



**Officers, 2009**

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Go Texan Beds: Jennifer Corzine & Donna Hebert  
Ext. Office Beds: Julia Cosgrove & John Milligan  
Communications: Helen Quinn  
Children's: Jennifer Corzine & Sandy Robillard  
2010 Seminar: Sandy Robillard  
Fundraising: Julia Cosgrove  
Admin: Carolyn Guillotte  
Class: Jennifer Corzine  
Painting Texas w/wildflowers: Edmond McGee  
Co-op: Fred Vesperman

**Texas AgriLife Extension:**

Rodney Finch : County Agent  
Barbara Szymczak: Secretary  
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**HOE! HOE! HOE!**  
**Grimes County Master Gardeners Newsletter**  
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**Ongoing Projects:**

- \*Rose beds and landscaping at Go Texan Building, Fairgrounds.
- \*Landscaping at Texas Agri-Life Extension Office.
- \*Painting Texas with Wildflowers

**September 12 Fall Vegetable Seminar  
(see inside)**





## VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

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

### GLORIOUS GARLIC

Did you know that over 50% of the garlic we buy in the grocery store is shipped in from China?? What better reason to plant our own. Garlic is easy to grow and take up less space than most onion varieties, so can be interplanted with other cool season crops. Most gardeners find garlic easier to plant from cloves, which are set 1 inch deep with the pointy end up and the blunt end down. Space them 3 to 4 inches apart in conventional rows set 12 to 16 inches apart. Space in growing beds is 6 inches. Garlic can also be planted in among other crops to help provide a measure of insect control. Common Garlic, *Allium sativum* is not the same species as Elephant Garlic (*Allium scorodoprasum*).

Italian (pink) varieties require 110 days to harvest, Mexican (white) requires 90 days but do not store as well as Italian varieties.

Remove flower heads as they appear. For bigger bulbs next year, save the largest bulbs from this year's harvest for replanting. Leaves can be snipped like chives and used for a mild garlic flavor, although this slows bulb formation. Garlic is ready for harvest when tops begin to yellow and droop. At that time, stop watering and knock down all the tops to hasten bulb curing. Three to five days later loosen the soil or use a fork to lift them. Leave outdoors in a dry, shady place for several days until the tops re completely dry and the skin has become papery. Trim, and hang in mesh bags.

Be sure to eat lots of garlic during this spookiest of months to keep the vampires at bay! PLANT NOW FOR NEXT YEAR'S CROP.

Regular meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Go Texan Building, Grimes Co. Fairgrounds, 9.00 am., except as noted below. Two evening meetings held at members' homes, and two Saturday field trips, enable members who work to participate.

## ON THE CALENDAR – OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

Oct 3 Rainwater Harvesting seminar, Coufal Prater, 10.00 am by Robert Stuckey

Oct 3, 4 Scout instruction project, details tba

Oct 15-16 Garden Study School, Hort. Lab, TAMU

Oct 17 GCMG at Vicki's, noon. Potluck

Oct 17 Madisonville Mushroom Festival 10-5 for non-gardening fun!

Oct 29 Treats on the Street – details tba

Nov 1 Standard Time begins – clocks back an hour!!

Nov 10 GCMG monthly meeting – tentatively 6.00pm, Fountainview  
Barbara Volk-Tunnell speaking on holiday arrangements

Nov 14 Fruit Tree Production, Coufal Prater, 10.00 am by Rodney Finch

Dec 04 GCMG Christmas Party? Details TBA

Dec 05 TMGA Directors' Meeting 11.00-3.00 TAMU

Dec 05 City of Navasota Christmas Parade 6.00 pm (judging 4pm)



## **DUNG BEETLES** by Sandra Williams

There are many species of dung beetle. They are important recyclers in pastures and elsewhere, removing dung and using it for larval food. The beetle shapes a portion of dung into a ball and rolls it to an underground nest where it is buried. It's not uncommon for another dung beetle attempt to steal the dung ball while in transit. The female lays an egg in each ball and seals it off in the underground den. When the larva hatches, it feeds from its own horde of food. There may be many branches to the nesting tunnels, each with its own dung ball.

By removing the dung, the beetle reduces the above ground manure and thus decreases the habitat for flies and other unwanted pests. The residue left in the nest also serves as food for many other organisms, which speeds the breakdown of fecal material into soil nutrients.



### **Last chance!**

to put your name in the hat for an Officer position For 2010! If you would like to be considered for President, Vice-President, Secretary, or Treasurer! Contact Sandy.

### **Heads up!**

Christmas Parade will be December 5<sup>th</sup>. John has once again offered horses & carriage, so be thinking if you want to join in the fun. More details in November newsletter and/or at meeting.

**SPRING PLANTING SEMINAR : FEBRUARY 20, 2010**

## 2010 GCMG TRAINING CLASS

The Committee, headed by Jennifer and Alvie, met on August 25<sup>th</sup> to produce a tentative schedule for the 2010 training class. Classes will start on January 26<sup>th</sup> and run for 13 weeks, ending April 20<sup>th</sup>. Once again we expect the classes to be held at the Go Texan Building at the Fairgrounds. Applications are available so tell your friends, family and neighbors! We hope to have all the instructors and dates confirmed soon.

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## FALL VEGETABLE PLANTING SEMINAR held on September 12<sup>th</sup>

This was a success, thanks to our speakers Sharon, Alvie and John, and all the members who provided cookies, made exhibits to display in the hall, and supported us by their presence. There were several other events taking place in the area that same day, but our "draw" mainly was the private applicator license CEUs. Several of the attendees expressed an interest in the Master Gardener Program.





*by Kathy Denning*

One of my favorite flowering plants in my garden is the Texas Star hibiscus. My family teasingly calls it “Mom’s pot plant”, since the leaves are hemp shaped, but they could also be loosely compared to a maple leaf. The Texas Star hibiscus is native to Texas and the southeastern U.S.

This flowering perennial has large scarlet colored flowers and typically grows 6 feet tall and about 4 feet wide. While it needs full sun to bloom it will tolerate some shade, particularly during the hot afternoons we endure here in Texas. The Texas Star hibiscus has a prolonged blooming time, from June through October. The bright red flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies with their beautiful color and rich nectar. It is hardy to Zone 6, but also makes a good container plant in colder climates.

This plant likes moist, fertile soil. Found in the wild in wet areas, especially around the edges of ponds, it easily tolerates standing water. For best plant health, water regularly until it is established in the garden, and also during dry spells. The use of a heavy layer of mulch in the garden to retain moisture is essential. With its love of moisture, it is a great choice for the edge of a pond or water garden. The stalks are tall and leggy, adding textural and visual interest to the garden.

Seeds can be collected and the Texas Star germinates true to form. Seed heads can be dried on the plant, or seedpods can be dried off the plant. Store seed in a cool, dry place, even in the freezer. Before direct sowing after all danger of frost has passed, nick the seed coat (sandpaper works well) to make germination easier.

Being a native Texan, the Texas Star hibiscus is a low maintenance addition to the garden. It is actually considered a pest-free plant! While this is the first year to have one in my garden, I can attest to it having no pest problems whatsoever. It may occasionally attract aphids, but that’s about all. Deciduous, it should be heavily pruned in late winter, even going so far as cutting to ground level, as blooms occur on new growth. Fertilize in early spring, and once established in your garden, avoid too much cultivation around the base of the plant. As always, mulch heavily!

Part of the Mallow family, the Texas Star goes by many other names such as Hardy Hibiscus, Scarlet Mallow, Scarlet Rose Mallow, Wild Red Mallow and Swamp Hibiscus, to name a few. Whatever anyone else wants to call it, I prefer the name Texas Star!