THE TREE ISSUE • FALL PLANTING

GULF COAST Gardening

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TEXAS MASTER GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
Galveston County

If the Oaks could talk . . . oh the stories!

I think I've always loved trees. They are like old friends with shared experiences. Though I doubt that many of the trees in the backyard of my childhood home are still standing, I would like to think that perhaps the live oak tree with the swing might still be there. If we could chat, we would have some wonderful memories to share.

If I had to pick a favorite type of tree to love amongst so many, I would choose the stately oak, for its longevity alone. There are many types of oaks, but the oldest live oaks in the country are estimated to be between several hundred to more than a thousand years old.

That's a lot of history! Generations of people, long gone, walked amongst these "majestics". Oaks living today have weathered battles, storms, fires, and calamities. Oh, what tales they would tell if they could only speak!

But trees can speak to us if we will listen. If you can do one thing for yourself today, go take a walk in nature. Really pay attention to the trees. Tune in with all of your senses: your eyes, your ears, your nose, your touch. The trees will speak of the wonders of nature and the abundance it brings to us.

Sharon Zaal
GCMG President

Celebrate Fall with trees

In this issue we celebrate trees for their beauty, their gifts, their shade and more.

In Galveston County, watchful eyes are on the lead tree in the marsh on the way to Galveston. One of its kind in the state, the aftereffects of the February freeze are showing and the life of the tree is in danger. The tree told its story through Galveston County Master Gardener and writer Dr. Margaret Canavan. A large image of the tree hangs in the kitchen area of the Discovery Garden for all to enjoy.

In Friendswood, a resident proudly displays a crape myrtle that was measured and tagged as largest of its kind in Texas in 2010. It has continued to grow and bloom profusely. The tree was certified on May 6, 2010 and the certificate was signed by Tom Boggus, State Forester and Director and Peter D. Smith, Texas Big Tree Registry Coordinator. At that time the tree was 109 inches in circumference, 32 feet in height, and 36 feet in crown spread. The tree has grown quite a bit since then, according to its owner who thinks it probably should be measured again.

See more celebrity trees on pages 14-15. The photos show how majestic these trees are.

We also celebrate GCMG Linda Steber who has been the editor of this publication for 25 years. With 11 awards at the State level, Linda accomplished an evolution of production that has brought Gulf Coast Gardening to where it is today. Brava, Linda! She tells the story of it all on page 21.

Enjoy this issue perhaps in a hammock under a big shady tree.

Karolyn Gephart

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Contact Us

Extension Office: 281-309-5065 | galvcountymgs@gmail.com

Horticulture Help Line: 281-534-3413 Ext. 1-1

Speakers Bureau: Nancy Langston-Noh @ 832-289-7087 and Betty Webb @ 281-630-0103 at gcmg.speakersbureau@gmail.com

Written by Galveston County Master Gardeners in cooperation with the Galveston County Extension Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Perfect timing to replace citrus

Robert Marshall
GCMG 2012

Rio Red grapefruit
Top
Seedless Lisbon
Middle
Armstrong Satsuma
Bottom

The winter of 2021 proved to be tough on our citrus trees and many of them will need to be replaced.

The best citrus to grow in this area is whatever your family likes - because all of it does well as long as our weather is within normal ranges. If you're worried about future freezes, use cold hardiness to assess potential damage to leaves and wood for mature plants. Kumquats are the most cold hardy, and will withstand temperatures down into the teens. Next on the cold hardy list, withstanding temperatures into the low twenties, are satsumas and many other mandarins. Oranges and grapefruits can handle temperatures to around 25 degrees while lemons and limes are going to freeze at around 28 degrees. The Meyer lemon is the exception and can handle temperatures down to around 25 degrees.

Photo by Dr. William Johnson

Photo by Robert Marshall

The word "frost" in front of a citrus variety name is supposed to indicate it is more cold hardy. Variety Orange Frost in our Discovery Garden orchard was the first to put out new leaves and showed little serious damage from the February 2021 freeze.

Photo by Dr. William Johnson

Citrus growers have many choices of grapefruits, lemons, limes and oranges. Here are some of my personal favorites. Sanguinelli orange - hands down the best orange I have ever eaten. Other favorites include Moro Blood orange and the Cara Cara orange. It's a toss-up between Kinnow mandarin and Kimbrough satsuma. Okitsu Satsuma is another good one and Owari satsuma is the reference standard of all satsumas for taste, so you won't go wrong adding one. For grapefruit trees you have Rio Red and Ruby Red; both are mildly acidic. If you don't like the acid of grapefruit there is the Oro Blanco pomelo which is sweet with no acid. Another favorite is the Sarawak pomelo, but both are more sensitive to cold than most of other grapefruit varieties.

Limes and lemons are another good choice and there are several varieties normally available to plant. The Persian Lime is normally picked green, but if left on the tree until pale yellow it develops a milder lime flavor. The Eureka and Lisbon are the lemons you see at the store. True lemons or limes set multiple groups of fruit per year. They blossom year round and set some fruit which then starts to grow and in a month or so, set more blossoms and fruit. Sweet lemons include Ujukitsu and New Zealand Lemonade. These can provide juice that, in my opinion, doesn't need any added sugar to make lemonade.

It is recommended to plant citrus anywhere between the fall to late winter, but I consider the ideal time to plant any fruit tree is mid fall. The weather has cooled down a bit so the new tree doesn't have to deal with hot weather along with planting stress. And as long as the ground temperatures are above 45 degrees, the roots will continue to grow, giving the tree a head start on those trees that weren't planted until early March after the last chance of a freeze has passed.

For limes and lemons, it's recommended to grow them in 15 to 20 gallon pots so they can be brought inside when the weatherman predicts cold weather. Added bonus, having a blooming lemon tree in the house is going to make the whole house smell great. The exception is the Meyer lemon which can be planted outdoors.

More information on establishing citrus can be found in this Aggie Horticulture article or from our very own Galveston Master Gardener publication.

Backyard fruit trees, follow your dream

West of Bellville, Texas on Mill Creek Road near the intersection of Kuykendall Road is about two acres of trifoliate, a citrus tree used as a rootstock that provides some cold hardiness to the citrus grafted on top of it. This tree goes semidormant in the winter and with two-inch-long thorns, it can make an evergreen people-proof fence. This stand of trifoliate is part of a dream to prove citrus can grow in Bellville.

The rootstock of trifoliate can produce a satsuma about 8 feet tall and about 10 feet wide in a large yard. A variety of trifoliate named Flying dragon used as a rootstock can produce a satsuma smaller in stature about 6 feet tall and about 7 feet wide, just right for the small backyard and can produce for over 30 years. Both rootstocks do very well in our heavy soil but they do not like high salt on their roots. For my trees that had protection, six of the 11 citrus on trifoliate or flying dragon did well after the freeze. At a local orchard, citrus on flying dragon and trifoliate had almost no damage from the 2021 freeze even though the citrus wasn't protected.

When considering planting a fruit tree in your yard, ask yourself if you have the space for it with good drainage, air movement, sunlight and access to water? Is the variety you want available, how much care is needed, will its foliage create a security risk for your family? Does the variety have chilling requirements that match our climate? In our area we recommend planting fruit tree varieties that need 300 hours of chill, plus or minus 100 hours. Research, and remember the rootstock.

You should be able to expect 15 plus years of production from a single peach tree. Peach and plum care is similar but some plums need a pollinizer. Nemaguard and Guardian are the two best stone fruit rootstocks for our area however they don't tolerate wet feet, and drainage is a must.

Some pears can grow to be well over 60 years old. Biscamp, Pineapple and Acres Home are pear varieties that can do very well in the county and seem to be resistant to fire blight, a fungus that over time may slowly kill a pear tree. I have seen the Pineapple pear produce so much fruit that it didn't produce any new wood on the tree. Pyrus calleryana is a pear species used as the rootstock in heavy soil that are started by stooling. Some pears need a pollinizer.

I have seen some beautiful apples produced in the county. Apple rootstock M.111 is semi-dwarfing and can produce a tree 85 percent of a full-size tree. The Anna variety needs the Dorset Golden variety as a pollinizer and both are good pome fruit for the area. Growth and culture are similar to pears and at times may be infected by fire blight.

Loquat, an evergreen tree that grows as far north as Dallas, is a nice tree that blooms in the fall and the fruit is ripe about May. The fruit is very good for eating fresh, and makes beautiful jelly and wine. The tree does not get very large. Planting seeds or buying established trees work.

If you are wondering if Bellville has produced citrus, the answer is no. A freeze will kill the top graft and leave the trifoliate bare. What Bellville does have is a two-acre lot with lots of evergreen people-proof fences.

Follow your dream but do your research.

Herman Auer
GCMG 1983

Honey Mandarin
Top left
Peach Tree
Bottom left
Backyard Pluot
Bottom right

Photos by Herman Auer

Selecting the perfect tree

Tish Reustle
GCMG 2012

All gardeners at some point have dreamed of resting from their labors and sipping a cold drink in the shade of their own tree. Trees provide shade in summer and trap warmth during winter which helps reduce the energy bill. Trees can provide food for humans, block unsightly views and dampen traffic noise. Trees can provide shelter and food for small creatures, berries and nesting sites for birds, and nectar for pollinators. They can increase the value of your property and even improve the quality of your air. But, a tree is a big investment in time and money. What may look perfect in that nursery pot will look different in five and ten years and a little thought and planning now can prevent future grief.

First answer some important questions. How much space can you give this new tree? The distance between house wall and the sidewalk or fence is crucial. Tree roots can break foundations and lift concrete so understanding your space constraints is important. Look upwards as well and check for power lines; energy companies are not known for their pruning skills and have the right to take the top off your tree if it gets too tall. Plan for the adult height and spread of your tree accordingly. Then look down as well. Is digging an adequate hole for your new tree going to bring you into conflict with water pipes or irrigation systems? That's a problem worth preventing.

Secondly, what is the tree's new environment? Will it be sandy, loamy soil or heavy clay? Will it be well-drained or prone to hold water during rains? Is the proposed planting area in full sun or heavy shade? Is it a windy spot? Your tree would like to know.

There are a few more questions to ask yourself. Do you want a tree that will provide flowers like a Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*)? Do you expect your tree to provide food like a fruit or nut tree? How do you feel about raking leaves? A deciduous tree will give you shade in the summer but will drop its leaves in the fall. This allows the winter sun to reach your windows and warm your house. An evergreen tree, on the other hand, will not lose its leaves all at once and can provide you with a wind break or block an unsightly view. Is providing a habitat for birds and pollinators important to you? Birds love to eat the berries on Serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*) and all kinds of bees are attracted to Texas Sage (*Leucophyllum frutescens*).

Next, a little research is required. Know your planting zone. Find out which trees are native or well adapted to the area in which you live. Be aware that the Texas Department of Agriculture has a noxious and invasive plant list; you can also find an invasive plant database online to help you avoid trees such as Chinese Tallow (*Triadica sebifera*) that are not recommended for coastal prairies because of their invasive nature.

When you have answered all these questions and done some research, you are well prepared to buy your tree. If you have a nursery close to you, that is the best place to go as it will most likely have trees suitable for your area and good advice as well. Some nurseries will even plant your tree for you.

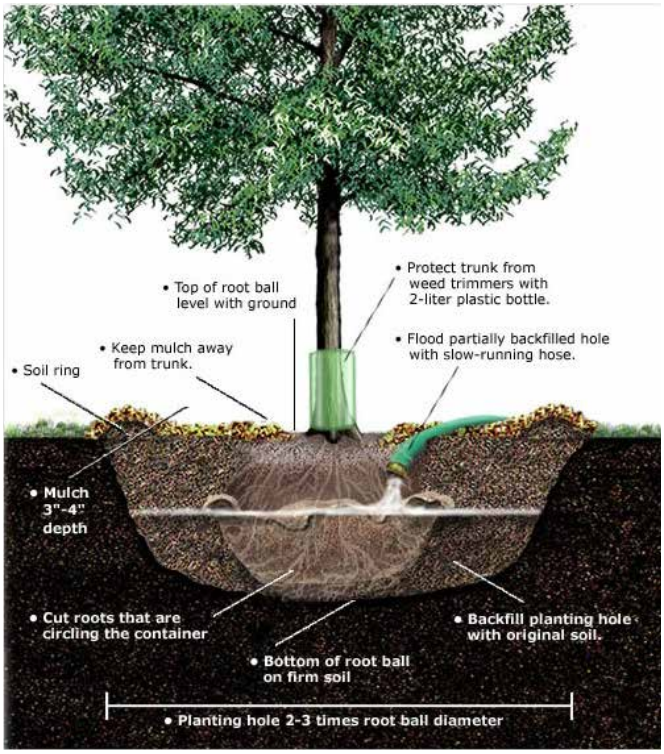
May you spend many years sipping iced tea in the shade of your carefully chosen tree!

Planting a tree properly

Kevin Lancon
GCMG 2018

With the recent extreme freeze that we all endured in early 2021, many of us are considering replacing dead trees or modifying our landscape, hence a refresher on planting trees would seem not only appropriate, but also timely.

With cooler weather just around the corner and the heat of the summer receding, fall may be the best season to plant a tree, surpassing even the spring. Many people prefer spring for planting, but the fall months of September through December are a great time to plant trees, and have many distinct advantages over spring planting. One of the primary advantages in planting during fall is ~~that~~ the stress of the hot summer is behind us and cooler, more temperate weather occurs during these months.



Since plant roots grow anytime the soil temperature is 40 degrees, this allows the newly planted tree time to acclimate to its new home and establish a good root system before being stressed by our summer heat. During our normal winter months, this past year not included, the root systems of a fall planted tree can continue to develop and become established throughout the winter. When spring arrives, this expanded root system can support and take advantage of the full surge of spring growth.

Every plant in the landscape should serve a purpose, therefore it's critical to plan before you plant. It's much easier to move plants on paper than to dig them up after planting in the wrong location.

All plants have growing requirements. Think about the plant's needs before making a selection. Is it adapted to your area's conditions or soil? Will it grow in sun or shade? Does it need a wet or dry location? Is it cold hardy or heat tolerant? Some nurseries have this type of information on tags beside the plant. If not, do some homework and research to make sure it's a good fit. Also, when buying plants for your landscape, be sure to get healthy, well-grown plants. Always buy from a reputable dealer.

Finally, it is critical to follow proper planting procedures to ensure success. Here are a few guidelines on getting the job done right:

Dig a hole large enough in diameter so that the root system has at least six inches of clearance on all sides. The root ball should rest on a solid soil foundation slightly above the existing soil level, so don't dig the hole deeper than the ball.

Plant the tree or shrub slightly above the level of the surrounding soil to allow for settling and increased soil drainage.

Carefully place the tree or shrub in the hole. Handle the plant by the root ball, not by the trunk. A broken root ball can mean a dead plant. Always remove any container before you plant.

Backfill the hole, using only the native soil removed from the hole; do not use soil amendments when planting large shrubs and trees. Fill the hole and firm the soil around the plant. Water thoroughly to settle the soil around the roots and to eliminate any air pockets.

Do not fertilize your tree or shrub after planting. Wait until early in the spring to do this, and even then, go lightly. Heavy applications of fertilizer may burn and injure the root system, and could possibly kill the plant.

Watering has been and remains paramount in transplanting. At the time of transplanting, soak the root ball and surrounding soil. A thorough watering every 7 to 10 days dramatically increases the success rate. More frequent watering may encourage root rot. Remember more trees and shrubs fail from over watering then from under watering.

Secure or stake the tree to provide support while the root system gets established and add 4 to 6 inches of mulch around the base of the newly planted trees. This helps to keep down weeds, conserve soil moisture and protect from weed eater or mower damage.

https://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu/PlantTreeProperly.htm

What causes tree decline?

Laurel Stine
GCMG 2002

Trees can present some of the most puzzling problems for the gardener, because they can cover a lot of area and remain there for a long time. While it can be easy for a gardener to remember a cause of damage, such as a hurricane or lightning strike, many times the causes of dieback can seem a mystery.

Trees store energy in the form of starch. Starch is considered the money, or the energy, in the tree bank. The bank is the living xylem or wood in branches, stems, trunk, and roots. If there is less stored starch, there is less stored energy in the bank. Trees need stored starch to carry on normal functions, especially to break dormancy in temperate trees.

Past environmental conditions, particularly those which occur during succeeding years, affect how much starch a tree has in its tree bank in the present day. These conditions can range from natural causes, such as droughts or floods, or man-made causes, such as construction or improper irrigation.

Photo by Wayne Clatterbuck

Crown dieback of an oak tree

Tree decline symptoms develop slowly and subtly, and affected trees may survive indefinitely. But, they may die within a year or two after the first symptoms are noted. It can take several years for significant symptoms to manifest in a fully mature oak tree.

Symptoms of tree decline are: The crowns of affected trees often thin out. Terminal branch growth becomes limited, and branches may die, beginning at the top of the tree and progressing downward. Leaf scorch frequently accompanies the syndrome, also.

Care should be taken to not let too much of the canopy die back, as it may not have the vitality to come back to its original form, even with ensuing good care.

Because trees can give the illusion that they live forever and can withstand many things, gardeners tend to ignore them. Good old-fashioned neglect, I have found, is one of the primary causes of tree decline.

Improper care, such as not enough water (or too much), can put a tree into decline, especially if done over succeeding growing seasons. The same applies to fertilization practices.

Damage to the trunk or branches can harm the tree's circulation and deprive it of moisture and nutrients. Lawn equipment can strike the trunk and create wounds. Misuse of herbicides, either sprayed or applied to the soil, can impact a tree. Improper pruning can create wounds which allow insects and/or diseases to enter the tree and stress it further.

As a tree grows, girdling roots can press in on the cambium layer and impact circulation. Most tree roots are located in the top 8 to 12 inches of the soil and occupy an area two to three times the diameter of the tree canopy

Having other trees too close can deprive the tree of needed moisture and nutrients because of their competing root systems.

Any disturbance to the root zone of a tree can harm it. Grading, putting more soil, any activity which might significantly sever the roots, such as digging ditches, impacts the tree's ability to take up moisture and nutrients.

The amount of oxygen in the root zone of a tree is just as important as the amount of water. Anything that compresses the soil in the root zone — running heavy equipment over it, parking cars, etc. — deprives the roots of air space and suffocates them. Overwatering does the same thing by filling the air spaces with moisture. Adding more than two inches of soil over the root zone during a growing season can suffocate roots as well.

Be aware of any chemicals, such as power washing solutions, which may flow into the root zone.

Trees in the early stages of decline can sometimes be stabilized through proper management. First, follow the recommendations given for routine watering. Next, a competent arborist should check the tree for problems such as girdling roots, unfavorable soil pH, or damage by borer-type insects and diseases, and treat the tree if necessary. With proper care and management, the rate of decline may be reduced and further problems prevented.

The savvy gardener is aware that a mature tree is a living thing, with ongoing needs, just like the smaller plants gardeners tend in their landscapes. And while no tree lives forever, good care can help ensure many years of shade and beauty.

Galveston: Tree City USA for the third year!

The city of Galveston has been named a Tree City USA Community for the third consecutive year by the Arbor Day Foundation. The Tree City USA designation recognizes the city of Galveston's commitment to effective urban forest management.

Achieving even one year as a Tree City USA Community was unthinkable only a few years ago. In 2008, the city of Galveston lost over 95 percent of its tree canopy cover due to Hurricane Ike. Since then, the city of Galveston in partnership with Galveston Island Tree Conservancy and the private sector have planted over 19,989 trees towards a 25,000-tree goal. The city of Galveston Tree Committee members (including five Galveston County Master Gardeners) have worked with City Council and the Parks Board to create awareness of the value of trees and ordinances protecting public and private trees in the city of Galveston.

Why should we care about planting more trees and vegetation in Galveston County communities?

- *Lower surface and air temperatures:* Trees and vegetation reduce temperatures by providing shade and evapotranspiration. Shaded surfaces, for example, may be 20–45 degrees Fahrenheit cooler than the peak temperatures of unshaded materials. Evapotranspiration, alone or in combination with shading, can help reduce peak summer temperatures by two-nine degrees Fahrenheit.
- *Reduced energy use:* Trees and vegetation that directly shade buildings decrease demand for air conditioning. Planting deciduous trees or vines on the west side of buildings was most effective if the vegetation shaded the building's roof and windows.
- *Improved air quality and lower greenhouse gas emissions:* By reducing energy demand, trees and vegetation decrease the production of associated air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. They also remove air pollutants and store and sequester carbon dioxide.
- *Enhanced stormwater management and water quality:* Trees and vegetation reduce water runoff and improve water quality by absorbing and filtering rainwater.
- *Improved quality of life:* Trees and vegetation provide aesthetic value, habitat for many species, and noise reduction.

The city of Galveston achieved Tree City USA community status for the last three years by achieving four requirements:

1. A tree board or department that creates awareness of what trees do for a community and provides broad support for better tree care.
2. A public tree care ordinance that provides clear guidance for planting, maintaining, and removing trees from streets, parks, and other public spaces as well as activities that are required or prohibited.
3. A community forestry budget of at least $2 per capita annually. (Galveston's 2019 expenditures were $10 and $14 in 2020.)

Galveston County Master Gardeners have been involved in the city of Galveston Tree Committee and Tree City USA designation. They include Kathy Maines, Vicki Blythe, Susan Roth, Dr. Margaret Canavan, and Nancy Greenfield.

Nancy Greenfield
GCMG 2017

Tree City Dedication at Galveston City Council Meeting in July 2021. Pictured below are Dorothy Trevino, Megan Pearce, Dr. Alice Anne O'Donell, Barbara Sanderson, Vicki Blythe, Cesar Garcia, Kathy Maines, Jan Davis, Priscilla Files, and Nancy Greenfield.

Certain plants can grow well under trees

Elayne Kouzounis-
GCMG 1998

It is possible to install flower beds under large shade trees without building a raised bed, but you will have to take several factors into consideration. How much light and rain can penetrate the tree canopy? How thick and shallow are the tree roots? Even if enough light and rain reach the soil, shallow tree roots can be a prohibitive problem. Tree roots do not grow straight down into the earth as commonly believed; they grow in the top 18 inches of the soil, spreading out far beyond the drip line. Roots can quickly invade flower beds and sap all the water and nutrients from them. Maples, sycamores, and beeches are among the worst offenders, and planting beneath them almost always ends in disappointment.

Some trees, however, such as oaks and conifers, have deeper- growing roots and can coexist well with other plantings. Beds planted beneath small trees—with a mature height of under 20 feet—typically do well, since such trees have smaller, less invasive root systems.

If you find relatively root-free areas under trees where you can place plants, you are in luck; some of the most beautiful landscape scenes are made up of lush plants that thrive and look their best in the shade of handsome trees.

To grow herbaceous plants at the foot of a mature tree, the soil must be relatively free of roots—unless you are willing to cut away some roots, a method of last resort. To find out how dense the roots are, push a shovel into the ground. If the blade is stopped by a mesh of roots, move to a new spot and try again until the shovel penetrates at least as deep as the length of the blade. If you must chop through a major root, take care not to over stress the tree. Do not cut away more than 10 percent of the total root network, and have the crown pruned back a proportionate amount.

Always check the drainage of the soil in such a site. Dig a hole twice as wide and deep as the root ball you are planting and fill it with water. If the

Yellow lantana and yellow weigela under a magnolia tree.

"Understanding trees is an essential part of our learning..."

water does not drain away after 15 minutes, either improve the drainage or put in plants that tolerate boggy conditions.

Set the crown of the plant slightly above the soil level and fill with soil mix. Tamp down firmly; water and tamp down again, then cover with mulch.

My plants that I have successfully planted under my magnolia are yellow lantana and weigela. On the perimeter of the 29-inch circle I have successfully planted monkey grass. I do water with a drip globe so the water goes down to the roots once a week.

Under my orchid tree I have planted white begonias and they also get watered once a week with a drip globe and are doing very well.

There are some issues you may encounter when planting perennials under some large trees. For instance, Norway maple trees have a network of surface roots that can rob plants of moisture. Plants that can tolerate these dry shade conditions include violets (*Viola*), woodland strawberries (*Fragaria*), dead nettle (*Lamium*), *Hosta*, *Epimedium*, and leadwort (*Ceratostigma*).

If you want to grow bulbs under trees, there are a few trees you can try. Maples, beeches, and some other trees with shallow, fibrous roots are the ones to avoid. Bulbs and most other kinds of plants have a hard time competing with them for nutrients, water, and growing space. Also avoid evergreens and other trees with low canopies that prevent at least a half-day of filtered light from getting through.

Most bulbs that do not get at least a half-day of sun not only flop over but also have sparse blooms. Transplant the bulbs to a sunnier location, fertilize and water well; and thin out overhanging vegetation to let in more light. For future plantings on this site, choose cultivars that are more shade tolerant.

To gardeners and all who appreciate Earth's natural beauty: trees are deserving of admiration for the blessings they bestow. Understanding trees is an essential part of our learning to be good Stewards of the Earth.

Trees give us air to breathe

They offer shelter and shade

They lavish us with gifts of useful purpose

They surround us with natural luxury and delight our senses.

Photo by Elayne Kouzounis

Orchid tree (top) **with white begonias and monkey grass.**

Spiral ginger under pink crape myrtle. (middle)

A water globe. (bottom)

Small trees for small yards

Briana Etie
GCMG 2017

When a yard is small, it is still possible to find a tree that works in a space if research is done to determine the perfect fit. With potted plants, we can push the cold hardiness zones and eco regions by sheltering them and providing their preferred soil. When planting trees, we must make more informed and practical decisions about right place, right tree. Small trees' growth range is 10 feet to a maximum of 40 feet. Some shrubs that can reach 10 to 20 feet can be pruned to a vase tree shape. Small trees can fill a space in your yard with color, and possibly provide wildlife with shelter and food.

Carnation of India
Top
Texas Plum
Middle
Chinese Fringe Tree
Bottom

Photos by Dr William M. Johnson

Deciduous trees (sheds its leaves in the fall)

Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

Texas Redbud (*Cercis canadensis var. texensis*)

Mexican Buckeye (*Ungnadia speciosa*)

Texas Hawthorn (*Crataegus texana*)

Mexican or Butterfly Orchid (*Bauhinia divaricata*)

Golden Wonder Senna (*Senna splendida*)

Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*)

White Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*)

Chinese or Lacebark Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*)

Sweet Acacia (*Vachellia farnesiana*)

Possumhaw Holly (*llex decidua*)

Evergreens:

American Holly (*llex opaca*)

Japanese Black Pine (*Pinus thunbergii*)

Little Gem Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*)

Weeping Yaupon Holly (*IIex vomitoria*)

Texas Mountain Laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*)

Japanese Blueberry (*Elaeocarpus decipiens*)

Hamabo Hibiscus Tree (*Taliparíti tiliaceum*)

Pygmy Palm (*Phoenix roebelenii*)

Pindo or Jelly Palm (*Butia capitata*)

Bay Laurel (*Laurus nobilis*)

Shrubs that can be small trees:

Almond Verbena (*Aloysia virgata*)

Arabian Lilac (*Vitex trifolia*)

Banana Shrub (*Michelia figo*)

Anacacho Orchid or Texas Plume (*Bauhinia lunarioides*)

Gardenia (*Gardenia jasminoides*)

Orange Peel Cestrum (*Cestrum x*)

Walter's Viburnum (*Viburnum obovatum*)

Chinese Fringe (*Loropetalum chinense*)

Mexican Oleander (*Thevetia peruviana*)

Calypso Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)

Mont Blanc Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)

Retama or Mexican Palo Verde (*Parkinsonia aculeata*)

Lavender Twist Weeping Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

Southern Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera*)

Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*)

Coral Bean or Fireman's Cap (*Erythrina x bidwillii)*

Confederate Rose (*Hibiscus mutabilis*)

Photo by Billy Jenke

Arabian Lilac (top left)
Confederate Rose (top right)
Cassia Spendida (middle left)
Senna Splendida (middle right)
Crape Myrtle (far left)
Weeping Ruby Falls Red Bud (middle bottom)

Oak Celebrities in Texas

Sharon Zaal
GCMG 2015

We are fortunate to have many stately oaks in Galveston and nearby Texas counties that would have amazing stories to tell. They are often still here, with the help and support of communities who cherish them and their history.

The Borden Oak of Galveston: One of the most significant of the giant live oaks *(Quercus virginiana)*, identified as the "Borden Oak", is in the city of Galveston. It is one of the few trees that survived the storm of 1900, the grade raising of the city, and all of the droughts and hurricanes since that time. According to Famous Trees of Texas by the Texas A&M Forrest Service

Photos by Sharon Zaal

Goose Island Oak
above

Thomas Henry Borden, was determined to save his beautiful oak, so when the grade raising began, he had a dike constructed about it to keep the salty fill from poisoning the tree. He hauled fresh water from cisterns and wells and kept the salt washed out of the seepage that crept in about the roots. After the grade leveling was completed and the salt dissipated from the soil, the well around the tree trunk was gradually filled. It is difficult to believe that the base of the tree is about 5 feet below the present ground level, but it is.

The Butler Oaks of League City: League City's living legacy of beautiful live oak trees began in the 1870's when George Washington Butler established his ranch headquarters in town, and planted live oak trees around it. Many of these trees are still appreciated today in Helen's Gardens on tree-lined Main Street.

These trees are descendants of acorns brought from Calcasieu, Louisiana, by the ranching families that settled the community of Clear Creek in 1854. Following an Acadian tradition, they brought acorns with them to plant on their new home sites. At first the acorns were planted on their ranches. Then Butler brought live oak offspring into town from his ranch on Chigger Creek.

The Ghirardi Compton Oak & the Moonshine Oak: League City fell in love with the Ghirardi Compton Oak, and love knows no limits. Compton oaks *(Quercus x comptoniae)* are wonderful trees, a cross between overcup oaks *(Q. lyrata)* and live oaks *(Q. virgiana)*. The Ghirardi Compton Oak has been a piece of League City's history for over 100 years. With a county road project putting the future of the oak in jeopardy, the city hired Hess Landscaping Construction to move the majestic oak. The undertaking was massive, with the tree standing 56 feet tall, a canopy over 100 feet wide, a trunk 135 inches around, and weighing an incredible 518,000 pounds. The move was completed in 2012, when the oak was successfully relocated to its new home in the Ghirardi Watersmart Park.

The 3.75-acre park was named for the Ghirardi family, early settlers of League City, who donated a three-quarter acre parcel of land. The tree-filled park includes 68 oaks, and most prominently the Moonshine Oak, which is centralized on the park trail and serves as the backdrop for an outdoor classroom.

"If this tree could speak to us, it would most certainly have amazing recounts..."

According to Rusty Bolen, park operations superintendent, "When this oak was first discovered, it had remnants of an old moonshine still. Most of the trees here were fighting for canopy space and the Moonshine oak was struggling," he said. "We removed a lot of invasive species, but kept things like hackberry trees, because they are a food source for birds. We also removed some of the smaller brush, but we are letting the original underbrush come back — like yaupon and privet."

The Goose Island Oak aka The Big Tree: Near the town of Rockport is one of the most famous live oaks in the world after being named "Texas State Champion Virginia Live Oak" in 1969. The tree retained that title until 2003, when a larger oak was discovered in Brazoria County. The Big Tree has never been accurately aged but estimates place it between 1,000 and 2,000 years old.

The Big Tree, located at Goose Island State Park, has a rich history. It has seen Karankawa Native American ceremonies, pirates, hangings, hurricanes, all six flags of Texas, the Union Navy bombardment of the nearby town of Lamar during the Civil War, and many generations of humans who climbed it for the sake of tradition, especially once its notoriety began to spread.

If this tree could speak to us, it would most certainly have amazing recounts of history, people, and events. A plaque at the base is inscribed with a wonderful poem that gives voice to the tree:

I am a live oak tree and I am very old. I have seen spring return more than a thousand times. I can remember hundreds of hurricanes, most I'd rather forget, but I withstood. There was a big fire once – I hate fires.

Around me are my offspring. We are an old-dune woodlands community. We provide shelter and acorns for squirrels, jays, raccoons, bobwhite, deer, javelina, and most other members of our community.

For most of my life, I belonged only to myself. Now I belong to you, or so I am told. Humpf! Branch Breakers and root tramplers the lot of you.

Some years ago, someone came and patched my cracks, trimmed my dead branches, killed my pests and healed my fungus rots. Was that you? I'm feeling much better, thank you.

I am tired now. You may leave me in peace when you are ready to go. Please leave my home as you found it. I have important things to do. The seasons are changing again and I must get ready.

Moonshine Oak
above images this page

Care, nurturing help avoid damaging pests

Hedy Wolpa
GCMG 2018

Trees are some of Earth's most valued assets: they provide food and shelter for humans and animals, air purification, deep or dappled shade, and serene beauty. We take them for granted until they begin to suffer from pests or diseases, and then their decline can be unsightly and even dangerous.

Insect pests can be especially harmful to our landscape trees. Conscientious gardeners and naturalists look upward to visually inspect trees in their yards and neighborhoods for damage. Pest damage may begin in the upper-most reaches of the tree canopy, making it difficult to treat, or even see what the issue might be. At eye level, we notice curled, crinkled, or rolled leaves. We may see holes or wounds in the leaves or trunk or peeling of the outer cambium bark layer. A variety of insects can cause damage and there are many ways to approach control. What matters most is that we regularly observe the health and well-being of our trees so that we can identify and treat insect pests early and in the most efficacious manner.

Bagworm cocoons are unique and easy to spot top
Aphids are found in dense clusters on tree bark bottom

Specific tree pests may be chewing or sucking insects. Chewing insects consume all or part of a leaf. Caterpillars, the larval stage of an adult moth, are particularly adept at skeletonizing leaves. Other specialized chewers include sawflies, bagworms, weevils, beetles and leaf miners. Sucking insects don't damage the outer surfaces of leaves, but instead suck juices from the interior of leaves which may result in stippled pattern dots on the leaf surface. Examples of sucking insects include aphids, lace bugs, plant hoppers, mealybugs, scale insects, and mites.

Using biological, cultural, and physical insect control methods are important for the health of the tree, nearby vegetation, and beneficial insects. Biological control is control by balance of nature, using insects' natural enemies, including other insects to destroy the pests, and can be accomplished by conserving current populations or mass releasing natural enemies into environment. Remember, they can fly away, so only release beneficials when there are pests on which they can feed. Cultural methods include watering/fertilizing properly, removing insect egg masses, raking and destroying affected leaves, or removal and disposing of bark matter. Physical controls include handpicking and using high pressure water spray to dislodge insects. If insecticides are necessary, use the least-toxic products that are effective. Carefully read the pesticide label and follow directions for application rates, timing, and more. Pests in the upper branches should be treated by an arborist who uses proper and safe equipment.

A good rule to follow is to use the least drastic solution for insect control, even if that means handpicking a few insects from trees when they are first spotted, to control an infestation and avoid severe control measures. Usually, when a tree is otherwise healthy, the presence of a few insects will not cause serious or permanent damage and no treatment is needed.

Getting a good start is considered the best defense against insect pests for trees and other landscape plants. Always obtain trees from a reputable source and select native or locally adapted varieties. Research the trees you're interested in adding to your landscape to learn about potential pest problems. Select an appropriate location that has enough sun exposure and growing space for your tree at its mature height and spread. Mulching helps slow evaporation from the soil surface, deter weeds, moderate soil temperature, and prevent erosion. Mulch should not be piled against the tree trunk to avoid promoting decay of the trunk tissues. Take care when pruning and staking your trees to avoid damaging the bark, which can open the door to disease and damage from boring insects.

With timely, consistent care and nurturing, our landscape trees can live for many decades and provide all of the benefits and beauty we've come to expect.

What to do about Johnsongrass

Mary jane Fortney
GCMG 2017

Weeds are troublesome plants where we don't want them. Most lawns have weeds at some point. The wise gardener tries first to determine what flaw in lawn keeping let the weeds get a roothold. Weeds aren't generally the initial problem. For whatever reason, the grass wasn't thick enough to crowd out the weeds. St. Augustine grass will crowd out a lot of weeds if given good care. However, weeds may still show up in even the best maintained turf. If there is a problem, finding and solving it is the first step in controlling weeds in a lawn.

Weeds are often grouped by morphological characteristics into the categories: broadleaf weeds, grassy weeds, and sedges. One of the most invasive grassy weeds in Galveston County is Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*). Johnsongrass is considered one of the 10 most noxious weeds in the world.

Around 1830, Johnsongrass was introduced in South Carolina from Turkey. William Johnson, whom the plant is named after, established Johnsongrass along the Alabama River in the 1840's as a forage species, and it spread rapidly across the South. Johnsongrass is now widely escaped from cultivation in much of the United States.

Johnsongrass reproduces from rhizomes and from seed. Johnsongrass plants begin growing rhizomes in the seedling stage. It is a perennial with vigorous rhizomes (underground stems). It is a coarse grass with yellow to purplish black panicles or seed heads. It develops plume-like flower spikes. It is a good seed producer; a single plant may produce 80,000 or more seeds in one growing season. This grass has broad leaves three to six feet tall. They grow in an erect fashion of clumps of light to medium green wide leaf foliage. The stems are smooth with no hairs. Johnsongrass is tall growing when unmown, but dies out with repeated mowing. Plants can develop colonies. Mature johnsongrass is moderately drought resistant and salt tolerant.

So how to manage unwanted Johnsongrass? This invasive weed grows rapidly, is competitive with crops, and can be very difficult to control. Use the least toxic method of control first. Johnsongrass can be controlled by tilling, mowing, and flooding. Individual plants or small clumps may be controlled by hand-pulling or solarization.

Hand-pulling: Pulling and/or digging is the most immediate, effective control. Best results are obtained in early spring when soil is moist, and rhizomes are least likely to break. Just be sure to get roots and all or else many weeds will simply sprout new leaves from the roots left behind. Small or broken rhizomes can form new plants.

Solarization: Repeated solarization treatments (using a clear polyethylene tarp to trap solar heat in the soil) can control small johnsongrass infestations.

The most effective chemical control of Johnsongrass involves using systemic herbicides that translocate the active chemicals to rhizomes. A single application of herbicide generally does not control large infestations, and follow-up measures are needed for long-term control. Spot spraying with sodium chlorate or dalapon has been effective for small infestations. If chemicals are required, read and follow all product labels.

Remember, every weed seed head you prevent or eliminate now could translate into hundreds of fewer weeds you'll have to deal with later.

Johnsongrass weed

Photo courtesy of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Bulbs: Nature's easiest plants to grow

Camille Goodwin
GCMG 2008

Trivia:

- The word "bulb" has no botanical significance – it's used to cover the 5 bulbous plant species which produce fleshy storage organs: true bulbs, corms, tubers, rhizomes and tuberous roots.
- The Roman army was responsible for introducing the daffodil to much of the known world.
- Fall is the main season for purchasing and planting bulbs that flower in the spring; 75 percent of all bulbs sold are spring-flowering.
- Today, 60 percent of the world's supply of flower bulbs comes from the Netherlands. The tulip is probably the most well-known flower bulb throughout the world. Tulips were being cultivated and traded in Turkey as long ago as the Middle Ages.
- Summer bulbs have to be planted in the spring to flower in the summer.
- The spice saffron comes from the stigmas of a certain type of Crocus flower. It's the most expensive spice in the world.

Top 10 Bulb Planting Mistakes Gardeners make:

1. Too much water. Don't submerge bulb in water when forcing to bloom or overwater in-ground planted bulbs, it causes them to rot.
2. Not digging hole deep enough for the bulb.*
3. Allowing bulbs that need refrigeration to freeze. Don't place near fruit when refrigerating.
4. Not allowing naturalizing bulb leaves to die down into the bulb giving them energy to bloom again. Naturalizing bulbs are bulbs that return every year.
5. Planting too close together. Don't let them touch each other.*
6. Planting a single bulb is not enough for color impact.
7. Planting in straight line. Plant in irregular groupings, the more bulbs the better (see photo). Plant bulbs of one color or variety for most dramatic effect; or several colors for visual impact.
8. Planting upside down: wider/flat side goes down.
9. Not marking/labeling where you've planted them.
10. Planting at the wrong time.*

* Follow the planting directions for your bulbs to avoid these mistakes.

The Magic of Bulbs in Nature:

Bulbs create two root forms. **Fibrous** roots for feeding that take up water and nutrients, and unique thickened roots called **contractile** roots that function to adjust the depth of the bulb in the soil. These thickened and transverse ringed roots expand and contract to pull the bulb downward to its proper or preferred soil depth. Thus, the bulb actually plants itself until it finds its preferred depth. Preferred soil depth is one that shelters it from predators and drought.

Bulbs will adjust to the type of soil, descending deeper in light, airy soils than in dense, heavy ones. Depending on the species, some bulbs may take a few years to reach their preferred soil depth, descending deeper each season as the bulb, tiny when it germinates, grows in size.

BE PATIENT – Some bulbs need to settle to bloom (Lycoris, iris, Watsonia, leucojum, Oxblood Lily).

Planting in Layers:

This is a great way to have flowers throughout the entire blooming season and can be used in containers or in-ground. When using containers, their size determines the number of layers; 10 inches deep will hold two layers of bulbs; a 14-inch depth will hold three levels. Be creative with container shapes. Make sure there are drainage holes. Put a layer of gravel in the bottom of the pot; add 2-3 inches of potting soil mixed with bulb food. Place first layer of the deepest bulbs in pot, spaced per recommendations, then cover

with 2 inches of soil. For next layer add more bulbs that need a planting depth of 6 inches, spaced per directions, and staggering placement between rows so lower bulbs can grow through, cover with 2-3 inches of soil. Plant third layer using smallest bulbs and this time cover with 3-4 inches of soil and a light dressing of bulb food. Mulch well and water. Use one color, or many colors for the impact you're looking for. Containers with combinations of bulbs and annuals like snapdragons, petunias, pansies, violets, geraniums and violas make beautiful focal points.

You can easily apply this method to beds or trenches, just skip the part about starting with a layer of gravel in the bottom of the pot. For three layers, dig the area to a depth of 8-12 inches and then plant your first layer. Follow directions above for planting the layers. When done, completely cover the trench with the loose soil, water well to remove air pockets and mulch. You can plant perennial bedding plants on top to disguise the withering bulb foliage after their bloom!

Trench Planting:
This is an easy and quick way to plant clumps of bulbs together to create a big color statement in your garden. Be sure to select a well-draining area with amended soil. Instead of using a bulb planter or spade to plant single bulbs, dig a large hole in the garden, place the bulbs closely together in it, and bury them. This can be any size! The photo below is about 5 feet x 1 1/2 feet but a 2-foot x 1-foot area works great for tiny yards or for individual focal points in your landscape.

Mark your calendar for the GCMG Online Bulb Sale November 5-6, 2021!

Amaryllis Ice Queen left
(Galaxy, fully double bloom)
Amaryllis Charisma second row left
(Scarlet brushed with red ribbon edges)
Bulb Layering second row right
Amaryllis Grand Diva third row left
(Galaxy, Deep Dark Velvet Red)
Irregular grouping of bulbs third row right
Amaryllis Sunshine Nymph bottom left
(Galaxy Ruffled coral/pink triple blooms and white starburst)
Trench Planting bottom right

Gardeners Tasks for September and October

Patricia Martin
GCMG 1998

September

This month (and October) are the best months to divide and transplant daylilies, Louisiana iris, bearded iris, violets, Shasta daisies and phlox if they are crowded.

Prune perennial salvia, pentas, buddleia and lantana by one-third early this month; water and fertilize for a good fall show.

Plant seeds of alyssum, snapdragons, petunias, stock, and sweet William. Sow spring wildflower seeds such as Texas bluebell, bluebonnets, and Indian paintbrush late September or early October.

Transplant petunia and dianthus and leave spreading room for the petunias.

Photo by Dr William Johnson

Fertilize roses as needed, but do not fertilize after September to avoid promoting late season growth which is less cold hardy.

Start planting parsley, Irish potatoes, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage transplants.

By the end of September, begin planting beets, chard, collards, kale, kohlrabi, carrots, English peas, and radishes.

The last week of September is the time to treat for brown patch in lawns if there has been a prior history. Apply a fungicide labeled for disease control on lawns to the affected area. Avoid watering in the evenings to minimize fungal diseases.

October

Divide and replant the rest of any spring and summer-blooming perennials including verbena and cannas.

Plant and divide Dutch iris, amaryllis, *Leucojum* and narcissus.

Pre-chill tulips, crocus, and hyacinth bulbs in the refrigerator until it is time to plant them in late December or early January

Dig up caladium bulbs, dust them with sulfur to discourage rot, and store the bulbs in a cool, dry area with good air circulation.

Plant cool season annuals such as alyssum, and calendulas, and biennials such as larkspur, poppies, bluebonnets and snapdragons.

It is best to wait and plant violas and pansies in November when the weather is cooler. At that time, add blood meal as a fertilizer to pansy beds and work into the top six inches of the soil before setting out the transplants. Follow the instructions on the package to determine the amount to use.

All fertilization of perennials should be completed before the end of the month.

Lettuce can be planted now. Fall is a good time for planting most herbs. The exception would be all types of basil which should be planted after the weather warms up in Spring.

Divide and replant chives, garlic and multiplying onions. Plant cool weather herbs such as cilantro, parsley, winter savory and fennel. Plant carrots, beets, radishes, mustard, spinach, and turnips. Kale, Chinese cabbage, and Swiss chard may be planted by the end of the month.

Stop watering and feeding plumerias. Allow the plants to drop their leaves and go dormant. Store the plumerias in the garage to protect from freezing temperatures until spring.

October through February is the best time to plant trees and shrubs to reduce transplant stress from warm temperatures. Keep in mind a shrub or tree's mature size and shape before planting in the desired location and adjust as needed.

Ghost Dianthus
top left
Iris
second left
Tulips
third left
Kale Kohlrabi
bottom left
Carrots
left

Meet a Master Gardener: Linda Steber

How did the one-page mimeographed Galveston County Master Gardener newsletter evolve to a professional-looking, 30-page, full color quarterly publication, viewed by thousands of people each month and half a million downloads a year? Two words: Linda Steber.

Linda served as editor of the newsletter for 25 years, ending her editorial volunteer commitment with the last issue. She acknowledges it has been hard work, but she credits a great team of volunteers who have made *Gulf Coast Gardening* an award-winning, informative and educational tool.

"I promised Dr. Johnson I would do this until he retired, but sadly his passing came too soon. It is time to turn it over to someone else now," she said.

Back in August 1986, GCMG Association President Sam Scarcella put together the first edition of the newsletter, which was a one-page, two-column typed bulletin, alerting members to upcoming meetings and other events, as well as inviting gardeners to a plant and seed swap and a covered dish dinner/meeting (some things never change). It was mailed to 100 people.

Within two years, the newsletter was expanded to two pages, with gardening tips (we are still learning about tomatoes!) and what to do after a freeze.

By 1993, more information was collected and disseminated via the newsletter and the publication continued to grow. It was eight pages long, printed on colored paper and named the *Master Gardeners Network Newsletter*. It even included a full-page calendar of events and other pages were filled with articles on composting, summer tips for vacationing gardeners, recipes and wildflowers. There were no photos, however.

About this time, Dr. J asked Linda if she would like to help with the newsletter. In the next issue she read that she was the Editor. Linda began learning about layout, design, graphics and desktop publishing. By the time she took the reins, she had a team in place, with MG Sandra Devall mentoring her with her expertise, she being a college professor in graphic arts.

The newsletter expanded again, this time with color photos, printed on heavier paper, headshots of the writers and columns written by MG experts in their chosen areas.

"The appearance of our MG newsletter may have changed over time, but the focus has steadfastly remained the same," Dr. William Johnson wrote in his column in April 2007 when the publication grew to include more information and photos. He noted that the purpose was to "keep our MG volunteers informed of current and upcoming association activities, projects and programs, to serve as a common community forum to exchange and share ideas, and to provide additional education to our MGs in the art and science of horticulture."

Barbara Canetti
GCMG 2016

People took notice. The Texas Master Gardener Association has recognized this publication year after year as being in the top three in the state. Since 1999 the newsletter has been presented with 11 state awards in both the Newsletter and Written Education categories.

Because it now has an online presence, it has more than 1,600 subscribers but annually more than 500,000 downloads of materials and over a million hits on the website. Subscribers include all MGs, but also interested parties worldwide. Today it is a magazine-style newsletter with over 30 pages, containing videos, links for additional information as well as QR codes for smartphone access. It contains current, topical educational articles featuring plants, weeds, diseases, insects and pests that are researched and written by MGs. There are Q&A articles addressing queries received by the MG HotLine and from MG seminars.

The changes have extended the educational outreach of the Galveston County Master Gardeners to a much larger audience.

"It has come a long way," Linda remarked. "I will miss working on it and I miss working with William (Johnson) but it is time for new energy. And now I can volunteer in other things."

And then there are another two words: Well Done. Thank you, Linda.

Book Reviews - Plant Hunters

Pat Forke
GCMG 2010

This is a must-have for every serious gardener's library. The reader might be tempted to just look at the beautiful pictures and drawings and then perhaps move on to reading the boxed information in each chapter. But the book should be read from beginning to end as it travels around the world mostly in chronological order.

From describing the collecting of seed and hunting for plants in Egypt during the fifteenth century BC to modern day challenges with climate change, there is a great deal of information covered. Each chapter stands on its own, so you may read this outstanding book in any sequence you pick and choose.

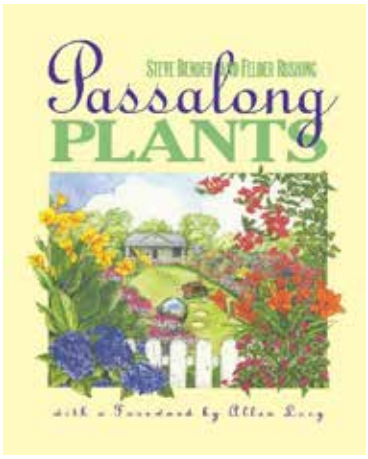
If you want to know more about certain pioneer botanists, explorers and empire builders who have made major contributions to the world of seeds and plants, you will probably find them in this book. Stories about Carl Linnaeus, Sir Joseph Banks, Francis Masson, and Joseph Hooker are just some of those portrayed throughout its pages. The Kew Gardeners are also examined.

The author, Carolyn Fry is an award-winning writer and journalist. She is the former editor of the Royal Geographical Society's magazine, *Geographical*. She has contributed to various publications, including *BBC Wildlife*, *A Passion for Plants*, *BBC History* and *The Times*. She has also authored *The World of Kew* (which accompanied the BBC TV series).

How does it relate to our work as master gardeners? This book pushes us to look at plants as more than beautiful attractions and sources of food. The history, the nutritional values, the challenges of reproducing and the economic impact of plants such as tulips, tea and rubber, offer us additional avenues of thinking about plants. And, as we become more familiar with the contributions of botanical pioneers and trailblazers, we have a deeper respect for the groundwork laid and the challenges faced in leading the way.

Passalong Plants

If you can imagine sitting in the garden talking southern plants with two knowledgeable gardeners with both having a great sense of humor, you have an idea of what reading this book is like. The title is indicative of the scope. The authors present much information in a humorous and direct manner. Passalong plants are, as the name implies, plants that may not be at the local nurseries but are still popular, shared between gardeners and often passed down through generations.



If you are interested in plants that are aggressive, aromatic, unique in appearance or habit, appear misplaced in the manicured garden or simply appeal to your sense of beauty, then many passalong plants may appeal to you.

These authors not only present a wealth of information about over 100 plants, they do it in a chatty, whimsical fashion. Rather than just listing plants, these authors tell a story about each plant. The best way to share these plants with other gardeners is also covered. And, if you have the need, there are sources listed for mail ordering passalong plants. These authors have written numerous gardening books and magazine articles.

How does this book relate to our work as Master Gardeners? Since passalong plants are typically easier to grow and more likely to spread, this knowledge is particularly helpful to master gardeners working with new gardeners or those who feel challenged choosing plants and establishing and maintaining a garden. And, by sharing plants with more experienced gardeners, we are making available plants that might not be available from other sources.

How can I apply this knowledge? Sharing the knowledge from this book should be an easy task. Passing along information about easily grown and hearty passalong plants benefits everyone. The hardest part may be asking fellow gardeners for part of a plant from their gardens. Be prepared to share something from your garden. Do not overlook the last chapter on organizing your own plant swap. Also, remember to donate some starters for the next Master Gardener plant sale.

Master Gardeners receive the Holt bonsai

There is historical evidence of small potted trees found in Egyptian tombs more than 2000 years ago. The art of bonsai as we know it today originated in China around 700 A.D. where it was known as 'penjing'. Emissaries brought that knowledge back to Japan where the practice was developed into what we now know as bonsai. (http://lcnews.us/gardening071307.html)

Bonsai (pronounced 'bone-sigh') literally means 'plant in a pot or tray.' When people think of bonsai, they think of miniature trees, but that is not the case. Bonsai is categorized from smaller than six inches to as large as needing several people to carry. Many plants lend themselves to being trained as bonsai such as junipers, boxwood, ficus, maples and bougainvillea to name a few. The plants are securely wired in shallow pots through the drainage holes and with soil composed of a combination of akadama (volcanic clay), pumice and lava rock in differing proportions depending on the needs of the particular plant. Pruning and wiring are performed on the plant to eventually produce a mature-looking tree.

The Galveston County Master Gardeners Association (GCMGA) recently received a beautiful laurel fig (*Ficus macrocarpa)* bonsai from Clyde Holt, Master Gardener Class of 2005 as a parting gift, as he and his wife Ruby relocate to Utah to be closer to family.

Maria Abad
GCMG Intern 2020

The bonsai Clyde gave the GCMGA spent many years of development to produce the thick tapering trunk and multiple aerial roots and more years in refinement to produce the tree you now see. I tried to get the history of the tree from Clyde and asked him how old the tree was. His reply, "The goal of bonsai is not how old it is, but how old do you think it is?"

I didn't know that trees were so sensitive about their age.

Rain Garden created for drainage

The Galveston County Master Gardener Association recently installed a rain garden in the Discovery Garden, located at Carbide Park. Briana Etie, the master gardener in charge of the project, chose a rain garden because it was the perfect solution to the area's drainage issue. A rain garden has a depressed area where water gathers so it is filled with plants that tolerate wet feet as well as periods of drought.

Our rain garden was born from a need to recycle grey water from the Discovery Garden's aquaponic area and greenhouse sink, as well as overflow from the aquaponic garden. Overall, this project took two years to complete due to many obstacles during the pandemic.

Master gardeners Kevin Lancon, Phil Haught, and Clyde Holt began the project by using a tractor to lower the area two inches overall with a slightly deeper trench running down the middle. Cardboard was then laid in the designated area to kill all weeds while the Galveston County trustees helped lay the pavers around the border. A small group of master gardeners, including Maria Abad, Debie Lambson, and Kathy Maines, volunteered in July 2021 to plant around 30 plants in the new area.

Briana placed each plant in their new location according to their specific needs. Texas Star Hibiscus (*Hibiscus coccineus*) and Giant Plume Ginger (*Curcuma elata*) were planted in the center where water remains the longest time, while plants like Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and Aquatic Milkweed (*Asclepias perennis*) were placed near the edges where drainage dries up faster. Just as all the master gardeners were finishing planting the last Obedient Plant (*Physostegia virginiana*) in the rain garden, the rain blessed the project with an approval shower. The final step to completing the rain garden was laying a mix of cypress mulch on top of a layer of cardboard, around the plants, as a weed preventative.

Alysha Davila
GCMG Intern 2020

Rain Garden before and after
Glenn Diket in the rain garden

A rain garden is an excellent solution to turn any swampy area into a blooming wonderland. The plant roots even help filter the water as it returns to the earth.

Seasonal Bites

Sandra Gervais
GCMG 2011

What an interesting summer we have had with rain almost every day. It's unusual for our part of Texas. But besides keeping us cooler and a bit bored, the wet weather has been a delight for our lawns and gardens. They've earned this treat. Simply surviving the great Valentine's Day freeze was hard on a lot of our plants and us. The fact that many are now thriving and showing off beautiful blooms, lifts our spirits and makes us reach for a trowel to happily plant more that have proved what "Texas Tuff" means.

Here are two easy recipes for the oven. The simple fruit cobbler is from GCMG Vicki Blythe, who got it from a church member, Delores Bahr.

The pork chop casserole is one I recently found that's good. It's also simple and uses everyday items from your pantry.

Simply Delicious Cobbler 350°

1 stick of butter
1 cup plain flour
1 cup sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
Dash of salt
1/2 cup milk
3 cups berries with juice
(She usually uses blackberries, but others can be used.)
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Place berries with juice, the 1/2 cup sugar, and cinnamon in a bowl.
Mix gently and set aside.

Heat oven to 350 degrees.
Melt butter in 9 x 9-inch pan in oven.
Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and milk in a bowl.
Add to the hot baking pan and mix with the butter.
Add berry mixture to ingredients in pan and mix all.

Bake for about 30 minutes.

Note: Blueberries would also work as would ripe Texas peaches.
Remember the Blue Bell!

Pork Chops and Potato Casserole 400°

1 tablespoon oil
6 boneless pork chops
Salt and pepper (to your taste to season chops)
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 cup milk
4 cups thinly sliced potatoes
1/2 chopped onions
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Heat oil in skillet to medium hot and sear seasoned pork chops.
Arrange potatoes and onions in 9 x 13 greased baking dish.
Top with chops.
Mix soup and milk then pour over chops.

Bake uncovered for 50-60 minutes until potatoes are tender.

Top with cheese and bake 5 more minutes or until cheese melts.

Note: Before cooking, feel free to add more flavor with chopped garlic, onions browned with the meat, herbs such as thyme or crushed rosemary, spicy peppers, or whatever else pleases your tastebuds. You could also sneak in more veggies like carrots or mushrooms.

Discovery Garden Update

It's hard to believe we have reached the end of summer and we are having to deal with a variance of Covid-19. Our routine here in the Discovery Garden has been better as most of our gardeners are vaccinated. We have also had several groups of visitors, and returned to having Thursday lunches together. As the weather starts to cool, we are hoping more Master Gardeners will be showing up in the garden again.

The Master Gardener 2020 Interns conducted the tomato test this year. At the end of the season, they put together a tasting of marinera sauce and tomato jam. Using the same recipe with the seven different varieties of tomatoes, the results were amazing. I enjoyed the tomato jams that Barbra Eskins in (Fig. 1) had put together with husband David. All I can say is "Wow, what a wonderful experience." If you weren't there, you missed out.

In the garden, the season continues and so does the garden's need for attention whether it's taking care of the grounds, weeding beds, harvesting, or preparing a bed for the next season. I caught Debbie Brizendine in (Fig. 2) taking a turn mowing in the pecan orchard. Pictured in (Fig. 3) are Alysha Davila, Tabatha Holt, Sheila Brown, and Paul Clarence who endured a long hot day working with Tish Reustle and others cleaning up the bamboo from the spring freeze.

One of my favorite activities is taking pictures, and I like the candid shots. I take many, but am happy with only a few. The interactions between gardeners are my favorite ones. Featured here are several like Joseph Davis and Pam Hunter talking in the gazebo. In (Fig. 4) and in (Fig.5) Jim Edwards and Ken Deslattes are talking after getting a bed ready to plant. Also, there is Kay Sandor (Fig 6) weeding the herb bed.

During the past several months, our area temperatures have been slightly below to near normal. Since early summer rainfall across the area has been 8 to 10 degrees above normal. The extended forecast from NOAA indicates temperatures will likely be near normal into late fall with rainfall is likely to continue slightly above normal. The peak of hurricane season is here, so be prepared and be safe.

Looking forward to seeing you in the garden soon.

Tom Fountain
GCMG 2008

Photos by Tom Fountain

JMGs & Trees: a partnership in learning

Kaye Corey
GCMG 2001

Junior Master Gardeners is an innovative youth gardening program modeled after the adult Master Gardener program. The kids learn horticulture and environmental gardening while participating in fun and creative activities.

I have enjoyed leading this program for over 20 years. Our youth are the gardeners of the future. Heritage Junior Master Gardeners in Friendswood currently is the first place winner of the JMG Kids in Texas State Award.

Often trees are an important element of their learning.

JMGs working with leaves

Apple trees in the fall provide a perfect learning opportunity. Johnny Appleseed (John Chapman) who wandered through the country in the 1770's planting apple seeds, is a meaningful legend teaching how to make the world a better place. We eat the apples, cook some, make apple butter, and learn seed science propagation. Studying water evaporation in fruit, the kids carved faces in their apples and let the apples dry until their next meeting. Creative skills kicked in and the apple heads became little old apple head people.

Why do leaves change colors in the fall? Discussions about spring's warmth and tree growth, lead to fall's changing leaf colors. Cooler weather results in growth element decline, and the leaves begin to die. Simply put, when the green chlorophyll disappears, the color pigment in the leaves begins to show.

The kids painted large-pressed sycamore leaves in fall colors to be mounted along with painted butterfly bush seed pods that resemble butterflies.

Currently, the Heritage JMG Kids are collecting and labeling various tree leaves to be placed in their notebooks. They will present their at-home project to their JMG friends at the next meeting. Home assignments and presentations are part of their program. Our parents, who attend all our meetings, declare they are learning with their children.

Working in their garden at the Heritage Garden Center, the Kids will collect leaves to put on the ground making habitats for wildlife for the winter. The leaves will rot and make more nutrients for tree and plant growth in the spring.

Tree planting is underway in both fall and spring activities. In 2016, Heritage JMG Kids planted trees in Friendswood's Stevenson Park. Learning the correct way to plant a tree is primary, and having a professional landscape consultant help teach is perfect.

Visit JMGKids.us

MGs can volunteer at Libbie's Place

Kathy Maines
GCMG 2017

Libbie's Place Senior Day Program is a community outreach mission of Moody Methodist Church in Galveston. The program serves adults ages 55 and older who may be experiencing memory loss, physical impairment, or social isolation by providing help with medications, personal care, and social activities during the day. This helps the seniors to continue to live in their own home and community.

Galveston County Master Gardeners have two volunteer opportunities at Libbie's Place.

The Beautification Bunch meets monthly to maintain the facility's handicap accessible garden. This garden has trees, perennials, annuals, a certified Butterfly Waystation, and vegetable and herb beds.

The Green Thumb Club meets weekly with Libbie's clients for planting, harvesting, and horticultural related arts and crafts.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Master Gardeners Barbara Canetti at Barbara.canetti@gmail.com or Kathy Maines at kathyam2@ymail.com.

Plant sales, educational opportunities

Unless otherwise noted, all programs are conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office at 4102-B Main Street (FM 519) inside Carbide Park in La Marque, are free to the public, and require pre-registration.

SEPTEMBER

SUMMER SUNDOWN SALE

Sept 10-11, 2021 from noon to noon

We will have a selection of fruit trees, landscape trees, perennials, fall tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, and herbs available for purchase online at https://store.galvestonmg.org/ . Dates for drive through pickup in La Marque will be provided at sale.

GROWING ONIONS & GARLIC

Saturday, Sept 11, 2021 • 9 - 10:30 am

Galveston County Master Gardener Herman Auer will present a program highlighting the elements for successfully growing of bulbing onions, garlic, leek, and multiplier shallots. Auer will share his experience, knowledge, as well as mistakes he's made over the years while perfecting the art of growing onions and garlic.

GARDEN BULBS FOR GALVESTON COUNTY

Saturday, Sept 11, 2021 • 1 – 3 pm

Master Gardeners Fran Brockington and Lisa Davis will introduce participants to true bulbs, corms, tubers and rhizomes that can be grown successfully in Galveston County. The history of bulbs, gardening techniques and calendar care will be covered. Come discover the joys of gardening with bulbs both in the garden and in containers.

BACKYARD CITRUS

Saturday, Sept 25, 2021 • 9 - 11 am

Galveston County Master Gardener Robert Marshall's presentationwill feature the following topics: variety selection of citrus trees that grow well in this area, root stocks, nutrients, disease (citrus canker and citrus greening), insect problems, control of birds and critters, and freeze protection. Robert, our Citrus go to Person has years of experience in many facets of growing and propagating citrus trees in this area. Many of the citrus trees discussed will be in the Fall Plant Sale on October 15-16.

T-BUD GRAFTING OF CITRUS & FRUIT TREES

Saturday, Sept 25, 2021 • 1 - 3 pm

Galveston County Master Gardener Nancy Langston-Noh and Hazel Lampton will present a hands-on workshop on T-bud grafting. This method is used on smaller peach, plum, pear, apple and other trees as well as roses. ***Hands-on workshop is limited to 20 participants, others are welcome to observe. You must pre-register to participate.***

OCTOBER

GROWING BLUEBERRIES

Saturday, Oct. 2, 2021 • 9 - 11 am

Galveston County Master Gardener Robert Marshall will begin his program covering some facts about fertilizer, what the numbers tells us, macro and micro nutrients, acidity and how to change the pH of the soil. He will then dive into blueberries and cover rabbit eye and southern high bush plants, growing blueberries in raised beds or container, how to plant and fertilizer your blue berries, how to mix the soil to provide the proper pH, and some of the diseases and pests you face. ***NOTE: Class is limited to 32 attendees. NOTE LOCATION - Master Gardener Discovery Garden in Carbide Park, 4102 Main St (FM 519), La Marque, 77568***

FALL FAVORITE VEGETABLES

Saturday, October 9, 2021 • 9 - 11 m

Galveston County Master Gardener Gene Speller will present a program on Cruciferous and other favorite vegetables usually grown during fall and winter months. These include popular varieties of broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard, kale, mustard and turnip greens, all members of the Cruciferous family. Other vegetables included will be several varieties of lettuce, spinach, and Swiss chard. Many of the vegetables discussed will be offered in the Fall Plant Sale October 15-16, 2021.

FALL PLANT SALE

Oct. 15-16, 2021 from noon to noon

We will have a selection of citrus trees, onions, lettuce, greens, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and MG grown items available for purchase online at https://store.galvestonmg.org/. Dates for drive through pickup in La Marque will be provided at sale.

KOKEDAMA (a hands-on workshop)

Saturday, October 30, 2021 • 9 - 11 m

Kokedama is a ball of soil, covered with moss, on which an ornamental plant grows. Galveston County Master Gardener Kat Tondre will lead a hands-on workshop demonstrating step-by-step instructions on how to make your own kokedama and participants will leave with their own kokedama creation. ***NOTE: Cost is $20 per person, fee will be collected at the event and covers cost of plants, soil, peat moss, twine and sheet moss. Class is limited to 15 attendees. You must pre-register in order to attend. NOTE LOCATION - Master Gardener Discovery Garden in Carbide Park, 4102 Main St (FM 519), La Marque, 77568***

NOVEMBER

BULB SALE

Nov. 5-6, 2021 from noon to noon

We will have a selection of amaryllis, various lilies, daffodils, summer snowflakes and more available for purchase online at https://store.galvestonmg.org/. Dates for drive through pickup in La Marque will be provided at sale..

Legacy group formed to celebrate Dr J's life

Kathy Maines
GCMG 2017

The Dr. William McCray Johnson Legacy Committee was formed to coordinate the Galveston County Master Gardener Association's efforts to appropriately commemorate the life and contributions of Dr. Johnson to the Master Gardener program, to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, to Galveston County, and to the State of Texas. These efforts are being coordinated with Extension staff, master gardeners, and stakeholders in the community.

The committee members include Julie Massey, Phoenix Rogers, Brittany Allen, Ginger Benson, Sharon Zaal, Robin Collins, Linda Steber, Linda Barnett, and Kathy Maines.

They have met weekly since April. Their specific goals include considering options and recommending projects that will commemorate Dr. Johnson's work, solidifying details, and working to implement the project and meet its goals.

The committee's first project is to rename the Extension Office. This request was presented to the Galveston County Commissioner's Court and the Commissioners voted in favor to rename the building the "Preston E. Poole and Dr. William McCray Johnson Extension Office". Dr. Johnson and Mr. Poole worked together and Mr. Poole was much respected by Dr. Johnson. Those who knew both men have said that Dr. Johnson would be happy to have his name with Mr. Poole's name.

Dr. Johnson was employed by Galveston County Extension for 31 years. Under his guidance, the Galveston County Master Gardener Program expanded from nine members to over 200 members volunteering 30,000 hours annually. This association is one of the most renowned master gardener programs in the state, winning multiple awards annually, including Outstanding Master Gardener Association of the Year by the Texas Master Gardener Association. He had a passion for education and wrote a weekly gardening column for the Galveston Daily News. Dr. Johnson had a way of bringing out the best in people.

Mr. Poole was employed by Galveston County Extension for 29 years. He was the first black extension agent in the county. He, too, had a passion for education, believing that Extension agents are professional educators. He was most interested in landscape architecture and was on the planning board for the city of La Marque. After he retired from Extension, Mr. Poole was named as an aide to the County Commissioners Court and was a member of the Beach Park Board of Trustees. After Mr. Poole's death, his wife donated $20,000 for the therapeutic garden at Carbide Park as a way to memorialize her husband while helping senior citizens.

The second project of the Legacy Committee is an outdoor classroom at the Discovery Garden underneath the huge oak tree by the Pollinator Garden. Adhering to the belief of Dr. Johnson that "knowledge not shared is knowledge lost," the Dr. William McCray Johnson Discovery Classroom will support his legacy and his lifetime dedication to education and the sharing of knowledge. For the many people who have asked about making a donation to something in Dr. Johnson's name, this is the perfect opportunity. Donations may be made online at https://store.galvestonmg.org/

To get these projects started, there will be a ribbon cutting and dedication to Dr. Johnson and Mr. Poole followed by a celebration honoring Dr. Johnson. On display will be proclamations in Dr. Johnson's name from the cities of Hitchcock, Kemah, and Galveston as well as a proclamation that creates a Dr. Johnson Day from the city of La Marque. Also on display will be a proclamation from the county of Galveston, and an In Memoriam from the Office of Mayes Middleton House of Representatives. Finally, Dr. Johnson's Regents Fellow Service Award from Texas A&M University and his Lifetime Achievement Award from the Galveston Daily News will also be on display.

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 Mangement System or other approved means. Contact MG Wayne Elliott at gcmghours@gmail.com for more information.

RECERTIFICATION HOURS 2021

Date	Name of Program	Speaker	MG CEUs
1/8/2021	Wedge Grafting - Online via Zoom	Herman Auer	1.50
1/11/2021	Growing Potatoes - MGs Only - Online via Zoom	Kevin Lancon	1.50
1/15/2021	Planting Fruit Trees - Online via Zoom	Herman Auer	1.50
1/22/2021	Growing Irish Potatoes - Online via Zoom	Kevin Lancon	1.50
1/29/2021	Growing Backyard Citrus - Online via Zoom	Robert Marshall	1.50
2/1/2021	"Texas Tuff" Plants for the Gulf Coast - Online via Zoom	Briana Etie	1.25
2/5/2021	Growing Great Tomatoes, Part 2 of 3 - Online via Zoom	Ira Gervais	1.75
2/9/2021	MGA Feb. Meeting - Wildscaping at Home	Lauren Simpson	1.00
2/12/2021	Chile Peppers from A to Z - Online via Zoom	Gene Speller	1.75
2/26/2021	Growing Peaches in Galveston County - Online via Zoom	Herman Auer	2.00
3/5/2021	Herbs for the Gulf Coast Garden - Online via Zoom	Nancy Noh & Briana Etie	1.75
3/8/20201	Successful Spring Vegetable Gardening - Online via Zoom	Herman Auer	1.75
3/9/2021	MGA March Meeting - Building Healthy Soils	Greg Cooper	1.50
3/26/2021	Tomato Stress Management - Online via Zoom	Ira Gervais	1.75
4/13/2021	MGA April Meeting - The Grape State of Texas	Justin Scheiner	1.00
4/16/2021	Growing Cucurbits - Online via Zoom	Herman Auer	1.75
4/23/2021	Best Practices of Watering - Online via Zoom	Karolyn Gephart	1.50
5/11/2021	MGA May Meeting - Talking Trash	Diane Hume	1.00
5/21/2021	Composting - Online via Zoom	Jim Gilliam	1.75
5/28/2021	Rainwater Harveting - Online via Zoom	Nat Gruesen	1.00
6/4/2021	A Passion for Plumeria - Online via Zoom	Loretta Osteen	1.25
6/8/2021	MGA June Meeting - Gardening for the Birds & the Bees	Greg Grant	1.00
6/11/2021	Louisiana Irises - Online via Zoom	Monica Martens	1.00
7/10/2021	Aquaponics	Robin Collins	2.00
7/13/2021	MGA July Meeting - Hort Tech Program Within TDCJ	Scooter Langley	1.00
7/24/2021	Arranging Fresh & Artifical Flowers	Jackie Auer	2.25
8/7/2021	Plumeria Propagation	Loretta Osteen	2.00
8/28/2021	Small Trees for Small Yards	Briana Etie	2.00
8/28/2021	Growing Strawberries	Robert Marshall	2.00
2021 Recertification Hours for MGs		**Total CEUs (Hours)**	**44.50**

Last Updated: Aug. 31, 2021

Reminder: 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 means.

Great fall sales offered online

MGs offer County help with gardening issues

Plant specimens for cultural, disease and insect identification, as well as weed and other plant identifications, can be submitted to the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office is located at 4102-B Main Street (FM 519) in La Marque. Please have all specimens sealed in a zip lock bag where possible and always include a name, address and telephone number.

Master Gardener volunteers are available at a Help Line to answer telephone questions on horticulture Monday thru Friday at **281-534-3413, Ext. 1-1.**

The Extension Office is also a resource for a wide range of printed horticultural material. Publications are available on everything from planting a vegetable garden to stamping out fire ants. These publications are free and the public is encouraged to come by and help themselves to these reference materials.

Beginning, middle, end (the next chapter)

Phoenix Rogers
CEA- Agriculture &
Natural Resources

Gulp. I don't know if it was audible, but it was loud in my head. The setting is the Master Gardener newsletter meeting. The scene is Karolyn Gephart (our new editor) assigning articles. Her words, "Phoenix, you're writing the 'Last Word' article." Panic was setting in. It's not because I mind writing articles – no indeed – it's being assigned to write the article that was historically written by Dr. Johnson. No pressure. Karolyn was generous though in giving me carte blanche on the topic, so I reviewed the last 20 issues of the newsletter for inspiration. Know what I found? The "Last Word" article is a reprint of Dr. Johnson's weekly gardening column from The Daily News. That man was a genius!

The panic started to abate now that I knew the "Last Word" wasn't an inspirational piece written by a much-beloved man, but rather an informative piece. Next challenge, the newsletter is filled with informational articles written by those with a collective knowledge on gardening that surpasses mine for certain. What can I contribute? Information about agriculture or 4-H in our county? Sure, but this is a gardening newsletter. Then it came to me. Write about this award-winning newsletter and how it came to be (and I have a unique opportunity to dig through the actual digital and paper files, so that's what I did).

The beginning

"The Galveston County Master Gardener Association was formed in 1986 and shortly thereafter the first newsletter was published. Both have grown ever since. That first newsletter was a one-page, typewritten and copied for distribution to MG's by handout and mail. Less than 100 copies were issued." ~ Extension Office archival document

The middle (aka Linda Steber era)

The first digital file on our computer network is the February 1996 issue, and that happens to coincide with Linda Steber becoming the newsletter's first editor. Created using the newest technology available, Adobe PageMaker, that February issue was revolutionary, and, the creation of a Super Hero Team – Dr. J, Linda, and Sandra Devall (the design guru). This team slowly transformed the written words of Galveston County Master Gardeners into a piece of art. From new fonts to new design leads (now Robin Stone Collins), evolutions, both big and small, created the magazine quality newsletter published today.

The ending (aka the next chapter)

Stories like this never have endings, just new chapters, and we are starting a new one now as the newsletter embraces a new editor, Karolyn Gephart, altered aesthetics, and a new Horticulture Agent (well, soon anyways). Some changes will be noticeable, others won't. What is certain is that change has been a constant companion to this newsletter. The original Super Hero Team didn't know that they were going to publish an award-winning publication with over 1,600 online subscribers. They, along with many Master Gardeners, did the hard work, took a leap of faith and said to change "welcome to the table, have a seat."

A final thought. The previous chapters aren't just history. They are the foundation, solidly built by Linda, Dr. Johnson, Sandra, and scores of Master Gardeners who authored, edited, reviewed, and designed into the wee hours of the night to take Gulf Coast Gardening from yesterday into today. As we move forward with new Extension Agents, editors, authors, and more, it's important to remember our history, and embrace our future. .

Galveston County Monthly Meetings 2021

Judy Anderson GCMG 2012

October 12, 2021

Recognition and Graduation of Class of 2020

Mikey and Allen Isbell

1715 35th Street, Galveston

After the freeze, the pandemic, and all of the other crazy interruptions, the Class of 2020 is finally graduating. The class who thought they would never get certified will be recognized as Master Gardeners on October 12 in Galveston.

If you have not had an opportunity to meet them, the graduation will be an excellent time to say hello and get acquainted. They have spent their time working in the Discovery Garden and completing their Tomato Trials. They have supported the community beds, assisted with plant sales and prepared tomato starts for the online sale.

Deb Lambson worked with Clyde Holt as the Vegetable Garden coordinator and since his move to Utah, she is the Vegetable Garden contact. Jesse Jones helped provide tropical Hibiscus for the Online Hibiscus Sale, Maria Abad and Alysha Davaila worked with Briana Etie to get the Rain Garden planted. Deb Valdez, Michelle Gauthier, Dana Wulchak, Roxanne Rossen, and Deb Lambson helped with the Butterfly Garden installation at the Galveston Artist Boat property.

Michelle Gauthier donated bromeliads for the Master Gardener Grown Plant Sale. David Eskins, John Meyer, Ann Ross and Karen Nelson coordinated the Tomato Paste Trials with taste testing of salsa, jelly and tomato paste. John Meyer, Celia Philpot and Roxanne Rosson have worked with Rachel Montemayor to get the porch swings ready to hang. Bettye Vogler is preparing plant markers for the Earth-Kind Garden.

Carol Hairfield and Karen Nelson are creating a children's garden in the vegetable garden area. Deb Lambson, Maria Abad, Celia Philpot, Roxanne Rosson and Deb Valdez volunteer at Libbies. Debbie Valdez, Celia Philpot, Deb Lambson, and Karen Nelson participated in the Herb Fair at Moody Gardens. When Clyde Holt moved, a huge need was created for help keeping the grass mowed at the Discovery Garden; Debbie Valdez, Deb Lambson, and Carol Hairfield joined the mowing team.

The 2020 class has found many ways to support their MG training while complying with the COVID protocols. Our hats are off to them for their creativity and support of the MG projects.

It will be a unique graduation, in October, as they are recognized as certified Texas Master Gardeners. Plan on a traditional graduation at the home of Mikey and Allen Isbell, 1715 35th Street in Galveston. There will be a potluck dinner in the garden with the social beginning at 5:30 pm and dinner at 6 pm. Adult beverages are welcome. This will be an evening of celebration for the Class of 2020.

November GCMGA Annual Business Meeting

Please mark your calendar for Tuesday, November 9, 2021. It will be time for the GCMGA annual meeting when the business of the association is discussed with the membership. The meeting will be held at the AgriLife Extension Office. This is an opportunity for all members to hear discussions and better understand about the budget, activities of the association's past and future, and opportunities for volunteering. More details will be announced.

December GCMGA Holiday Party

December 14, 2021

Mikey and Allen Isbell

1715 35th Street, Galveston

As 2020 comes to an end, the GCMGA will celebrate the holidays with a gathering at the Isbell Home with a White Elephant Gift Exchange. Donations of unwrapped children's gifts will be accepted for Galveston children. Depending on the weather, the social will be held on the porch with the potluck indoors amidst the holiday magic.