



HOE! HOE! HOE!

Grimes County Master Gardeners Newsletter

*Winner of the Texas Master Gardener Association
2nd Place Newsletter Award 2006*

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 5, May 2011

ON THE CALENDAR May/June 2011

- May 1 Navasota Garden Club Homes Tour 1-5pm
- May 2 Work time Anderson Main Street 9.00 am
- May 6 Farm Bureau Jr. Ag Day, Fairgrounds 8.00am
- May 10 GCMG Field Trip to Tyler Rose Gardens
- May 13 AgriLife Extension Feral Hog Seminar
- May 14 GCMG Spring Seminar 8-12.30
- June 4-11 Grimes County Fair
- June 8 Senior Day at GC Fair
- June 14 GCMG Reg. Monthly Meeting, program TBA
- June 21 First day of Summer!!!

Navasota Garden Club Home & Garden Tours

Thanks to the Master Gardeners who volunteered to help :
Barbara Szymczak, Sandra Stuckey, Edmond McGee, Kathleen Flick,
Marguerite Corbello, Peggy Sloan, Janeth Nevill. (Sorry I don't have
photos of all, but I was working too and couldn't get to all the houses)



Preliminary reports estimate approximately 125 visitors attended on Saturday, and maybe 75 on Sunday. It was hot and windy outside, and although we felt like we had been sand-blasted, it was fun!

Officers, 2011

President: Jennifer Corzine
Vice President: Alvie Vesperman
Treasurer: Barbara Szymczak
Secretary: Helen Quinn

Committee Chairs

Go Texan Beds: Mike Arden
Communications: Helen Quinn
Children's: Kathy Laughlin
Admin: Sandra Williams
Class: Jennifer Corzine
Plant Texas w/wildflowers: Edmond McGee
Tesa Silva
Co-op: Fred Vesperman
Time: Kathy Denning
Anderson Beautification: Janeth Nevill/
Barbara Szymczak
Publicity: Peggy Sloan
Fundraiser: Linda Jolly
Awards/Social: Connie Arden

Texas AgriLife Extension:

Shane Jennings: MG Coordinator
Sandra Curl: Secretary

Newsletter Editor:

Helen Quinn
Articles, photos and other
Information due by 27th of each month.
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VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

MAY

1/25-5/5 – Radish
3/10-5/5 - Green Beans
3/10-5/5 – Pinto Beans
3/5-5/5 – Sweet Corn
3/20-6/15 – Cucumber
3/25–6/10 – Eggplant
3/25-5/21 – Lettuce, Romaine
4/5 – 6/15 – Melons
4/5 – 6/15 - Pumpkins
4/5 – 6/15 - Okra
4/5-6/15 – Peas, Southern
4/5-6/15 – Peppers
3/15-6/15 – Squash, Summer & Winter



Okra – love it or hate it, no in between!

Okra, *Abelmoschus esculentus* aka Lady's finger, is one of the oldest cultivated food crops. It originated in west Africa and was brought over to the Americas by the slaves. Okra is a warm weather crop, growing best when average temperatures are between 70 and 85F. Since it matures so quickly (first harvest is two months from seeding) it may be grown in any area that offers ten weeks of warm and sunny weather. The plants do poorly in cool, damp or cloudy regions, and are very susceptible to frost.

In the Mallow family and related to the hibiscus, the flowers are striking enough for the plants to be grown in the flower bed! Standard plants are 4 – 7 feet high, dwarf varieties 2 – 4 feet. One way to keep the mucilaginous material inside the pod is to cook it with its cap on. This material is valued as a thickener for gumbos, soups, stews and catsup! If you like it, plan on three to five plants per person. Plant after the soil temperature has reached 60 F. Soak seed overnight to hasten germination; unused seed can be good for 5 years. Okra is a heavy feeder and a quick grower, so give it nitrogen-rich supplementary feedings. Side-dress with manure or compost, or water with solutions of fish emulsion or manure tea every three weeks. To contain rampant growth, prune a few branches and leaves below each pod you have harvested, and be prepared to harvest every day once the plants start to produce! Pick the pods when they are 2 – 3" long and still soft. Longer pods quickly become fibrous and unfit for green use, and if allowed to mature, no more young pods will be produced. Cut the pods from the branches rather than tug at them to avoid disturbing the roots.

Some people are quite sensitive to contact with okra plants. To avoid the burning itch, wear a long-sleeved shirt and gloves.

Grimes County Fair June 4 – 11, 2011

Anyone wishing to enter plants in the Horticulture Division at the County Fair must be in possession of such at least 3 months prior to show. That means by March 1st (or March 4th if you want to be precise.) All entries must be in good condition, free from dirt, disease, and insects, and pots should be squeaky clean!!

Plant categories are:

- Class 39 Container Plants (ex. Cactus, Fern, Violets, etc.)
- Class 40 Terrariums
- Class 41 Hanging Baskets
- Class 42 Cut Flowers
- Class 43 Herbs
- Class 44 Miscellaneous (one item other than those listed)

For details of other classes in Creative Arts & Living Division, check the website grimescountyfair.com, or the Fair Book at the Extension Office.

Judging of horticulture entries etc.

Jennifer will be recruiting judges for the Fair – this is a fun thing to do, especially if you get lucky and are asked to judge the cakes too!!! Of course, if you are entering, you can't be a judge! Last year we participated in the "Big Back Yard" Project, and for at least five years have taken part in the Senior Day activities. Be watching for more information on these exciting opportunities to earn volunteer hours and have fun while so doing!!!

Questions received by email in March/April included request for information on how to grow Asparagus, sources for heirloom seeds, and general planting dates.

Remaining schedule of volunteers to answer questions by email through June 30 is :

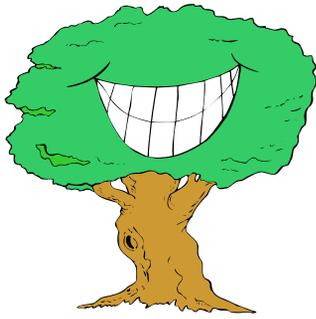
April 22 – May 5 – Mike Arden May 6 – May 19 Janeth Nevill
May 20 – June 2 - Barbara Szymczak June 3 – June 16 – Sandra Williams
June 17 – June 30 – Sandra Williams

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

Recycling Project – submitted by Sandra Stuckey

I am ashamed of myself; I planned to email Fred and Alvie and let them know how much I enjoyed their seminar on recycling, but never did it. I recycle but not like they do. The picture of the garden walls built with water bottles and the painted tire flowerbeds inspired me. I don't know why I did not think about it when Helen first sent me the picture but after seeing it for the second time, I thought to myself we have a big tractor tire just sitting in the yard being a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Our little grandson loves tractors, tires, and everything that requires a tire. So I thought this would be a good project for our grandkids to help with as our granddaughter is really into recycling. So I looked on the Internet to see how to prepare and paint a rubber tire. We spent about \$30.00 on spray paint and spent several hours cleaning and painting the tire so it would be ready for planting when the grandkids came. I went out and bought plants to go into the tire so I was ready for a great learning project for the kids. We were going to let them help roll the tire down into the gully and then place the plastic bottles we had for recycling into the tire. Robert was going to let Caleb ride with him on the tractor when he went to get the sand for the tire. We planned for the kids to fill their sand buckets with sand and walk down into the gully to fill the tire and then put some potting soil in and then plant the plants. Well, that didn't work out so well, as the kids didn't want to do it. Soooooo Robert and I had to do it ourselves. Getting the tire down there was the easiest part. I emptied the sacks of plastic bottles into the tire and decided that I should put them into the inside of the tire, so I had to almost stand on my head to get the bottles into the inside of the tire. After that, carrying the buckets of sand down into the gully was not easy. After a great deal of hard work we got the sand, potting soil, and plants into the tire. When we placed the tire in the gully we sat it on top of some canna lilies (Family: Cannaceae, Genus: *Canna*, Species: *x generallis*) so I cut them off. As you can see, the cannas came up anyway. This is a good way to recycle old tires but it is work!!





SMILE GARDEN

Submitted by Connie Arden

Smiling is the beginning of laughter.....plant some smile seeds to grow into laughter and reap blossoms of positive physical, mental, and social benefits.

Michael and I will be attending the MG State Conference the last week of April, so I thought I'd better review some of my class notes so I won't appear too much of the "gardening novice" that I am. Take this fun garden quiz and see what YOU know.

1. What type of bulb is an iris? A- Corm, B-Tree bulb, C- Rhizome, D- 40 Watt
2. The best shaped hole to plant a tree in is? A- Bucket Shaped, B- As deep and wide as you can get someone to dig it, C- Pear Shaped, D- Bowl shaped.
3. Which of the following is not a means of plant reproduction? A- Seeds, B- Bulbs, C- A blind date, D- Corms.
4. What condiments can be used as an effective weed killer? A- Sugar, B- Salt, C- Vinegar, D- Ketchup.
5. When is the correct time to prune spring flowering shrubs? A- The moment you get a new chainsaw, B- Late winter, C- Early fall, D- Immediately after blooming.
6. What does deadheading do? A- Annoys hungry bees, B- Encourages further blooming, C- Stimulates root growth, D- Stunts growth.

Smile Garden, continued

7. You spot a really healthy looking plant at the nursery, but it has lots of roots growing through the holes in the bottom of the container. What should you do? A- Buy a completely different plant instead, B- Buy it, and when planting it, tease out the long roots, C- Save your guarantee, D- Rip off the roots when no one is looking.

8. Generally, at what depth should tulip bulbs be planted? A- Six times the diameter of the bulb, B- Three to four times the diameter of the bulb, C- With the tip sticking out of the soil, D- Scattered on the surface.

9. What is the most organic means to help prevent pest attacks? A- Spray with selective pesticides, B- Welcome useful critters, insects, and birds into your garden, C- Squish every insect in sight, D- Aerial spray with Malathion.

10. Which bulky organic matter is NOT recommended for digging into flowerbeds? A- Well-rotted cow manure from a farm, B- Mushroom compost, C- Fresh horse manure from a parade, D- Leaves.

Answers: 1-B, 2-D, 3-C, 4-C, 5-D, 6-B, 7-B, 8-B, 9-B, 10-C

The Photographer photographed!

Rarely does the Photographer appear in photos (mostly by design), but the following was sent in by Connie, who saw it in the Examiner. It is nice that the Examiner printed something about Grimes Co. Master Gardener Association! Some other groups of volunteers have since worked on Railroad Street, which is now looking very nice again. The other photos are of the project and other Volunteers ☺

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Keeping Navasota Beautiful



Examiner Photo by Rosemary Smith
Master Gardener Helen Quinn assists the City of Navasota with beautification efforts on Railroad Street. The city has been busy spreading the colors of spring all over town.

“Grimes County Master Gardener Secretary and Communication Committee Chair, Helen Quinn, caught by the local paparazzi while volunteering to keep Navasota beautiful. Helen can usually be spotted on the opposite side of the camera lens. Looking good Helen!”

