



Inside this issue:

Seeds to Sow for Summer Blooms? 2

What Are Microgreens? 3

Q&A 3

How to Self-Pollinate Squash 4

My Trees—What Happened? 5

Event Calendar 6

Become a Master Gardener 7

Senior Day 8

Grimes County Master Gardeners 9

June Gardening Tasks From Central Texas Horticulture

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 .



Seeds to Sow for Summer Blooms by Ann DeWitt

Scattering flower seeds in the garden is such a joy! It's not only quick, easy, fun, and very economical, but it's the gift that keeps on giving. Even though there are some hybridized "annual" plants you get at a big box store, they are usually sterile seeds. The term "annual" means that the plant is propagated from seed. The flowers below can be propagated and, you can save your seeds from these summer beauties to reseed them again next year. You'll end up with so many seeds that you can share them with your friends.

It's best if you get the chance to loosen the soil a bit before you sow your seeds. Most flower seeds are small so mixing them with some soil or sand can be helpful. Then, literally scatter the mixture about in any pockets of your garden. Firm the soil lightly and keep the seeds moist until seedlings are developed.

Here's my garden list of must-seed sun-loving flowers for early summer to frost. These seeds can be found from quality seed companies online or in your local plant nursery:



Zinnias

Zinnia

Zinnias come in many colors and heights and as singles or doubles. Although, singles are best for pollinators. Zinnias are native to Mexico and Central America, so they love the sun (even our Texas sun). They make wonderful cut flowers, specifically the taller varieties. To harvest cut flowers, take a bucket of water to put them in immediately after cutting. Pick them in the morning when they are fully open. If you are deadheading the flowers, make a sharp cut just above the leaves for easy regrowth. Dry the heads completely before you harvest the seeds to store in a paper bag. Zinnias will bloom from late spring to frost, so you can even toss the seeds back for freshening up your late summer or fall garden.



Cosmos

Cosmos

Cosmos also comes in many color and heights. Seeding the larger yellow and orange varieties in mid-summer produces bountiful fall blooms on what appears to be a flowering shrub because it can get so large. It's very easy to collect seed as the blooms will fall off leaving the long seeds to dry on the stems.



Gomphrena

Gomphrena

Gomphrena is also known as Globe Amaranth and is native to Central America. The "flowers" are actually bundles of stiff, papery bracts and can be used in dried arrangements. They are 1'-2' tall, dependable, abundant, and extremely drought tolerant once established. The classic gomphrena is the fuchsia-colored, button-like globosa which is very prolific and allows for seeding. Other varieties are now common in the trade such as 'Fireworks', 'Strawberry Fields, and 'Lavender Lady.'" Gomphrena attracts butterflies, but not deer.



Blanket Flower

Blanket Flower/ Firewheel, *Gaillardia pulchella*

Blanket flower is a Texas native that provide a bountiful display along our roadsides. Most natives need to be seeded in the fall for spring blooms. Blanket Flower can be seeded in the fall, but it's not necessary, it can be seeded with your other summer bloomers. Once established, it doesn't like too much water or any fertilizer. Too much water will make it leggy and fall over. Unlike many natives, Blanket Flower does make a nice cut flower.



Cleome

Cleome

Cleome is also known as spider plant. They are heat and drought tolerant. They attract hummingbirds but not deer. The sturdy 3'-5' stems are topped with ever-lengthening clusters of 4"-6" wide spider-like flower heads. Available colors are white, cherry red, violet, and my favorite, a bi-color that is soft pink then lengthens to a darker pink on top. They are stunning in the garden or as a cut flower.

What are Microgreens?



What are microgreens? They are simply greens, lettuces, and herbs that are harvested when they are quite young—generally when they are approximately an inch tall. While small, microgreens are packed with nutrients such as **potassium, iron, zinc, magnesium and copper**. Microgreens are also a great source of beneficial plant compounds like antioxidants. Microgreens can be used in salads, sandwiches or stir-fries. Here are some popular microgreens to grow:

<i>Mustard</i>	<i>Kale</i>	<i>Endive</i>	<i>Arugula</i>	<i>Beet Greens</i>
<i>Spinach</i>	<i>Tatsoi</i>	<i>Watercress</i>	<i>Mizuna</i>	<i>Peas</i>
<i>Cabbage</i>	<i>Basil</i>	<i>Sunflower</i>	<i>Lettuce (any)</i>	

How to Grow: Microgreens can be grown outside, in a garden bed or in containers indoors on a sunny windowsill. Outside: loosen soil and rake it smooth, scatter the seeds about 1/8 to 1/4 inch apart. They don't need a lot of room because they will be harvested young. Once seed is scattered then cover with 1/8 inch of soil and water gently. Indoors, using a container, choose one that is at least two inches deep and as large a diameter as you want. Fill it with organic potting mix, scatter the seeds the same as above—1/8 to 1/4 inch apart and cover with 1/8 inch soil. Water gently and place in a spot where it will get at least four hours of sunlight each day.

Maintenance: Do not let the soil dry out whether it's outside or inside. Remove any weeds so the microgreens don't have to compete for water and nutrients. You don't need to fertilize since they will be harvested while still young.

Harvesting: The first leaves you'll see are seed leaves. Wait until the leaves have developed into true leaves which is generally about 10 days to two weeks after planting. Simply snip the microgreens at soil level. They won't be able to grow back but you can leave the old roots as they are a good source of organic matter for the next planting.

Q & A



Question: Help! My compost pile that I've been working on for months now has ants in it. What can I do to eliminate them without contaminating the soil?

Answer: When ants show up in your compost pile it is because the pile is too dry. Your compost should be wet as a squeezed out sponge ideally. The compost will stop breaking down altogether if it gets too dry - and the ants move in. If the temperature is below 140 degrees, it is cool enough to invite ants to set up house. Cover the compost pile with plastic to keep it warm and to retain moisture. Ants and other insects prefer a cool, dry location so having a wet and warm pile discourages their presence.



Question: My neighbor dug up several mimosa trees and offered them to me. Is this a tree that grows in our part of Texas and is it safe to plant in my yard?

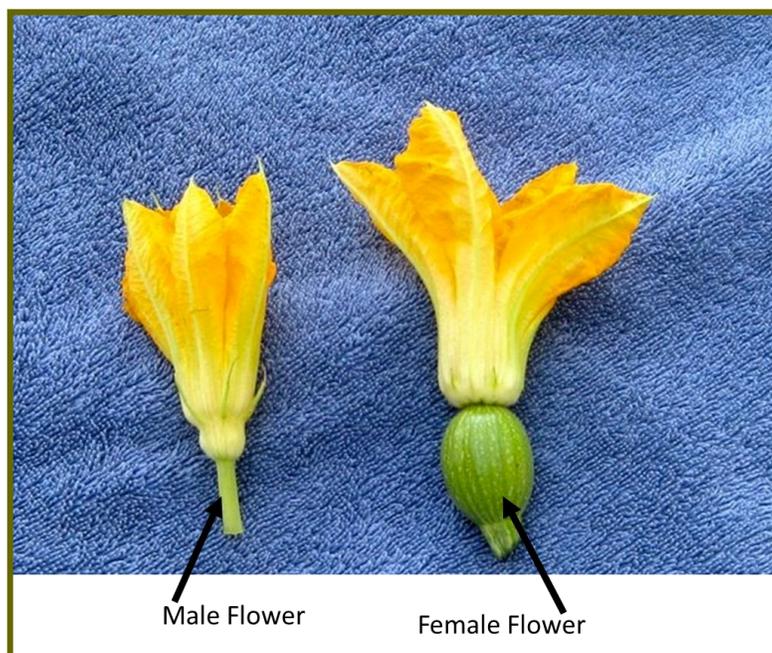
Answer: Mimosa, also known as the Silk Tree, is short-lived and very messy. Yes, they grow easily in Texas but are not recommended. After flowering, the petals drop and mat the undergrowth. Brown seedpods litter the tree and the ground. Seeds germinate and seedling trees sprout over the lawn and surrounding beds. Plus they are prone to breakage, webworms, and fungus. There are many recommended trees for Texas to plant instead that won't give you as many problems.

How to Self-Pollinate Squash

There's nothing more frustrating for a vegetable gardener than having nice big healthy squash plants but no squash! The main reason for this problem is a lack of sufficient pollination. Gardeners have depended on bees and other pollinators to pollinate blossoms in their gardens for centuries. In recent years, as bee populations in some areas are declining for various reasons, including suburban sprawl, colony collapse disorder, and changing weather patterns, some plants may need human help with pollination.

Pollination can also be affected by long stretches of rainy or cold spring weather, or watering too vigorously when pollen is forming. Water at the base of the plant by the stem and try to avoid pouring water on the forming blossoms, or early in the morning when the blossoms have just opened.

It is possible to hand pollinate summer squash like zucchini, winter squash like butternut or pumpkins, melons, gourds and cucumber plants for better yields.



Identify Male and Female Flowers: Your squash plant will have male and female blossoms. Here's how to tell the difference. The male flower has a bare stem below the flower, while the female flower has a tiny immature fruit: a baby squash! If that female flower is not pollinated, that tiny fruit will drop off and no fruiting will occur. Different varieties of squash have different ratios of male to female flowers. Also the inside of the flowers are a clue to identifying male and female blossoms. The main difference is that male flowers have anthers (little appendages; hey, this is squash sex we're talking about!), which contain pollen (the substance that pollinates) and the female flowers have pistils, which receive the pollen.

Pollinating the Female Squash Flower: Mid morning is probably the best time to pollinate your squash, as the flowers should naturally open by then, But if they have not opened yet, you can gently peel them open with your fingers separating the petals and exposing the anthers and pistils.

Pollinating your squash blossoms by hand is very easy, although somewhat time-consuming if you have a lot of squash plants. Simply take the male flower and expose the anther with pollen. You'll need to pick the male squash flower to be able to apply pollen from the anther to the female flower's pistil. Lightly brush the anther against the pistil in the female flower, leaving some pollen behind. If desired, you may also use a cotton swab or a small make up brush to transfer pollen from the anther to the pistil. You don't need to pick the male flower in order to do this, but these won't produce squash anyway. Squash blossoms are edible too. You may choose to put your extra squash blossoms into a salad, or make fritters. You can also leave the male flowers on the plant for a little while for the bees to gather nectar from.

Article from The Spruce, Peg Aloji, 10/14/20.

My Trees—What Happened?



After this year's arctic blast called "Uri" finished with its devastating freeze, we all held our breath to see how the plants were affected. Most survived and even put on a spurt of growth that was astonishing. But as spring moved forward, it was apparent that many large trees did not leaf out properly. All over Texas, owners are contacting specialists because their large trees seem to be struggling or even dying. In a yard with many leafed-out trees, there will be one or two that are only leafed out on the bottom third of the tree. So, what happened?

Neil Sperry, a recognized horticulturist in Texas, gathered a panel of certified arborists, foresters, extension specialists, and nursery leaders to get their expert opinion on a phenomenon that had not been observed. Here is their answer:

- Theory one suggests that the trees struggling right now were likely stressed or struggling before the winter storm, probably from the drought conditions of 2011 onward. Even though they were continuing to leaf out, there is a probability that ongoing damage was already present. Long-range drought can affect a tree for up to 15 years after the drought has stopped.
- Theory two is more about the science of bud formation in trees, according to Gretchen Riley, Urban and Community Forestry Program leader at Texas A&M Forest Service. She says every February in Texas trees begin pulling nutrients from their roots all the way up into their branches and finer twigs. This combination of sugar, starches, and water is then used to produce buds – which become leaves over the course of a few weeks. Once Uri hit, this liquid component was susceptible to freeze damage and once frozen, could not be repurposed after thawing started. It takes a lot of energy for a tree to produce buds and leaves. When that process is interrupted, the tree now must expend even more energy to get those buds reformed and leafed out. That is why the upper and outer edges of the trees look dead while the lower branches have leafed out normally.

What to do? As offered by the specialist panel, it is a waiting game for now. While you might have an unsightly tree in your landscape, try not to remove it just yet. Many trees are still putting on new leaves, so it is wise to be a bit cautious and see if the tree will recover completely. You may have to wait until next spring to see if the tree completely recovers and leafs out in its entirety. If we have a very dry summer, you can water lightly around the trees but don't drown the roots because that will also cause more stress. Also, refrain from using fertilizers and insecticides. Let nature take its course and work to repair the trees.

If you have a small tree that is still barren, then you need to do one of two things. Crape Myrtles, for example, have been observed across the state like this. Some are dead on top but are putting out new growth at the base. If that is the case, you need to prune the dead limbs and allow the new growth to take over. If your crape myrtle is completely leafed out but has shoots coming up from the base, go ahead and prune out the new sprouts but leave the rest of the tree alone.

Events

Grimes County Master Gardeners will have their **Monthly Business Meeting on Tuesday, June 8th, 10:00 a.m.** *This will be a field trip to Lavender Farm, Chapel Hill.*

Monthly Garden Work Day: June 15th—9:00 a.m. at the Grimes County Extension Office.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, no in-person continuing education classes are available. Below are some virtual learning and

June 2021

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			

GOT A GARDENING QUESTION?

Got a gardening problem or question?

Contact our Master Gardeners to get help: grimescountymastergardeners@gmail.com or call us at [936-873-3917](tel:936-873-3917).

A photo along with your question will help us with the answer.

Continuing Education and Events

- June 3: Home Grown Lecture Series, Harris County AgriLife, “**A Legen-Dairy Lecture**”, 10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m., Free To Register: <https://www.hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops>
- June 8: Urban Harvest, “**Foraging for Weeds in Your Garden**” 7:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m. \$20, Zoom
- June 9: Gardening on the Gulf Coast; “**Summer Lawn Care**”, 10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Free
- June 12: **Navasota Farmer’s Market**, 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.—Navasota Library Parking Lot
- June 12: Urban Harvest, “**Companion Planting**”, 9:30 a.m.—11:00 a.m., \$20, Zoom Live Class by Invitation
- June 15: Urban Harvest, “**Fully Mediterranean**”, 6:00 p.m.—7:30 p.m., \$20, Zoom Live Class by Invitation
- June 17: Home Grown Lecture Series, Harris County AgriLife, “**Art from the Garden**”, 10:00 a.m.—11:00 p.m. Free
- June 23: Gardening on the Gulf Coast; “**Vegetable Garden Success in Summer**”, 10:00 a.m. Free
- June 24: Urban Harvest; “**The Edible Academy, Half Day Workshop**”, In Person Class, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. , This Hands-On class is for teachers, garden educators, & parents. \$50



Become a Grimes County Master Gardener



2021 Grimes County Master Gardener Class



Grimes County Master Gardeners will hold a Master Gardener Training Class in 2021 (August—November).

Classroom courses will be held in the Go Texan Building located at the Grimes County Fair Grounds, 5220 FM 3455, Navasota, Texas.

Specific courses and dates and times of training are still to be determined.

Grimes County Master Gardeners will be offering more than 60 hours of online and/or classroom courses taught by Texas A&M horticulture specialist, staff and area horticulture experts to meet the 50 hours required to become a certified Master Gardener. The class offers instruction in topics such as:

- ◆ Plant growth and development,
- ◆ Integrated pest management,
- ◆ Soils and water conservation,
- ◆ Fruits and vegetable gardening,
- ◆ Ornamental trees and shrubs,
- ◆ Earth-Kind Landscaping and,
- ◆ Lawn care.

Registration is \$200.00. Price includes the recently updated Master Gardener Handbook. Please contact Herb Abraham through the email or phone number listed below for more information on the class or to be added to the roster.

Learn, Grow, Share

Herbert Abraham, Grimes County Master Gardener
Phone: 703-801-3273 (voice or text)
Email: herbabraham@gmail.com

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.



THE GRIMES COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Senior Citizens Day at the Fair

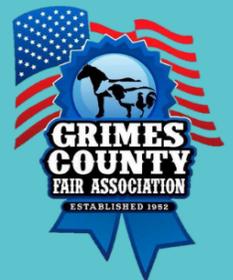
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2021
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
5220 FM 3455 Navasota TX 77868

FREE

&
Open to the Public

- Visit Vendor Booths
- Health Screenings
- Play bingo
- Win Prizes

A lunch, provided by Mid-South Electric CO-OP, will be served at 11:30 A.M.



Texas Master Gardeners

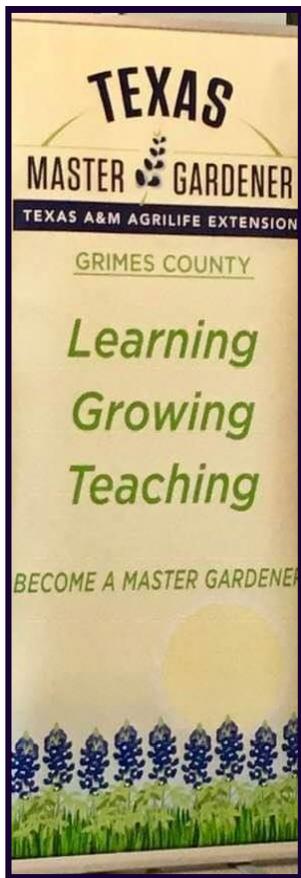
203 Veterans Memorial Drive
Navasota, Texas 77868

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



2021 Board of Directors

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Vice PresidentKimberly Hertan
SecretaryRenee Harter
TreasurerHerb Abraham

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Community Garden.....Cathey Hardeman
Co-op.....Fred Vesperman
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Fundraising.....Carol Garnet
Historian.....Sharon Murry
Intern Class Coordination.....Herb Abraham
Junior Master Gardener.....Kay Douglas
Newsletter.....Paula Parmley
Nominating.....Carol Garnet
Social Media.....Jamie Brunns
Scholarship Program.....Kimberly Hertan/Renee Harter
Timekeeping.....Martha Brogdon
TMGA Awards.....Sharon Murry