



June Gardening To-Do Tasks

From Central Texas Horticulture

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FERTILIZE	Add compost to annuals and vegetables, fertilize if needed. Scratch the fertilizer into the top layer of soil and water deeply to quickly move the nutrients into solution. Provide supplemental iron through foliar applications, if needed, before daytime temperatures exceed 80°F.
WATER	Irrigate deeply and as infrequently as you can to encourage deep roots.
TRANSPLANT	Time to take a vacation from adding new perennials, grasses, and trees. Wait until fall.
SOIL	Pull back mulch, apply compost, then replace mulch to retain soil moisture.
LAWNS	Stop fertilizing to prevent brown patch and take-all root rot. Raise mower settings to reduce turf stress. Water in the morning. Avoid weed killers once temperatures exceed 85°F
DISEASES/PESTS TO LOOK FOR	Monitor the sunny areas of your lawn for chinch bugs. Spot treat scale and mealy bugs with horticultural oil, being careful not to spray oil on leaves. Blast the undersides of leaves to control spider mites, aphids, and whiteflies.
MAINTENANCE	Deadhead flowers and spent foliage. Remove fruiting canes from blackberries when last berry is harvested. Summer prune shrubs and trees (except Oaks) to remove damaged or dead wood if found. Replenish mulch if needed. Train vines and climbing roses up a trellis.
IN THE VEGETABLE GARDEN	Dig potatoes when the tops turn yellow and start to die back. It's time to plant cover crops in fallow beds, such as cowpeas or buckwheat. See the full Vegetable Garden Planting Guide and Vegetable Varieties for Central Texas .



Covid-19 Face Mask

Yes You Can!

Cathey Hardeman

As far as I can remember, as a child, I spent most of my spring and summer with my grandmother. We called her Mome. Although she had fiery red hair and a quick temper, it was never directed toward my sister and me. We were her first grandchildren, and she loved us dearly. She loved us to be at her side every day.



Mome was an adventurous cook. Although she was poor, she delighted her family and neighbors with delicious Cajun dishes. I learned most of my culinary skills from Mome. Being poor, she knew the importance of preserving food.

I became acquainted with canning at a very early age. Mome loved to forage for dewberries when they came in season. At the crack of dawn, she would come over to our house and drag my sister and me out of bed to hunt for the sweet berries. We would go up and down the irrigation canals among the rice fields of south Louisiana. They grew juicy near the water. Mome always had her metal cup to dip into the emerging water from the pumps, carrying cool water from the underground springs. Always refreshing, always cold. After filling buckets with berries, we would head to her house to begin the process of jelly making. First, she saved a large bowl of berries for her black-berry dumplings.

My grandmother did not know about the USDA guide lines. She accepted old mayonnaise jars from friends and had a collection of her own mason jars. She then began to squeeze out the juice from the berries. The juice was placed in a large cauldron along with copious amounts of sugar and brought to a boil. The juice was boiled for quite some time making sure all the sugar was dissolved. It was then placed in sterilized jars, topped with a seal, and rings. Mome never used boxed pectin to make her jelly because she knew to add under ripe berries along with ripe ones, providing the natural pectin. We then waited for the pop, announcing the jelly was done and the top had sealed. To a canner, that is a sweet sound.

When summer arrived so did the figs and another adventure began. Again, at dawn, we joined her to pick figs from her friend's trees. The fig trees were grown in the chicken yard. It's hard to forget the feeling of chicken droppings between to the toes of my bare feet. However, the aroma of figs stewing in Mome's large pots surely did help to erase the horror.



Our family enjoyed the canned goods my grandmother created from the wonderful bounty of nature. From these experiences, came my love for canning. Whether it's berries, figs or many vegetables from the garden, my All American Pressure Cooker and I are well acquainted. Following the USDA guidelines, I use pressure to can meats and most vegetables. These food items are lacking in acid and therefore need to be under more rigorous measures to kill bacteria.

For pickles, jellies, jams and fruit preserves, I use the water bath method. These foods contain sugar and vinegar that naturally preserve not needing the pressure to bring the temperature up as with non-acidic foods.

The pressure canner is not to be feared. With a canner in good working condition, it is easy and safe to use. Following the instructions assures a fun and safe way to preserve foods. I do use other methods of preserving. Freezing is a great alternative as is dehydrating and fermenting.

Don't hesitate to scope out that bargain on veggies seen at the farmer markets or the grocery. Meats are on clearance often. You can benefit from canning or preserving these foods. Publications are available, on-line, free of charge to assist in our quest to preserve foods.

Wildflowers in Grimes County

Kady Hackenberg

I have a passion for growing wildflowers, or should I say, trying to grow them. I've never understood how some are so easy to grow and others I have seeded and planted multiple times and will never grow, yet they are all over the sides of the roads and middle of pastures that you know rely solely on rainfall! Here are a few of my favorites and some fun facts about them.



Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia*): Native to North America, and a hardy perennial that the bees go crazy over. They are attracted to the bright yellow and brown cone in the center which is filled with nectar. I have them come up all around my yard, and I never planted a single one. Yet I have tried many times to transplant them in early spring with no luck.



Indian Blanket (*Gaillardia*): Commonly called the “fire wheel,” this stunning flower is easy to grow and very beneficial to honey bees. Gaillardia is related to the sunflower and takes the same care as one....Super easy! They typically bloom from May to August. I catch the seeds every year and sprinkle them around my yard, and I am pretty sure every single seed comes up!



Prairie Verbena (*Glandularia bipinnatifida*): My all-time favorite! As a kid at our lease in Burnet, Texas, this beautiful flower would cover acres of the land. When I cleared my property in 2014, I found three patches of this beauty! It is easy to dig up and transplant and looks like I never skipped a beat. There are more than 3000 species of Verbena! Mine typically bloom from February to December, making it a long season bloomer and favorite!



Mist Flower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*): Mistflower is a really great flower, but HIGHLY INVASIVE and spreads by rhizomes. It is easy to thin, and when you have a bunch together, they look beautiful! It is native to North America and blooms from late spring to early fall. It looks like the annual ageratum, and can easily be confused with each other. It loves a sandy, wet soil, and you can't do much to hurt it. Butterflies go crazy over this plant, being the reason I leave some every year!



Bluebonnets (*Lupinus*): While there are many varieties of Bluebonnets, the most common in Texas is the *Lupinus subcarinosus*. The shape of the petals on the flower resembles the bonnet worn by pioneer women to shield them from the sun. Bluebonnets are known for their soil enrichment. As a legume, they have roots that work with a bacterium called Rhizobium to improve plant growth and flowering. Rhizobium converts atmospheric nitrogen to a form that plants can use.



Indian Paintbrush (*Castilleja*): A genus of about 200 species of annual and perennial herbaceous plants native to the west Americas from Alaska south to the Andes, northern Asia, and one species as far west as the Kola Peninsula in northwestern Russia. They are hemiparasitic on the roots of grasses and Forbs. It is the state flower of Wyoming! The flower itself is edible and were consumed in moderation by various Native American tribes as a condiment with other fresh greens. If the stems and or leaves are eaten they can be highly toxic!

Harvesting & Storing Onions

The Old Farmers Almanac

How to Harvest Onions:

- Pull any onions that send up flower stalks; this means that the onions have stopped growing. These onions will not store well but can be used in recipes within a few days.
- When onions start to mature, the tops (foliage) become yellow and begin to fall over. At that point, bend the tops down or even stomp on them to speed the final ripening process.
- Loosen the soil around the bulbs to encourage drying.
- When tops are brown, carefully dig up the onions.



How to Store Onions:

- Clip the roots and cut the tops back to 1 inch (but leave the tops on if you are planning to braid the onions).
- Let the onions cure on dry ground for a few days, weather permitting. Always handle them very carefully—the slightest bruise will encourage rot to set in.
- Allow onions to dry for several weeks before you store them in a root cellar or any other storage area. Spread them out on an open screen off the ground to dry.
- Store at 40 to 50°F in braids or with the stems removed in a mesh bag or nylon stocking.
- Mature, dry-skinned bulbs like it cool and dry.
- Don't store onions with [apples](#) or [pears](#), as the ethylene gas produced by the fruits will interrupt the onions' dormancy. Onions may also spoil the flavor of these fruits (as well as [potatoes](#)).
- A pungent onion will store longer than a sweet onion. Eat the sweet varieties first and save the more pungent onions for later.



Braiding Onions



Stringing Onions

DIY—Three Chamber Composting

Kady Hackenberg

DIY—Three chamber composting made from pallets. If you are like me you come up with plenty of “simple or easy” DIY projects that end up being overwhelming and not so “easy,” but Joe Gardner made this one super easy!



First things first, you need your pallets. I have bought many pallets from feed stores, nurseries, and sometimes if I’m lucky, Lowes will sell me a couple. Some things you want to know and stay away from when picking your pallets—some are sprayed with pesticides. If you look at a pallet and it is marked MB that means Methyl Bromide, you will want to stay away from that one; the other marking will be HT meaning heat-treated, which would be the better alternative. Personally, I would go for the untreated raw wood, preferably a hardwood like oak or cedar. Also, while buying your pallets, remember they are not standard and come in all different sizes. Pallets typically range in cost from free to \$5.00.

Joe Gardener’s Design and Instruction:

Assembly is straightforward and intuitive. All you need are seven pallets, all-weather deck screws (3-inch length is ideal), and a drill with the appropriate bit.

Assemble your bin where you plan on leaving it, preferably on a level surface. The seven pallets are used as follows: one for each outer wall, two for the dividers to separate the bins, and three across the back.

1. Using several screws, attach one pallet that will serve as an outer sidewall to another pallet that will be part of the backside of the bin.
 2. Next, add one of the inner pallets that will serve as a divider for each section. Secure it against the first back pallet with several screws. Be sure to offset this inner pallet when securing it to the backside. You’ll need this extra surface space to attach the next middle, back pallet section to the divider.
 3. Now add the next pallet to make up the middle section of the backside. Secure it to the diving pallet you added in the previous step (using the offset space mentioned in Step 2). With the remaining four pallets, work your way across for the next two sections in this same manner.
- **Pro Tip:** Consider grabbing an extra pallet to use just for additional parts. I removed the slats from it to place in between other slats of my finished bins wherever I wanted to close some of the gaps. It’s a smart and simple fix to help keep more of your precious compost in place. **EASY ENOUGH!**

Benefits of composting in a three-bin system...

- In a three-bin system, use the first section for your initial contribution, yet you can start with any section you want, of course. Continue to add new ingredients until the bin is nearly full. You can use leaves, veggie and fruit scraps, grass clippings, and twigs.
- Then, move to the middle section and start filling that bin with the newest ingredients. Continue to add inputs to this section until it is nearly full.
- Finally, use the third bin just as you used the first two bins. The logic is that by having three separate sections, you always have compost in different stages of decomposition: new, in-process, or finished.
- Once the third bin is full, the contents of the first (original) bin should have broken down and is now ready to use as finished compost. Once that’s used up, the middle bin should now be ready, etc.



Continuing Education

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, no continuing education classes are available in June except for virtual learning and webinars. Below are on-line classes made available for those members who need additional educational hours. Many are being offered as virtual classes on Facebook by Agrilife Water University in partnership with Texas A&M Agrilife Extension.

June 2020

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 ★				

Continuing Education

- June 02: Agrilife Water University (Facebook), “Water U Doing? Water Efficient Sprinklers”, 5 p.m.—7 p.m.
- June 04: Agrilife Water University (Facebook), “Drip Irrigation DIY”, 5 p.m.—6:30 p.m.
- June 04: Prairie View AMU, 10th Annual Horticulture Conference. Online Event starting at 9:30 to 5:00 p.m.
- June 09: Agrilife Water University (Facebook), “Grow Native Not Wild!”, 5 p.m.—6:30 p.m.
- June 11: Agrilife Water University (Facebook), “Texan Plants”, 5 p.m.—6 p.m.
- June 16: Agrilife Water University (Facebook), “Rainwater Harvesting”, 5 p.m.—6:30 p.m.
- Jun 18: Agrilife Water University (Facebook), “Weed’em and Reap: Weeds & Watering”, 5 p.m.—6 p.m.
- June 23: Agrilife Water University (Facebook), “Pots in Small Spots, Container Gardening”, 5 p.m.—6 p.m.
- June 25: Agrilife Water University (Facebook), “Sensational Succulents”, 5 p.m.—6 p.m.
- Jun 30: Agrilife Water University (Facebook), “Family Friendly Gardening”, 5 p.m.—7 p.m.

Join Every **Wednesdays & Fridays** at **1 pm** on the [Aggie Horticulture Facebook Page](#) to watch Facebook Live events!

A new podcast on [Aggie Horticulture Facebook Page](#) called “Talking Bugs” is upcoming. This is a series featuring a new entomologist and their research every two weeks. Start Date: **June 16th**.

Gardening 101 on [Aggie Horticulture Facebook Page](#). There are nine (9) episodes that have gardening tips for beginners. Subjects are: Raised Garden Beds; Starting Vegetable Seeds at Home; Planting your Garden with Transplants or Direct Seedlings; Home Fruit Production; Small Fruits for Backyard; Floral Designs from your Backyard; Growing Herbs: Basil Bounty; Backyard Grapes/Vineyards; and Pecan Grafting.

Congratulations to our Newest Members!
Class of 2019



Kelley Pritchard—New Master Gardener



Kady Hackenberg—New Master Gardener

Texas Master Gardeners

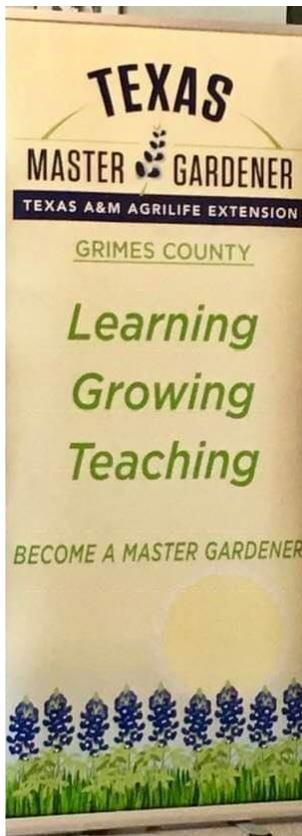
203 Veterans Memorial Drive
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Website: txmg.org/grimes
Facebook: www.facebook.com/GrimesCountyMasterGardeners



Grimes County Master Gardeners

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



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