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WITH THE GALVESTON COUNTY OFFICE OF TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

GULF COAST *Gardening*

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**By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008**

Blossom by blossom the spring begins."
Algernon Charles Swinburne
"Spring unlocks the flowers to paint the laughing soil."
Bishop Reginald Heber

At this time of the year, I always feel Master Gardeners are awaiting the hidden signals of spring in our landscapes. If you planted bulbs in October, their green heads are now popping up. Amaryllis are budding, citrus trees are in full bloom and are heavenly scenting the air on the March winds and many of the other harbingers of spring are meeting us on the back side of our Gulf Coast winter. Spring is the time of plans and projects!

This issue of our newsletter has many timely educational articles to get us started with another season of successful gardening. With new methods constantly bringing change in the horticulture world, sometimes the old ways are still the best. Read about companion planting



on page 4, the art of growing specific plants in proximity to each other because of their ability to enhance or complement each other for many reasons. Our 2019 Interns have begun their tomato trials and are expanding on previous trials and research as described on page 5 to help us find the best tomatoes for our gardens. These trials are just one of the ways we meet the scientific research goals of the Master Gardening Program.

Our Gulf Coast environment hosts an unending number of weeds. The article on page 6 teaches us about Frog Fruit – is it a weed or a native groundcover? Learn about the Yellow-striped Armyworm, a tomato pest that visited our Discovery Garden (page 7). Several 100 of these worms visited the inside of my car one day when I parked under a tree for a short time. The tree evidently was loaded with them, and the top was off my car at the time. If you know me and insects – you can imagine how horrifying and

comical (at the same time) this was! My skin still crawls just thinking about it. I absorbed a lot from reading John Jons' "What your weeds are telling you" article on page 8. I realized that most of the weeds I see in my landscape are because my soil is fertile or acidic, which is what I normally strive for. But with the number of weeds I can't seem to beat -- I'd prefer not to be so successful! Chickweed seems to be an over-performer – it occurs in almost every possible relationship described. Jan Brick helps us learn about plants that clean the air on page 10.

Our Best Shots story on pages 12-13 provides lots of information on spring gardening and maintenance tasks along with planting ideas. Then Donna Ward provides more education on activities to enhance our currently blooming plants for next spring, lawn care, plant division for fall perennials, and proper fertilizer (page 15). Looking for something new and fragrant for your yard? Maybe a Loquat is what you're looking for (page 16).

Please enjoy meeting Master Gardener Kathy Maines on page 17. You might be interested in

a Landscape Design School. Judy Anderson fills us in on a recent course she took (page 20) that might inspire you to sign up as well. It's a busy time in the Discovery Garden; page 21 brings us up to date. Check out the story on page 23 and learn about our Board of Directors. Dr. Johnson's "Last Word" article on page 27 teaches us about growing figs. A couple of great recipes are featured on page 22.

We've had some requests for how to access the weather station data. The link you can copy for your computer or phone is on page 25. It's best to copy the link and not try to type it in. If you'd like to see more detailed reports, you can see the article in our October 2018 newsletter on how to get this data (see our website for the newsletter section).

"A weed is a plant that is not only in the wrong place, but intends to stay." - Sara Stein

Inside This Issue...

- 2 *Intro* by MG Camille Goodwin
- 3 *How to Reach Us*
- 4 *Question and Answer - What are the Benefits of Companion Planting?*
by MG Tabatha Holt
- 5 *Tomato Trials* by MG Intern Stefanie Balasubramanian
- 6 *Frogfruit Weed or Beneficial Native* by MG Briana Etie
- 7 *What I Learned - Tomato Pest* by MG R Corley and MG D Schenke
- 8 *Weeds as Indicator Plants* by MG John Jons
- 10 *Islander - Clean Air* by MG Jan Brick
- 12 *Best Shots Gardening in Early Spring* by MG Elayne Kouzounis
- 14 *LED Grow Lights* by MG Ira Gervais
- 15 *Trowels & Tribulations* by MG Donna Ward
- 16 *Loquat Tree* by MG Bernice Shirey
- 17 *Meet Master Gardener Kathy Maines* by MG Trish McDaniel
- 18 *Green Genes Passed Down to Master Gardeners* by MG Karolyn Gephart
- 20 *Landscape Design School* by MG Judy Anderson
- 21 *Discovery Garden Update* by MG Tom Fountain
- 22 *Seasonal Bites* by MG Sandra Gervais
- 23 *GCMGA Board of Directors* by MG Sharon Zaal
- 24 *GCMGA June Meeting Minutes* by MG Briana Etie
- 24 *Recertification Hours* by MG Ginger Benson
- 25 *Upcoming Events* by MG Nita Caskey
- 25 *Weather Station at the Discovery Garden* by Ken Goodwin
- 26 *Bulletin Board* by MG Linda Steber
- 27 *Last Word - Figs are Easy to Grow* by Dr. William M. Johnson
- 28 *Monthly Meetings and Invitation* by MG Judy Anderson



Cover:
Dahlia
Photo courtesy of GCMGA Digital Library



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Thanks for your interest!

Q and A

What are the Benefits of Companion Planting?



By Tabatha Holt
MG 2009

As I am an organic vegetable gardener, “Companion Planting” has meant the difference between success and failure in my gardens. Simply defined, companion planting is the establishment of plants that benefit each other in some way. When I plan my gardens, I visualize them as a community much like the ones in which we live. Like humans, plants can be indifferent, thrive or sometimes struggle in their relationships with others, an important if not subtle metaphor for companion planting.

Agrarian societies throughout the ages have been aware of these special unions and employed them in the art of farming. There are three factors that are attributed to producing a successful companion vegetable garden: (1) pest control (2) nutrient support (3) spatial relationships/interactions.

I was first introduced to these concepts while gardening with my grandmother at a very young age. Growing up in New England, our family had learned from the Native American tribes the popular companion planting method called the “Three Sisters Garden” (corn, beans and squash). Also called intercropping, this method of planting incorporates all beneficial factors mentioned earlier. Corn, a heavy nitrogen feeder, benefits from the nitrogen produced by the legume bean (nutrient support). The leaves of the pole bean wrapping up around the corn stalk acts as a camouflage that proves confusing to the corn earworm moth (pest control). The lower lying squash plants shield the soil around the base of the corn and beans from rapid soil evaporation and weeds (spatial interaction/pest control).

After all these years I still utilize the same techniques that I was taught while spending my summers with Grandma but have now expanded to intercropping and crop rotation.

Intercropping allows gardeners to practice space saving by maximizing the amount of space we have available to us while providing a variety of vegetables instead of just one or two. During the Spring, I plant squash, corn, bush beans, carrots, pole beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, herbs, radishes, Chinese cabbage, bok choy, eggplants, okra, peppers and kohlrabi.

After the Spring crops have been harvested, I clean out my beds and use a cover crop that acts as a weed, nematode, pest or soilborne virus suppressant such as winter rye grass, chopped alfalfa or mustard greens. Before letting the cover crops go to seed, I till them into the soil in preparation for the next season's planting.

For the Fall vegetable garden season I rely on carrots, onions, cilantro, dill, lettuce, strawberries, beets, peas, kale, collards, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and radishes. By rotating the locations of vegetables, I avoid mineral depletion as a result of overuse in the same location.

These techniques of organic gardeners and farmers have been used for thousands of years and could be the answer to creating, or at least maintaining, a micro-world of biodiversity in our own backyards as well as creating healthy communities and wildlife habitats that are both environmentally and economically responsible.

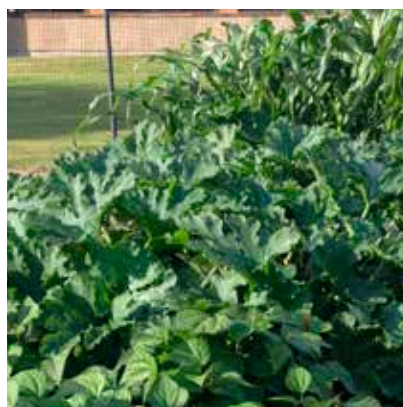


Photo by MG Tabatha Holt

The Battle for the BEST Tomato Continues!



By Stefanie
Balasubramanian
MG 2018

Over the last few years, the GCMG Intern Class has been tasked with the growing and tending of tomatoes to see which select varieties prove worthy of growing in our hot, humid climate.

The new notables are the Anna Russia, Black Cherry, Carmello, Charger, Sun Master and Parks Season Starter. Interns will be measuring how well these varieties hold true to their advertised description, as well as their overall production, to determine if they will be recommended to local gardeners for home growing.

The trials will also weigh another indicator for a “good” tomato outside of heat tolerance, pest resistance, and production, which may be the most important test - TASTE! Therefore, if you only have space to grow one tomato, this will be the tomato that makes you swoon with nostalgia to the “good ole days” of what a homegrown should taste like.

Last year, the 2018 Intern Class tested Fourth of July, Falcorosso, Atlas, Parks Whopper, and Peron as well. Each of these varieties performed exceptionally well and are being tried again to validate last year’s findings. The summary of the 2018 findings follows:

2018 GCMG Intern Tomato Trial Summary and Recommendations

Taste

A taste test was performed and sampled by intern and veteran Master Gardeners. The best overall taste was the Peron variety. This Argentinian slicing tomato is well worth the wait, yielding more than 84% of its total production. Though both plants were susceptible to nematodes, the production ratio of the Peron was still quite astonishing, resulting in both plants producing 172 tomatoes and resulting in 68-1/2 pounds of fruit. Needless to say, your summer salads, burgers, and tacos will be the envy of your neighbors with this tasty powerhouse of a tomato!

Runners up for the taste test, in points order were Fourth of July, followed by Bush Beefsteak, Falcorosso, and Florida 91.

Production

A backyard production grower cannot go wrong with this British Falcorosso variety. Planting orientation did not seem to impact this compact, container

variety. The root system proved to be vigorous and free from nematodes. This is a heavy producer with a 90+% consumable harvest ratio, resulting in 74-1/2 pounds of tomatoes between both plants and a total of 600 tomatoes! Falcarosso was a favored among our taste testers too. Gather all the canning equipment you can find if growing Falcorosso!

Other varieties showing similar production yields not relative to planting orientation were the Celebrity, Early Wonder, and Burpee Early Pick.

By the Pound

If you are looking for quantity, the Parks Whopper had above 80% average production ratio based on total weight and the number of consumable fruit (101.75 pounds total weight of edible fruit with a total of 247 harvestable fruits produced, resulting in each fruit weighing an average of 6.56 ounces). The horizontal planting orientation did show about 4% increase in production than the other. Upon surveying the roots, they showed no signs of nematode activity and were in excellent shape. This beefsteak variety is indeterminate and will need ample space for best production.

Harvest in Pounds by Planting Orientation

As the trials continue this year, we are excited to see if last year’s varieties will still hold their title belts, or if one of the newcomers will upset the previous champions. Stay tuned for the results later this year so you can get a head start on growing an absolute knockout tomato.

Variety	Orientation	Harvest Wt
Atlas	H	24.0
Bush Steak	H	34.5
Containers	H	27.0
Early Wonder	H	23.5

Variety	Orientation	Harvest Wt
Atlas	V	17.25
Bush Early	V	24.25
Bush Steak	V	30.25
Containers	V	34.25
Early Wonder	V	21.50
Falcorosso	V	34.25
Peron	V	23.25

Variety	Orientation	Harvest Wt
Burpee	H	36.75
Bush Early	H	39.75
Celebrity	H	36.50
Falcorosso	H	40.25
Florida 91	H	36.75
Fourth July	H	35.75
Parks	H	52.00
Peron	H	45.25

Variety	Orientation	Harvest Wt
Burpee	V	42.25
Celebrity	V	49.25
Florida 91	V	36.25
Fourth July	V	42.25
Parks	V	49.75

Variety	Type	Days to Maturity	Qualities
Fourth of July	Indeterminate	49	Very early, Great taste, 4.5 oz.
Anna Russia	Indeterminate	70	Early Oxheart, Heirloom, Great taste, 14 oz.
Falcorosso	Indeterminate	65	UK, Large cherry, plum size, 3 oz.
Parks Whopper	Indeterminate	65	High disease resistance, 10-24 oz.
Black Cherry	Indeterminate	54	Heirloom, black-hue, cherry, good taste
Carmello	Indeterminate	72	High disease resistance, 10-12 oz.
Charger	Determinate	72	Very high disease resistance, 36" tall, 12 oz.
Atlas	Semi-determinate	65	Big beefsteak, 4'-5" tall, 1-2 lbs.
Sun Master	Determinate	72	Sets in high heat (90 degrees) 8-10 oz.
Parks Season Starter	Indeterminate	60	High disease resistance, 36", 6 oz.
Peron	Semi-determinate	68	Argentina, high disease resistance, 10 oz.
Celebrity (Control)	Semi-determinate	70	High disease resistance, 7-10 oz.

V = Vertical Planting • H = Horizontal Planting

Frogfruit

Weed or Beneficial Native?



By Briana Etie
MG 2017

Phyla nodiflora is commonly called Frogfruit in this region. Frogfruit is in the verbena family, Verbenaceae. The botanical name epithet *nodiflora* means “with flowers borne at the nodes.”

This plant grows as a perennial in our area and is generally considered an aggressive lawn weed. It is not well-noticed until it produces flowers. Frogfruit produces a thick mat-like growth pattern. It has fine hairs on its leaves and stems. The leaves are short-stalked, oval and toothed,

appearing opposite each other at leaf nodes.

Flowers are usually one-half inch across and globular in shape. Most flowers are white, while some are bluish purple, and each flower has a notched upper lip and a three-lobed lower one. The flower head is on a long thin stalk from a leaf axil and has a base of dense bracts.

The blooming period for Galveston County is from March to November. A multitude of tiny white flowers are borne on crimson purple verbena type stalk heads. It grows in any disturbed area including turf grass, ornamental and vegetable beds. Frogfruit is also known as Creeping Lipia, Cape Weed, Turkey Tangle, Frog Fruit Verbena, Common Frog Fruit, Mat-grass, Sawtooth Frog Fruit or Beach Morning Glory.

Frogfruit vegetation grows two to three inches in height and the flowers can reach up to six or more inches when blooming. The spreading habit can extend the plant to one foot wide. In Texas it can be found naturally anywhere from ditches, beaches and prairie fields.

Frogfruit also makes a hardy groundcover and spreads rapidly. It can become invasive in lawns or where you don't want it to grow. In tropical, areas it is a much desired ornamental because it is considered an evergreen. If you desire it in your garden, the best suited habitat is full sun to part shade, moist soil/poor drainage (even saline soil is okay), and once established it will tolerate occasional droughts or flooding.

In our Discovery Garden, MG Joanne Hargrove, the new team leader of our Butterfly Garden, grows frogfruit. It is the larval host plant for the Phaon Crescent, Buckeye, and White Peacock butterflies. Also, it is a nectar source for many pollinators in our gardens including the hummingbirds.

Propagation can be achieved by runners, cuttings, seeds and root ball dividing; however, it is more easily transplanted by root ball division and runners. Seed saving and germination isn't as successful, but is possible.

If you find frogfruit growing in your lawn, usually it will be found in low spots. The best way to deter undesirables from growing in low spots is to add clean bank sand to those areas. Your grass will eventually fill in and those weeds will not find your lawn as an ideal place to grow.



Buckeye Larvae



Buckeye



Frogfruit Nodule



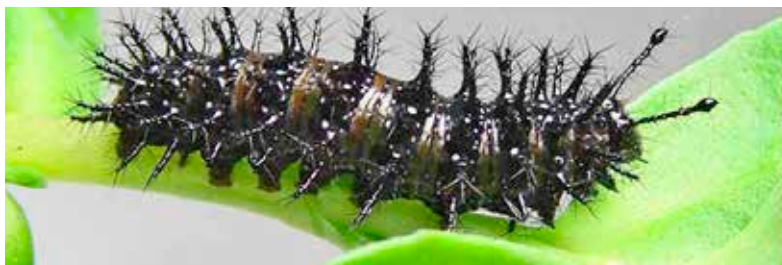
Phaon Crescent



Phyla nodiflora



White Peacock butterfly



White Peacock Larvae

Photos courtesy: Inaturalist.com

Tomato Pest Spotted in *Galveston County Discovery Garden!*



By **Ronnie Corley**
MG 2018

The Master Gardener Intern Class of 2018 had started its tomato trials by transplanting 24 small plants of 12 different varieties into 2 beds. One of the class members subsequently attended an educational program on tomato pests at the Extension Office, inspected the trial plants, and found the small worm, shown in the pictures to the right.

With the able assistance of Ira Gervais and Dr. Johnson, this worm was identified as a species of armyworm; most likely the Yellowstriped Armyworm (*Spodoptera ornithogalli*). While it's hard to differentiate armyworms when they are young/small in size without a hand lens, it is known that the Yellowstriped Armyworm is a species that shows up early. Armyworm caterpillars can be identified by examining the front of the head capsule. They have light-colored markings along the seams (sutures) of the "face" that appear as an upside-down Y, which can be seen in the photo on the right.

Adult caterpillars are up to 2 two inches long and vary in color from green when small to almost black when large. They have two cream-yellow to orangish stripes along the back and a prominent dark spot on the sides of the fourth body segment behind the head (the first legless abdominal segment). Partially grown larvae appear to have pairs of triangular dark markings along the back of each body segment inside the light-colored stripes. Adult moths have a wing span of 1-1/2 to 1-3/4 inches.

Adult moths lay clusters of eggs on host plants and then covers them with scales from her body. Caterpillars hatch from eggs in about 6 days. Caterpillars develop through several molts to increasingly larger stages (instars) over a period of about 20 days until they pupate in the soil for 14 days or over winter. Adult moths emerge from the pupae. Several generations can be produced each year, each being completed in 35 to 45 days to several months, depending on temperature, food and environmental factors. Tomatoes are a favorite host plant.

Ira recommends that biting or chewing insects are best controlled with a spray of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt). Bt insecticide is a biologic insecticide that kills caterpillar type insects, but it has no effect on birds, earthworms, or beneficial insects such as honeybees and lady beetles, when used as directed. It can be used on edible plants up to the day of harvest. Bt will tend to wash off after a rain, so reapply as necessary.

A complete discussion of the worms, along with an enlarged photo, and more information on treatment options, can be found at <https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/yellowstriped-armyworm/>

Also, a schedule of upcoming educational programs sponsored by the Galveston County Master Gardeners and the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office can be found at https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/educ_programs/index.htm



Photos courtesy of Ronnie Corley



Yellowstriped Armyworm *Spodoptera ornithogalli*
on Parks Whopper Tomato

Have you ever thought about what your weeds are telling you?



By John Jons
MG 2003

Weeds tend to be “specialists” plants. Contrary to what the average gardener may think, most weeds will only grow successfully in certain sites (sun or shade) and soil conditions (wet or dry or sandy or compacted soil, poor or rich soil, acidic or alkaline soil,...) that meets their particular and often very specific growing (and survival) needs. Some weeds even need a particular soil chemical (mineral) to be prevalent at a certain level within the soil, and for the soil to be either bacterial or fungal dominant. Knowing a weed’s particular

growing needs, a gardener will have more information about a garden site and soil. Below is a table that illustrates this point.

Farmers have long known that if they have a preponderance of “chickweed (*Cerastium*), chicory (*Cichorium*), common groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), common horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) and lamb’s quarter

(*Chenopodium berlandieri*)”, their soil may be quite fertile. By contrast, if the predominant weeds are “daisies (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*), wild carrots (*Daucus carota*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), common mullein (*Verbascum*), wild parsnip (*Pastinaca*), wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*) and biennial wormwood (*Artemisia biennis*)”, their soil may have a low fertility. When certain weeds are growing in a dry spot but they are typical of wet conditions may be an indication that this particular location will be wet at some time during the year. Perennial weeds are often better indicators than annual weeds as they have demonstrated the ability to survive at a particular site and in a particular soil for more than one year. There are some weeds, of course, that will grow almost anywhere, like dandelions (*Taraxacum*). Prospectors have even used weeds that prefer certain soil chemicals to determine where the concentrations of a mineral may exist.

So, the next time you pull a weed – think about what that weed is telling you!



Site/Soil Relationship	Plant / Other
Wet Soil	Cattail (<i>Typha latifolia</i>), Horsetail (<i>Equisetum arvense</i>), Lady's-thumb (<i>Polygonum persicaria</i>), Pennsylvania smartweed (<i>Polygonum pennsylvanicum</i>), Tall buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>), Creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>), May apple (<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>), Thyme-leaved speedwell (<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>), Canada goldenrod (<i>Solidago canadensis</i>), Lance-leaved goldenrod (<i>Solidago graminifolia</i>), Meadow pink (<i>Lychnis flosculi</i>), Jewelweed (<i>Impatiens pallida</i>), Coltsfoot (<i>Tussilago farfara</i>), Marsh mallow (<i>Althaea officinalis</i>), Sweet flag (<i>Acorus calamus</i>), Hedge Bindweed (<i>Convolvulus Sepium</i>), Bull sedge (<i>Carex lasiocarpa</i>), Coltsfoot (<i>Tussilago farfara</i>), Creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>), Ox-Eye Daisy (<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>), Docks (<i>Rumex</i> sp.), Foxtail (<i>Hordeum jubatum</i>), Goldenrods (<i>Solidago</i> sp.), Groundnut (<i>Apios americana</i>), Poison Hemlock (<i>Conium maculatum</i>), Jewelweed (<i>Impatiens pallida</i>), Joe-pye weed (<i>Eupatorium purpureum</i>), Lady's thumb (<i>Polygonum persicaria</i>), Meadow pink (<i>Lychnis flosculi</i>), Meadow Sweet (<i>Astilbe</i> sp), Mosses (all species), Stinging Nettles (<i>Urtica urens</i>), Ragwort (<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>), Tansy (<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>), Sheep sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosella</i>), Silvery cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla argentea</i>), Sweet flag (<i>Acorus calamus</i>), Tall buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>), Black Willow (<i>Salix</i> sp.), Rushes (<i>Juncus</i>), Sedges (<i>Cyperaceae</i>), Yellow nutsedge (<i>Cyperus esculentus</i>), Dollarweed (<i>Hydrocotyle umbellata</i>), Mouse-ear Chickweed (<i>Cerastium</i>), Annual bluegrass (<i>Poa annua</i>) Virginia (buttonweed), Spotted spurge (<i>Euphorbia maculata</i>), Knotweed (<i>Fallopia</i>).
Dry Soil	Virginia pepperweed (<i>Lepidium virginicum</i>), Rough cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla monspeliensis</i>), Potato vine (<i>Ipomoea pandurata</i>), Thistle (<i>Cirsium</i>), Purslane (<i>Portulacaceae</i>), Bermuda grass (<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>), Crab grass (<i>Digitaria</i>), Chickweed (<i>Stellaria media</i>), Yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>), Sheep sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosella</i>), Fragile fern (<i>Cystopteris fragilis</i>), Little blue stem (poverty grass) (<i>Sporobolus vaginiflorus</i>), Mustard (<i>Brassicaceae</i>), Ox-Eye Daisy (<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>), Carpetweed (<i>Molluginaceae</i>), Pigweed (<i>Amaranthus</i>).
Sandy Soil	Sandbur (<i>Cenchrus species</i>), Dog fennel (<i>Eupatorium capillifolium</i>), Cornflower (<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>), Yellow toadflax (<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>), Small nettle (<i>Urtica urens</i>), Maltese thistle (<i>Centaurea melitensis</i>), Arrow-leaved Wild Lettuce (<i>Lactuca pulchella</i>), Field Bindweed (<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>), White Cockle (<i>Lychnis alba</i>), Cornflower (<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>), Goldenrods (<i>Solidago</i> sp.)
Shade	Poison ivy (<i>Toxicodendron radicans</i>), Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>), Mustard (<i>Brassicaceae</i>), Honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera</i>), Annual bluegrass (<i>Poa annua</i>), Chickweed (<i>Stellaria media</i>), Mouse-ear Chickweed (<i>Cerastium</i>), Nimblewill, Speedwells (<i>Veronica persica</i>), Violets (<i>Viola</i>), Ground ivy (<i>Glechoma</i>)
Infertile Soil	Black medic (<i>Medicago lupulina</i>), Shepherds purse (<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>), Plantain (<i>Plantago</i>), Crab grass (<i>Digitaria</i>), Yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>), Sheep sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosella</i>), Moss, Ragweed (<i>Ambrosia</i>), Ox-Eye Daisy (<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>), Pearly everlasting. (<i>Anaphalis</i>), Mugwort (<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>), Common mullein (<i>Verbascum</i>), Wild parsnip (<i>Pastinaca</i>), Wild carrots (<i>Daucus carota</i>), Wild radish (<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i>), Biennial wormwood (<i>Artemisia biennis</i>), Clover (<i>Trifolium</i>), Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i>)
Fertile Sil Soil ph of 6.2 – 7.0	Henbit (<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>), Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i>), Clover (<i>Trifolium</i>), Ostrich fern (<i>Matteuccia</i>), Annual bluegrass (<i>Poa annua</i>), Bentgrass (<i>Agrostis canina</i>), Bermuda grass (<i>Agrostis</i>), Crabgrass (<i>Digitaria</i>), Mallow (<i>Althaea Officinalis</i>), Lamb's quarter (<i>Chenopodium berlandieri</i>), Chickweed (<i>Stellaria media</i>), Common horehound (<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>), Foxtail (<i>Alopecurus</i>), Chicory (<i>Cichorium</i>) Red root pigweed (<i>Amaranthus</i>), Burdock (<i>Arctium</i>), Chickweed (<i>Stellaria media</i>), Chicory (<i>Cichorium</i>), Common groundsel (<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>). Purslane (<i>Portulacaceae</i>)
Compact Soil	Field Mustard (<i>Brassica nigra</i>), Horse Nettle (<i>Solanum carolinense</i>), Morning Glory (<i>Ipomoea purpurea</i>), Pennycress (<i>Thlaspi arvense</i>), Pineapple Weed (<i>Matricaria matricariodes</i>), Quack Grass (<i>Agropyron repens</i>), Annual bluegrass (<i>Poa annua</i>), Carolina geranium (<i>Geranium carolinianum</i>), Chickweed (<i>Stellaria media</i>), Bindweed (<i>Convolvulaceae</i>), Knotweed (<i>Fallopia</i>), Morning glory (<i>Argyreia</i>), Lamb's quarter (<i>Chenopodium berlandieri</i>), Plantain (<i>Plantago</i>), Nettle (<i>Urticaceae</i>), Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i>) Quack Grass (<i>Elymus repen</i>) - Heavy in clay Curly dock (<i>Rumex crispus</i>) - Low in calcium, extremely high in magnesium, phosphorous and potassium
Acidic Soil (Below a ph of 7.0)	Ox-eye daisy (<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>), Curly dock (<i>Rumex crispus</i>), Red / Sheep sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosella</i>), Sow thistle (<i>Sonchus species</i>), Prostrate knotweed (<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>), Lady's-thumb (<i>Polygonum persicaria</i>), wild strawberries (<i>Fragaria species</i>), Plantain (<i>Plantago major</i>), Rough cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla monspeliensis</i>), Silvery cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla argentea</i>), Hawkweeds (<i>Hieracium aurantiacum pratense</i>), Knapweeds (<i>Centaurea species</i>), Knotweed (<i>Fallopia</i>) Chickweed (<i>Stellaria media</i>), Sweet fern (<i>Comptonia asplenifolia</i>), Common mullein (<i>Verbascum</i>), Pearly everlasting (<i>Anaphalis</i>)
Saline Soil	Field peppergrass (<i>Lepidium virginicum</i>), Goosefoot (<i>Chenopodium species</i>), Gromwell (<i>Lithospermum officinale</i>), True chamomile (<i>Anthemis nobilis</i>), Badder campion (<i>Silene latifolia</i>), Poppy (<i>Papaveraceae</i>), Woodyaster (<i>Xylorhiza</i>), Sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>), Peppergrass (<i>Lepidium</i>), Queen Anne's lace (<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>), Chickweed (<i>Stellaria media</i>), Spotted spurge (<i>Euphorbia maculata</i>), Chicory (<i>Cichorium</i>)
Bacterial Dominant Soil	Shepherd's purse (<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>)
Fungal Dominant Soil	Green annuals and perennial plants - Freshly disturbed soil; tilled, new housing developments, ... Woody and perennial plants - Soil that has existed undisturbed for a long period of time, untilled, old forests, ...

The Island Garden

Plants, Clean Air and Global Warming



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

Global warming is a term that has become commonly debated in recent years. An expression fraught with confusion, unease, skepticism and challenge. When we are experiencing disastrous storms, whether fires, floods, hurricanes, heavy snow, unusual cold or heat, the phrase for this activity “global warming” has become the norm. Scientific studies with dire warnings, scenes of widespread pollution over large portions of land masses as well as over huge swathes of oceans and open seas seem to point to something going wrong in our world. The answers to what can be done if anything, is a mind-boggling maze of conjecture, cynicism, uncertainty and distrust. If we do this then it will effect that...if we do that then it will effect this. Clearly something must be done and soon, we need to decide if the global warming is real and formulate a plan that includes all persons individually and all countries worldwide.

What does this have to do with an essay about plants and gardening? Can plants have any effect on the air we breathe?

On the positive side, if your glass is half full, much research has been conducted on this question with encouraging conclusions including experiments done by NASA, the results of which are cited often when advice is offered on this subject. If your glass tends to look half empty and you remain a sceptic, there are conclusions that might support your view as well. To be fair we should consider both positions and let you make your assessment of what works best for you.

Can plants purify the air in your home? The EPA has released surveys that state the air in your home may expose us to contaminants that can lead to serious health issues including headaches, respiratory problems, fatigue and cancer. Among those pollutants are dust, dirt and dander, gasses from synthetics in our carpets, curtains and cleaning solutions; thrown in with cooking and tobacco smoke, mold, pollen and what is called volatile organic compounds like benzene, ammonia and formaldehyde seems to render our domicile almost toxic. How could plants effect all of this pollution in any meaningful or beneficial way? Plants act as air purifiers by converting carbon dioxide into oxygen through photosynthesis while microbes in the soil convert toxins in the air into nutrients for the plants. While all plants may improve the quality of the air we breathe, some are viewed as better choices than others. Some proponents of clean air through plant life suggest that the bigger and leafier the plant the better as the amount of leaf surface area influences the rate of air purification. NASA research scientists recommends at least two good-sized plants per one hundred square feet of interior space.

A few selections that not only filter pollutants well but are easy to grow and familiar to all of us, gardeners or not, include Aloe Vera which removes formaldehyde; this plant needs plenty of light and well-drained soil. The Dwarf/Pygmy Date Palm filters xylene and ammonia, it also prefers a lot of light and water. Another choice is the English Ivy which is great for asthma and allergy sufferers as it removes benzene, formaldehyde and cigarette smoke. Popular and commonly found in many homes is Golden Pothos that removes and filters carbon monoxide and formaldehyde.

A former NASA engineer is a vocal advocate of indoor plants and operates a consulting company that encourages the use of them to clean contaminated air. Other experts say that the evidence that plants can effectively accomplish this feat is inconclusive. A professor of



Aloe Vera

Epipremnum aureum

English Ivy



Spider Plant



Pygmy Date



Bamboo Palm



Snake Plant



Peace Lily



Dracaena marginata

environmental medicine and public health at Mt Sinai School of Medicine states “There are no definitive studies that indoor plants can significantly improve health in a measurable way.” She has concluded that since the experiments were done under laboratory conditions, in the real world the idea that a few plants can purify the air does not have much science to back it up. A professor of horticulture at the University of Georgia asserts that those studies are not applicable to what happens in our homes with the constant exchange of air from the outside plus the fact that there is hardly enough light in most households to trigger photosynthesis and with all the manufactured products in our homes like furniture, carpets and flooring add new chemicals to the air quicker than plants would be able to remove or filter them.

Scientists at NASA, however, call the plants that purify the air a part of “nature’s life support system”. They are pleasant living companions and it has been proven they can maintain evidence-based health benefits by calming the nervous system and reducing stress with a positive effect on mood and energy levels. Enjoy the beauty and peaceful vitality that houseplants project “while your lungs benefit from their natural air cleansing action.” Talk to your plants and play some soothing music for them...watch them thrive from your loving attention.

Whether you are a proponent of, a believer in, or what can it hurt kind of person...the point is that it is your decision to learn more or follow the advice of what sounds reasonable when determining how you and your family will face concerns over global warming by making minor or major changes in your lifestyle habits even introducing a few houseplants into your home.

Galveston’s History of “Nature’s Life Support System”

The citizens of Galveston had never heard the term “global warming” in 1900 but they were wise folks and did appreciate the value of plants to our health and well-being. They did understand that the trees, plants and foliage that were lost to the Great Storm were of immense value to the Island not only for their beauty but for their significant impact on the air quality by their absorption of pollutants, their effectiveness in shading and shielding homes and inhabitants from the blazing rays of the sun and the torrents of rain storms. They understood also the importance of the effect on our ecological system, the cause and effect of vegetation to maintaining the health of the soil and preservation of the land mass itself, the impact and influence on returning birds and wildlife.

Prominent citizens implemented a program of restoration of that lost vegetation by offering, free of charge, saplings, shrubs, bushes and plants to every household. Holes were dug to receive the plants and the grateful citizens watered and nourished the seedlings, sprouts and sprigs understanding that they were creating an oasis of defense and shelter against further mayhem of future storms and floods. Generations of islanders and visitors alike enjoyed the fruit of that forethought and prudent planning. It took a storm of immense destruction to uproot and devastate that undertaking. When Hurricane Ike roared over this island, we finally truly comprehended and appreciated what our forefathers had accomplished. Once again, the residents of Galveston came together to confront the disastrous loss of forty thousand trees undertaking the challenge, once faced before, to recreate another oasis, another legacy for our children and grandchildren to enjoy; an endeavor of love with prayers that they may never encounter that damage and destruction themselves. With an eye toward that “global warming”, we must promote, encourage and support an attitude of sustenance of these very trees and plants that we have sown and re-established.

Gardening in Early Spring



By Elayne Kouzounis
MG 1998

This is the time of transition, from winter gardening to spring gardening. Even though we still may have occasional cold snaps, there will also be some bright balmy days, and warmer days for our seeds to sprout. There is still time to plant some bare-root shrubs, roses, and small trees before leaf buds begin to grow, if we dig and handle them carefully. Plants kept in cool storage, as many of the roses are being handled now, may be planted much later than material freshly dug from the nursery, because the low temperature prevents bud development. Another important factor in late planting is to see that plenty of water is used. After placing the plant, fill the hole half or two-thirds full of soil, fill with water, and after this has soaked in, finish filling with earth. Unless plenty of rain has fallen, water the newly planted material well at least once a week.

There are many plants that can be moved successfully out of their normal season if you are very careful digging them out with soil and roots. In handling out-of-season planting, I also find the rooting chemicals a great help. If you plan on planting more fruit trees and shade trees please get this completed as soon as possible - the roots need to be growing. Deciduous things planted bare-root in early spring should be more severely cut back when planted in early winter. This is also a good time to plant dogwoods and native southern magnolias because growth begins at once and tends to check any bleeding from the roots that might develop. This is the month when we will be planting azaleas. If you buy from the stores do not purchase plants that are wilted; take only the ones that are fresh and green. Plant them immediately, water them well and keep plants shaded for a week or longer. Should it rain lightly, water these newly set plants twice each week as they are shallow rooted and must have frequent watering.

Now is the time to take the poinsettias out of the basement, prune them back to within a few inches of the surface and repot. If the pots are plunged in soil in a shady spot outdoors until fall, they will be less trouble. By the end of March with normal season, it should be safe to plant seeds of alyssum, amaranthus, cockscomb, marigold, periwinkle, petunia, portulaca, salvia, torenia, and zinnia. If these plants are available set them out in the garden. Discounting the possibility of a late freeze, seeds of most annuals may now be planted outdoors. Use your own judge-

ment and plant when you consider the danger of frost has passed. To be perfectly safe, however, and to ensure getting an early start, I personally plant most seeds in a protected bed where I can cover them if need be. Even better, in flats as flats may be moved from place to place in order to take advantage of better sunlight and to give proper protection from the elements. A heavy rain can prove disastrous to your seedlings unless they are protected somehow. Little volunteer plants in the old flower beds will make fine flowers if you transplant them now. These little volunteers are usually hardier, have better root systems and come into bloom earlier than plants from hand-sown seeds. Anyway, these little heroes who fought so valiantly for their lives during winter should be given a chance to prove their worth. The improved strain of amaranthus, tricolor splendens, is one of the most colorful foliage plant you will find anywhere. It stands dry weather well and only a few plants will light up a huge flower bed - so gay are their colors. Give them plenty of sun for the best color effects.

It is too late to plant seeds of biennials; also, it is too late to set out plants unless you can locate very strong ones. Weak plants set out now will probably not bloom this season. Not all perennials, of course, should be separated and replanted each year, but when separation is done in the spring it should be done early. This gives the plants a longer period in which to make new roots and become established before the spring or summer blooming season. When clumps of perennials are not separated in the fall, it is a mistake to wait until there is lush growth in the spring, which is usually accompanied by hot weather. Many of them may be handled now when the new growth is only two or three inches high. Check on those varieties making rapid new growth and give them first attention. When you are ready to divide the clumps, it is much better to dig the entire clump, wash and shake off the soil and divide with a sharp knife. By this method you should be able to see just where the division can best be made. If the clumps of cannas failed to give good bloom last year, separate and replant them now or early in April. Clumps tucked back in the bays and coves of the shrub borders, where they have a good background, will add much color and beauty to the landscape.

A little frost seems to do no damage to the gladiolus, and I am convinced that, while the planting season for these flowers is a long one in the South, early planting gives the best flowers. Make a planting early in the month with additional plantings at two-week intervals until early summer.



Dahlia



Gladiolus



Daylily

Many gardeners in the South do not dig up their dahlias for the winter. If they were left in the ground, they should be coming up now. If so, the clumps should be lifted with care, the earth washed off and the divisions made with a sharp knife. Leave a section of the old stem with each tuber. If young eyes or sprouts are broken off, those particular tubers are worthless, as no more buds will grow. Much of the success with dahlias, especially in producing mammoth exhibition blooms, depends on proper soil preparation and planting. Prepare the hole for each tuber as for a shrub or rose, digging in some twenty inches square, almost as deep, and refilling with prepared soil. Dahlias like a deep, rich soil and plenty of water, but drainage should be good.

If you are adding daylilies this spring, get them planted at once, before hot weather arrives. They are among the easiest of all flowers to transplant, but while they are in lush growth is definitely not the best time to plant.

Plant seeds of carrots, turnips, mustard, spinach, lettuce, and other semi-hardy species. Plants of tomatoes and peppers may also be set out. String beans, bunch beans, cucumbers, corn and melons may be planted as well.

Only roses and those species like crape myrtle, althea, spirea and vitex which bloom in summer should be pruned now. Spring-flowering shrubs must not be pruned until they have finished blooming, but get to them just as soon as the flowers fade. Pillar roses and the ever blooming climbers like Crimson Glory and Peace will need very little pruning, but the cluster types that send up long canes from the ground each spring should be heavily pruned right after the flowers fade. Cut the old canes off near the ground, or at least down to the first new cane. It is these new canes that give the flowers for the following spring.

Shrubs, roses, evergreens, and trees should have been fed in February, but if you failed to feed them it is not too late, but feed them now. Of course you fed your bush roses when you pruned them last month, but what of the climbers? Of all the plants the climbing roses and perennial vines are probably the most neglected. Be sure to feed them this very week if you have not already attended to that chore.

The best time to feed camellias is right after the flowers have faded, which usually means March in most areas. If you use one of the special azalea-

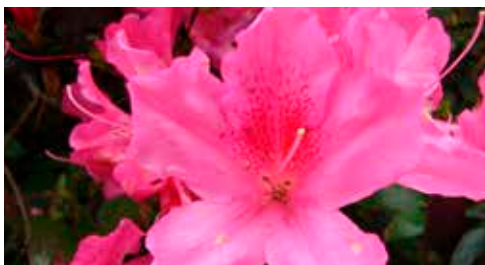
camellia plant foods you will hardly need to apply additional acid, but if you use standard garden fertilizer it would be best to add some aluminum sulphate, iron sulphate or sulphur, or one of the newer iron chelates. Chelates are very good for restoring color to badly yellowing azaleas. Be sure to follow the directions on the package.

Some gardeners say it is not necessary to keep faded flowers picked from English daisies and pansies in order to keep them in bloom, but if you remove all faded blooms, give regular applications of liquid food, and water if the weather is dry, you will definitely get a much longer flowering season. From nature's point of view the chief function of a plant is the formation of seed to propagate its kind. If we permit seeds to form, many will call it a season and fade out of the picture.

Cuttings of various shrubs, including azaleas and camellias, placed in the sand last summer and fall, should be satisfactorily rooted now and can be moved to the growing beds. Using a large spoon, spatula, or small trowel, lift carefully with a quantity of rooting sand with each cutting, handle carefully and replant without shaking off the sand. Water all cuttings well immediately after transplanting. Choose a shady spot in the growing bed for the azaleas and camellias.

This month take cuttings for new chrysanthemum plants. Feed the old clumps early in the month to encourage new growth. For new plants take the tips of the new growth when it is three to three and a half inches high and root in a mixture of peat moss and sand. These early rooted cuttings will furnish stock plants from which additional cuttings may be taken a few weeks later if you need them. After you have all the cuttings you need, the old clumps should be discarded. The old woody roots of chrysanthemums are susceptible to attacks from termites—and termites can be dangerous.

Roses are now in nice growth, or soon will be, and you should begin the use of a dependable fungicide. Either dust or spray will do the job. Azalea growers should begin spraying in order to prevent disastrous attacks of bloom blight. It will be too late after the flowers have wilted. All the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today. Happy Spring!!



Azalea



Vitex



Magnolia

LED Grow Lights



By Ira Gervais
MG 2017

If you attended my recent tomato program on “Growing Tomatoes from Seeds” and a recent Discovery Garden lunch, you would have heard information on LED Grow Lights. At the request of a number of MGs I am sending a general recap of this information.

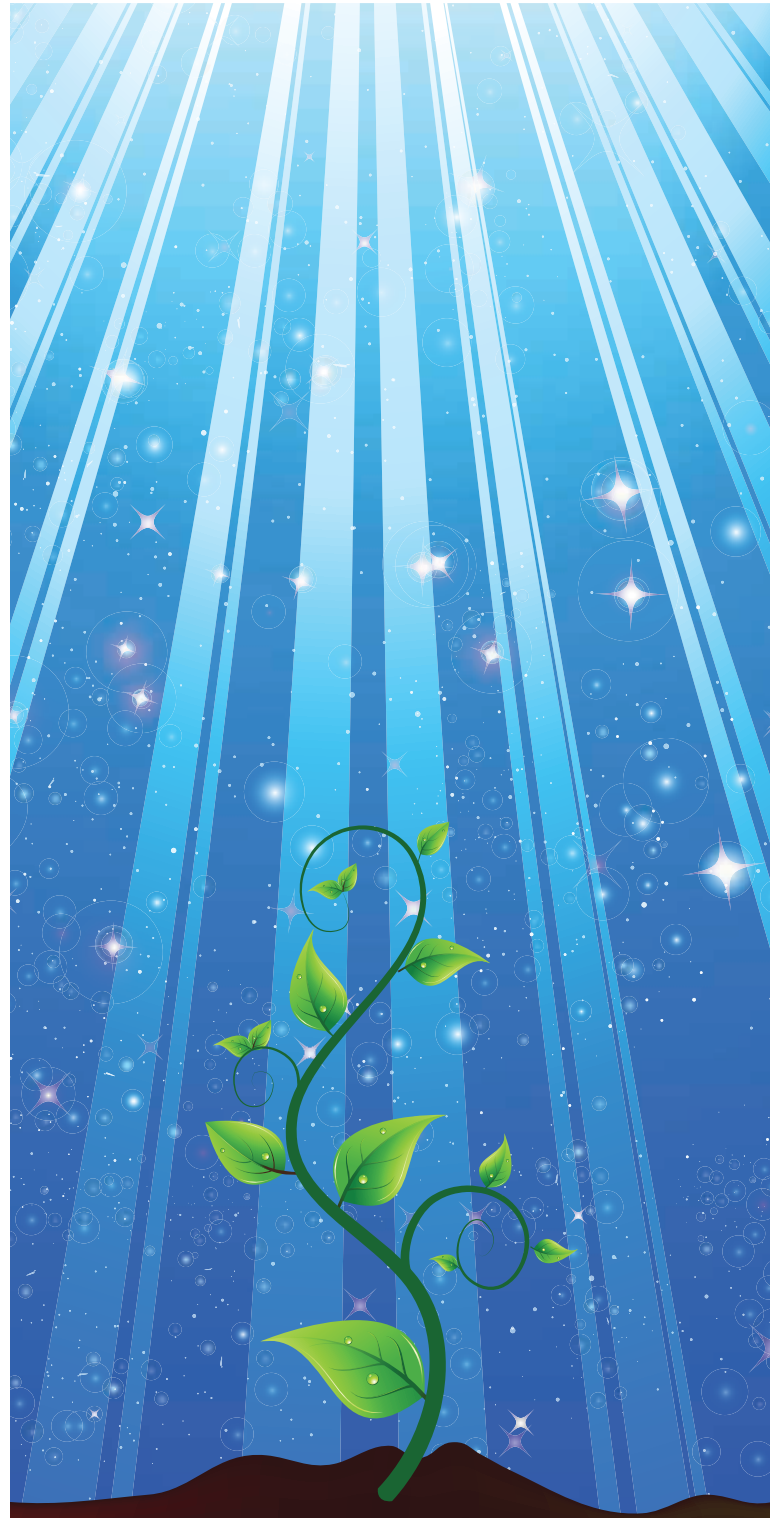
The LED grow light has been around since 2000. However, only recently have they become affordable and more diverse in their configuration. This has been a result of the expansion of the Marijuana growing industry.

If you decide to go this route, the LED Grow Light selection you make will depend on your requirements, so you need to do some research yourself on what you will need and want for your system. The main spec you will require for growing vegetables and flowers will be LED grow lights that are a full spectrum grow light with IR and UV LEDs included. It should contain Red LEDs (620-660 nanometers – accelerates growth, blooming and fruiting), Blue LEDs (430-470 nanometers – enhances leaf and stem structure, boosts growth and photosynthesis), White LEDs (6500K – enhances photosynthesis in vegetable plants), IR LEDs (730-735 nanometers – good for flowers and fruit), UV LEDs (390-395 nanometers – seedling sterilization). The red to blue LED light arrangement should be around a 5:1 ration of red:blue.

The size of the light and requirement will depend on how you will setup your grow area. Each LED light for sale will have a spec and will advise what grow area it will cover...i.e. say when mounted at 2 feet height, a grow area of 1.5 feet X 3 feet will be covered or something on that order. Also, they may come waterproof or indoor (which may or may not be waterproof). Some lights also come with fans to circulate and move the air on the plant, starts and some come with timers.

The big differences between Florescent and LED grow lights is that the florescent grow lights must be kept 2-3 inches above the plant which means you need to have a system where the lights move or the plants move as they grow. With LED grow lights, they are fixed at the required height to cover the selected grow area and they stay there. The LED lights draw way less power, less heat is emitted and they should last longer.

The system arrangement I have uses “LED Grow Lights, Full Spectrum lamp/IR and UV LED F/ indoor by Juhefa” They are priced on Amazon @\$17.97. This may not suit your system need...so don't buy this just because this is what I am using. You can purchase units that cost a little more but can cover a bigger area. You will have this system a long time; give it some thought on how you will design your system before you decide to purchase.



Trowels and Tribulations In a Suburban Garden

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



By Donna Ward
MG 1996

To say that this winter was peculiar would be an understatement. We had some pretty serious cold snaps, but that didn't seem to affect our impatiens which as you all know are pretty tender. Of course by the time you read this that may not be the case. I'm told it was an "off year" for orchids. Apparently so - a couple of mine had the audacity to just up and die. The cymbidium which has in the past produced over 100 blossoms simultaneously just sat there and sulked. But spring has sprung

and hope springs eternal in the heart of a gardener.

The 'azalea trail' exhibition at your address will soon be coming to an end, so fertilize right away after blooming. Give them a haircut at the same time - don't wait too long, as procrastination results in cutting off bloom wood for their next spring performance. As long as you're in a work mode you might as well mulch them and also the camellias while you're at it. Both have feeder roots near the surface and they need all the help they can get to retain moisture and moderate soil temperature. As you well know, a sizzling summer is right around the corner.

Perhaps you have noticed that some of your fall perennials didn't bloom up to your expectations. More than likely it could be the result of overcrowding. Now is the best time to dig 'em up, thin 'em out and transplant. Share any extra with friends and neighbors. If your daffodils have finished performing, pick the faded blooms. Going to seed saps energy from the bulb.

As we speak, our local nurseries are exhibiting a riot of color in the form of petunias, marigolds, pentas, salvia, coleus, impatiens, daisies, ixora, caladiums, hibiscus, bougainvillea, just to name a few!

St. Augustine is probably the most shade and traffic tolerant lawn grasses for our area. I'm not a fan of those high nitrogen (1st number) 'green up' fertilizers. The lawn may quickly look good, but I just don't feel that they are the balanced proportions for overall good health. A 3-1-2 formulation is preferable in my opinion. Just remember not to fertilize until you have mowed a time or two. St. Augustine is a warm weather grass and doesn't even think about growing until the weather warms sufficiently, so feeding too early only benefits the cool weather weeds. They don't need your help. At the risk of repeating myself for the gazillionth time - never, ever use a 'weed and feed' formulation on your lawn. Most contain Atrazine whose main purpose is to bring about the starvation and eventual death of those pesky weeds. Unfortunately it is non-selective, and views your trees and shrubs as just another annoying weed! You know what that means.

Around St. Patrick's Day many retailers are offering pots of white-flowering oxalis, often referred to as shamrocks. Did you know that they are perennials, and if you give them a shady spot in the garden, they will go dormant in summer and bloom again for you next winter?

I am happy to report that the frequency of traditional February "crape murder" in El Lago has significantly declined. Whether it's my annual protestations, or folks have finally realized that Mother Nature never intended for the "Lilac of the South" to be butchered each February. Cutting its branches down to the nubbins totally ruins the attractive architectural structure of this lovely tree, not to mention promotes weak spindly growth. It would be greatly appreciated if you would point this out to friends and neighbors who are still guilty of this horrific practice. The crape myrtle's open, airy canopy produces just the right amount of filtered shade to grow other southern beauties at its base - azaleas and camellias.

Studies show that gardening is a more effective stress-reducer than reading a good book. Gardening also promotes physical fitness through exercise and the production of wholesome food items. So what are you waiting for? The south forty is ready (it is ready - isn't it?) for you to plant seeds of wax, bush and pole beans, cucumber, lettuce, peppers, southern peas, radish, turnip, mustard, kohlrabi, zucchini, summer squash and beets (if you hurry). You'll need transplants of tomato, eggplant, cabbage and broccoli. There, aren't you feeling more relaxed and energetic? No need to thank me.



The Beauty of the Chinese or Japanese Loquat Tree



By Bernice Shirey
MG 2002

Early in my Master Gardener career, I became the proud owner of a loquat tree that I found at a plant swap. The leaves were so beautifully elongated and textured. I planted it in the newly constructed bed in my front yard and it thrived!

Several years later on a winter evening as my husband and I were going out for our walk, I smelled the most glorious scent as we passed by the loquat tree. It was blooming!

Having no idea that the tree was evergreen or even bloomed or produced fruit, I started reading about it and found that it was a fruit tree that produced small grape or kumquat sized yellow fruit in the spring. Its scientific name is *Eriobotrya japonica*. The loquat is a species of flowering plant in the rose family Rosaceae, a native of the cooler hills of China. Given the Master Gardener's proclivity of needing one of everything we see, it is always wise to read up on where to place a new planting. This tree will grow to 20 to 30 feet tall when given the right conditions ie: full sun and plenty of water. My tree only got to be about 10 to 15 feet because it didn't get the full sun it needed.

I couldn't wait until the fruit got ripe. Well, I was a bit underwhelmed with the fruit it produced since there was an abundance of very large seeds and very little fruit. The mockingbirds seemed not to mind that at all. Instead of hating it for taking up valuable space in my yard, I started appreciating it for its beauty. It was very cold tolerant and evergreen. Then the fact that it actually bloomed in the dead of winter and had the most fragrant flowers that was somewhere between a gardenia and a night blooming jasmine, it became my favorite planting.

Having no plan to eat the fruit other than a few off the tree, I felt guilty for wasting all this beautiful fruit. However, between the yard guys who were pleased to take home bags of fruit on mowing days and the ever-present mocking birds, I felt that the fruit didn't go to waste at all.

I did nothing extraordinary for the newly planted loquat tree; just let it grow by itself with no interference from me. It wasn't fairing too well after a while though. The live oak and magnolia trees weren't fairing too well either and our solution was to either take them out or fertilize and water them to see what happened. We decided to feed and water plus I gave them a good talking to so that they understood just what the options were. They seemed to take the threat to heart and started growing like they had died and gone to heaven. Needless to say, the newly found prowess I felt at my success with these plantings made me continue to feed and water all of the plants in my yard. The other trees had now gotten to the point of being out of control. We had to do some major trimming and even that didn't get the loquat the sun it needed. We eventually took the loquat out because of this.

The other day as I was scoping out the ant beds that needed attention, I saw a lot of small loquat trees growing in the front flower bed. Seeds from the dropped fruit had come to life and started a new family of *Eriobotrya*

japonica. I thought I'd pull them up and take them to the greenhouse at the Discovery Garden to sell at the Fall Plant Sale.



Meet a Master Gardener Kathy Maines



By Trish McDaniel
MG 2001

Between raindrops and sunshine, Kathy Maines greeted me curbside toting her shy pup, Tibby. Though never formally introduced, it was fun to make the visual connection that our paths had crossed many times prior, the last being the recent Friends of Moody Garden Herb Fair.

This busy lady's path to Galveston began two and a half years ago. Upon retirement from nursing, Kathy sold her home in San Leon, purchased a petite cottage needing rehab - then got back to work. Kathy is now a committed Island resident, business owner

and active community volunteer.

Kathy transformed the house, located mid-avenue and one block off the beach, into a lovely Airbnb; complete with seaside décor, including her own hand-sewn curtains and slip covers. Kathy's front yard features a young, albeit robust, landscape welcoming the composition of variegated vitex, sea grape, bird of paradise, esperanza, and Norfolk pine.

Residing in the detached garage apartment, Kathy enjoys the flexibility of accommodating personal family get-togethers as well as a fruitful vacation host business. In the beginning Kathy thought it would be a challenge to host families with children. She concluded early on that nights are markedly more peaceful when kids are involved, as they "play hard and sleep harder"; unlike some "adult only" arrangements.

Kathy's four-legged companion is another tale of restoration. As a puppy, Tibby was found dumped in a Houston dog park, skeletal and near death, when Kathy adopted her. Now, a marvelous picture of health and happiness, Tibby sports a heart melting and cartoonish expressive face – and is not as shy as first impressions.

History in a Nutshell: Kathy was raised by working parents in Marshall, Texas; the Harrison county seat in the upper East Texas Pineywoods region. With early roots in the soil, Kathy helped her parents in the family's large garden. She remembers her grandpa, with mule and plow, tilling the garden as the season required. Kathy's mother, an educator, also tended a chicken & egg business.

After her education Kathy moved to San Leon to practice nursing and raise her son, now 33 and a successful TAMUG graduate. Additionally, Kathy was a dedicated 4-H mom. Her son was active in the county's 4-H Horse Project where he and his paint mare won many awards including the Grand Championship in Halter Class, 2002 at the State 4-H Show in Abilene.

Being that the 4-H program was under the same County Extension roof as the Master Gardener program, Kathy was acquainted and ready to apply when the time was right. Retired and settled in her new home and business, Kathy became a 2017 MG graduate and was recently named Senior VP.

Kathy's son tells her she is busier now than ever - an understandable sentiment. Kathy is not only devoted to Master Gardeners, but also serves with Artist Boat, City of Galveston Tree Committee, Galveston Reads with Rosenberg Library, meets weekly with Olli's Bird Watching group and is a board member with Friends of Moody Gardens.

Favorite MG Activity: Libbie's Place Green Thumb Club, located on-island at Moody Methodist, where she engages club members in weekly gardening projects and activities. She also serves on the MG Garden Shop and Meeting Hospitality Team.

Gardening Style: She is a promoter of pollinators as evidenced by the surrounding gardens which host butterfly weed, salvia, pomegranate, confederate rose, just to name a few. Kathy is also a certified member of the Monarch Waystation Program whose mission is to assure the conservation of the species.

Favorite Dr. J. Anecdote: Above all, she admires the high standard of respect and consideration for others he practices and inspires in each class.

During the last MG state conference Kathy was amused to witness a clear nod to his distinguished rep when, during a lively class disruption, she heard the comment, "We know they're not from Galveston County!"



3 Master Gardeners Trace Their Gardening Roots to Family



By Karoyln Gephart
MG 2017

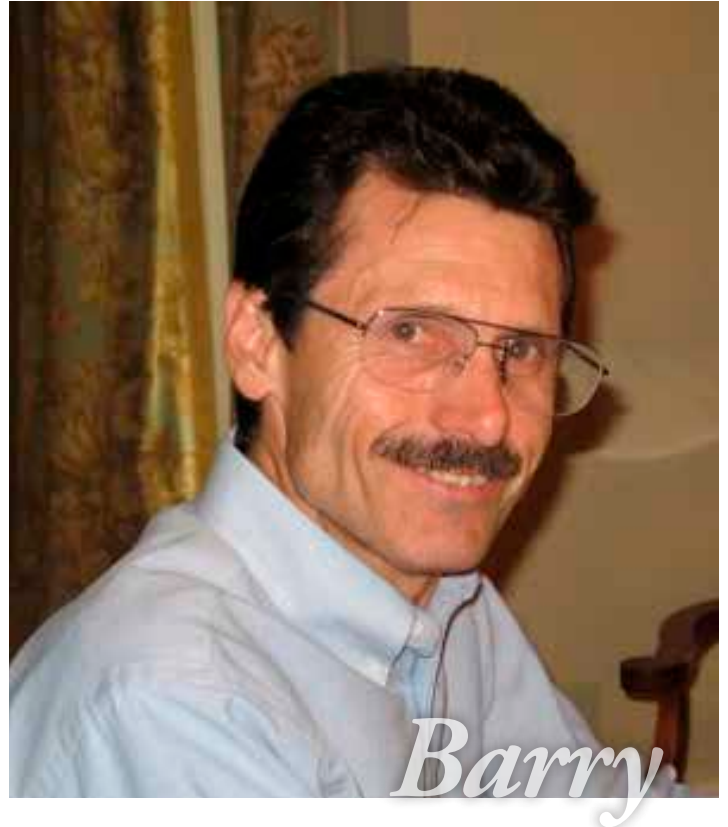
Master Gardeners share a love for gardening and each has a story on how their life journey led them to the program.

Master Gardener Clyde Holt

Master Gardener Clyde Holt can easily trace his roots to gardening. He was born in Tremonton, Utah to a family of farmers. His mother always had a garden. "I guess that's where I got my interest in gardening, even though as a teenager I hated weeding," Clyde remarked. "I did like eating out of the garden and as a young father we always maintained a garden."

He moved to League City in 1966 to work at NASA as a Field Service Engineer for a tape recorder company and retired in 2003. The first thing he did then was to look into becoming a Master Gardener. He became one with the class of 2005.

"The things I like most are working on the beds and with the people and those in the vegetable area. One of the other things I like is mowing the grass when I can get the mower to work," Clyde said. "I guess it reminds me of working on the farm and doing tractor work on ranches as a 14 year old." Clyde had advice for new Master Gardeners. "Jump in with both feet and get to know the old timers; their bark is worse than their bite."



Master Gardener Barry Gatlin

Master Gardener Barry Gatlin is originally from New Orleans but had relatives and the scouting program to get him out of the city and into green spaces that taught him a love of growing things.

Barry would visit relatives 50 miles up the Mississippi in Vacherie, Louisiana. Barry said he was amazed at the large vegetable gardens they had on relatively small lots and remarked, "Those potatoes, tomatoes, squash, etc. ended up being cooked with the meat from deer, rabbits, squirrels, alligator, and whatever game they had recently harvested. I realized later that they were growing those vegetables more out of necessity than pleasure. Nonetheless, they were very good role models for gardening."

For several summers, a community services organization, in the area of New Orleans where he grew up, would send children to a camp in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. "I was fortunate to go on those trips because I learned there was another world of trees and grass, compared to the concrete and asphalt world I lived in. My experiences at the camp motivated me when I was a little older to join the Boy Scouts. Our troop went only on several short camping trips, but it was enough to further kindle the spark in me to want to grow things," Barry said.

Barry worked for the Texas Health and Human Services Department and the Texas Workforce Commission for 28 years before retiring and then became a realtor in Dallas. He and his wife moved to Galveston 2 ½ years ago. A Master Gardener friend in Dallas advised him to look up the program when he arrived in Galveston County. He did and was in the Class of 2017.

“At the first class, I learned everything the GCMG program did was professional and first-class, from the printed materials to the classroom. I believe the majority of credit for those high standards belongs to Dr. Johnson. Being a horticultural expert, he brings an enormous amount of knowledge, about all things growing, to the program. That, combined with the university-level presenters we had, greatly increased my knowledge of, and interest in gardening,” Barry said.

Master Gardener Robin Collins

Robin Collins is a second generation Master Gardener. Her mother, Margie Stone Peterson, became a Galveston County Master Gardener in the early 1990s and Robin wanted to become one with her. Unfortunately, two young children and having a business to run made that impossible until years later.

Gardening, however, would not be new to her in the program. She had been involved in gardening since she was seven years old. Robin and her sister spent every summer with her grandparents in McKinney. Robin said, “We did everything with them. I learned to can the old fashioned way with Grandma. She taught me to cook. I was a beekeeper at a very young age with my grandfather and he taught me to garden. We worked about an acre garden together from the time I was sevenish until I graduated high school.”

Robin continued to garden with her grandfather and often once her grandparents moved near the Clear Lake area where Robin lived. “I gardened alongside him until the day he passed. He was in his 90s when he died and worked in his garden the day before he died. I always felt that is truly the way he wanted to leave this world – gardening!” Robin said.

Her mother too has been a gardening role model. “My mom always gardened as well and still does to this day – she too was a huge influence in my gardening experience with my children when they were small as she lived next door to me when they were young,” Robin added.

Robin became a Master Gardener in 2016. She has worked over 30 years as a graphic designer, muralist, water media artist and is also an adjunct professor at College of the Mainland. Collins still fits in time to be the 2nd Vice President at the State Master Gardener Association, create and work in the Aquaponics area of the Discovery Garden, graphically compile the Master Gardener newsletter, as well as create other graphics for the program including logos and signage.

Her grandfather prepared her for adulthood in more ways than just gardening. Thanks to him, Robin also helped in construction around the Discovery Garden. Tools, plants, graphics and more are part of her daily life.

“I have been on many boards and volunteered a great deal in my community over the years but MGs has proved to be an amazing social and learning/volunteer organization. I love the learning and sharing environment it provides. MGs give back in many ways – I have made great friends and learned many things way beyond just gardening. The feedback is positive. I feel a worth and feel appreciated – which I think is important in a volunteer environment,” Robin said.



Landscape Design School Course II



By Judy Anderson
MG 2012

The Master Gardener program has many opportunities for participants and attending the Landscape Design School at the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library at Texas A & M University is certainly a highlight. Sponsored by Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, the school is offered in four programs scheduled about six months apart with ten hours of instruction at Bryan-College Station. "Master Gardeners who complete a course may apply for 12 hours of credit to their

requirements for continuing education in their county. After completing 4 courses, they will receive the Landscape Design Steward certification." These courses offer an opportunity to learn from professional landscape architects and horticulturists about creating a successful landscape. Some people just take the classes for personal growth and some do it for fun.

For the recent February course, those attending from the Galveston County Master Gardeners included Lynn Shook, Kat Tondre, Susan Roth, Judy Anderson, Tauni Bryan, Joyce McMillian, Carol Springer, Louis Wilson, Lisa Davis, Melissa Terrell, Carol Jean Mulrain, and Nancy Greenfield.

The course began with a welcome by Diane Perez of Texas Garden Clubs and then by Dr. William Welch and Dr. Andrew King of Texas AgriLife Extension. The morning was off to a quick start with an overview of the history of Landscape Design in Early America and a review of the Preservation of Historic Sites and Structures. This was followed by a look at Community Landscape Management.

The afternoon included a presentation by Dr. Welch focusing on Plants in the Landscape. Dr. Justin Scheiner captured our attention with a fascinating update of the Texas grape industry. The class then adjourned to the Leach Teaching Gardens for a private tour of the completed seven acres of the 40 acres designated for the gardens spanning White Creek.

A feature among the gardens is a century old oak tree. The emphasis on rainwater harvesting and signage set an example for good stewardship. In addition to the task oriented gardens, a nod to Texas heritage included a Mexican Heritage Garden and a German Kitchen Garden. Following the visit at the gardens, Dr. Scheiner hosted a wine tasting in the atrium of the Benz School. He featured a white from Haak Winery and a red from Perdenales Vineyards. Fruit, cheese and crackers were available for the tasting experience.

The last day of the course allowed me a few extra minutes to stroll around the property where the quiet and peace was a reminder of the purpose of the Library. The sculpture of the horses crashing through a wall brings back the memories of the historic day when the "Wall Came Down."

The second day of classes featured the presentations of the Horticulture and Landscape Design staff including the awesome Dr. Whitney Griffin and Dr. Andrew King along with Bob Ruth and Gerald Barger.

For those of you who have an interest in landscaping, this course will certainly expose you to the elements of design.



The Discovery Garden Update



By Tom Fountain
MG 2008

Spring is here with the flowers and fruit trees starting to bloom and set fruit. All the low clouds and damp weather that we had made it seem more like winter. To make things worse, it seemed to have rained on almost all of the garden work days. However, the local weather records indicate temperatures have been a couple of degrees above normal and rainfall around the area has been normal to slightly below normal. The extended forecast indicates the probability that temperatures will continue above normal into summer and rainfall is likely to be slightly above normal, although we have had three or four sunny days in a row.

The picture (Fig. 1) of Robert, Pam, Julie and Tim heading for shelter as the rain began to get heavier is more indicative of our garden days the past few months. Despite the rain, some spring gardening has been accomplished. The new Intern 'class' tomato trial beds (Fig. 2) were planted. David (Fig. 3) was caught out in a light rain trimming one of the persimmon trees.

Spring is always an exciting time around the garden with harvesting remaining winter produce and cleaning beds to get spring and summer vegetables planted. Some of the spring harvest is headed to a food pantry (Fig. 4). There is always the mulching and plenty of weeding. Also, we have some new additions going on in the water garden and a sail-cloth rest area in the orchard is being built by Tim and Pam with occasional helpers.

We have continued to have visitors and provided tours and even had some timely workshops on grafting, pruning and planting fruit trees. One of our recent visitors and a great little helper was the granddaughter of Hedy. She is pictured (Fig. 5) helping Kay and Hedy harvest beets. Robert was conducting a workshop recently on how to plant an avocado tree (Fig. 6).

A warm spring sun is very welcoming after this damp cold winter and the garden is the ideal place to visit, to enjoy, and to learn. Each garden area has its own beauty and uniqueness, along with its own set of challenges. So come out to the garden! Visit, learn and enjoy! You can even get a little soil under your fingers.



Photos courtesy of MG Tom Fountain



easy recipes Seasonal Bites



By Sandra Gervais
MG 2011

Finally, a bit of sun has made the gardens perk up. Plants are cautiously beginning to leaf out; some are even starting to flower. Spring is on the horizon and hopefully all will be bright and beautiful in the gardening world for Easter. Here are a couple of delicious recipes that are simple and good to share, maybe even for Easter with the family. They were big hits at the February Master Gardener meeting.

Chicken Pot Pie Casserole 375°



- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 single pie crust, homemade or store bought (Let it come to room temperature while filling is being made) | 2 cups chicken stock or broth |
| 4 tablespoons unsalted butter | 1 teaspoon black pepper |
| 2 tablespoons olive oil | 1 cup heavy cream or half & half |
| 2 carrots cleaned and diced | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| 2 celery ribs diced | 1 teaspoon dried thyme |
| 2 garlic cloves peeled and minced/pressed | 1 teaspoon dried sweet basil |
| 3 cups cooked chicken cubed | 1 cup frozen peas thawed |
| 1 mild onion diced | 1 egg |
| 4 ounces mushrooms diced | |
| 1/4 cup plain flour | |

Heat butter and olive oil over medium heat until it shimmers. Add carrots and celery over and cook for 3 minutes. Add onion and cook until translucent. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add chicken, mushrooms, and peas and cook for 1-2 minutes. Sprinkle with flour and cook for 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Stir in chicken broth and scrape bottom of pan to deglaze. Pour in heavy cream or half & half and stir well. Season with salt and pepper, and then add thyme and basil. Continue cooking until thickened to a thick stew-like consistency. Adjust seasonings to taste. Spray a 2 quart casserole dish with non-stick cooking spray. Fill with the chicken mix.

Roll out the room temperature pie crust to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut into 1 inch strips and use to make lattice top on casserole. Use egg beaten with a little water to make egg wash. Brush on lattice top.

Bake in center of oven at 375 degrees for 35-45 minutes until top is golden.

Mary Gonzales has made her Chicken Pot Pie for our potluck meetings before and it's always a hit. She was happy to share it because she says it's not only good, it's really easy to make. That's my kind of recipe.

And for those of us with a sweet tooth, Karolyn Gephart's Southern Pecan Praline Cake is a great addition to our dessert list. It's a beautiful eye-ful when made in a fancy Bundt cake pan but works just fine in a regular 9 x 13 pan. It's unusual in that the can of frosting goes into the cake batter and has nothing to do with the glaze on top. Unusual indeed.

Southern Pecan Praline Cake 350°



Cake

- 1 box Betty Crocker Butter Pecan cake mix
- 16 ounce can Betty Crocker Coconut Pecan frosting
- 4 large eggs
- 3/4 cup canola or coconut oil
- 1 cup half and half (use instead of water to increase flavor)
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Butter Pecan Glaze

- 14 ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Grease or spray Bundt pan or 9x13 baking dish. Combine all ingredients except for pecans in mixing bowl. Mix well. Add pecans and stir to combine. Pour batter into prepared baking dish. Bake for 40-50 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

Note

This cake took 50 minutes to bake in a Bundt pan but will cook faster in a 9x13 pan.

While cake is baking, make the glaze. Melt butter over medium heat in small saucepan. Add condensed milk and stir. Heat thoroughly, and then add chopped pecans. Stir to combine, and then remove from heat. Spread over cake and let cool, or Glaze can be spread over cake slices when served.

Master Gardeners are Leaders



**By Sharon Zaal
MG 2015**

If you've been in nonprofit organizations before, you've likely heard of or worked with board members who just don't carry their weight in the organization. Maybe they weren't attending board meetings, or participating in events of the organization, or engaging in committees. In another case, you may have encountered a Board of Directors that primarily provided influence in the community, donor connections, fiduciary oversight, and, as a Master Gardener HAS to say without ever really participating in the grass roots efforts of the organization. Neither of these scenarios can be used to describe the Board of Directors for the Galveston County Master Gardener Association (GCMG). We are fortunate to have Board members who are personally invested and engaged in the mission of our organization. They are all Master Gardener volunteers first, and continue to volunteer in numerous ways beyond their specific duties as Board members.

The express purpose of our Board of Directors is to advise and guide the organization through the elected officers. The Board is also responsible for the annual audit of financial records, and for approval of the annual budget. While these are specific Board duties and responsibilities called for in the GCMG bylaws, the Master Gardener members serving on the Board will typically have a long history of hands-on volunteering in the organization. As a result, these Board members are our best ambassadors, advocates, strategists, and all around supporters. GCMG's leadership is comprised of the five members serving on the Board of Directors, president, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurer, State delegates, and committee chairpersons, and the Galveston County Master Gardener Program Coordinator, Dr. Johnson. Together, in a collaborative partnership, this leadership team provides the organization with a direction that is consistently improving and supporting our goals.

If you are interested in an overview of what is happening within our Galveston County Master Gardener Association, you might consider attending the quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors. The quarterly meetings are held on the "first Thursday" in the months of March, June, September and December, at 1 p.m. at the Extension Office. Anyone may attend and anyone may request a subject be put on the agenda through Ginger Benson. Consider attending one of the meetings to find out what is happening in our organization or perhaps volunteer to serve in some capacity.

Members of the current Board of Directors, elected for three-year terms, serve in additional volunteer capacities (all too numerous to mention).

This Board of Directors truly exemplifies the spirit of engaged volunteers working at all levels of the organization to fulfill our mission. This culture of engaged volunteerism is reflected in the vitality of the Galveston County Master Gardener Association and its continued contributions to the community.



**Julie Cartmill, MG 2007
Discovery Garden-Orchard Coordinator**



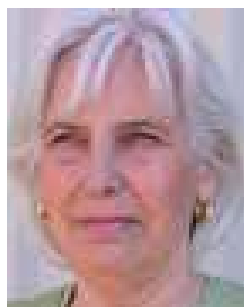
**Camille Goodwin, MG 2008
Plant Sale Bulbs Coordinator**



**Tim Jahnke, MG 2011
Discovery Garden Orchard Team
Audit Chair**



**Frank Resch, MG 2007
Board of Directors Chair,
5-Year Strategic Plan Committee Chair**



**Tish Reustle, MG 2008
Discovery Garden-Serenity
Garden Coordinator**

GCMGA Meeting Minutes



By Briana Etie
MG 2017

Tuesday February 12, 2019.

Members began arriving at 5:30pm. We enjoyed socializing until 6:00pm Sharon Zahl opened the meeting with a warm welcome.

Everyone enjoyed a pot luck dinner until 6:30 when Karolyn started her program highlighting the 2019 Spring Sale Plants. She did an excellent job. Everyone enjoyed it with a few good laughs as well.

Don't forget MGs if you attended, log your CE hours.



Tuesday March 12, 2019.

We invited Master Naturalists to this meeting for a movie night. "Five Seasons The Gardens of Piet Oudolf."

We enjoyed each other's company and snacks before the movie that started a little later than 6:30pm. We also took a great group photo. We all enjoyed the movie. Again MGs don't forget to log your CE hours for 75 minutes (1.25 hours) if you were an attendee.



2019 Master Gardener Recertification Hours

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
2/2/2019	Growing Great Tomatoes	Ira Gervais	2.25
2/2/2019	Spring Plant Sale Overview	Karolyn Gephart	1.25
2/2/2019	Growing Peaches in Galveston County	Herman Auer	2.00
2/2/2019	Successful Spring Vegetables	Jenni Hudgins	2.00
2/5/2019	MG Training Class - Class Orientation	Dr. William M. Johnson	4.00
2/7/2019	MG Training Class - Botany	Jayla Fry	3.00
2/9/2019	Growing & Using Herbs	Tricia Bradbury	2.50
2/9/2019	Planting Fruit Trees	Herman Auer	2.00
2/12/2019	MG Training Class - Vegetables	Tom LeRoy	4.00
2/12/2019	MGA Feb. Meeting - Spring Plant Sale Overview	Karolyn Gephart	0.75
2/19/2019	MG Training Class - Plant Pathology	Dr. David Appel	4.00
2/19/2019	Homeowner's Guide to Weed Control	John Jons	1.50
2/21/2019	Peach Pruning - hands-on demonstration	Robert Marshall	1.00
2/21/2019	Rose Pruning - hands-on demonstration	John Jons	1.25
2/26/2019	MG Training Class - Home Fruit & Citrus Production	Herman Auer	4.00
2/28/2019	Grape Pruning - hands-on demonstration	David Cooper	1.00
3/2/2019	The Culture & Care of Palms	O.J. Miller	3.00
3/5/2019	MG Training Class - Insect Pest ID & Management	Dr. Robert Puckett	4.00

Use this link to see the entire list.

https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/2019_MG_Recertification_Educational_Credit_Hours.pdf

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.

GCMGA Weather Station at the Discovery Garden

The bulletin of the GCMGA Weather Station data is accessible at www.weatherlink.com/embeddablePage/show/269c8db099654c0fa522d3420104b173/wide

Copy the entire link and paste it into your browser. This data bulletin format is great for smart phone use. If you want all of the GCMGA data including graphs of the user selected parameters, you will need to set up your own free WeatherLink account. Details of this process were published in the September/October 2018 issue of Gulf Coast Gardening on page 30 or you can contact Ken Goodwin at krgoodwin@comcast.net, who installed and maintains our Davis Weather Station in our Discovery Garden.

GULF COAST GARDENING EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS

Upcoming Events - May 2019

Galveston County Master Gardener Educational Programs for Interested Gardeners

The following 2019 Master Gardener Programs are free to the public.

Location: **Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park • 4102 - B Main Street (FM 519), La Marque, Texas 77568**

GPS location: **29.359705, -95.003591**

For course reservations, call 281-309-5065 or email galvcountymgs@gmail.com

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

SUCCULENT PROPAGATION (a hands-on demonstration)

Saturday, May 4

galvcountymgs@gmail.com to pre-register

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park,
4102-B Main Street (FM 519), La Marque 77568

Want to learn how to expand your succulent collection? Certified Texas Master Gardeners Paula Spletter and Marilyn Hill will present a hands-on class that will give you all the tools you'll need, class materials will be included. Paula is the Creative Director and Marilyn is the Container Specialist with the prestigious Northaven Gardens in Dallas.

MODERN SUCCULENTS WITH TILLANDSIAS WORKSHOP

(a hands-on demonstration)

Saturday, May 4, 2019

1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park,
4102-B Main Street (FM 519), La Marque 77568

Join Dallas County Master Gardeners Paula Spletter and Marilyn Hill for a creative class mixing succulents and tillandsias with a modern twist. Paula is the Creative Director and Marilyn the Container Specialist with the prestigious Northaven Gardens in Dallas.

****Course fee of \$30 to cover materials, you will get to keep your succulent creation****

****Class size will be limited to 40 participants, and pre-registration is required****

HOME FRUIT GROWERS' TOUR

Saturday, May 18, 2019

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Three fruit orchards are on the tour this year. Vegetable gardens at each site will also be open. The tour sites contain a wide variety of fruit trees, ranging from a peach orchard in Dickinson, the Galveston County Master Gardener Discovery Garden Orchard in La Marque, and a sizeable home orchard in Santa Fe. Each site will be open from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon. No pre-registration needed; visit sites in any desired order. There is no RAIN DATE for this event. It will occur, rain or shine. Wear appropriate shoes and bring other rain gear as needed.

Orchard locations:

1. Galveston County Master Gardener homeowner at
5202 Highland Road, Santa Fe, TX 77517
2. Galveston County Master Gardener Demonstration Orchard and Garden,
4102 Main Street (Hwy 519), La Marque, TX 77568
3. Wilson and Renee Hillman's Fruits 'n Such orchard at
6309 Ave. U, Dickinson, TX 77539; located off Bowerman Road and
FM 517; ph. 832-443-6733

ALL ABOUT LOUISIANA IRISES

Saturday, May 18, 2019

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

This program builds on our previous presentation "Irises for the Gulf Coast Garden" by Galveston County Master Gardener Monica Martens. Focusing specifically on this hardy species for our climate, this presentation addresses how to obtain Louisiana Irises and share.





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!

NEW! Budding & Grafting – April 2-3, hosted by Waller County, Brookshire
Plant Propagation – April 12-13, hosted by Tarrant County, Fort 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
Greenhouse Management – October 17-19, hosted by Tarrant County, Fort 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
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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.



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Figs Easy to Grow in Home Landscapes

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

Home gardeners in Galveston County frequently have fruit trees in their landscapes, and the fig is certainly one of the most popular. If you're a fan of figs, you'll be glad to know that fig trees are one of the easiest fruit trees to grow around your home. With little care, they will produce crops of juicy, sweet figs every year. The fruit is tasty and can be eaten fresh, made into preserves and jams or used in baking. Figs make nice additions to landscape plantings.

The fig, *Ficus carica*, was first introduced to the Americas in 1575 by Spanish explorers in Florida.

Figs originated in the Old World Tropics in the Mediterranean region where it has been cultivated since as early as 5,000 BC.

Local gardeners grow several cultivars of figs. One of the most popular and reliable fig cultivars is known as Celeste which happens to be my favorite cultivar. Celeste figs are small- to medium-size fruits with purplish-bronze to light brown skin color. Celeste begins ripening in early July and is good fresh or processed. I'm partial to the sweet flavor of freshly harvested Celeste figs.

Another popular cultivar of fig is known as LSU Purple which has medium-size, dark-purple fruit and good resistance to foliage diseases. LSU Purple has a tendency to produce three distinct crops, a light crop in early spring, a heavy main crop in early July and a later crop sometimes lasting into the fall. Figs should be planted in a sunny location away from large trees with overhanging branches. Figs will not produce well unless they receive at least eight hours of direct sun daily, and more is better.

Fig trees ordinarily do not produce a good crop of fruit until the third or fourth year after planting. One- to four-year-old trees often produce fruit (you'll see little green figs where the leaves join the stem), but it usually fails to ripen and drops off. LSU Purple is an exception, often producing small crops one to two years after planting.

You may train your fig into a large bush-like shape with several trunks or into a more typical tree shape with a single trunk. You won't need to do much pruning the first few years after planting — other than beginning to shape it the way you want it to grow. Mid-February to mid-March is great time to prune fig trees to ensure maximum production of fruit that can be easily harvested, i.e., does not require a ladder to harvest high-hanging fruits. Yearly pruning helps to maintain vigor, create the desired shape of the tree and control its size (which makes harvesting easier).

It is better to moderately prune your fig every year or two than to allow it to grow so large that severe pruning is required. Most of the branches cut back should be no larger than 1 inch to 2 inches in diameter.

If significantly cutting back is done to substantially reduce the size of or

rejuvenate an older tree, fruit production the following summer generally will be reduced. The tree should, however, produce well thereafter.

Describing how to prune a fig tree, or any other tree in a home landscape, is a relatively straightforward task. However, I have observed that when it comes to actually pruning a tree (regardless as to whether the tree is for food production or for landscape aesthetics), many gardeners are a bit hesitant to make that first cut.



Home gardeners in Galveston County frequently have fruit trees in their landscapes and the fig is certainly one of the most popular.

Photos courtesy of Dr. William M. Johnson

2019 GCMGA Monthly Meetings



By Judy Anderson
MG 2012

You're Invited Monthly Backyard Meetings

It's spring and a busy time for all Master Gardeners, but mark your calendars. We have two backyard meetings scheduled you don't want to miss. Backyard meetings are a good time to visit with other Master Gardeners without tools and work gloves. We are very fortunate in Galveston County to have members who share their homes and hospitality for these friendly gatherings. These patio meals will be pot luck so bring a covered dish and chairs for you and your guest.

Tuesday, April 9, 2019



Karen and Tom Morris have been hosting the April Backyard Meeting. Located in Bacliff on the Houston Ship Channel, the Morris home offers a panoramic view of the boat traffic on the inter-coastal waterway. We never know what the weather will be like, but Karen and Tom are always prepared. Karen will lead a tour of the property during the evening. Vegetables are planted as part of the landscape. She describes her orchard as small, but it features 16 fruit trees including Ana apples, blueberries, and blackberries.

Karen and Tom extend an enthusiastic welcome to the Master Gardeners for the April Backyard meeting. The Morris home is on Bayshore Dr. and they have requested all drivers avoid parking in the street. Look for signs indicating parking for the meeting. Neighbors and emergency vehicles need access. Directions to the home will be sent by email. Please join the Galveston County Master Gardeners for an evening of good food and fellowship.

Tuesday, May 14, 2019



Mark your calendar for the May Master Gardener Backyard Meeting. Nancy and Darryl Greenfield are looking forward to hosting the Master Gardeners at their home in Pirates Beach. No walking the plank here, just relax and let the gulf breeze sing the silent refrains of long ago pirate songs. This will be a great opportunity to see what is growing in West Galveston and watch the beautiful sunset. Mainlanders and islanders are welcome to this Master Gardener gathering as we look forward to the lazy days of summer.

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

Galveston County Master Gardeners 2019 Monthly Meetings

May 14, 2019

Backyard Meeting
Hosted by Darryl and Nancy Greenfield
Pot Luck
Galveston

June 11, 2019

Mikey and Allen Isbell
Graduation and Recognition
Pot Luck
Galveston

July 9, 2019

Donita Brannon
The Philadelphia International Flower Show
Pot Luck Extension Office

August 13, 2019

To be Announced

September 10, 2019

Backyard Meeting
The Galvestonian
Carol Jean Mulrain
Pot Luck
Galveston

October 8, 2019 – Subject to Change

Plant Sale Preview
1:00 p.m. Extension Office
Karolyn Gephart

November 12, 2019

Annual Meeting
Extension Office
Pot Luck

December 10, 2019

Mikey and Allen Isbell
Holiday Party
Galveston

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