



Meet Our New Extension Agent

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Vegetables & Herbs:

- Plant now for a fall garden. Tomatoes take 90 days to grow and ripen.
- You can plant pumpkins in early August for Halloween harvest.
- Now is the time to take your basil and make pesto. You can freeze for future use.

Meet our new Extension Agent, **Allen Homann**. Allen assumed his new duties on May 9th replacing Eric Zimmerman.

Allen earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Animal Science and a Master of Science Degree in General Agriculture from Sam Houston State University. He also has a minor in Horticulture which will be an added bonus for the master gardeners.

Before coming to Grimes County, Allen served as the County Extension Agent for two years in Jefferson County. If you don't know where Jefferson County is then look to Beaumont as it's county seat. Jefferson County is a much larger county than Grimes but

Allen says, "though we can't match the numbers in Grimes County we can match the quality."

Allen grew up in Franklin, Texas actively participating in the family business, Triple H Farms, which centers around cattle, hay and swine production.

In 2015, he married Hailey, a labor/delivery nurse at St. Josephs. They recently moved to their new home in College Station and at the same time welcomed a new baby girl, Adaline Grace. Because she was born in June her parents have already started calling her "Junebug".

Allen and Hailey are both avid fishing and hunting partners which is actually



*Allen Homann
Grimes County Extension Agent*

how they met. Now that Allen has taught her everything he knows, Hailey has started excelling and surpassing him.

Allen brings enthusiasm and determination to his new position. He says even though the job of a county agent can be overwhelming to some "I'm not going anywhere".

Don't Forget the Fall Workshop

Grimes County Master Gardeners will have a Fall Workshop on **Landscaping with Texas Native Plants** on **October 20, 2018**. Volunteers are needed for setting up and breaking down the conference. Please contact Ann DeWitt at ann.dewitt@ymail.com if you want to participate.

Backyard Horticulture: Taking A Spore Picture—One Step in Mushroom Identification

By Deborah Richardson



The branch of biology concerned with mushrooms is mycology. I am not a mycologist. I am an ordinary person interested in knowing how to identify mushrooms. In particular, I wanted to know about the mushrooms that pop up in my yard after a rain. Researching showed me that identification is complex and that ultimately it will take an expert in the field to get an exact ID. It also made me very cautious.

A mushroom is not a plant. It is a fungus. In addition to mushrooms, other members of the fungi kingdom include yeasts and molds. Most of the fungus is underground with interconnected thread-like structures that form a network, mycelium. The mushroom is the above ground fruiting body.

For identification, experts rely on several factors such as how the stem is attached to the cap, what color is seen if the mushroom is bruised, and other factors including its spore print. The spore print shows the spore color and



pattern made when the cap is detached, turned gill-side down, and left undisturbed for several hours on a hard surface.

Individual spores are usually too small to be seen in their normal environment. A human's head is usually a few feet above the ground when the spores disperse. And with the type of mushroom I had, they dispersed downward. So, it was not a normal situation for me to be near a large number of spores in a closed environment. When handling the mushrooms I always used disposable gloves and mask. When I was done, I threw them away in a plastic bag that went directly into my garbage bin. I did everything in my garage and didn't bring anything in the house. I don't know if this was necessary but, that's the point, I don't know.

When the mushroom first emerged the cap had not yet opened. To take a spore print you must wait until the cap has opened but before the spores have fallen. For my mushroom it took several hours from when the mushroom first appeared in the grass to when the cap opened. When I was ready to harvest the mushroom, I put on my gear and gently pulled it from the dirt. I carried it upside down so I wouldn't lose any spores. In the garage everything was already setup.



I used a hard clear plastic lid from a carton of salad greens. The spore color can vary greatly so it's best to use something clear. I carefully detached the stem from the cap, and placed the cap, gill-side down on the plastic. I then lightly coved it with the empty salad container. I rested the container on the lid such that it could be removed without disturbing the mushroom. The spores must be protected from any movement including that from the air. I left it overnight.

The next day I removed the cover and carefully lifted the cap straight up so as not to smudge the print and put the cap in the trash. Even though your print will look solid, it is made of tiny spores that are easily disturbed. I was surprised that the print of the white mushroom was green. Researching, I found that my mushroom could be *Chlorophyllum molybdites* (quite poisonous) or at least something in the *Chlorophyllum* genus.

Field guides for mushroom identification always ask about the spore print. Now you know how to obtain it.

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Deborah Richardson is a freelance reporter for the Navasota Examiner with a fondness for flora in its natural setting.

Dog Fennel—August Wildflower of the Month



Eupatorium capillifolium. In Texas fields you might spy this lacy fernlike plant. Dog fennel is a member of the aster family with narrow leaves which are finely divided. In early fall tiny daisy-

like flowers will appear eventually being replaced with red berries.

Dog fennel can provide a dramatic and attractive backdrop to your garden as they can grow up to 6 feet tall. But beware, it can be aggressive and crowd out other plants.

When crushed, leaves and flowers release an unpleasant odor which are considered a natural mosquito re-

pellant. Extracted juice from the plant has also shown to be an effective treatment for insect bites. Some people refer to it as Wild Chamomile but brewing it as a tea is not a good idea because it could cause liver toxicity. That's one reason why livestock and deer avoid it in the fields plus it tastes bad.

Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them

For Your Consideration....

For your consideration I present the black and yellow garden spider. Have you seen me lately in your garden? My Latin name is *Argiope aurantia* and I'm known as an orb weaver. I create delicate, circular spoked webs with a distinct thick zig-zag in the center. I patiently wait in the center of my web and when flying insects such as flies, grasshoppers, and wasps get stuck in my web, I quickly trap them in silk and bite them. They make a tasty meal and I contribute to getting rid of those pesky bugs you can't stand in your garden. If I don't catch anything then I'll devour my web for extra nutrients and then replace it the next day.

Sometimes I look like I'm jumping on a trampoline while I'm weaving but that's to confuse predators and help get that fantastic zig-zag just right. I look intimidating but actually I'm not poisonous or aggressive. If I feel threatened then I'll immediately drop to the ground to flee and hide. If a male spider shows up I'll let him court me but he's four times smaller than me and frankly once he's done his duty he either dies or I eat him! I live about one year and when I lay my eggs I usually don't live to see them hatch.

Please welcome me to your garden even though I look creepy. I'm really an asset not a pest.



*Female Black and Yellow Garden Spider
Argiope aurantia*



Orb Weaver

Schedule of Events

- *August 14th: Grimes County Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting, 9 a.m.—11 a.m., Grimes County Fairgrounds, Navasota, TX*
- *August 11th: Montgomery County Master Gardeners. Fall Vegetable Gardening, 8:00 a.m., Thomas LeRoy Ed. Bldg, Montgomery, TX*
- *August 11th: Montgomery County Master Gardeners. Birds in our Gardens, 10:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m., Thomas LeRoy Ed. Bldg., Montgomery, TX*
- *August 18th: Keyhole Gardening, 10 a.m.—11 a.m., Clara B. Mounce Library, Bryan, Tx*
- *August 25th: Summer's End Garden Seminar, 9:30 a.m.—1:30 p.m., Brazos Center, 3232 Briarcrest Dr., Bryan, TX*

August 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 
12	13	14 	15	16	17	18 
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 
26	27	28	29	30	31	



Dallas Red Crepe Myrtle

Garden Almanac

- Hot, hot, hot. One plant that loves the August heat is the crepe myrtle. There are now several varieties like the Dallas Red that are resistant to powdery mildew.
- Now is the time to note which flowers are blooming. Only the toughest are still blooming during the hot, dry month of August.
- Keep watering as needed, but lay off the fertilizer during August.
- Mulch your flower beds and gardens to reduce soil temperature.
- Run hose-end sprinklers for at least an hour in one spot to achieve deep penetration.
- Most water in the Brazos Valley contains large amounts of salts. The salts accumulate in the soil as the water evaporates which can burn the roots of plants. At least once a month, water twice as long in a single location to flush out the salts from the plant roots. In containers, let the water run freely out of the pot to leach the salts back out.
- The best times to water lawns are between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. If you don't have an irrigation system then water before 9 a.m.

Thank You Volunteers for a Successful Registration at the Master Gardener Conference



Congratulations to Our Winners

It's not too late to congratulate our winners of the **2018 Search for Excellence Award**. Grimes County Master Gardeners won **First Place** in three categories for their contribution to the Feed + Seed Program:

- Project
- Educational
- Youth JMG

Thank you for all your help:

- Georgia Abraham
- Herb Abraham
- Michael Arden
- Ann DeWitt
- Michael Havens
- Jena Jackson
- Lou Morgan
- Pat Parmley
- Paula Parmley
- Kathy Spaulding



Three—First Place Awards: Project, Educational, Youth

Texas Master Gardeners

203 Veterans Memorial Drive
Navasota, Texas 77868
Website: txmg.org/grimes



Grimes County Master Gardeners

Please send submissions and photos by the 20th of each month to: pwparmley@gmail.com

2018 Board of Directors

- President.....Michael Havens
- Vice PresidentSharon Murry
- SecretaryRenee Harter
- TreasurerDia Copeland

2018 Committees/Chairs

- AdministrationStephanie Cunningham
- Advertising/PublicityPeggy Sloan
- Auditing.....Stephanie Cunningham/Jena Jackson
- Communications.....Georgia Abraham
- Co-op.....Fred Vesperman
- Facebook.....Jamie Brun
- Fair Judging.....Marti Luedtke
- FundraisingCarol Garnett
- Historian.....Sharon Murry
- Newsletter.....Paula Parmley
- Nominating.....Carol Garnett
- Social AwardsKimberly Herten/Connie Arden
- TimekeepingMartha Brogdon
- TMGA AwardsAnn DeWitt/Connie Arden/Sharon Murry
- Master Gardener Class Coordination.....Herb Abraham/Sharon Murry
- 2018 Conference Registration.....Georgia Abraham/Herb Abraham/Jamie Brun
- 2018 Fall SeminarAnn DeWitt
- 2018 Buckingham ProjectMichael Havens/Cathey Hardeman



Texas Bluebells

