also Briana Etie brought Black Eyed Pea Soup, a different and delicious idea. Her recipe here is in her own words and should put a smile on your face. It's laid back and open to changes depending on what you like and what's available. An adaptable recipe is always fun!

Linda's Yummy Cornbread



2 boxes Jiffy Cornbread mix
2 eggs, beaten
2/3 cup dairy
(either sour cream, plain yogurt or Mexican crema)
1 full size can of cream style corn
1/4-1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese
(can use other types of cheese)
1/2-1 cup of chopped kale (or spinach, broccoli, etc.)

Note: If using frozen, drain or squeeze well. If fresh, blanch and drain well.

Cajun seasoning to taste.

Topping: 1/2 stick of softened butter
Honey to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
Grease a 9x13 baking pan.
Mix all ingredients together except topping.
Bake 45-50 minutes or until done.
Remove from oven and spread butter on top.
Drizzle on honey and spread with knife.

Briana's Black Eyed Pea Soup



I have to give you a little back story on this soup recipe. My grandmother would make a low calorie soup with cabbage as the noodles. I believe it was a Weight Watchers recipe. Years later I was repurposing leftovers in my fridge after a New Year's Day dinner and remembered that soup.

My spin on it, I try to always find a balance of sweet, heat and a little acid. I have made this soup fresh or with leftovers, having the same outcome. I have found using frozen black eyes or purple hulls, it takes an hour at a fast simmer, with the lid, to get them tender.

I start with the ham, a 2-3 pound carving ham or if you are using a bone-in leftover ham include the bone. I fill an 8-quart pot with water to cover ham and let it cook with a pound of frozen peas for about an hour. After an hour, (If there was a bone remove it) while the broth is still moving, I add an onion, about 6-8 ribs of celery and 2 poblano peppers. Poblanos have a stronger green flavor; they will not make it spicy. I add corn, I use frozen, about 2 cups. I added two cans of Rotel tomatoes. That gives it a little heat. I use a product called Better Than Bouillon, the flavors I chose are MSG free bouillon, I keep beef, chicken, vegetable and sometimes ham. I used 2 Tablespoons of the Premium Seasoned Vegetable. 4 green onions, save the green tops for later, 4 bay leaves, 2-4 cloves of garlic, 6 dashes of Worcestershire, salt and pepper to taste. Careful with the salt, some hams are high in salt. Taste it! I cut a fresh head of cabbage in half. Just above the core. I then cut the ends off the top half, so I can cut straight pieces of cabbage that will resemble noodles about 3-4 inches long and a 1/4 inch wide. A pinch of sugar is necessary, and squeeze a half of a lime to bring the acid and sweet component. Giving it a good stir I decide if it needs more water and add if necessary. I put the lid back on and let it simmer until the cabbage and other vegetables are tender. I love those little lunch box sweet peppers. I slice a few of the different colors to add a little more color and flare and throw in the green onion tops. Taste for salt. Sometimes the cabbage makes you add more salt.

I am trying to be certain I have not forgotten anything. I am a throw it in a pot or pan and add this and that kind of cook. I need to somehow measure how much shaking or sprinkling a spice across the top of a pot or pan measures. My kids got me one of those fancy salt boxes, ya know, I'm supposed to pinch and bam! I'm more of a sprinkling fairy kind of cook. I pick that box up and try to sprinkle from it. I don't understand why someone would want to get salt on their fingers. (Rolling my eyes)

GCMGA Meeting Minutes



by Briana Etie
MG 2017

Our members began arriving at 5:30 p.m. We gathered and enjoyed visiting until 6:00. Sharon Zaal opened the meeting welcoming everyone and wishing everyone a Happy New Year. Denny Noh led us in prayer.

We enjoyed a New Year themed pot-luck with many variations of traditional New Year dishes.

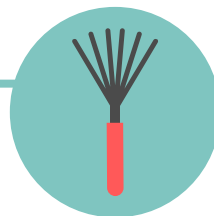
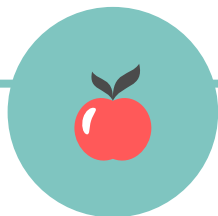
Around 6:30 Sharon Zaal, our president, started the program "The Year Ahead for Galveston County Master Gardeners." She presented a PowerPoint program highlighting "What's More," "What's New and "What's Ahead in 2019" and the "Five Year Strategic Plan."

The "Five Year Strategic Plan" Committee Members are:

Sharon Zaal, Ira Gervais, Judy Anderson, Frank Resch, Kevin Lancon and Dr. Johnson.

Sharon introduced Kevin Lancon to present the plan. He asked, if we have input for the plan, we should email the above-mentioned committee members by January 31.

Our meeting came to a close with Judy Anderson's raffle for door prizes.



REMEMBER

In order to maintain your status as a certified Texas Master Gardener, each year you must complete a minimum of 6 hours continuing education, as well as 12 service hours. Additionally, those hours must be reported through the online Volunteer Management System or other approved means. Contact MG Wayne Elliott at gcmghours@gmail.com for more information.

Date	Name of Program	Speaker	MG CEUs
1/8/2019	MGA Jan. Meeting - The Year Ahead for GCMG	Sharon Zaal, Kevin Lancon	1.00
1/12/2019	Growing Blueberries	Dr. David Cohen	1.25
1/12/2019	Backyard Citrus - Crystal Beach Fire & Rescue	Robert Marshall	1.75
1/19/2019	Kitchen Gardening	Mary Demeny	2.25
1/26/2019	Wedge Grafting	Sue Jeffco	1.75
1/26/2019	"Texas Tuff" Plants	Marie Leal	2.00
1/26/2019	Herbs for the Gulf Coast	Nancy Langston-Noh & Briana Etie	2.00

Use this link to see the entire list.

[https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/2018 MG Recertification Educational Credit Hours.pdf](https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/2018%20MG%20Recertification%20Educational%20Credit%20Hours.pdf)

2019 ANNUAL Spring PLANT SALE

Saturday, February 16, 2019

Galveston County Fairgrounds | Hwy 6 | Hitchcock, TX

Galveston County Master Gardeners

**Citrus & Fruit Trees, Vegetables, Bulbs, Herbs
"Texas Tough" Perennials, and much more!**

For a complete list of plants visit aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html

**Limited Wagons
Available**

You Are Welcome
To Bring Your Own



8:00 am

Educational Seminar

Ed Pickett Hall

9:00 am

Plant Sale

Rodeo Arena

1:00 pm

Close

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



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Master Gardeners

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE | GALVESTON COUNTY OFFICE
4102-B Main Street (FM 519) | La Marque, Texas 77568 | 281-309-5065 | aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston



bulletin board



Volunteer Opportunities

For the **Master Gardener Hotline** contact Ginger Benson by email at galvcountrymgs@gmail.com or call the office at 281-309-5065.

Volunteer Opportunities

Tideway is a program of the Transitional Learning Center

Dr. Johnson has approved Tideway Transitional Learning Center (644 Central City Blvd., Galveston, Texas 77551) as a location where Master Gardener service hours may be earned. Plans to prepare the gardens at Tideway for spring planting are ready and volunteers are needed. Volunteers can contact Jennifer Pinard at jpinard@tlc-tideway.org. The focus is on the long-term needs of individuals with an acquired brain injury. The program offers accessible horticultural experiences, through which individuals with a brain injury can improve sensory awareness, motor skills, range of motion, endurance and flexibility as well as regain confidence, and learn new skills. This provides the opportunity for our residents to develop the necessary skills to gain and maintain a productive lifestyle whether it is on site or volunteering in the community. The residents at Tideway are very much "hands on" in building the different garden beds, in fact some of the residents came up with the designs.

And they have chickens!

Volunteer Opportunities

- **Libbie's Place Adult Day Care** has been designated as a Demonstration Garden for the Master Gardener Association. It is located at 5402 Avenue U in Galveston and is part of Moody Methodist Church outreach ministries <http://www.moody.org/libbie-s-place-senior-day>. A crew is needed to maintain and upgrade the garden as needed with your time spent counting towards MG volunteer hours. MG Pam Windus is heading up the crew and will determine the day, time and frequency of the work days. If you are interested, or have any questions, please contact Pam at 409.771.5620, email DrPGilbert@aol.com to let her know the day/times (AM/PM) that would work best for you. Thank you for your time and consideration in this great new endeavor for the Master Gardeners.

ADVANCED TRAINING Save These Dates!

TreeCare - March 13-15, hosted by Dallas County, Dallas
Turfgrass - March 14-15, hosted by Montgomery County, Conroe
NEW! Budding & Grafting - April 2-3, hosted by Waller County, Brookshire
Plant Propagation - April 12-13, hosted by Tarrant County, Ft. Worth
First Detector #1 - May 2-3, hosted by Ellis County, Waxahachie
Earth-Kind® - May 16-18, hosted by Henderson County, Athens
First Detector #2 - May 20-21, hosted by Williamson County, Georgetown
Tree Care - June 12-14, hosted by Kerr County, Kerrville
Vegetables - August 13-15, hosted by Bexar County, San Antonio
Greenhouse Management - October 17-19, hosted by Tarrant County, in Ft. Worth

Advanced Training Committee Chair
Duane Robinson ~ poohdaddy55@sbcglobal.net
936-355-8215

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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

Our Demonstration Garden is open for touring by the general public on each Thursday from 9:00 - 11:00 am. MGs are needed to serve as tour guides for our Discovery Garden.

Contact MG Denny Noh at 281.723.2830 or dnoh@aol.com to volunteer.

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

Denny Noh @ 281-723-2830 or dnoh@aol.com
Nancy Langston Noh @ 832-289-7087 or nancylnoh@aol.com

AgriLife Extension Office Discovery Garden needs volunteers!

The gardens around the AgriLife Extension Office are maintained by Master Gardeners under the team leadership of MG Ginger Benson. This is an opportunity to make a good impression on the many visitors to the AgriLife Extension Office. Come out and have a good time while learning more about ornamentals. Please contact Ginger at 281-309-5065, email galvcountrymgs@gmail.com to find out the schedule and join her team.

2019 TMGA CONFERENCE
APRIL 25-27, 2019
VICTORIA
REGISTRATION FOR THE
CONFERENCE IS NOW OPEN!

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



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



Last Word - Protecting Plants from Cold Damage

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



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

Our winters tend to be relatively mild and that's considered a blessing by most folks. Nevertheless, temperatures can occasionally dip low enough to be able to inflict a significant toll on many landscape plants in the Galveston County area.

We had a significant cold snap last year during January that caused many gardeners (including me) to scramble a bit to move tropical plants to the garage. As I write this column, meteorologists are forecasting that temperatures will dive into the low thirties over the weekend after an Arctic front arrives.

So that we can be proactive horticulturists instead of reactive horticulturists, here are some guidelines to practice to help avoid or reduce cold injury to plants. Save this information and you will know what to do in case a real blue norther should bear down on us this winter!

Several factors will influence the extent of cold injury damage to landscape trees and shrubs and even certain types of fruit, especially citrus. Such factors include variety (some may be more cold tolerant than others) and age (recent plantings that are not well-established are more susceptible to cold injury). A very important factor is the general health of a plant. Plants grown under low soil fertility or drought conditions or plants that suffered severe disease and/or insect problems during the summer growing season are far more likely to sustain damage.

However, homeowners can take protective measures to help reduce the occurrence of cold injury to landscape and fruit plants if cold weather conditions occur. These steps include the following:

PROVIDE INSULATING COVER TO PLANTS

Here are some things you already have around your house that can be used for just this purpose: paper bags, newspaper, flower pots, bath towels, beach towels, bed sheets, blankets, painter's drop cloths, etc. Weigh them down with bricks and rocks or use clothespins, twine and staplers to hold them in place. Caution should be used when using plastic sheeting during prolonged hard freezes as plant leaves touching the plastic may suffer cold injury.

However, it can be very beneficial to place plastic underneath blankets, sheets, etc. for large plants. The important thing to remember is to protect your plants from freezing temperatures and hopefully you've already protected the plant's roots by mulching in the fall.

KEEP PLANTS WELL-WATERED

Providing proper soil moisture conditions is an extremely important plant-saving practice for winter. It is very important that plants—those in the soil as well as those in containers—be provided adequate moisture throughout the winter season.

The wind in the winter, like the sun in the summer, will dry soils. Be especially sure that soils are well-watered if a cold snap appears to be forthcoming to prevent plant roots from drying out. Freeze damage on plants can be significantly reduced or avoided if plants have adequate soil moisture before a severe cold snap occurs.

PROVIDE PROTECTION TO ROOTS AND CROWN

One of the most sensible ways to protect a plant from the effects of a severe freeze is to protect its roots and crown by mulching. Mulch is an excellent insulator. If the roots and crown survive, the plant can usually be salvaged and new top growth developed.

Use mulches around annuals, perennial plantings, roses, etc. Clean straw, shredded pine bark, cottonseed hulls, compost, etc. make excellent mulches. In fact, most plants will benefit significantly if mulched throughout the year.

DELAY HEAVY PRUNING

In the event of a freeze, do not do any pruning until late winter or early spring even though affected woody plants may appear to be in poor condition. This applies to all citrus and ornamentals, including palm trees.

Heavy pruning after a hard freeze can stimulate new growth during a warm spell which could easily be burned back if another cold snap occurs. Also, it is easier to prune and shape ornamentals after the full extent of damage is known.

Yes, we've had some beautiful and sunny weather conditions over the last few days. But take heed to the above steps and if a severe cold snap occurs, your plants will be in good shape.



A variety of items you already have around your home can be used to provide excellent cold weather protection for plants, including large towels. Remember that insulating covers need not be expensive nor sophisticated, just effective.

Photos courtesy of Dr. William M. Johnson

2019 GCMGA Monthly Meetings



By Judy Anderson
MG 2012

February 2019

You will not want to miss the plant sale preview presentation by Karolyn Gephart. If you are going to be a plant adviser or just need your educational hours, she will let you know about all the plants that will be available during the Master Gardener Spring Sale. The time and place will be announced.

March 2019

March will be movie night for Master Gardeners with a special showing of "Five Seasons," the Gardens of Piet Oudolf. The movie was shown at the 2018 Texas Master Gardener State Conference. It has been an entry in many environmental film festivals and winner of the Environmental Film Festival in the Nations Capitol 2018. It has been recognized in many other international Film Festivals. The movie visits the public gardens in Chicago, New York and the Netherlands highlighting the designs by the plantsman. It also includes visits to west Texas and the industrial area of Pennsylvania. Please come see this beautiful movie and bring your friends. Many thanks to Sharon Zaal, Ed Klein and Ginger Benson for helping to make this happen. The evening will begin with a pot luck dinner.

You may contact Judy at
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for information.



FEEDBACK

We Want Your Feedback

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