



VOL. 14 ISSUE 2 • FEB 2022

# THE GREENERY

GRIMES COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS



## SPRING IS AROUND THE CORNER

BY PAULA PARMLEY

WELCOME TO THE NEW LOOK FOR GRIMES COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS NEWSLETTER. AS YOU READ OUR NEWSLETTERS, WE HOPE YOU WILL FIND INFORMATION THAT WILL EDUCATE AND INSPIRE YOU TO START A VEGETABLE GARDEN, PLANT FLOWERS, AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS THAT MAKE UP SUCCESSFUL GARDENING.

SPRING IS AROUND THE CORNER, EVEN THOUGH IT MAY NOT FEEL LIKE IT RIGHT NOW. ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES WE HAVE SOME ARTICLES THAT MIGHT HELP YOU GET READY FOR WARMER WEATHER.



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## It's Not Too Late Onion Lovers

It's not too late to plant onions. According to the Texas A&M AgriLife Vegetable Planting guide, from October to early February is the time to plant onion bulbs. In this area, you can grow yellow, white, and red onions and many feed stores are stocked with onion sets now. Below are the best varieties for our area.

<u>Short Day (less than 12 hours day length)</u>	
Yellow	Chula Vista, Cougar, Jaguar, Legend Linda Vista, Mercedes, Prowler,
White	Cirrus, Marquesa, TX Early White, Crystal Wax
Red	Red Bone, Rio Santiago, Sakata Red, Red Burgandy
<u>Intermediate Day (12-13 hour day length)</u>	
Yellow	Caballero, Cimarron, Rivera, Utopia, Yula
White	Alabaster, Mid Star, Sierra Blanca, Spano
Red	Fuego
<u>Long Day (14-16 hour day length)</u>	
Yellow	Armada, Capri, Durano, El Charo, Ole, Seville, Sweet Perfection, Valdez, Vaquero, Vega
White	Blanco Duro, Sterlin, White Spanish, Sweet
Red	Tango

Prepping: Select a site that will get full sunlight, free of weeds, and is well draining. Work the soil 8 to 10 inches amending it with compost so that your final planting site will become a loose, loamy soil. Spread a good 10-10-10 fertilizer and work into the soil 3 to 4 inches deep.

Planting: Plant onion sets 3/4 inch deep and 3 inches apart. Do not plant deeper than this, as onion bulbs prefer to sit close to the soil's surface.

Fertilizing: Onions are heavy phosphorous feeders so they like soil amendments that are low in nitrogen and high in phosphorous. Bone meal and rock phosphate are two good amendments that can be added. Apply when the onions have developed 5 - 6 leaves.

Watering: Water once a week in spring and more often during hot weather.

Harvesting: When you see the tops fall over, that means the onions are ready for harvesting. Gently pull out and lay on soil for 1-2 days to dry. Store in a cool, dry place away from heat.



# Overcoming the Winter Blues with Indoor Plants

BY PATTI SEXTON

During this cold and dreary time of year we are spending lots of time indoors. Now is a great opportunity to experiment with plants indoors that require little fuss and seem to almost survive on neglect. House plants in the winter bring beauty, freshness, and life into our homes. Being a part of the Master Gardener's program, we often hear from our friends and family they could never be a plant enthusiast because of their dreaded "black thumb". But almost everyone can grow these indoor plants, it just takes a little attention. The following plants seem to flourish with little to no special attention and make our homes more inviting.

One of the best low light plants is the Pothos, an easy-care vining plant with heart shaped leaves. It looks great in a basket or climbing pole and is quite beautiful spilling over the edge of a table or shelf. This plant can go a long time without water and can grow either in bright lite or dim spaces and is not fazed by low humidity.

Another popular choice is the Peace Lily which tolerates low light and low humidity and also inconsistent watering. It sports glossy lance shaped leaved that arch from a central clump of stems. The white flowers are most common in summer but may occur any time of year.

The Snake Plant, also know as mother-in-law's tongue is a tough succulent that grows well in just about any indoor space. They grow upright with sword like leaves and don't take up a lot of space. They will grow in low light but do better in medium to bright light.

Another succulent that does well in house is the Jade Plant. It has plump fleshy leaves. It prefers bright light but can handle some shade. It doesn't like to be overwatered and can grow very large.

The Dracaena genus comprises several popular foliage plants. The corn plant can get quite tall. These plants can do well in house but in low humidity the tips of the leaves may turn brown and crispy. Those can be snipped off.

Many common houseplants are derived from subtropical areas of the world and prefer the same conditions that we are most comfortable in. One reason why the plants became so popular has its beginning in Victorian times, when indoor hearting was perfected. Sometimes people overwater their houseplant to compensate for the dry air, but soil moisture does not equal air moisture.

If the air is too dry, indoor plant could develop brown leaf tips. Keep them away from any source of forced air or heat. When the air is driest, a light misting of the plants is preferred. Open a nearby window when the weather gets above 50 degrees to let in more humid air. A moisture meter is most helpful to monitor the moisture levels. Keep in mind your light sources and the amount of light each plant prefers. If your hand casts a shadow that is considered bright indirect light. Make sure your plants receive the proper amount of light for maximum health.

During their lifetime the plants will most likely need to be repotted at some point. To check slide the plant out of the pot and examine the roots. If there is a high root to soil ratio, with circling roots, the plant will benefit from repotting.

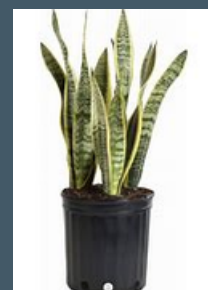
We don't have to give up our love affair with beautiful plants just because Old Man Winter is here. Our homes can be a sanctuary of beauty with green flourishing plants, and we can benefit from their beauty both physically and spiritually.



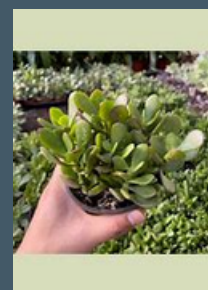
Pothos



Peace Lily



Snake Plant



Jade Plant



Dracaena

# Identifying & Combating Winter Turf Weeds

BY KAY DOUGLAS



Spring is just around the corner (we hope) and you may be seeing those pesky weeds starting to sprout again. Perhaps you were able to pre-empt them by using a pre-emergent herbicide. The best time to have done that was back in September, with perhaps another application in November. Why? Because pre-emergents are substances that create a barrier at the top layer of soil. They are formulated to coat weed seeds, preventing them from growing shoots or roots. Essentially, a pre-emergent is designed to prevent weeds from emerging from the ground in the first place.

So, if you did not apply a pre-emergent, what are your options now? Post-emergent herbicides are products used to control weeds and other non-desirable vegetation that have grown above ground. You can purchase commercial weed killers but be sure to read and follow the directions. Apply post-emergent herbicides when temperatures are below 85 degrees but wait until the soil temperature is above 55 degrees. If possible, apply in the morning when plants can metabolize the post-emergent better.

You might try home remedies using common household substances. Vinegar is what's known as a "burndown" herbicide, which means it works on contact. If you want to try vinegar on your weeds, pour it into an ordinary spray bottle and give individual weeds a couple of spritzes each. The active ingredient, acetic acid, will kill the visible parts of weeds in a few hours to a few days.

You can also use salt. Bring a solution of about 1 cup salt in 2 cups water to a boil. Pour directly on the weeds to kill them. Another equally effective method is to spread salt directly onto the weeds. Sprinkle with water or just wait until rain does the job for you.

Dish soap acts as a binder and dissolves the protective oils and waxes on weeds. Essentially, putting a few drops in the mixture allows vinegar or salt to better adhere to the parts of the weed it is meant to kill. The weed has a harder time make food, sometimes causing it to die.

What are the most common weeds in our area? Chickweed, Henbit and Bluegrass.

Chickweed isn't just a weed; it's also an edible plant. This species actually got its name because chicks, as well as other fowl, love to eat it. However, unless you have chickens who will keep this weed from spreading across your lawn, you'll want to control this bothersome plant as quickly as you can.

Chickweed is distinct because of its thin spatula- or egg-shaped leaves that have no stem, and tiny individual white blooms.



Henbit can be identified by its square stem, ovular triangle-shaped leaves and sparse hairs that point downward. If left to grow, these plants produce clusters of reddish-purple flowers. This common Texas winter weed is considered a dead-nettle and got its name because hens seem to like it. Henbit is a relative of mint and it's actually perfectly safe for humans to eat. Many gardeners have purposefully planted this species in a pot to attract local pollinators but find that henbit can be incredibly invasive.



Annual Bluegrass, or *Poa annua*, doesn't really pose much of a problem to most other flora you might have in your landscape.

This plant is also usually brighter than the rest of your grass, and if it grows high enough, you'll notice white feathery seed heads that might remind you of wheat. The primary concern with this winter weed variety is its tendency for prolific reproduction and spreading once established.



## Gardening Tasks for February

It's hard to believe but we have only about another 45 days before spring traditionally takes hold. Here are several gardening tasks that need to be done in February to get ready:

Prune: Prune rose bushes by half. Each cut should be made directly above a bud that faces away from the center of the plant.



Planting: February is a good month to plant roses, bare-root fruit and nut trees plus blueberries and blackberries. Also, dig up and transplant native and landscape trees and shrubs while they are still dormant. There is still time to plant many vegetables such as onions, potatoes, greens, lettuce, carrots, peas and turnips.

Fertilizing: Hit the newly pruned roses with high nitrogen fertilizer or rose food. You can apply 2 cups of ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) per inch of trunk diameter to peach and plum trees. Start adding compost to flower beds and add slow-release granular fertilizer at the END of February.

Lawn Care: February is the time to apply pre-emergent herbicides on lawns for those weeds that were a problem last summer BUT YOU CAN'T SEE YET. If you see weeds now, it's too late and you will need to use a post-emergent herbicide.

Did you know  
food tastes  
way better  
when you  
grow your  
own?





# GARDENING RESOURCES

GRIMES COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

Having a hard time finding answers to your gardening questions?

- Grimes County AgriLife Extension Office: 936-873-3907
- Grimes County Master Gardeners:  
([grimescountymastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:grimescountymastergardeners@gmail.com))
- Grimes County Master Gardeners Facebook Page
- Texas Master Gardener Association ([txmg.org](http://txmg.org))
- Texas A&M AgriLife Bookstore  
(<https://www.agrilifebookstore.org/>)
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension (<https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu>)
- Texas Department of Agriculture: 512-463-7476 or  
[TexasAgriculture.gov](http://TexasAgriculture.gov)
- Texas A&M Department of Horticulture Sciences:
  - Aggie Horticulture ([aggie-hoirticulture.tamu.edu](http://aggie-hoirticulture.tamu.edu))
  - Plant Picture Pages ([hortsciences.s.tamu.edu/plantpicturepages/](http://hortsciences.s.tamu.edu/plantpicturepages/))
- Texas A&M Forest Service ([tfsweb.tamu.edu](http://tfsweb.tamu.edu))
- Texas Nursery and Landscape Association ([tnlaonline.org](http://tnlaonline.org))
- Native Plant Society of Texas (<https://npsot.org/wp>)

## E-NEWSLETTERS

TEXAS GARDENER MAGAZINE  
[www.texasgardener.com](http://www.texasgardener.com)

NEIL SPERRY'S WEEKLY E-GARDEN  
<https://neilsperry.com/e-gardens>

CENTRAL TEXAS GARDENER  
<https://www.centraltexasgardener.org>

NATIONAL GARDEN BUREAU  
<https://ngb.org/enewsletter>

NATIONAL GARDENING ASSOCIATION  
WEEKLY NEWSLETTER  
<https://garden.org/newsletter>

## Upcoming Events

Get out your walking shoes and get ready to Walk Across Texas. Walk Across Texas is an eight-week program designed to help Texans establish the habit of regular physical activity - **gardening counts too!** Each adult team may include up to 8 team members, all working together to reach the 832-mile goal.



WALK  
ACROSS TEXAS!

JOIN US

# WALK ACROSS TEXAS CHALLENGE

GRIMES COUNTY

MARCH 6TH - APRIL 30TH  
2022

Register your Team at [howdyhealth.org](https://www.howdyhealth.org)

Deadline to register is March 1, 2022

# Upcoming Events & Educational Programs

Grimes County Master Gardeners meet the second Tuesday of each month at the Navasota Center in Navasota.

Below are area classes and plant sales available during the month of February.

- Feb 2: Gardening on the Gulf Coast, "All About Basil", 10:00 am - 11:00 am. This event is open to the public at no charge. This is an online presentation and you need to register in advance through this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gardening-in-the-gulf-coast-2022-tickets-244717104447>
- Feb 2: Urban Harvest, "Spring Garden Favorites: Tomatoes, Potatoes, and Roses", 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm, Zoom
- Feb 3: Home Grown Lectures Series, Harris County AgriLife, "Basic Grafting Techniques", 10:00 am - 11:00 am, must pre-register
- Feb 5: Harris County Master Gardeners, "Fruit Tree & Tomato Plant Sale", 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Weekly Park located at 19110 Longenbaugh, Cypress, Texas 77433
- Feb 5; Montgomery County Master Gardeners, "2022 Fruit and Nut Tree Sale", Program starts at 8:00 am, Sales - 9:00 am - Noon, 9020 Airport Road, Conroe, Texas, 936-539-7824
- Feb 12: Urban Harvest, "Growing Fruit Trees in Small Spaces: Spring Prep", 9:30 am - 11:30 am, Zoom
- 2022 B/CS Home & Garden Expo @ Brazos Expo Complex, Feb 12: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm & Feb 13: 11:00 am - 4:00 pm, located at 5827 Leonard Road, Bryan, Texas. Adults \$5, Children \$3, Free Parking
- Feb 15: Texas A&M Garden Interest Group (GIG); "Texas Native Perennials", 11:30 am - 1:30 pm. Dr. Mengmeng Gu, Assoc. Professor of Texas A&M. Peace Lutheran Church in the Fellowship Hall, 2101 Rio Grande blvd., College Station. Dues: \$10 annually, first year free.
- Feb 20: Brazos County Master Gardeners "Edible Landscaping with Herbs", 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm, located at Lick Creek Park, 13600 Rock Prairie Rd, College Station, THERE IS A \$4 FEE FOR THIS PROGRAM AND REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED THROUGH THE CITY OF COLLEGE STATION PARKS & REC WEBSITE.





## 2022 GRIMES COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

203 Veterans Memorial Drive, Navasota, Texas  
77868  
936-873-3907

**President** - Paula Parmley  
**Vice President** - Kimberly Herten  
**Treasurer** - Kyle Braswell  
**Secretary** - Renee Harter

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Herb Abraham and Ann DeWitt

**State Association Alternate Delegates:**  
Kyle Braswell and Kimberly Herten

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Connie Arden and Mike Arden

**Financial Auditing:**  
Jena Jackson and Dia Copeland

**Historian:** Sharon Murry

**Nominating:** Carol Garnet

**Timekeeping:** Martha Brogdon

**TMGA Awards:** Sharon Murry

**Advertising/Publicity:** Peggy Sloan

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**Newsletter Editor:** Paula Parmley

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Sharon Murry and Peggy Sloan

**Community Gardens:** Kady Hackenberg

**Chamber of Commerce Liaison:**  
Kimberly Herten

**Senior Day Coordinator:** Vicki Wood

**Scholarship Program:**  
Kimberly Herten and Renee Harter

**Speakers Bureau:** Ann DeWitt

**Co-Op:** Jena Jackson & Ron Jackson

**Fundraising:** Carol Garnet

**Intern Class Coordination:** Herb Abraham

**Social/Awards:**  
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