



HOE! HOE! HOE!

Grimes County Master Gardeners Newsletter



VOLUME 4, ISSUE 12, DECEMBER 2008

President: Alvie Vesperman, Vice-President: Rosella Presswood
Secretary: Julia Cosgrove, Treasurer: John Milligan
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www.grimesmastergardeners.org

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES & FUN DEC/JAN 2008

NOV 30—DEADLINE TO SUBMIT VOL. HOURS FOR AWARDS CONSIDERATION! HOPE YOU ALL MADE IT! IF NOT, CONTACT MARY WITHOUT DELAY!!!!

- Dec 04 GC Christmas Parade 6.00 pm (if participating, time to be at Navasota Center TBA).
- Dec 05 GCMG Christmas party—6.00 pm, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Navasota
- Dec 06 TMGA Directors’ meeting—TAMU, 11.00 am—3.00 p.m.
- Jan 13 GCMG Regular monthly meeting - Go Texan Building 9.00 a.m.
- Jan 27 First class of 2009 training class - Go Texan Building, 8.30 a.m. - 12.00 p.m.



SS throwing seedballs



C-JW Organic Gardening seminar

Recent GCMG Activities



HQ seminar Bulbs



HQ presenting Propagation program for Tri-County Diggers Garden Club



JM teaching us how to care for our tools and use them.



Card making workshop

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!

**Dec 5 Party! St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Church/McAlpine St, Navasota
6.00 p.m. Pot Luck – bring your favorite dish (as well as your spouse/
partner/guest) and beverages other than tea, coffee or “soft”.
No gifts this year, bring non-perishable food items for the
Food Pantry instead. Exciting program planned**

November Bloom list

What is blooming in your garden? The week of Thanksgiving there were still a large number of blooming flowers. The bright orange and yellow Asclepias tuberosa (butterfly weed) is hosting a caterpillar party, with several fat and sassy Monarchs-to-be chomping like it is the end of the road. More like the fork in the road for them! The Gaillardia has been blooming all year, and now it is joined by the Mexican Mint Marigold, and the pretty blue Mist Flower (Eupatorium .) Roses, Santa Barbara Daisy, Blue Plumbago, Yellow Chrysanthemums, self-seeded Periwinkles, even the tomatoes and peppers are still setting bloom! The early Narcissus Paperwhites are up and in bud - may be we should skip winter and go straight to spring!



NOVEMBER MEETING NOTES

Thanks to John, we now know how to keep our tools sharp and in good working order. We even had a lesson in pruning techniques. If you missed the meeting and would like to know more about this, please ask John. Remember, a sharp tool is a safer tool!

For those who missed the meeting, please make sure to let Julia know of any email/address changes. She will soon be making a new roster, and we don't want anyone to miss any information

Officers for 2009 are:

President: Alvie Vesperman
V-President: Donna Hebert
Secretary: Julia Cosgrove
Treasurer: John Milligan

CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD LUCK!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Dec 4 Sandy Robillard
Dec 16 Linda Milligan
Dec 20 Kellie McKenney
Dec 20 Helen Quinn

2009 MASTER GARDENER TRAINING CLASS

The next class will begin Tuesday January 27th, and run through Tuesday April 21st, 8.30 - 12.30, at the Go Texan Building. Tentative schedule is as follows, but note that not all of the speakers are confirmed so they are not listed here.

Jan 27 Intro/Orientation
Feb 03 Soils Sam Feagley
Feb 10 Botany
Feb 17 Entomology
Feb 24 Lawns/turf
Mar 03 Fruit & Nuts
Mar 10 Landscaping
Mar 17 Vegetables
Mar 24 Plant disease
Mar 31 Herbs
Apr 07 Propagation
Apr 14 Composting/Organic Gardening
Apr 21 Communications Skills, Overview of what comes next, followed by pot luck lunch.

Everyone is encouraged to audit any and all of the classes. For certified Master Gardeners and interns there is no charge, cost to Auxiliary Members and members of the public will be \$10.00 per class. Chairing the class committee this year is Jennifer Corzine, with Julia Cosgrove as the resident Expert and guide. Let's all help to make this a great class!

Downloadable Application is available at www.grimesmastergardeners.org, at various businesses in the county, and has been mailed out to all members of the Grimes County Chamber of Commerce with their December Newsletter.

PAINTING TEXAS WITH WILDFLOWERS

The scheduled seedball planting unfortunately had to be cancelled because of torrential rain, accompanied by scary thunder and lightning. There had been some problems with TXDOT, who hadn't identified their property even though they had, in principle, given permission to plant. Some private sites had been identified, but when it became evident that the weather wasn't going to let up, individual members took seedball supplies to throw out when they could. More information about this will be provided later.

On Nov. 21 Sandra and Robert Stuckey planted Wildflowers by throwing our seed balls at the Munition Factory Historical Marker on FM 244 outside of Anderson. This marker was erected at the site of a munition factory of the Southern Confederacy established in 1861. The factory was in operation until 1865 manufacturing cannons, cannon balls, guns, pistols, swords, sabers, bayonets and gun powder. We have not received reports from anyone else who took seedballs to plant.

On Nov. 1, Julia did a seminar on Wildflowers to kick off our PTWW, sorry no pictures, our photographer was out of the country and I forgot to take my camera. Julia did a great job, it was so interesting. I was surprised to learn that TEXDOT started planting Wildflowers back in the 1940's, I believe this is correct, check with Julia to see if I am. Julia handed out some of the seedballs that we all helped to make.

Sandra Stuckey

Try a new plant in 2009

One “exotic” plant you might want to consider trying is *Lawsonia inermis* - Henna. This plant has been used for thousands of years in “The East” to produce a dye to color fabrics, to enhance hair and finger nail color, to beautify the soles of young ladies’ feet, and to produce body tattoos in wild and wonderful tribal patterns. This plant has flowers in summer that I would say are the most fragrant I have ever experienced. I kept it in a container for several years, so that I could move it into winter shelter because it was not supposed to survive here. One year I found that the roots had gone through the bottom of the pot, so for the last several years it has stayed outside, and survived!

The dye is obtained from the veins of the dried leaves, so you would need many plants to extract it commercially. I used it for many years when I lived in Libya and Algeria, and bought a package of the powder at the spice market in Tunisia last month. You’ll know if I ever decide to use it - especially as I can’t remember the ratio of water to powder! A word of caution — if at any time you decide to try a henna tattoo, make sure the tattooist is using genuine henna and not ppd, which is illegal in the U.S. and can cause intense itching, swelling, and other unpleasant side effects! Grow it, smell it, but don’t paint with it unless you know what it is and where it comes from.!



Helen Quinn

SPRING PLANTING SEMINAR UPDATE AND ACTIVITIES

Planning continues for the 2nd Annual GCMG Spring Planting Seminar, to be held at the Navasota Center, in Navasota, on April 21, 2009. Co-Chairing this event are Sandra Stuckey and Sandy Robillard, and there will be all kinds of volunteer opportunities available, as well as the same caliber of presentations and instruction as we had in 2008!

For 2009 a plant sale has been added, and hopefully this will be of great interest to our participants. Hand-made greetings cards, herbal soaps, and other things will also be available for sale. A card-making workshop was held on November 4th at Sandra Stuckey’s home and she writes :

“... six Master Gardeners, and two auxiliary members got together at Sandra's house for a card making session to make cards to sell at our 2009 Seminar. A fun time was had by all and they produced some very beautiful cards. Everyone wants to do it again. Hopefully we can do it again in January. You may want to come next time and just see how talented you are.”

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!!!!!!!!!!

KISMIF

Keep It Simple Make It Fun

In Keeping with our KISMIF Christmas Theme for this year:

**You are all cordially invited to the annual CGMG
Christmas Party, this next Friday, December 5 at 6:00 p.m.
at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
414 E McAlpine Street
Navasota, Texas**

**As always, bring a hot dish appetizer and beverage of your choice.
(coffee and tea are provided)
Be ready for ANYTHING!**

**For this year, in lieu of gifts, we are asking for donations to the following:
(this was suggested by our MC Dorothy Holkamp and seems very appropriate)**

Regarding our MG Christmas party and food pantry donations...

Our Grimes County Master Gardeners group should consider giving the food pantry donations collected at our Christmas party to the Navasota Manor Senior Center located on Church Street. Navasota Manor is comprised of 36 units that are occupied by elderly and handicapped people of all races who are still able to take care of themselves (sometimes with home health care assistance), but are on fixed minimal incomes. Each year, the residents organize several fund raisers—sale of barbecue plates, baked goods, handmade items, etc., all of which are made by the residents—and all money raised from these events is given directly to the Brazos Food Bank. In turn, the Brazos Food Bank sells food items back to Navasota Manor at a significant discount, currently at a cost of \$1.49/ pound for their total order. Navasota Manor distributes thousands of pounds of food to its residents annually through its association with the Brazos Food Bank, and the facility receives donations from other organizations and individuals, as well.

These items are not available through the Brazos Food Bank.

2-lb. sugar

2-lb. flour

2-lb. corn meal

(Note: Although the food bank can provide the three above items, they provide it in 5- and 10-pound bags, which is more than the residents can physically handle and/or use in a reasonable amount of time.)

1-lb. coffee

Tea bags

Small bottle of cooking oil

Dish soap

Laundry soap

Toilet paper

Paper towels