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**Gardening
requires a lot
of water—
mostly in the
form of
perspiration**

Cole Plants for September

Even though it's still extremely hot in the early part of September, knowledgeable gardeners know this is the month to start a fall garden. Fall in Texas truly is like a second spring season and it's the time when those wonderful **cole** vegetables can be grown and harvested. What is a **cole** vegetable? Some people associate the word "cole" with the word "cold" but actually it derives its name from Latin and means **stem**. Cole plants belong to the mustard (*Brassica*) family and are all descendants of wild cabbage. The most common cole plants are: **Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Broccoli, Kale, and Turnips.**

Cole vegetables grow best when the daytime temperature is below 80 degrees and nighttime temperatures are below 60 degrees. That's why high temperatures will cause bolting or deformed vegetable heads.

Cole vegetables should be grown in full sun and require large amounts of nutrients, specifically micro-nutrients that may not be found in regular fertilizers. The lack of these micro-nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, manganese, boron, and molybdenum can cause deficiencies in plant growth. Research each type of cole vegetable you want to grow to find the specifics for each plant and prep your soil accordingly. Most cole plants require a pH between 6.2 to 6.8 in mineral soils and 5.5 or higher in organic soils.

GCMG Fall Social

Grimes County Master Gardeners will hold their Fall Social on **Saturday, September 14**, at Kimberly Herten's residence. This will be a potluck event with Kimberly and Bernie providing the main meat course. Anyone who would like to bring their guns for a little target practice at the Herten shooting range are welcome.

- Social Hour:** 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Dinner:** 6:00 p.m. with business meeting to follow
- Location:** 5347 County Road 325, Navasota, TX 77868
- Phone:** 805-279-8557

Brilliant Bromeliads



What do a Pineapple and Spanish moss have in common? Well, they are both bromeliads. Originally from the tropics and subtropics of North and South America, the pineapple was harvested by Christopher Columbus and brought back to Spain where it now is being cultivated throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa.

While the pineapple plant most closely resembles the more exotic types of bromeliads, Spanish moss looks like hanging grass. Native Americans named it “tree hair” but the French thought it looked like Spanish Beards so

somehow through time the name morphed to Spanish Moss. Many people think Spanish moss is a parasite, but it is only attached to trees for anchoring and not harmful.

Tiny gray scales make up the moss captures nutrients and water from the air. It is an excellent source of building material for bird’s nests and was even used by pioneers to stuff mattresses.



Bromeliads come in over 2,700 varieties which include many shapes, sizes and colors. As a tropical plant they cannot withstand outdoor temperatures below freezing, but gardeners can bring them indoors during winter to add some colorful splash and texture.

Fast Facts:

- Mature bromeliads only bloom once—sometimes lasting for months. However, once the bloom dies, so does the mother plant.
- Before the mother plant dies, pups or offshoots will develop and become new plants.
- The roots of the bromeliad do not form in the ground; instead, they cling to rocks and trees to anchor them. The leaves take in all the water and nutrients the plant needs.
- Bromeliads are very resilient and inexpensive to grow and will last a long time if not overwatered. Just a little water in each cup once a week should be all the plant needs.
- Outdoors, the collection of water provides an excellent food source and home for tree frogs, worms, snails and other tiny insects.
- Pests do not tend to bother bromeliads as long as they are not over-watered.
- Most bromeliads do not like ordinary potting soil because it tends to collect too much water and will rot the root system. Look for specific bromeliad soil or read up on what type of soil your bromeliad needs before planting.
- Some bromeliads are called “air plants” which means they grow attached to a piece of wood and do not draw their moisture through their roots but instead from the air. Mist air plants every few days to assist with air moisture.
- Almost all bromeliads are tropical so they thrive in a warm but shaded area. Most require bright, indirect sunlight to flourish.



The Wonders of Turmeric

The herb Turmeric has gained quite a bit of popularity in the United States in the last few years due to its unique flavor in cooking and its many medicinal benefits. It's a close relative to ginger and can be quite expensive to purchase in grocery stores so why not grow your own?

Growing turmeric in your garden not only provides you with the beneficial root but also adds quite a beautiful display of leaves and flowers to your landscape. Turmeric is a tropical plant which requires warm, humid weather to thrive—usually zones 8 and above. When temperatures start to dip in the fall you need to either harvest your roots, transplant to a pot for overwintering or mulch, mulch, mulch and hope it comes back in the spring. I planted turmeric two years ago and was lucky that it survived winter and returned in the spring.

The leaves of the turmeric are large and can grow up to 3–4 feet. It should be planted in well-drained soil and can handle full sun to partial shade. Turmeric can be purchased from your local grocery store in its root form (rhizome). It's also called a creeping rootstalk because the underground stem is capable of producing shoots and root systems for several plants. When purchasing, you will want to find a plump looking root with several bumps or fingers. These will be where the new stems will start. Soaking the root in water overnight helps promote growth once planted. It can take up to 10 months for the plant to fully mature. For harvesting, you will want to take only the outer pieces leaving the main root in the ground to grow more roots.

Processing the rhizomes requires some “curing”. Put the harvested rhizomes in water and bring to a boil. Simmer until they can easily be pierced by a fork. This may take up to 60 minutes, depending on the size. Drain the water and dry the cooked rhizomes in a dehydrator set at 140 degrees until they are brittle. Once they can be broken clean off when bending then you can move on to a spice or coffee grinder to turn into powder.

Amazing Benefits of Turmeric

- Turmeric contains a compound called “curcumin” which has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects.
- Turmeric has been known to provide pain relief for arthritis, inflammation, digestive problems, and liver conditions.
- Other proposed benefits include helping to control blood pressure, reduce cholesterol and diabetes.
- It can be used on the skin as an exfoliating agent, help with tightening, and as a prevention for sun damage.
- There are some claims that turmeric can prevent cancer cell growth.



Beneficial Insects in the Garden



Yellow Crab Spider



White Crab Spider



Orange Crab Spider

Last year, I wrote about a common orb weaver spider, the garden spider, and the benefits this unique insect provides in the garden. Today, I want to introduce another orb weaver spider; the **Spiny Orb Weaver** also called the **Crab Spider**

(*Gasteracantha cancriformis*). Crab spiders are tiny spiders that spin round webs to catch their prey and are unique because they come in a variety of colors. They get their name because they resemble tiny, little crabs with a hard, spiny shell on their back. Scientists are not sure why there are spines on the shell as most prey and predators probably cannot see them. Like the garden spider, crab spiders produce ornate and circular webs that many of us probably walk into around the garden. I found a white one in my garden yesterday. Now, you probably think I like spiders because I write about them, but the truth is I have always been a bit scared of them. However, since becoming a Master Gardener I decided I should face my fears and look kindly on

our creepy, crawly insects because they do provide so many benefits in our gardens. The crab spider is not venomous nor harmful to humans. Their specialty is a wide range of flying prey which includes flies, moths, small beetles, wasps, bees, mosquitoes, etc.

The crab spider is found in many parts of the world and is mostly seen in the southeast of the United States and California. Crab spiders have a broad, hard shell that can be yellow, white and orange with red or black markings. If you were to look closely the bottom portion of the spider looks like an ordinary so the hard shell is quite unique in nature.

The female crab spider captures flying insects with a web built at an angle. She will rest in the center, face down, awaiting her prey. If the prey is smaller than the spider then she will carry it back to the center of the web and devour it. If the prey is larger than she is, then she will wrap the numbed pest for dinner later. Sometimes,

she will catch several insects at a time and will leave them in place to come back and feed when she pleases.

After mating, a female crab spider will produce an egg sac that will contain 100 to 250 eggs. To protect her eggs, the female will construct a complicated and layered egg case on the underside of a leaf. They will winter there from October to January before hatching out.

Crab spiders are one of the most beneficial spiders in the garden because they prey upon small pests that we can't even see and help to control overpopulation of these insects. They are not dangerous and rarely invade inside homes unless carried in accidentally on a plant.

The next time you're in the garden see if you can find one of these colorful, beneficial insects.

September 2019

Schedule of Events

- Sept 3: Washington County Master Gardeners:**
“Sustainable Landscape Principles by Dr. William Welch”; Noon—1:00 p.m.; Washington County Fairgrounds Sales Facility; Brenham
- Sept 7: The Arbor Gate:**
“Building a Great Garden Chair”; 10 a.m.—11 a.m.; 15635 Farm to Market 2920, Tomball
- Sept 11: The Arbor Gate:**
“Harvest Herbs and Greens”; noon—1 p.m.; 15635 Farm to Market 2920, Tomball.
- Sept 14: The Arbor Gate:**
“Organic Pest, Disease, & Weed Control”; 10 a.m.—11 a.m.; 15635 Farm to Market 2920, Tomball
- Sept 14: Montgomery County Master Gardeners:**
“Landscaping for Curb Appeal”; 10:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m., Fee: \$5; Thomas LeRoy Building, Conroe
- Sept 14: Montgomery County Master Gardeners:** *“Patio Gardening”*; 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.; Fee: \$5; Thomas LeRoy Building, Conroe
- Sept 17: Brazos County Master Gardeners:** *“Spring Blooming Bulbs”*; 6 p.m.—7 p.m.; Lick Creek Nature Center, College Station

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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8	9	10	11 ★	12	13	14 ★
15	16	17 ★	18	19	20	21
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29	30					

Landscape Design School Series XXVI

Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. and Texas AgriLife Extension are offering **Course III** in the Landscape Design School series. This offering in the College Station area will provide 12 hours of instruction to learn from professional landscape architects and horticulturists how successful landscapes are designed. Courses in this series can be taken out of sequence and can be taken even if you have not taken Courses I and II.

- Date:** September 23-24, 2019
- Hours:** Monday (9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.); Tuesday (9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.)
- Location:** George Bush Presidential Library, College Station
- Fee:** Tuition/Lunch Fee \$145 if submitted by September 1, 2019
 Tuition/Lunch Fee \$165 if submitted **after September 1, 2019**
 Reference Book (\$40); **“Stewards of the Land” must be ordered before September 1, 2019**
- Registration Form:** Forms may be obtained from aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden/
- Master Gardeners:** Anyone who completes the course and passes the test may apply to their MG Chapter to receive 12 hours of continuing education credit.

**Schedule of Events
(cont'd)**

September 2019

- **Sept 17: Native Plant Society of Texas (Sam Houston Chapter):** Monthly Meeting; 6:30 p.m.—8:00 p.m.; W.G. Jones Forest, 1328 FM 1488, Conroe
- **Sept 18: Brazos County Master Gardeners:** “Landscaping with Bulbs”; 12 p.m.—1 p.m.; Brazos County Extension Office, Bryan
- **Sept 19: The Arbor Gate:** “Succulents 101”; 10 a.m.—11 a.m.; 15635 Farm to Market 2920, Tomball
- **Sept 21: The Arbor Gate:** “Fall Gardening—the Best Gardening of All”; 10 a.m.—11 a.m.; 15635 Farm to Market 2920, Tomball
- **Sept 21: Brazos County Master Gardeners:** “Spring Blooming Bulbs”; 10 a.m.—11 a.m.; Clara B. Mounce Library, Bryan
- **Sept 24: Brazos County Master Gardeners:** “Floral Design from the Garden”; 7 p.m.—8 p.m.; Brazos Center, 3232 Briarcrest Drive, Bryan
- **Sept 25: The Arbor Gate:** “Simple Salads and Luscious Leafy Greens”; Noon—1 p.m.; 15635 Farm to Market 2920, Tomball.
- **Sept 28: The Arbor Gate:** “How to Root a Rose”; 10 a.m.—11 a.m.; 15635 Farm to Market 2920, Tomball

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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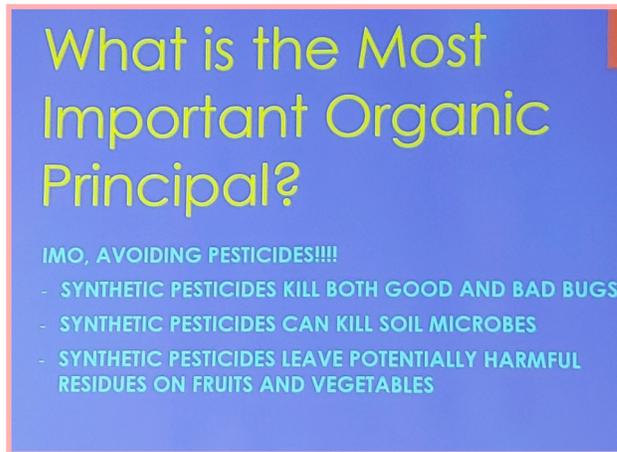
Fall Plant Sale

Washington County Extension Horticulture Committee is having a fall plant sale which will include cool season plants such as arugula, bok choy, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, green leaf lettuce, red leaf lettuce, romaine lettuce, mustard greens, spinach and swiss chard.

- All plants are propagated locally from seeds.
- Plant 4 Packs = \$2.50
- Order Deadline is **Friday, September 13th**
- Online forms: <https://washington.agrilife.org/> or at the Washington County Extension Office located at 1305 E. Blue Bell Road in Brenham.
- Online orders can be submitted and paid by PayPal or credit card online at: <https://washington.agrilife.org/plantsale/>
- Plants will be available for pick up on **Tuesday, October 8, 2019** from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- All proceeds will benefit the youth of Washington County through scholarships.

August 13th Meeting: Pest Free

Jay White, Publisher of Texas Gardener Magazine, provided a talk on Pest Free Organically at the August 13th meeting. Jay discussed how to reduce pests without pesticides and reviewed the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Triangle.



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



Neoregelia 'Barbarian'
Bromeliad

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