



HOE! HOE! HOE!

Grimes County Master Gardeners Newsletter



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EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES & FUN SEP/OCT 2008

- Sep 9 GCMG Evening Potluck meeting at the Milligans
- Sep 15, 16 Landscape Design School, College Station
- Sep 10, 11, 13 Master Composter Class, College Station
- Oct 14 Regular Monthly meeting (Field trip postponed) - details to be announced
- Oct 25 Texas Mushroom Festival, Madisonville
- Oct 30 Treats on the Street—downtown Navasota-MG participation.

AUGUST ACTIVITIES (the garden can wait!)



September 1st is the feast day of St. Fiacre, Patron Saint of Gardeners, and of the spade

TIME TO GET READY FOR FALL GARDENS

Here's what you should plant in September (the "main month"):

- 9/1—10/15 Beets; Chinese Cabbage;
- 9/1-11/30 Radish
- 9/5—11/25 Spinach
- 9/10-11/10 Broccoli; Brussels Sprouts 9/10-1/5 Head Lettuce
- 9/15-12/31 American Cabbage 9/15-11/30 Carrots; Leaf Lettuce
- 9/20-10/31 Cauliflower; Celery
- 9/20-11/30 Kale; Kohlrabi

Keep water handy, also prepare to shade tender seedlings from the blistering Texas sun!

A good idea at the time—Container Growing

"The popularity of container gardening has grown in proportion to the diminishing size of the average garden. But in Roman times, the men and women who looked after the Roman Emperor Tiberius' gardens turned container gardening into craft. The emperor was mad about cucumbers and expected, as emperors do, to be able to eat them at any, and every, time of the year. Terrified of the emperor's wrath, his gardeners invented a system of growing the cucumbers on portable beds. If cold weather threatened, the beds were wheeled inside to safety. On cool days they were taken out of doors, and sheltered behind windows made of mica, a translucent stone cut into sheets for the purpose"

From: "Spade, Skirret and Parsnip, the Curious History of Vegetables", by Bill Laws

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!

Sept 9 Meeting will be held at the home of John & Linda Milligan. This will be mostly potluck, food and fun, with minimal meeting! Come and enjoy the scenery and get to know your fellow Master Gardeners better! Directions will be sent out nearer to the time.

Oct 14 Field Trip to TMPA - postponed until spring. Stay tuned for new October meeting details

Nov 11 Tool Use & Care, John Milligan

Dec 5 Party! (place TBA)

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

Dog Day Bloom list

What is blooming in your garden? The week of August 16th: Yellow Bells/Esperanza (Tecoma stans), Ruellia, var. Katy, the tall weedy Ruellia, self seeded Periwinkles (Vinca), Diamond Frost (Euphorbia), Mexican Honeysuckle (Justicia), Roses (Belinda's Dream, Red Knockout, Miniature Apricot Blaze), Pineapple Sage (pink & red), Portulaca, Santa Barbara Daisy, Gailardia, Dianthus, Sunflower, Cannas, Crepe Myrtles (White, Magenta, Pink), Althea (white, pink w/red center), Oleander, Petite Pink, red, Duranta, Almond Verbena, Blue Plumbago, Wild Petunia, Airplane Plant, Tradescantia, Purple Heart, Four o'clock and water poppy.

Top scorers for hummingbirds, dragonflies, butterflies, bees, and bumblebees - all of the above! !



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Sept 3 : Phyllis Falco
Sept 8 : Edmond McGee
Sept 9 : Pam Schnieder
Sept 19 : Fred Murray
Sept 25 : Bonny Burger

"Bread feeds the body, indeed, but flowers feed also the Soul."

The Koran

HERBAL HELPER

Combining fresh garlic (or any food grown in soil) and oil to make flavored oils can encourage the growth of botulin if you don't take precautions. To kill botulin spores, soak garlic in vinegar before combining with the oil. For safekeeping, store the oils in the refrigerator.

FASCIATION (not a typo, but it just could be fascination!!)

Freaky! That's what you'll think the first time you come across a plant with fasciation. Stems and flowers that should be round are flat. Misshapen and ribbonlike, they look as they've been run through a pasta machine.

Fasciation can be caused by injury to a plant's growing tip. Herbicides, frost, insects, a careless gardener, or bacteria can cause fasciation. Sometimes it's the result of a random genetic accident. Many plants are susceptible, including asparagus, cactus, delphinium, forsythia, hibiscus, lily, and sycamore. The condition is unusual but not rare. Garden long enough, and you'll see it!

Man took this accident of nature and purposely cultivated plants, such as the Japanese fantail willow (*Salix sachalinensis* "Sekka"), for just this appearance. The wavy, brain-like flowers of cockscomb (*Celosia argentea* var. *cristata*) are an example of inherited fasciation.

While it is certainly odd-looking, fasciation is harmless. You can prune fasciated parts from annuals and perennials if you don't like the way they look, but on a woody plant, the fasciated branches after grow back.



(Info out of an old "Organic Gardening" magazine)



My new bromeliad - pups from Paula's plant, stuck in a pot with no soil, bloomed while waiting to be planted!

Helen Quinn

‘STAYING COOL’



Frog in a pot—every morning, after his nightly carousing, he burrows down in this pot of Costus Ginger.

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 the spring.

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

FALL IS THE TIME TO PLANT BULBS

As soon as you see spring flowering bulbs in the stores, plan on buying - the best ones tend to disappear from the shelves quickly. Always try to buy the firmest and plumpest bulb, and large sizes will produce better. Plan your planting area in advance, so you will be ready. Our warm, humid climate is not well-suited to bulbs that require long chilling. For more reliable blooming, try some of the following bulb varieties, which have naturalized and bloomed for generations in Southern gardens.

If you absolutely must plant hybrid tulips, refrigerate them for 8-10 weeks before planting, and don't expect them to bloom again the next year. A better choice would be the species tulip *Clusiana*. This creamy white and cherry-red species tulip will bloom and return reliably.

Narcissus (daffodils and jonquils) are long-lived and can multiply readily in warm climates. Some recommended varieties include Grand Primo, Butter and Eggs, Campernelle and Sweetness. I also like Erlicheer.

Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*) blooms early, prefers moist sites and has bell-shaped white flowers with a green dot on each petal. Make sure it is *Leucojum* you buy, and not *Galanthus* sp. - this snowdrop does not like our climate!

If the above varieties are not available locally, some reliable online sources are : www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com, www.southernbulbs.com, and www.oldhousegardens.com.

Most bulbs prefer well-drained soil with ample amounts of organic matter. Almost all thrive in full sun, but some, like daffodils and leucojum, tolerate shade. Avoid a high-nitrogen fertilizer, use bone meal or any balanced mix. Leave all foliage to mature after the blooms fade, until it yellows. At that point it may be removed. The foliage builds up the bulb for next years flowers. I tie the foliage in a knot to keep it tidy, however some people say this stops the flow of nutrients back to the bulb. In all my years of gardening I have never found this practice to affect the spring bloom.

