



HOE! HOE! HOE!

Grimes County Master Gardeners Newsletter

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

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 8, August 2011

ON THE CALENDAR August/Sept 2011

- Aug 6 10.00-3pm TMGA Directors' Meeting, Hort-Forest Sci Building, TAMU
Aug 9 9.00am GCMG Reg. Monthly Meeting, program by Tesa Silva on Backyard Wildlife Habitats
Sept 10 9.00am GCMG Fall Seminar at Martha's Bloomers
Sept 13 9.00am GCMG Reg. Monthly Meeting, program TBA
Sept 15-18 Hummingbird Festival in Rockport, TX



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Officers, 2011

President: Jennifer Corzine
Vice President: Alvie Vesperman
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Secretary: Helen Quinn

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Co-op: Fred Vesperman
Time: Kathy Denning
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Publicity: Peggy Sloan
Fundraiser: Linda Jolly
Awards/Social: Connie Arden

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VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

AUGUST



7/20 – 8/15 Cucumbers
7/15 – 7/31 Eggplant **
7/15 – 8/31 Peas (Southern, Edible Pod)
7/15 – 8/20 Sweet Corn
7/15 – 8/20 Squash, Summer & Winter
7/1 – 8/31 Romaine lettuce

** Use plants rather than seed

Use protective floating row cover to help reduce heat and viral infection, and to provide a little shade to young plants.

~~~~~  
Five aromatic plants said to repel mosquitoes are :

Lemongrass  
Rosemary  
Marigolds  
Mint  
Catnip



***Forsythe Pots*** for easy propagation

- \*Line the bottom of an 8 inch diameter plastic pot with paper towel to cover the drain holes, keeping the paper lower than the rim of the pot to prevent wicking.
- \*Fill with fresh, dry vermiculite, to about 1 inch below the rim.
- \*Plug the drain hole in a 2½" to 3½" unglazed terra cotta pot with a cork. Or use unglazed terra cotta pot with no drain hole.
- \*Screw corked terra cotta pot into the center of the vermiculite, using a back-and-forth motion. Push it in deeply enough so the top of its rim is nearly level with the top of the vermiculite.
- \*Water the vermiculite slowly. Fill the terra cotta reservoir with water. Because its walls are porous, water will wick through them as moisture evaporates from the vermiculite. All you have to do is keep the reservoir full, and the vermiculite will stay evenly moist. Stick cuttings into the vermiculite, about 2 to 3 inches apart, in a circle around the reservoir.
- \*Place the completed forsythe pot in a bright location. In winter, keep the pot in a sunny window; move it away from the window in summer when sunlight is more intense.

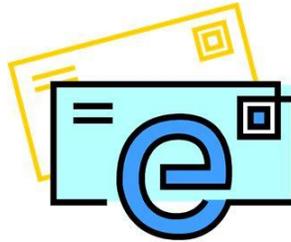
## EMAIL QUESTIONS

**Questions received by email in July** – *I live in Houston Tx and I ordered four triple lilies from GVC. They say they are from Holland. I have a picture on face book. My name is Patricia Dodson. I planted them under the kitchen window in a small bed with mulch, on the north side. At first they didn't get much sun but as summer goes on, they are in the sun. The first flower was a pretty pink triple flower. We have had no rain so I watered them with city water. They have eight blooms on each stalk but as they open now the edges of the flower is brown and they fall apart before they open all the way. Can you help? Thank you.*

**Answer** - *Attached you will find some research I did regarding triple lilies. Not sure when you planted the bulbs but they should be planted in early autumn and the soil should not dry out. They do better in hot temp (think Houston qualifies??!!) IF the soil is moistened. Note #5 on the attachment. Have you fertilized, how often, how much? The photo is beautiful. Hope these comments help. Happy gardening!*

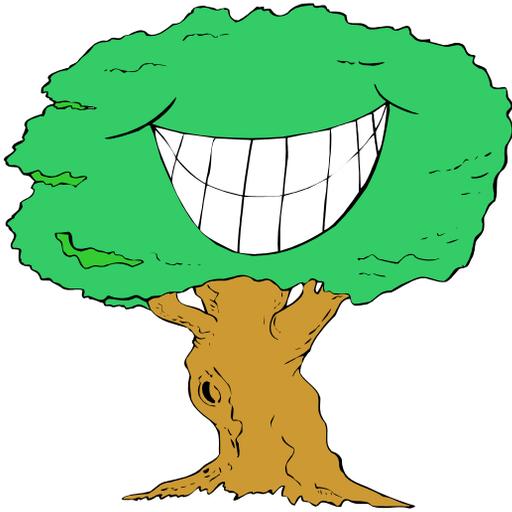
The remaining schedule of volunteers to answer questions by email through December 31<sup>st</sup> is :

|                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| July 29 – Aug 11 | Flick, Kathleen   |
| Aug 12 – 25      | Laughlin, Kathy   |
| Aug 26 – Sept 8  | Nevill, Janeth    |
| Sept 9 – 22      | Silva, Tesa       |
| Sept 23 – Oct 6  | Szymczak, Barbara |
| Oct 7 – 20       | Vesperman, Alvie  |
| Oct 21 – Nov 3   | Williams, Sandra  |
| Nov 4 – 17       | Arden, Connie     |
| Nov 18 – Dec 1   | Arden, Mike       |
| Dec 2 – 15       | Flick, Kathleen   |
| Dec 16 – 31      | Laughlin, Kathy   |



If you would like to join the team of “answerers” please let Helen know. Researching the answers is a great way to increase your own knowledge as well as earning volunteer hours.

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



## 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.

Got some refreshing, hydrating jokes to cool us off in this heat wave.

- A watermelon walks into a bar. The bartender asks, “what’ll it be?” the watermelon says “A rum and cuke please”
- Why was the potato crying over his vodka and tonic?.....It was his cousins.
- \* What do you call a mushroom who buys everyone drinks and is the life of the party?.....a fun-gi.
- \* What do you get when you cross a glow worm with some beer?.....Light ale!
- \* Where do vegetables go to have a few drinks?.....the Salad Bar.

**Stay cool and drink plenty of fluids!**

## Mother Nature's Miracle Plant

August is time to start planning your spring-flowering bulb garden, so that by the time bulbs are available in September/October you will know exactly where to plant them. Just as an egg provides all the nutrients necessary for nurturing life from embryo to birth, the same is true for the bulb (except, of course, the end result is a beautiful flower instead of a chick, and the egg is a one-off instead of producing for years. )

Most people agree that bulbs look best "naturalized", and unless you are fortunate to have an established bulb bed where they have multiplied over the years, the easiest way to obtain that natural look is simply by taking handfuls and scattering them randomly, in drifts and plant where they land. If you have a tiny space you can of course simply plant them in groups of 3, 5, 7, as advocated by the "experts". A single daffodil or tulip just doesn't make much of a statement!

When selecting bulbs at the nursery buy the biggest, plumpest and firmest you can find, even if they cost more. First-quality bulbs will bloom more reliably, have bigger and better flowers, and will multiply more quickly because they often have bonus bulblets inside! Daffodils often have multiple "noses" on the outside, and each one will eventually become another plant. Looked after properly throughout the growing and resting season, bulbs will give garden pleasure for many years to come. That is, if suitable varieties are selected, and if you don't expect tulips to return year after year (in our climate, these are best planted as annuals, although some years they will come back.) Some people like to amend the soil with blood meal and/or bone meal prior to planting. This can invite dogs, cats, squirrels and other unwanted visitors to your garden – these visits can be discouraged by planting your bulbs in cages of hardware cloth. Experts differ slightly about how deep to plant a bulb, but most agree on somewhere between 4-8" for daffodils and tulips, 6-8" for Hyacinths, pointy end up, and in as much sun as possible. A good layer of mulch is beneficial to keep the soil temperature even, and while bulbs prefer rainwater, they will tolerate tap water in times of drought when it is important to keep them uniformly moist. Some bulbs (tulips in particular) require 6 – 8 weeks chilling in the refrigerator prior to planting in November/December, and it is very important not to keep fruit such as apples in the same area because the methane gas given off by fruit and some vegetables will inhibit bulb flowering. Some experts are now recommending refrigerating daffodils now because of our continuing warm winter temperatures.

According to the American Daffodil Society, there are 13 divisions of daffodils depending on their flower shape and heritage. Some daffodils that should naturalize in our challenging area are Fortune, and Carlton; I have had very good luck with Erlicheer, Geranium, and Monal. This year I want to try Pineapple Prince. Whether you choose to plant bulbs, corms, or rhizomes, daffodils, hyacinths, crocus, tulips, dutch iris or grape hyacinth, the important thing is not to have "expectations" – enjoy them the first year and if they don't come back, plant again the next year, and enjoy!!!



## 2011 Grimes County 4-H Adventurer's Camp

On July 27 GCMG members presented two sessions of "Gardening Fun" at the Go Texan Building. The program was based on "My First Garden", from the University of Illinois Extension. Segment I "Show Me the Basics" (My Garden Spot, and How's My Dirt) was presented by Tesa Silva, and (I'm Thirsty, and Feed Me) by Barbara Szymczak. Segment II "Gardening Fundamentals" (Tools of the Trade, You are the Ruler – Garden Measuring, When to Start Planting, My Garden Journal, You can Tell a Seed by its Package, and My first Garden Planning List) was presented by Kathy Laughlin. Segment III "Planning My Garden – What Do You Want to Do?" (Grow Flowers and Grow Vegetables) was presented by Sharon Murry, and (Garden in Unbelievable Places) was presented by Peggy Sloan and Jennifer Corzine. Erin manned the laptop, and a great job was done by all!!! Between the two classes about 27 children signed up, and several of them said they already had gardens of their own. Future Master Gardeners???

To conclude the programs, Kathy Laughlin invited all the children to participate in the "Garden Gallery" by sending in their pictures to our MG email address : [grimesmastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:grimesmastergardeners@gmail.com)

The complete curriculum is found at [urbanext.illinois.edu/firstgarden](http://urbanext.illinois.edu/firstgarden)



Don't forget to come to the meeting on August 9 to hear all about gardening for backyard wildlife habitat – program by Tesa Silva. 9.00 am, Go Texan Building, Grimes County Expo Center (aka GC Fairgrounds).