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Texas Master Gardeners



Grimes County Master Gardeners

Are Pumpkins a Vegetable or Fruit?

Inquiring minds might want to know, is the orange orb a fruit or vegetable? The answer may surprise you. A pumpkin is, in fact, a fruit. Dr. Joe Masabni, Texas A&M Agri Life Extension Service vegetable specialist in Dallas, said scientifically speaking, pumpkins are a fruit simply because anything that starts from a flower is botanically a fruit. Usually, fruits and vegetables are named according to how they are consumed. How people eat them versus how people see them, is often different. Consider a cucumber or tomato. People don't typically eat those as desserts; they eat them in a salad or cooked in a meal, so they became classified as vegetables, even though they are officially fruits. "Pumpkins are a tricky one," he said, "because some people make soups or stews from pumpkins, which is a meal, while others make pies, which is a dessert. So that can sometimes be confusing."

The Difference Between A Fruit And A Vegetable

The difference between a fruit and a vegetable is established in how they grow. "All plants start from seedlings," Masabni said. "Let's take the example of lettuce as a vegetable. It makes more and more leaves, and then you harvest it and eat those leaves. However, if you let it grow longer, it will eventually make a flower stalk and seeds for next year's crop." "A pumpkin starts the same; however, their flowers become the pumpkin we eat. It starts with a small plant and a few leaves, and as the leaves grow, flowers will start to bloom on the plants," he said. "Those flowers then need to be pollinated by bees or other pollinators. Once that flower is pollinated, that flower develops into a fruit that we consume. So ultimately, any fruit relies on pollination of the flower to then grow the part of the plant that we eat."

What Other Vegetables Are Actually Fruits?

It seems that many of our regularly thought of vegetables are actually fruits, simply because they come from a flower. Some of those which are often mislabeled like pumpkins include cucumbers, olives, tomatoes, eggplants, avocados, corn, zucchini, okra, string beans and peppers. "The fruit and vegetable debate is a fun one that hangs on the technical horticulturist/scientific view of these plants that we consume," Masabni said. "At the end of the day, we want to inform people, but we also want them to enjoy these plants as gardeners and at the dinner table."

*Taken from an article posted by Adam Russell, Texas A&M AgriLife Marketing & Communications, October 12, 2023
<https://Today.TAMU.edu/2023/10/12/are-pumpkins-a-fruit-or-a-vegetable>*

Freeze Protection for Cold Weather Vegetables



Our Texas mild winters are ideal for growing all types of cold weather vegetables. With cooler weather gardeners don't need to worry as much about constant watering and insects. However, as cold hardy as most of these vegetables are, they will need some type of protection during extreme cold blasts that usually hit our region in December, January and February. Below are several types of vegetables that grow well in our area along with when to plant them and when to provide extra protection when the temperature plummets into freezing.

The lowest temperature for a day will usually take place in the hours before sunrise so cover your plants the night before. Uncover them once the temperature warms up to 32 degrees or above. It's also a good idea to group your plants together that have similar frost tolerances so you can cover them with one blanket or sheet for protection.

Here are some popular cold tolerant plants that do well in our area (Zone 8b):



Lettuce when properly protected, can provide endless salads for several months from late fall to early spring. In our area, it's best to plant from October – 3 weeks into November. Lettuce is one of the lesser cold hardy vegetable so look for ways to protect those delicate leaves when temperatures hit **25° or lower**. You can plant them in a cold frame or hoop houses for container gardening or place cloches or fabricate cover over them. You can make home made cloches from plastic water or juice bottles.



Broccoli: Best planted: Early September (seeds), September – 1st week of November (transplants). When to cover: **26° or below**.

Cauliflower: Best planted: Early September (seeds), September – October (transplants). When to cover: **26° or below**.

Cabbage: Best planted: Mid-September – 1st week of November. When to cover: **20° or below**.

Radishes: Best planted: Mid-September – 3rd week of November. When to cover: **20° or below**.

Brussels Sprouts: Best planted: Mid-September (seeds), September – 1st week of November (transplants). When to cover: **20° or below**.

Beets: Best Planted: 3rd week of September—2nd week of October. When to cover: **20° or below**.

Spinach: Best planted: October – Mid November. When to cover: **15° or below**.

Collard Greens: Best planted: Third week of September – End of October. When to cover: **15° or below**.

Garlic: Best planted: Mid-October – Mid-November. When to cover: **15° or below**.

Carrots: Best planted: Mid-October – mid-November. When to cover: **15° or below**.

Kale: Best planted: Mid October – Mid November. When to cover: **10° or below**.

Onions: Best planted: 1st week of November for spring transplants. When to cover: **10° or below**.

What is the Difference Between a Frost and a Freeze?



Frost Advisory: This occurs when the temperature is expected to fall between 36 degrees down to 32 degrees.

Freeze Warning: A warning is usually issued when there is at least an 80% chance that the temperatures will hit 32 degrees or lower.

Hard Freeze: This takes place when the temperature falls below 28 degrees.



Fall Flower Power



There are several cool-season flowers and plants that can be grown in the Grimes County area throughout winter, 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 as we move into spring. Go ahead and purchase a few large heads with small stems that will fill up a container or a garden spot.

Foxglove and **Holly Hocks** are not mentioned as often as other cool-weather annuals, but they are extremely cold-tolerant annuals that produce magnificent spikey flowers. In other parts of the country, they are grown in the summer, but here in Texas I put them in containers along with **snapdragons**, **pink dianthus**, **larkspur**, **holly** 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 see some color along with some edibles straight from the garden. Try other edibles such as **radicchio**, **curly parsley**, and **rosemary**.

Plant	Cold Tolerance (when to cover)
Dusty Miller	25° for short periods
Snap Dragons	20° for short periods
Pansies	20° for short periods
Violas	20° for short periods
Ornamental Kale	10° or below
Fox Gloves	5° or below
Holly Hocks	5° or below
Dianthus	Can tolerate extreme cold (-10°)
Larkspur	Can tolerate extreme cold (-10°)

Plants for the Holiday Season

If you are stumped on gift ideas, then look no further than giving a living gift. During the holiday season there are several plants that make great gifts that keep on giving. Amaryllis, Paperwhite Narcissus, Christmas Cactus or Poinsettias are just a few examples.



Amaryllis is the plant that keeps on giving. It's a great gift for those folks who are not good at gardening but want to have a little color during the winter. Many of these plants are already packaged in a pot and ready to grow. All that is needed is to plant the bulb with the pointy end sticking out of the soil about one inch. Add water and bright light, and in a matter of days you will see the flower actually grow before your eyes. This plant can be enjoyed for months indoors if given the best environment. Once the threat of frost is over in the spring, then transplant the bulb in the garden.



Paperwhite Narcissus are beautiful, tall white flowers that make a stunning display when tightly grouped together. You can try to force them to bloom in time for Christmas, but even if you miss the holiday they will still provide a nice indoor display during the winter. Unlike the Amaryllis, you will need to plant the paperwhite bulbs in a shallow planter with stones and soil. Bury the bulb halfway in the pebbles and water thoroughly so that the water is slightly over the bulbs. The bottom of the bulbs requires water to encourage growth but don't keep the whole bulb submerged, or it will rot. Place in a cool room until you start to see 2 inches of sprouts then move to a warm room. Move back to a cool room (55-65 degrees) at night to promote full and healthy blossoms. *Warning:* Paperwhites can give off an odor that some people find offensive. If this is the case, then move them outdoors to a protected area.

Christmas Cactus are not a true cactus but actually grow in the tropics in the crooks of trees. They require soil that is moist but not overly wet. A good rule of thumb is to water when the top 1 inch of soil is dry. Don't purchase this plant already in full bloom but look for elongated buds that are just beginning to open. Keep in bright indoor light for continued blooming. With the right conditions and care this plant can rebloom for years to come.



What about those gorgeous **poinsettias** that greet the eye everywhere you go? They all seem to just disappear after the holidays, but in our zone, they can survive as indoor houseplants until the low temperatures reach 55°, when they can be moved outdoors again. Keep them in a warm, draft-free area with plenty of light, but not direct, intense sunlight. Water as needed when the soil has dried out, but be careful not to overwater. Be aware that, due to myriad factors in your home and yard, your poinsettia may not be as vibrant in successive years as when you first bought it from a professional florist. The bracts (color-modified leaves) only show for about six weeks in the winter, so be patient.

GRIMES COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Speakers Bureau

Do You Need a Guest Speaker?



The Grimes County Master Gardener Association has a Speakers Bureau made up of friendly, knowledgeable Master Gardeners! We offer speakers on a variety of topics to garden clubs and other organizations upon request.

Please contact us 936-873-3907 or send an email to request a speaker at grimescountymastergardeners@gmail.com



BECOME A TEXAS MASTER GARDNER

Grimes County Master Gardeners (GCMG) will offer a Master Gardener weekly training course beginning in January 2024 through April 2024. The Trainings are conducted online by instructors from Texas A&M University and Texas AgriLife Extension Specialists around the state.

Upon completion of the training and volunteer service, Master Gardeners provide ongoing service & educational programs to the local community through the AgriLife Extension Service.

WHAT WE OFFER & MORE!

- ✓ Courses over plant growth & Development
- ✓ Fruit and Vegetable Gardening
- ✓ Plant pathology & Entomology
- ✓ Soil health & Water Conservation

START TODAY!

Visit the website - <https://evs.tamu.edu> to start your volunteer application process!

MORE INFORMATION:

*Contact Herb Abraham via phone or email
703-801-3273
herbabraham@gmail.com*





Grimes County Master Gardeners will have a booth at the upcoming *Thankful, Grateful, Local Market*

Saturday, November 18th, from 10 am to 3 pm

First Baptist Church of Navasota

301 Church Street

Navasota, Texas

October Grimes County Health Fairs

Grimes County Master Gardeners participated in October at the Texas A&M Agri-Life Healthy Lifestyle Education Programs held at the Grimes County Fair Grounds and Bedias Community Center. Spinach growing kits and literature were given to the public. Thank you volunteers!



Trunk or Treat *October 28th*

Grimes County Master Gardeners celebrated Trunk or Treat in Anderson, Texas on Saturday, October 28th. The turnout was huge, the kids were cute and we got a lot of pumpkins decorated.



Events

Grimes County Master Gardeners will have their **Monthly Business Meeting on Tuesday, November 14th**, at the Navasota Center.

Business Meeting will start at 9:00 a.m.

Presentation by the Houston Bonsai Society will be open to the public and start at 10:00 a.m.

November 2023

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 and Events

- Nov 8: Harris County Master Gardeners, **"Native Plant Talk"**, 6:00 pm—7:00 pm, In-person: Heights Neighborhood Library, On-Line Streaming: [Facebook.com/houstonlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/houstonlibrary)
- Nov 9: Harris County Master Gardeners, **"Pre-Freeze and Post-Freeze Landscape Care"** 11:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m., On-Line Streaming: [Facebook.com/houstonlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/houstonlibrary)
- Nov 29: Home Grown Series, Harris County AgriLife, **"Rainwater Harvesting"**, 11:00 a.m.—12:00, On-line Streaming: [Facebook.com/houstonlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/houstonlibrary)

Events

Grimes County Master Gardeners will have their **Christmas Social on Tuesday, December 12th, at the Navasota Center, from 11:00 am—1:00 pm**

December 2023

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
31						



LUNCH & LEARN
MARTHA'S BLOOMERS

THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER, 2023
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

GRIMES COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS
PRESENT

SEED STARTING
&
WINTERIZING YOUR GARDEN

RSVP: SARAH FLETCHER - 936-825-7400

Continuing Education

- Dec 9: Harris County Master Gardeners, "Container Gardening", 11:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m., One-Line Streaming: [Facebook.com/houstonlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/houstonlibrary)

Texas Master Gardeners

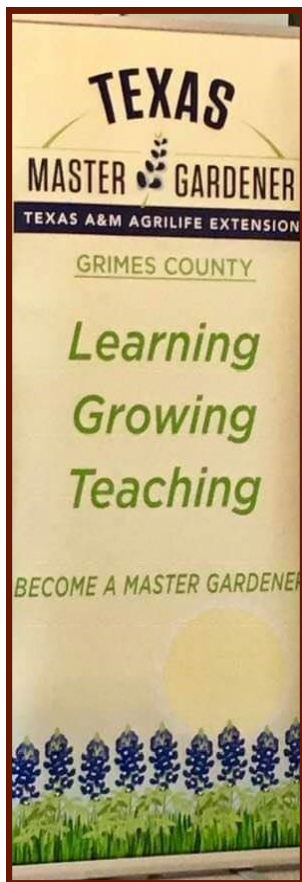
203 Veterans Memorial Drive
Navasota, Texas 77868

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



2023 Board of Directors

President.....Sparky Hardeman
Vice PresidentCathey Hardeman
SecretaryNancy Vidotto
TreasurerKyle Braswell

2023 Committees/ Chairs

AuditingJena Jackson
Community GardenKady Hackenberg
Co-op.....Jena Jackson / Ron Jackson
Fundraising.....Carol Garnet
Intern Class Coordination.....Herb Abraham
Junior Master Gardener.....Patti Sexton
Newsletter.....Paula Parmley
NominatingCarol Garnet
Social MediaJamie Bruns
Speakers Bureau.....Georgia Abraham / Paula Parmley
Timekeeping.....Martha Brogdon