



HOE! HOE! HOE!

Grimes County Master Gardeners Newsletter



VOLUME 4, ISSUE 8, AUGUST 2008

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EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES & FUN AUG/SEP 2008

- Aug 2 TMGA Directors Meeting, TAMU 11.00 a.m.
- Aug 9 Seminar at Martha's Bloomers : Snakes Alive by Jerry Walls, 11.00 a.m.
- Aug 12 GCMG Reg. Monthly meeting : program Pollinators & Native Bees, Helen Quinn
- Aug 16 Seminar at Martha's Bloomers: Fall vegetables, Elmer Krehbiel
- Sep 9 GCMG Evening Potluck meeting at the Milligans
- Sep 13 Seminar at Martha's Bloomers : roses, Mike Shoup
- Sep 15, 16 Landscape Design School, College Station
- Sep 10, 11, 13 Master Composter Class, College Station

JULY ACTIVITIES - Craft displays, and an interested potential new member (Mary's grandson) - we start 'em young!!!



TIME TO GET READY FOR FALL GARDENS

The Dog Days are here, with soaring temperatures and high humidity , but some vegetable plants are not readily available in the garden centers for fall. Here's what you should plant in August :

Beans: **8/10-9/10** Lima bush , **8/15-9/5** Pinto bush , **8/15-9/15** Green bush
8/10-10/20 Garlic **8/20-11/15** Swiss Chard **8/20-9/30** Collards
8/20-11/15 Mustard **8/20-11/20** Turnip Greens **8/15-8/31** (see below) Irish Potatoes
Thru 8/31 Edible Pod Peas, English Peas

Thru' 8/20 Sweet Corn **Thru' 8/15** Cucumber **Thru' 8/31** Romaine Lettuce

In early August take the seed potatoes out of the refrigerator. Pre-sprout them at room temperature in indirect light. **At end of August** plant them shallow, 1 ft apart cover with straw or leaves, and keep moist.

MEETING SCHEDULE 2008

Regular meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Go Texan Building 9.00 a.m. 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!

Aug 12 Meeting will be held at Go Texan Building, GC Fairgrounds.

Aug 12 "Show and Tell" Summer Activities, and program on Native Pollinators by Helen Quinn

Sep 9 Potluck evening meeting, hosted by John & Linda Milligan

Oct 14 Field Trip to TMPA

Nov 11 Tool Use & Care, John Milligan

Dec 5 Party! (place TBA)

Updates to programs, activities and projects will be announced when available.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Luther Burbank (March 7, 1849 – April 11, 1926) was an American botanist, horticulturist and a pioneer in agricultural science.

He developed more than 800 strains and varieties of plants over his 55-year career. Burbank's varied creations included fruits, flowers, grains, grasses, and vegetables. He developed a spineless cactus (useful for cattle-feed) and the plumcot.

Burbank's most successful strains and varieties include the Shasta daisy, the Fire poppy, the July Elberta peach, the Santa Rosa plum, the Flaming Gold nectarine, the Wickson plum, the Freestone peach, and the Burbank potato. Burbank also bred the white blackberry. A natural sport (genetic variant) of the Burbank potato with russet (reddish-brown) skin later became known as the Russet Burbank potato: this large, brown-skinned, white-fleshed potato has become the world's predominant processing potato.

August birthdays
Margie House 8/3
Jennifer Corzine 8/16
Sue Zook 8/21
Bob Young 8/22
Stewart Thompson 8/26

"Flowers always make people better and happier; they are sunshine, food and medicine to the soul."

Luther Burbank



Contributed by Sandra Stuckey

EGYPTIAN WALKING ONIONS

Allium cepa

These onions are also called tree onions, or topset onions. At the top of each stem small bulbs start to grow. From this develops the onion for next year. When the plant stalk dries out in the summer, it bends over and the little onions plant themselves in the ground. After several years, if left to their own devices, they really could “walk” around your garden! This promenade can be controlled by picking off the little onion sets and planting them where you want them, and they make fun things to give your friends to start in their own gardens. They can be planted in pots and snipped off like green onions, but then no babies would develop. The main bulb, which is only 1/2 to 1 inch long can be used like any other small onion. They are good for pickling and in vinaigrettes or soups, are great in scrambled eggs! They have a reddish-purple tinge, are quite strong tasting, and can also be stored like garlic for later use.



Mature onions on the ground



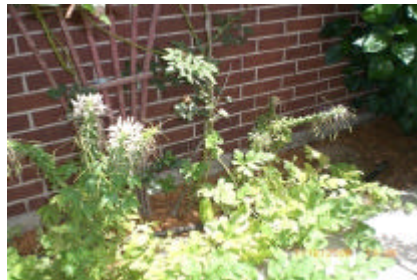
The other end of the stalk—the babies!

The flower stalks can also be used inside in fresh flower arrangements before the pretty flowers turn into baby onions. Try some of these interesting and delicious onions. You'll be glad you did!

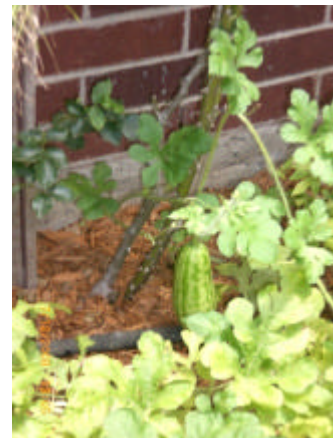
Helen Quinn

“JUST GOES TO SHOW YOU CAN GROW ANYTHING ANYWHERE!”

Peggy Sloan



This watermelon decided to grow in Peggy's flower bed. She hopes it will make it to full maturity, and will send updated picture next month.



MORE ASSOCIATION NEWS

*July saw a general slowing down of gardening and outdoor activities, and I'm sure August will be the same. For our July meeting Sandra, Peggy and Doris put together an interesting display of craft items we might make in small groups or individually to use as future fund-raisers.

*For our August meeting (August 12) don't forget to bring pictures and stories of your summer activities to share with your fellow master gardeners. We will also have a program on Native Bees and Pollinators where I'll be sharing some of the information I have learned through the Master Naturalist program, assisted by Sandy.

*Volunteer hours : Flower beds at the Fairgrounds (Flagpole, Go Texan, and Test Rose Garden) are getting weedy again. If anyone is willing to go out there early in the morning before it gets too hot, please do! We could also have an early morning pre-meeting work session before the August meeting on the 12th.



MASTER NATURALIST TRAINING

The Grimes County chapter, Cinco Tierra, will be holding its third training class in the new year. More information will be available later on. We are planning a joint field trip with Cinco Tierra members in October.

MASTER COMPOSTER TRAINING

BVSWMA will be holding the next Master Composter training on September 10th, 11th, and 13th. This is a great training. Call Shelia McQueen 979-764-3805, or email her smcqueen@cstx.gov

LANDSCAPE DESIGN SCHOOL

Course II, Series XXI will be held September 15-16, 2008 at Christ United Methodist Church, 4201 State Hwy 6, College Station. Even if you are not a Garden Club member or interested in going into landscape design, this is a very interesting four-part course covering a variety of landscape design techniques, private and public landscaping, environmental concerns, and even a field trip to see some of the ideas in established locations. The four courses can be taken in any order, and classes are usually held in September and February. Master Gardeners who complete a course may apply 12 hours of credit to their requirements for continuing education. Registration fee for each course is \$90, which includes lunch on both days. There is a textbook which is not required unless you are a Garden Club member seeking certification. "Stewards of the land" is a great book, \$40, covers all four courses. A limit of 175 students will be accepted for this school. More information and a downloadable registration form is available at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden> or call Tammy Landry, Department of Extension Horticulture, 979-845-7342 or by email tlandry@ag.tamu.edu

NEW PEST ALERT

The following condensed information was taken from AgriLife Extension Publication E-454, dated 9/07, and can be read in full on the Web at : <http://agrilifebookstore.org>. Publication is by Carlos Bogran and Scott Ludwig, and was sent to me by Sandra Williams. It has also been featured on Houston TV, so must be spreading.

The pink hibiscus mealybug (*Maconellicoccus hirsutus*) is an exotic pest. It first appeared in the U.S. in Florida in 2002, and has been recently found in Nueces County, Texas.

This insect is a potentially serious pest in many ornamental and agricultural crops. It feeds by sucking plant sap and attacks more than 300 species in 74 plant families. Tx AgriLife Ext and the Tx Dept of Agriculture are working hard to contain the spread of and potential damage by this pest. You can help by knowing how to identify it and what to do if you find it on crops or ornamental plants. They look similar to other mealybug species, but there are several ways to distinguish PHM infestations from those of other species.

*The feeding of the PHM causes new leaves to curl and young stems to stop elongating and become thick. This gives the plant a “bunchy top” appearance, and is caused by a toxin the PHM injects into the plant as it feeds.

*PHM form very dense colonies with heavy wax accumulations.

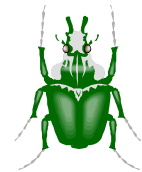
*The PHM has a reddish or pinkish body. When pierced, the PHM bleeds a reddish-brown fluid. Eggs are bright pink to red.

*While most other mealybugs have a fringe of wax filaments surrounding their bodies, the PHM has only one or two pairs of lateral wax filaments on the posterior end of the body and two “buttons” of white wax on the abdomen.

If you find a mealybug infestation, use the above information to compare damage symptoms and the insects' appearance. If you suspect the pest is PHM, or are not certain, contact your county Ext. Agent or the regional rep. of the TX Dept of Agriculture. You may be asked to submit a sample of the infested plant or a good digital photo for identification.

Biological control is the best way to manage this pest. Systemic insecticides are not always effective, and often PHM colonies are guarded by ants that feed on the honeydew, which can prevent parasitic wasps from attacking their prey. It may be necessary to control the fire ants first.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT! For more info on PHM, go to the University of Florida website at: <http://mrec.ifas.ufl.edu/LSO/PinkMealybug.htm>



More Pollinator facts (also from the Master Naturalist program in June)

If you enjoy coffee, chocolate, raspberries, almonds, or many other fruits and vegetables, thank a pollinator today! These are foods from plants that require pollinators to produce seeds or fruit. Over 75% of all flowering plants need pollination by animals. Pollinators need our help!