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Cool Weather Annuals



Now that we are getting a touch of fall weather, it is time to start planting cool-season flowers. Warm-weather annuals are probably putting on quite a show here at the end of the growing season, so it might be hard for some gardeners to remove them and plant cool-season plants. However, now is the time to give those cool-season plants a head start as we move into colder weather. Moreover, think about the splashes of color you will get when everything else has frozen and died down to the ground.

There are several cool-season flowers and plants that can be grown in the Grimes County area, starting with my favorite, **ornamental kale**. With a variety of colors in purples, lavender, rose, and shades of green, kale can be grown in the ground or in containers to add scale, shape and size. Pairing them with **swiss chard**, **pansies**, **dusty miller** makes an attractive arrangement for your porch. Don't skimp on buying small ones because they will not increase in size until warmer weather. Go ahead and purchase a few large heads with small stems that will fill up a container or a garden spot.

Foxglove is not mentioned as much as other cool-weather annuals, but it is another cold-tolerant annual that produces magnificent spikey flowers. In other parts of the country, Foxglove is grown in the summer, but here in Texas I put them in containers along with **snapdragons**, **pink dianthus**, and tiny **violas**.

At most nurseries this time of year you will find **mums**, **snap dragons** (short and tall), **pansies**, **dusty miller**, and even **geraniums**. Look at different ways to landscape

your yard or garden with these showy plants.

And don't forget you can also add cool-season lettuces and swiss chard to your containers and landscaping. These pair well with ornamental kale and pansies. And what's better than to not only see winter color but have some edibles straight from the garden. Try other edibles such as **radicchio**, **curly parsley**, and even **rosemary**.



YOUR
GARDEN
IS A
FRIEND
YOU CAN
VISIT
ANY
TIME

What is that? Can we eat it?



As an outdoor education teacher, I've heard this all the time over the last three months, and even before I looked where my students indicated, I knew which plant they meant.

American Beauty Berry, *Callicarpa Americana*, also known as French mulberry, purple beauty berry, bunchberry, or sourbush. Whatever you call it, there's no denying that it's a striking plant found in abundance in our area. A perennial shrub native to the southeastern U.S., it typically grows five to eight feet tall and nearly as wide, and can be found in moist, well-drained soil, (although once established, it can tolerate drought), amid pine forests along with other mid-stage forest succession plants, in thickets, and along fence rows.

If you don't have an abundance of American Beauty Berries in your backyard, and would like to plant some, the good news is that it is fairly hardy, and can be propagated by softwood cuttings, seeds, or transplants of either volunteer or nursery-grown plants. It can stand full-sun and partial-sun, but isn't fond of full-shade. Soil pH levels can range from 5.6 to 7.3.

As with most native plants, it provides food, shelter, and even mosquito repellent. The berries are popular with over forty varieties of birds, including finches, towhees, and robins, as well as mammals such as raccoons, foxes, armadillos, and squirrels. The leaves can be crushed and rubbed on livestock as a mosquito repellent, although for humans, it's a safer idea to rub it on your clothes until you know how your skin will react.

But back to the burning question: "Can WE eat it?"

The answer is, "yes, with caution." Some people may have some digestive issues with large quantities of the raw berries, but a few won't hurt you.

"Good, because I already ate a few." (Yes, we tell our students not to eat anything in the forest without our express permission, but enthusiasm sometimes wins out over good judgement.)

The raw berries don't taste like much, but a mild, pleasant jelly can be made from them. At this point in the year, however, it's best to harvest them quickly, as they're starting to fade for the season.



Submitted by Kelley Prichard



Beauty Berry Jelly

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 quarts beauty berries, washed.
- 2 quarts water
- 1 envelope Sure-Jell
- 4 1/2 cups sugar

Directions:

1. Boil berries for 20 minutes
2. Strain off any solid matter
3. Add Sure-Jell and sugar
4. Boil for another 2 minutes
5. Remove from heat and allow to stand until foam forms, then skim off foam.
6. Pour hot jelly into sterilized jars, and cap.
7. If it doesn't set, add another 1/4 envelope of Sure-Jell, or just use the thin jam as a syrup.



Tool Time

Having dirty, rusty, and dull tools can make your gardening chores a lot more difficult not to mention you might be spreading bacteria from one dirty tool to areas around your property. Now that the growing season is coming to an end, take advantage of your hours to properly clean and sharpen all of your garden tools.

Supplies: Detergent, sprayer, sponge, old rags, steel wool, scrub brush, wire brush, sandpaper, metal file, lubricating oil. Don't forget to wear safety equipment.

Step 1: Remove any mud by scrubbing blades and handles. Dry with old rags and set overnight to dry completely.

Step 2: Remove rust by using either steel wool or a wire brush. Remove just the rust and no further as you don't want to impact the tool by making it weaker or thinner.

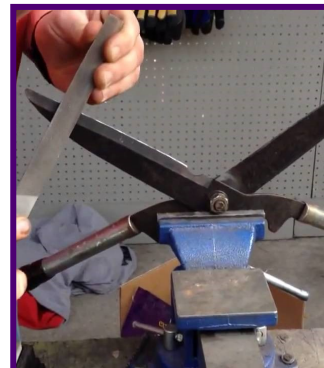
Step 3: Sand and smooth worn spots on handles and blades.

Step 4: Sharpen the edges lightly. Using a metal file smooth out nicks and gouges but not too much or you will thin the metal and weaken it. For pruning equipment, put the tool in a vise to hold steady. Make short strokes with the file moving up and out away from the blade.

Step 5: Use a clean rag to

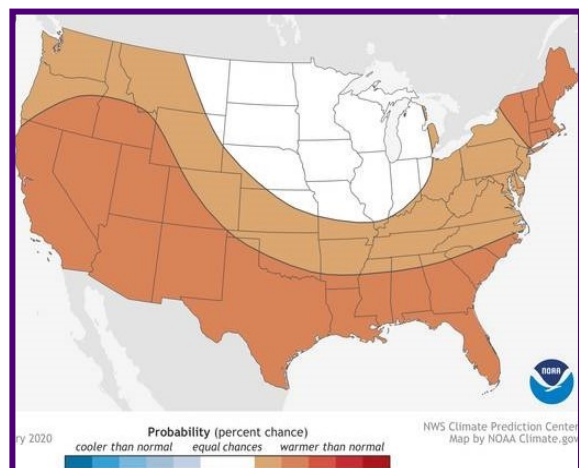
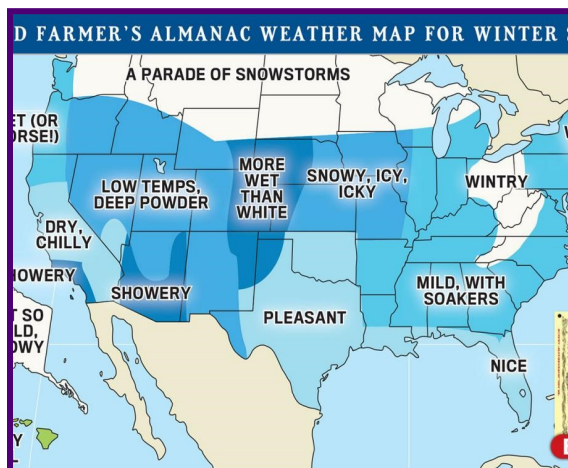
apply lubricating oil on wooden handles and metal blades. You can use linseed oil, coconut oil, or WD-40. This will help prevent rust and cracking. Wipe off excess oil and hang tools to dry.

Remember, a clean and sharp tool will be your gardening friend for many seasons to come.



Winter Forecasts—2019/2020

The December – February (2019/2020) forecast calls for above-normal temperatures in the coming winter, which shouldn't surprise anyone as we've had our warmest last few months on record. Also, precipitation forecasts are showing below normal.



Schedule of Events

- Nov 2: Montgomery County Master Gardeners, "Open Gardens", 9:00—12:00, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe
- Nov 2: Producers Cooperative, "Feeding your Soil and Prepping for Spring", 10:00—11:00, 1800 North Texas Avenue, Bryan
- Nov 9: Producers Cooperative, "Fruit Tree Selection"; 10:00—11:00, 1800 North Texas Avenue, Bryan
- Nov 12: Grimes County Master Gardeners, Field Trip: Base Camp Farm, 9:00—11:00; 23683 Ward Road, Navasota
- Nov 12: Brazos County Master Gardeners, "Gardening with Herbs for Flavor and Fragrance", 6:00—7:00 PM, Lick Creek Nature Center, 13600 Rock Prairie Road, College Station
- Nov 16: Brazos County Master Gardeners, "Cool Season Annuals for your Garden"; 10:00—11:00 AM, Clara B. Mounce Public Library, 201 E 26th St., Bryan,

November 2019

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

Common Mistakes Gardeners Often Make

- Overwatering: Remember the rule—Long, Deep and Infrequent. Don't drown your plants but first check for soil moisture before watering.
- Overfertilizing: Too much of a good thing can cause problems with plants such as excessive new growth and making the plant more susceptible to disease.
- Misusing pesticides: Too many chemical pesticides can upset the balance of nature.
- Planting the right plant in the wrong place: When placing a plant, consider its mature size and needs for sunlight or shade.
- Failure to prepare soil before planting: Most successful gardeners depend on amending their soil no matter what type of soil they have.
- Failure to use mulch: Mulch helps the soil retain moisture, controls weeds and provides organic matter.
- Planting at the wrong time: Knowing when to plant a vegetable and flower, how long it will take to mature, and watching the weather are keys to success.

Information taken from Doug Welsh's Texas Garden Almanac

2019 Fall Seminar

Grimes County Master Gardeners had a successful Fall Seminar on October 19th at the King Oaks Pavilion. There were 32 attendees and 12 volunteers who assisted with questions and sales of roses from the Antique Rose Emporium. Paula Parmley presented “Keys to a Successful Landscape” and Cathey Hardeman educated the group on “Fall Vegetable Gardening.”



Grimes County Master Gardeners



King Oaks Pavilion



Herb Abraham Addressing the Group



Attendees from King Oaks



Grimes County Master Gardeners
Co-op Table



Paula Parmley—Keys to a Successful
Landscape



Cathey Hardeman—Fall Vegetable
Gardening



GCMG Assisting Attendees



The Antique Rose Emporium Roses
for Sale

Trunk or Treat—October 26, 2019



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



2019 Board of Directors

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Vice PresidentSharon Murry
SecretaryPaula Parmley
TreasurerDia Copeland

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Communications.....Georgia Abraham
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Co-op.....Fred Vesperman
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Fair Judging.....Marti Luedtke
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Newsletter.....Paula Parmley
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