



# HOE! HOE! HOE!

Grimes County Master Gardeners Newsletter



## VOLUME 5, ISSUE 3, MARCH 2009

President: Alvie Vesperman, Vice-President: Donna Hebert  
Secretary: Julia Cosgrove, Treasurer: John Milligan  
AgriLife Extension Agent: Rodney Finch Secretary: Barbara Szymczak  
[www.grimesmastergardeners.org](http://www.grimesmastergardeners.org)

### EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES & FUN MAR/APR 2009

- Mar 03 #6 Class - Fruits & Nuts - Tom LeRoy
  - Mar 10 #7 Class—Landscaping - Elliott Head
  - Mar 10 GCMG Regular Meeting—1.30 p.m. Go Texan—program by John Pitt, Soil Testing Lab
  - Mar 16 Waller Co. AgriLife Extension Blackberry & Citrus Workshops (details inside)
  - Mar 17 #8 Class—Propagation - instructor(s) TBA
  - Mar 19, 20 TGC Garden Study School (refer to email for details)
  - Mar 21,22—Herb Forum, Round Top, TX.
  - Mar 24 Waller Co. AgriLife Extension Pecan Tree Management workshop (details inside)
  - Mar 24 #9 Class—Rainwater Harvesting Stuckey's - 9442 FM244, Anderson (Carlos)
  - Mar 24,25,26 -5.30-9.30, and Mar 28 9.00-5.00 BVSWMA Master Composter Class (see inside)
  - Mar 31 #10 Class—Herbs - Ann Wheeler
  - Apr 7 #11 Class-Vegetables—Joe Novak
  - Apr 14 #12 Class-Plant Disease-Carlos Bogran
  - Apr 14 GCMG Regular Meeting-Field Trip to Arbor Gate
  - Apr 21 #13 FINAL Class-Communications-Rodney Finch, Open Forum-GCMG-Celebration lunch
  - Apr 23,24,25- TMGA Conference, Marshall, Texas
- All training classes are 8.30—12.30 at the Go Texan Building, Grimes Co. Expo Center (Fairgrounds) except where noted

The above is just a selection of events available in March and April, including seminars and plant sales, and does not include events at commercial businesses.

What great opportunities we have to learn about all things relating to gardening! This gives us a good knowledge base to pass the information on to our families, friends, members of the general public, and to use this knowledge in our own lives. Great stuff!!



Please send in your articles, photos, and other information by the 27th of the month to [hortiq@embarqmail.com](mailto:hortiq@embarqmail.com)

## MEETING SCHEDULE 2009

Regular meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Go Texan Building 9.00 a.m. except as noted below. Other meetings are held in the evening at members' homes and on Saturdays. Whenever weather permits, work time at the various beds at the Fairgrounds will take place before or after meetings held at Go Texan. Bring a brown bag lunch!

**March 10 Go Texan Building 1.30pm Speaker : John Pitt, Texas AgriLife Soil Testing Lab, on Interpreting Results from Soil Tests**

April 14 Field Trip to Arbor Gate, Tomball. 2.00 pm. Details TBA

Did you know :

### THE ICE HOUSE

In the U.K. where on average every person eats 2.25 kilograms of frozen peas a year, the pea is the nation's favorite vegetable. Freezing farm peas is a stopwatch affair, where the grower has precisely 150 minutes to get the peas picked and chilled before they start to deteriorate. But long before Bob Birdseye patented his frosted food process, kitchen gardeners were rushing fresh vegetables to the ice house. Popularized by Charles II, who had an ice house built in St. James' Park in 1600, the ice house was all the rage among the country set of the 1700's and 1800's.

Built of stone or brick and built in the ground or the side of a hill, the pit was filled with ice cut from a neighboring lake in winter. Packed down and kept dry, the ice would keep for twelve months or more. The chamber above the ice was lined with chilled shelves and rails, where fresh vegetables and foods were stored until required for use.

Ice had been used to chill food by the ancient Chinese, and remarkably, by the Mesopotamian gardeners some 4000 years before. Alexander the Great it said to have had trenches dug and filled with mountain snow and covered with branches at Petra so that his soldiers could still enjoy cool wine, fruit and vegetables, even in the heat of summer.

From Spade, Skirret and Parsnip—The Curious History of Vegetables, by Bill Laws.

### FEBRUARY NOTES

Everyone enjoyed the speaker at the February meeting, Jim Anding, telling us about birds in the Brazos Valley. I wish the Painted Buntings would come to my garden!



(Photo from Audubon Watch List)

Classes have been continuing, with some great information on soils, botany, entomology, and lawns & turf grasses. Only 8 more to go, y'all!!

The main event of the month, of the year even, was, of course, the Spring Planting & Landscape Seminar. We had a great turnout of Master Gardeners, Trainees, and Interns, who worked very hard to help make the event a success, not to mention all those who baked, crafted, and grew plants. Local businesses were very generous with their support, and the registrants had a great time. Sandra Stuckey and Sandy Robillard co-chaired the event, and earned huge amounts of praise. Sandy will be in charge of next year's, and is already making plans!



Three happy visitors!!

## Waller Co. BLACKBERRY & CITRUS MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Monday, March 16, 2009

At Waller Baptist Church, 2520 Cherry St.

### Blackberry Production

Registration begins 9:00 am

Program: 9:30 until noon

Topics include:

Blackberry management, varieties, disease control, and pest control.

Guest Speaker: Mr. Micah Meyer, Jefferson Co. Extension Agent for Horticulture

Cost: \$10, payable at door.

For info: Cody Dennison 979-826-7651  
(Programs are separate)



Come  
And  
Learn!!!

### Citrus Production

Registration begins 1:00 pm

Program: 1:30—4:00 pm

Topics include:

Citrus management, varieties, grafting, disease and pest control.

Guest Speaker: Mr. Herman Auer, Galveston Co. Master Gardener

Cost \$10, payable at door

For info: Cody Dennison 979-826-7651  
(Programs are separate)

### REMINDER OF CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan 27 Intro/Xeriscaping : Jayla Fry  
Feb 03 Soils : Sam Feagley  
Feb 10 Botany : Jayla Fry  
Feb 17 Entomology : Carlos Bogran  
Feb 24 Lawns/Turfgrass : David Chalmers  
**Mar 03 Fruit & Nuts : Tom Leroy**  
**Mar 10 Landscaping : Elliott Head**  
**Mar 17 Propagation : TBA**  
**Mar 24 Rainwater Harvesting : Bob Stuckey**  
**Mar 31 Herbs : Ann Wheeler**  
**Apr 07 Vegetables : Joe Novak**  
**Apr 14 Plant Disease : Carlos Bogran**  
**Apr 21 Communications - Rodney Finch**  
**Open Forum - MG speakers**  
**CELEBRATION LUNCH!!!**

Recap of the audit rules:

Master Gardeners can audit the classes free of charge and earn Continuing Education hours. Auxiliary members, and members of the Public, can audit individual classes for a fee of \$10 per person per class.

### March Vegetable Planting Guide

Asparagus—through 3/15  
Beets—through 3/5  
Broccoli—through 3/5  
Cabbage (American & Chinese) through 3/10  
Carrots—through 3/5  
Cauliflower—through 3/29  
Chard, Swiss—through 4/20  
Collards—through 3/31  
Garlic—through 3/15  
Swiss Chard—through 4/20  
Kale & Kohlrabi—through 3/10  
Head & Leaf Lettuce- through 3/20  
Mustard—through 4/15  
Turnips—through 4/20  
Edible Pod peas- through 3/5  
Radish—through 5/5  
Irish Potato- 2/5-3/15\*

If your onion crops develop seed heads instead of bulbs, they were probably planted either too early or too late!



*Spring is Nature's way of saying "let's party!"*

- Unknown

GRIMES COUNTY FAIR 2009  
June 5—12

It is time to start planning your entries for the County Fair. If you are entering plants, (container, hanging basket, succulents, etc.) they must have been in your possession for ninety days prior to the Fair, so you have a month to think about it and make preparations. Schedules and entry forms will be available at the Grimes County AgriLife Extension Office closer to the time. You can also enter vegetables, fruits, jams, jellies, pickles, baked goods, paintings, knitting, and many other classes - the County Fair is not only for the kids, although it remains a major source of income

**Raspberry Crazy Ants**

*Paratrechina sp. nr. pubens*

The Raspberry Crazy Ant is named after Tom Rasberry, a pest control operator who first discovered them in 2002 in Pasadena, Texas. To date these exotic pests have been found in Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Hardin, Harris, Jefferson, Liberty, Montgomery, Orange, Walker and Wharton Counties. They are on the move.

These ants spread via ground migration rather than mating flights. They are 1/8 inch long and are a reddish brown color. They raise colonies under any object on the ground and they multiply rapidly into multiple colonies of millions. They can be transferred from place to place via any infested object, including plant and soil material, bales of hay and yard debris. They will forage in and around homes and are extremely difficult to eradicate.

Their nuisance value is high and they cause extensive and costly damage. They are attracted to and accumulate in electrical equipment. This in turn causes short circuits and clogging of switching mechanisms. These ants do not sting, but they do have a painful bite.

For help in recognizing these ants, go to [http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu/ants/exotic\\_tx.cfm](http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu/ants/exotic_tx.cfm). If you notice large numbers of ants of uniform size, loose foraging trails with ants that crawl erratically and rapidly and above-ground colonies under debris, you may be looking at raspberry ants. Be sure to have them properly identified by your AgriLife Extension agent. Proper application of specific pesticides may eliminate them.

Sandra Williams



Photo from [urbanentomology.tamu.edu](http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu)

**WALLER COUNTY**  
**FREE PECAN TREE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP**  
Tuesday, March 24, 2009

At: Ken Fangué's Pecan Orchard at end of Harper's Church Road in Monaville, Tx

Registration begins : 12:30 pm  
Program: 1 pm until 4 pm

Topics include: Pecan Pest Management, Best Pecan Varieties, Pecan Management, Pecan Grafting

Confirmed Speakers: Dr. Tommy Thompson, USDA Research Geneticist at the National Pecan Repository  
in Snook, Texas

Bill Ree, Texas AgriLife Extension Specialist for Pecan Pest

For more information : Cody Dennison, Texas AgriLife Extension Agent for Agriculture, Waller County  
979-826-7651

*Program is outdoors, under a carport. Bring lawn chair, a drink, and pruning shears and pocket knife  
to use during the grafting demo.*

### **Master Composter Training Program**

The Master Composting Training Program is designed to train committed individuals who want to gain composting expertise and assist in educating their community in the area of backyard composting. The program provides an opportunity for hands-on experience, lectures by guest speakers, instructional books and videos, and an overview of the latest composting tools and techniques. After completing the 4 day training course the Master Composters then volunteer 20 hours teaching friends and neighbors in the community. Completion of the class and volunteer hours leads to certification as an official Master Composter.

The classroom sessions and field days cover topics such as:

- The biology of compost systems
- Compost trouble-shooting
- Equipment and bin selection
- Effective community outreach

Each participant will receive:

- Compost Bin
- Instructional materials
- Brazos Valley Compost Corps T-shirt
- Saturday lunch

The next class is scheduled at the **College Station Conference Center, 1300 George Bush Dr**

***March 24, 2009 - Tuesday 5:30 - 9:30pm***

***March 25, 2009 - Wednesday 5:30 - 9:30pm***

***March 26, 2009 - Thursday 5:30 - 9:30pm***

***March 28, 2009 - Saturday 9am - 5pm (Field Trip Day)***

**All 4 dates must be attended.** If you have any questions about the Master Composter Class please call Shelia McQueen, Program Coordinator at 979-764-3806.