



## HOE! HOE! HOE!

### Grimes County Master Gardeners Newsletter

*Winner of the Texas Master Gardener Association*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Place Newsletter Award 2006*

## VOLUME 6, ISSUE 6, June 2010

### **Officers, 2010**

President: Jennifer Corzine  
Vice President: Donna Hebert  
Treasurer: Fred Vesperman  
Secretary: Helen Quinn

### **Committee Chairs**

Go Texan Beds: Kathy Denning & Linda Jolly  
Ext. Office Beds: Julia Cosgrove  
Communications: Helen Quinn  
Children's: Linda Jolly  
Scholarship: Sandra Stuckey  
Admin: Vacant/Jennifer Corzine  
Class: Jennifer Corzine  
Painting Texas w/wildflowers: Edmond McGee  
Co-op: Fred Vesperman

### **Texas AgriLife Extension:**

Shane Jennings: MG Coordinator  
Sandra Cook: Secretary  
\*\*\*\*\*

### **Newsletter Editor:**

Helen Quinn  
Articles, photos and other  
Information due by 27<sup>th</sup> of each month.  
Send to:

[hortiq@gmail.com](mailto:hortiq@gmail.com)

### **Website:**

[www.grimesmastergardeners.org](http://www.grimesmastergardeners.org)

### **Ongoing Projects:**

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

### **New Project:**

Helping Ext./EYC with Beautification of Old Carver School . Watch for more new projects coming in June and ongoing.

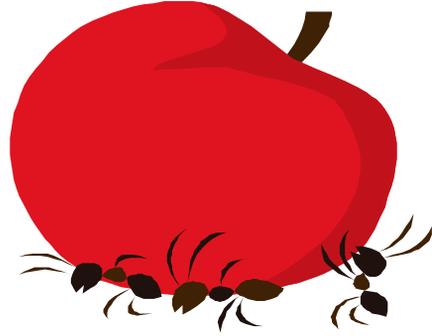
We also participate in once-a-year activities such as Farm Bureau Ag Day, Senior Day and horticulture judging at the County Fair, Boy Scout programs, Courthouse rose beds. Suggestions for new projects are always Welcome for consideration by the Board.

**WE ARE NOW ON FACEBOOK –JOIN US! We also have a dedicated email address for gardening questions from the public : \_**

[grimesmastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:grimesmastergardeners@gmail.com)

## VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE MAY

Cucumber	3/20-6/15
Eggplant	3/25-6/10
Peas: Southern	4/5-6/15
Peppers	4/5-6/15
Squash, S & W	3/15-6/15



### COMFREY by Sandra Williams

Comfrey, *Symphytum officinale*, is a perennial herb native to Europe. It grows into an attractive mound form and has clusters of purple, bell-shaped flowers which bloom in the spring. Its most common use was as a wound treatment in the form of a poultice, and it was taken internally for a variety of ailments. It has been used as a forage crop and as a spinach substitute. It has been shown to cause liver damage, so internal use is no longer recommended. The leaves make a nutrient rich addition to compost and it aids in the breakdown of compost. A plant tea can be made by soaking the leaves in water for a month. It is then diluted and used as a foliar fertilizer. The wilted leaves make a good mulch.



## ON THE CALENDAR : June/July 2010

June 1 – Workday at the Fairgrounds, 9.00 a.m.

June 3 – 12 – Grimes County Fair (Big Back Yard Project June 7, 9)

June 8 – GCMG evening pot-luck meeting at Fred & Alvie's

June 9 Senior Day – we will have an information booth this day, 9.30-12.00

June 27 Housing Fair booth, Navasota Center 8 – 5.

July 13 - Rregular monthly meeting, 9.00 Go Texan. Program Flora Williams Home Canning

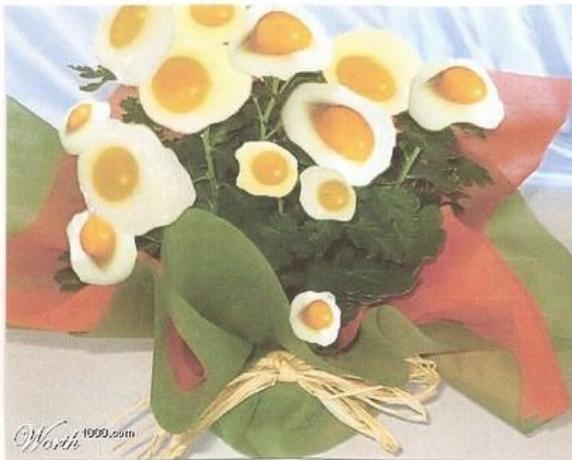
If you know of something coming up, please let me know!!



SMILE GARDEN

Submitted by Connie Arden

WHAT DOES THE PICTURE BELOW SAY TO YOU? (\*ANSWER BELOW)



\*ANSWER.....EGGPLANT

SMILING IS THE BEGINNING OF LAUGHTER.....PLANT SOME SMILE SEEDS TO GROW INTO LAUGHTER AND REAP BLOSSOMS OF POSITIVE PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND SOCIAL BENEFITS.

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 field trips are planned annually,  
and two evening meetings held at  
members' homes enable  
members who work to participate.

## Fairgrounds Projects

A BIG thank you goes out to Randy Krueger and the Go Texan Committee for their very generous donation of \$1,000 to the Grimes County Master Gardeners! Funds will be used to enhance the beds at the fairgrounds with new plants, edging and mulch.

The rose beds are looking beautiful this year, too! Thank you to everyone who helped edge, weed and prune the roses. We will continue to have the occasional work day to keep the beds looking as good as they do now.

Watch the newsletter and check your inboxes for upcoming opportunities to earn volunteer hours by working at the Fairgrounds



Kathy Denning.

## Big Backyard Project – June 7 & 9

We will plan to do the big back yard on Monday and Weds only, 7, 9 June from 4 to around 8.00. Our theme is "The Plant Zoo", which will be a matching type of game.

Jennifer Corzine

## Senior Day at the Fair June 9

We will have a booth in the main hall of the fair ground complex from 9.30 – noon. Come out and See the Creative Arts and Horticulture entries (probably on display in the Lions' Club Building). Seniors have free entry this day, entertainment, free health checks, bingo, lunch.

## Butterflies & Moths of Grimes County CD/DVD Project

Several people have already sent in photos of butterflies, caterpillars and moths for this Project. Some need identification so towards the end of June all photos will be posted for committee members to review, possibly identify, and share suggestions . We invite all of you to send in pictures taken in Grimes County whether you signed up to be on the committee or not

Helen Quinn

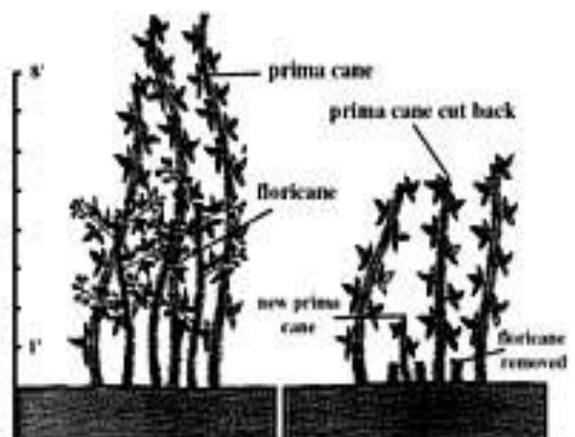


## BLACKBERRIES

by Janeth Nevill

My father-in-law bought several blackberry plants from Texas A&M University in the 1980's. When he retired and moved to Gueydan, Louisiana, to be near my mother-in-law's family, he took cuttings of the Brazos blackberry plants with him. My husband and I purchased a farm in Grimes County where the Nevills have been since 1850. My father-in-law and his family were from the Cross and Lola area. He told me that wild blackberries grew all over that part of Grimes County and that he would pick them in the late spring and early summer as he was growing up. He said he wanted to bring me some Brazos Berries that were developed by Texas A&M and that he had in Bryan and moved to Louisiana. He wanted to see how the Brazos Berries did in the Eastern part of Grimes County. In the winter of 1996 he brought me 12 plants that he had taken cuttings from his berry plants and potted for me. He and my son planted those 12 berry plants along a fence in my West-facing side yard and that spring I had about a handful of berries. By the next year the berry plants had grown as tall as the fence and I harvested several buckets of the huge delicious berries. By the following year the berry plants had grown over the fence and started plants from the opposite side. That year I had to harvest berries about every 3 days and had to drive my tractor and lift my mower up as high as I could and then climb on top of it to be able to reach the tops of the berry vines. This continued for several more years. Then my father-in-law told me I needed to clean out the old canes and cut the berry plants down. I did that and it just invigorated the plants. I had so many berries that I couldn't keep up with the picking of them – my freezer was still full from the past year and I noticed that the birds were flying erratically – seems that the berries I had neglected to pick had turned into blackberry wine! The next year I had several volunteer Redbuds that came up along the fence where the blackberries were planted. The trees grew very fast and the area became shaded. I did not have any berries. So 2 years ago I cut down all except 2 of the trees and limbed them so that the berries had were left had sun all day. The vines are loaded with berries and I am sure I will be filling my freezer this year! They are wonderful on cereal, in cream, in cobbler or just plain, but you have to wait until they are very black – if there is any red on them they are very tart!

There is an article on [www.plantanswers.com](http://www.plantanswers.com) on Brazos Berries and other blackberry varieties.



Several people have asked about the article that didn't appear with the photo in the Examiner after Arbor Day. For the record, the following short piece was sent to the Examiner, but evidently didn't make it!!

GRIMES COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS  
ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION, April 30, 2010

GCMGA celebrated Arbor Day with a short program followed by planting of a "Natchez" Crape Myrtle in memory of the late Tom Sloan, husband of Master Gardener Peggy Sloan. This white-flowered tree, with cinnamon bark and high mildew resistance, will reach 20+ feet at maturity, and is planted in the center of the bed in front of the flagpoles at the Grimes County Expo Center.

Observance of Arbor Day began in the United States in 1872, 1889 in Texas. The Day celebrates the planting and nurturing of trees as well as all the ways trees enrich our lives and stabilize our environment. We hope to make this an annual event in Grimes County to encourage the community to become "treewise" while having fun.



Sharon's Hummingbird Moths,  
the adults of the hornworms



Sharon's Hornworms

These are hornworm pupae after two weeks in the soil. On the next page are Hornworms on tomato plant, and Hornworms in captivity being fed tomato suckers.

## Tomato/Tobacco Hornworm

The Tomato/Tobacco Hornworms are the largest caterpillars you will see in your garden. The Tomato Hornworm (*Manduca quinquemaculata*) and the Tobacco Hornworm (*Manduca sexta*) are very similar and often confused with each other. They both attack members of the Solanaceae family, which include tomatoes, eggplants, peppers and potatoes. They are both green in color and grow to 4 inches in length and sometimes larger. If you haven't seen one, you may be startled when you first come upon one. The tomato hornworm larva has white V-shaped marks along the sides and a fierce-looking but entirely harmless black horn projecting from the rear end. The tobacco hornworm is similar in color and size but has white diagonal lines along its sides and has a red horn. The most common hornworm is the tobacco hornworm, although both exist in our area.

The tomato/tobacco hornworms are the larval stage of the hawk or sphinx moth, also known as the hummingbird moth. The moths overwinter in the soil as dark brown pupae then emerge and mate in the early spring. Tilling your garden well in the fall and again in the spring will help to destroy the pupae. After mating, they lay their eggs, which are round and greenish white, on the undersides of leaves. The eggs hatch in four to five days and the hornworm emerges. For the next four weeks, it continues to grow, while eating your plants, and then it makes its way into the soil to pupate.

The first sign of hornworms on tomatoes is a branch with the leaves completely eaten off. Undetected, a hornworm can defoliate a whole tomato plant in a matter of a couple days. Early spring, the end of May and early June, is the time to watch for hornworms. You may notice the large black droppings, called frass on the foliage and around the base of the plants. If the hornworms are caught early enough, the plant will be able to recover. At this time of the year, it is a good idea to check your tomato plants every morning and again later in the afternoon. You will be amazed at how many you missed in the morning. They are very hard to see.

Because the hornworms are large, the easiest way to get rid of them is to pick them off and put them in a pail of soapy water. I usually cut the part of the leaf the hornworm is on and put the whole leaf in the soapy water. You can also use your pruner/scissors and just cut them in half while they are on the plant. For a bad infestation on a large number of plants, you can use BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). If you happen to see a hornworm covered with white egg sacs, leave it be. The egg sacs are those of the parasitic Braconid wasp. The eggs hatch and the wasps eat the hornworms and other garden pests. The hornworms are good eating for frogs, snakes, lizards and chameleons.

Last spring (May 2009) I decided to do an experiment with some hornworms I found on my tomato plants. I collected 5-6 large hornworms and put them in a bucket that I had added about 6 inches of soil. With the hornworms on top of the soil, I kept feeding them the tomato suckers I had pulled off my plants. When the hornworms were about 4 inches in length, they disappeared into the soil. I marked 2 weeks ahead on my calendar when the pupae should emerge. After 2 weeks, I dumped out the soil and had 4 large 3-4 inch brown pupae. They had a projection, like a pitcher handle sticking out from the front. This eventually becomes the moths long, hollow, tongue-like proboscises used to reach the nectar in flowers. I put them back in the soil and two weeks later dumped it out again and the pupae had emerged and was gone. I missed the emergence, but then I had hummingbird moths.

Sharon Murry

