



HOE! HOE! HOE!

Grimes County Master Gardeners Newsletter

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

Officers, 2011

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Articles, photos and other

Information due by 27th of each month.

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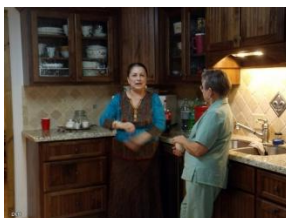
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VOLUME 7, ISSUE 11 November 2011 ON THE CALENDAR Nov/Dec 2011

- Nov 6 End of Daylight Savings Time – set your clocks back!
- Nov 8 9.00am GCMG Monthly meeting, Go Texan Building, Fairgrounds. Program by Jeff Lehde of Plant People LLC, "Drought Stress – What Can I Do?"
- Nov 28 Average first frost date for Grimes County
- Dec 3 10. 30am TMGA Directors Meeting, TAMU Hort Bldg
- Dec 2 6.30pm Christmas party/meeting/awards at Go Texan GC Fairgrounds.
- Dec 10 6.00pm Christmas Parade in Navasota

October Social meeting at Marguerite's



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.

VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

NOVEMBER



Broccoli *	9/10 - 11/15
Brussels Sprouts*	9/10 - 11/05
Cabbage*	9/15 - 12/31
Carrot	9/15 - 12/31
Kohlrabi	9/20 - 11/30
Lettuce, leaf	9/15 - 11/30
Mustard	9/01 - 11/15
Turnip	9/01 - 11/20
Radish	9/01 - 11/30



- Use plants, not seeds; be sure to provide shade and adequate water.

Pumpkins are very malleable: a growing pumpkin encased in a box will turn itself into a cube. They're not, however, infinitely plastic. The giant pumpkin, if it overreaches itself, can explode. Too much rain, for example, makes the growing pumpkin swell too fast, exerting pressure on the weak spots in the rind, and causing it to eventually crack open. Source: How Carrots Won the Trojan War, Storey Publishing, 2011



Over 6000 Texans are Master Gardeners, highly trained volunteers of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. In 2010 they gave over 500,000 hours of service, a \$10 million gift to Texas. These dedicated gardeners receive 50 plus hours of training and in return, they provide volunteer service in Extension programs. Join this elite group of trained volunteers!

African Proverb: "It is better to stand on a lion's tail than to sit on a colony of ants"

2012 CLASS

*Will start February 21, and will run
every Tuesday 8.30-12.30
through May 15 at the Go Texan
Building, Grimes County Fairgrounds.
Speakers are already confirmed. Tell all
your family, friends and neighbors, and
be watching for more information as
plans develop!*

SCHEDULE FOR 2012 CLASS

February 21	Jayla Fry	MG Program/EarthKind Landscaping
February 28	Lisa Whittlesey	Plant Growth & Development
March 6	Sam Feagley	Soil, Water & Plant Nutrients
March 13	Tom Leroy	Vegetable Gardening
March 20	Bart Drees	Entomology
March 27	Carlos Bogran	Plant Health
April 3	David Chalmers	Lawns & Turfgrass
April 10	Tom Leroy	Home Fruit & Nut Production
April 17	Ann Wheeler	Herbs
April 24	Martin Thomas	Landscape Horticulture
May 1	Helen Quinn	Propagation
May 8	Sharon Murry	Composting
	Stuckeys	Rainwater Harvesting
May 15	Shane Jennings	Communications/General
	MGs	Open discussion/program/lunch

The flyer and application forms are available on our website txmg.org/grimes , at local Businesses, and at the Grimes County AgriLife Extension Office on Judson Street, Navasota.

Growing Citrus in Grimes County

With a little attention to variety and growing requirements, citrus is wonderful addition to the home garden. Whether you want fruit for eating, juicing, or cooking, there is sure to be a variety perfect for you, and the evergreen trees themselves are attractive with fragrant flowers and decorative fruit. They don't have many pest and disease problems, except for scale and white fly, and occasionally citrus leaf miner. The only pruning they require is to maintain shape and size, but the less you prune, the more fruit the trees will produce. Thinning of fruit is essential for the first couple or three years, otherwise the plants can become stunted. The hardiest types can be planted in the ground in protected areas, and most of the smaller species like lemons, limes, kumquats and satsumas can be grown in large containers on decks and patios.

Grapefruit can tolerate temperatures down to 26-28F. Bloomsweet is white-fleshed and is somewhat cold hardy. Henderson is the hardiest of the red-fleshed varieties. Rio Red, Ray Ruby and Ruby Star are less cold hardy.

Sweet Oranges can tolerate 25-28F, with Republic of Texas being the hardiest of all. Cara Cara navel is a natural dwarf with deep pink flesh. Moro blood orange is the most highly colored of the bloods, which are all best suited to the lower South but with protection will do well here.

Lemons can take 18-28F. Ponderosa (the "5lb lemon") produces a huge fruit that makes excellent lemonade. Meyer lemon produces an abundance of normal size fruit. Both will require some protection, and are often grown in pots so they can be moved to a sheltered patio.

Many citrus types can be propagated from seed, especially lemons. Grafting is used to "dwarf" a tree, with one common rootstock being *Poncirus trifoliata*, the sour orange that grows wild in South Texas, the "Flying Dragon" variety with the wicked hooked thorns! Other fruits, including apricots, are sometimes grafted on to Flying Dragon when a dwarf tree is desired. Flying Dragon has its own fruit, small, seedy and stinky!

Another benefit of growing citrus in your yard is the butterfly connection! The Giant Swallowtail, for instance, prefers oranges above all on which to lay its eggs. The caterpillars grow to maturity and defoliate the tree as they grow (the leaves grow back) then they provide entertainment as they leave and make their way to their chosen place to hang as a chrysalis and hatch into a beautiful butterfly. Giant Swallowtails are not popular in commercial orange growing areas because of the mass defoliation, and in Florida they are known as "orange dogs"!



Flying Dragon with fruit



"Kitchen lemon" seedlings

A good source of information on lemons is to be found on [aggie-horticulture website](#) under /citrus/lemons

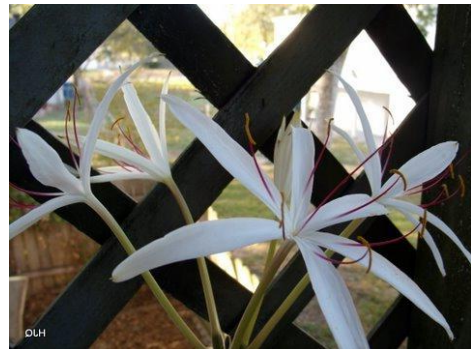


Fragrance and drought tolerance

My shining star this difficult gardening year has been *Aloysia virgata*, or Sweet Almond Verbena, or Incense Bush. It has been growing in the ground for two or three years between my house and out-building (aka the “maid’s quarters”), where it receives afternoon sun. It has had little or no watering or care, and has bloomed repeatedly throughout the year. The natural form is not particularly attractive but it can be trained into a nice small tree shape. The bloom is white, reminiscent of *buddleia* (butterfly bush), and like the *buddleia* is a magnet for butterflies, other flying insects, and humming birds. The wonderful scent wafts on the breeze and hangs on still air. The only negative thing I have ever heard is that some people might be allergic to the touch of its leaves, which are silvery and scratchy, much like *lantana*. Propagation is by herbaceous cuttings or semi-hardwood cuttings.



Another plant that always surprises with its fragrance is the crinum – this particular one falls over when in bloom, but makes a striking and fairly long lasting cut flower.



And also doing well in the heat and drought is Hibiscus *sabdariffa*, famous in Egypt for the refreshing, ruby red tea made from its dried flower buds and calyces.