



Grimes County Master Gardeners



Inside this issue:

<i>The Soil Must Come First</i>	2
<i>Cool Weather Plants</i>	3
<i>Aphids & Honeydew</i>	4
<i>Henbit Weed</i>	5
<i>Persimmon Trees</i>	6
<i>Left Over Pumpkins</i>	7
<i>Speakers Bureau</i>	8
<i>2023 Intern Class</i>	9
<i>GCMGA Events</i>	10
<i>Calendar</i>	11
<i>Grimes County Master Gardeners</i>	12

Garden Tasks

Happy Fall Ya'll!!! The months of November and December in the South typically bring the enjoyment of cooler temperatures and a slower pace of fall days in the garden. We all love to add a little color and flavor to our Autumn table. As the warmer days ease on out, it is time to plant a fall garden with leafy greens, root vegetables, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and kale. These vegetables, and many more, enjoy the cooler, shorter days of fall.

Tasks and Tips:

- If you are using seeds for your fall vegetable garden, plant the seeds deeper than you would in the spring. This allows the seeds to get down to where the soil is cool and moist.
- Add compost to gardens.
- Rake leaves into beds to mulch over winter and return nutrients to the soil.
- Keep planting perennials.
- Stay posted for frost warnings, protect tender plants with row covers and think about moving houseplants indoors.
- If you harvested seeds or bulbs, check them to ensure they are not rotting or drying out.
- Order seeds to plant in the spring.
- Plant trees and shrubs.
- Prune wisteria, starting with the longest vines.
- Plant spring flowering bulbs like tulips, daffodils and crocuses.



Fun Fact: December 12th is **National Poinsettia Day**, and the holiday plant represents more than 85% of the potted plant sales during the season. There are over 100 varieties of poinsettias available! To learn more about this colorful gift of nature, go to <https://txmg.org>, click on Gardening Tips and The Poinsettia.



The Soil Must Come First

“If I want a happy garden, I must ally myself with my soil; study and help it to the utmost, untiringly. Always, the soil must come first.” Marion Cran, If I Were Beginning Again



Good soil is the first step to a bountiful harvest, beautiful blooms of color or delicious herbs. A good starting place is to get a soil sample to better understand the current PH level, nutrient values, porosity, and texture of your soil. Once you have the soil sample information, you can determine how best to “amend the soil.” Amending soil simply means to add or make changes to the soil to make it more suitable for growing plants.

Understanding Our Soil

The soil PH should be the perfect balance of acidic and alkaline so the plant can absorb the nutrients it needs to survive. There are 17 main nutrients that plants need, yes that it a lot of nutrients to track. Thankfully, most fertilizers list nutrients and associated amounts on their package. Good soil texture for indoor potted plants is light and chunky with good aeration. Rich soil with aeration is recommended for outdoor plants. Good aeration and drainage allow oxygen to get to the roots. If dense, compact soil is suffocating the plant’s roots, amending the soil with nutrients will not be the solution.

Ways to Amend Your Soil

Organic matter, such as animal-based amendments and plant-based amendments are two ways to amend your soil. Livestock manure contains elements, such as nitrogen, which are required for a plant to grow. Livestock manure also conditions the soil and increases moisture retention. Worm compost supplies nutrients and helps to repel pests and prevents diseases.

Plant compost is another way to amend your soil. Homemade compost made from food scraps and yard waste is readily available and inexpensive. Compost provides a slow-release fertilizer and soil conditioner for your garden. A win-win!

Amending Soil in Potted Plants

If your potted plants are thriving and your potting mix looks good, there are a few amendments you can do to improve the soil. Remove about one third of the existing potting mix. Next, add perlite or pumice to help with drainage and aeration. You may want to refresh the soil with a fresh layer of compost and lastly, sprinkle a little slow-release fertilizer over the mix. This type of fertilizer will provide a consistent level of nutrients over time. Mix the new materials into the old potting mix with a trowel.

When should we improve our soil? Typically, a good time to amend soil is anytime you are planting, replanting, or repotting a bed or potted plant. It is recommended to repot indoor plants in the spring or summer. So, roll up your sleeves and dig into that soil with both hands! Happy gardening!

Eye-Popping Fall Color - Cool Weather Plants

Texas gardeners associate Fall with cooler temperatures and rich, bold, colorful gardens and beds. As Texas creeps into Fall, it is an exciting time to think about planting your cool weather Annuals (plants that germinate, flower, set seed, and die all in one season) and Perennials (plants that regrow each spring from roots that survive the winter).

Cool season annuals thrive in cooler temperatures, growing best in spring or fall. Some annuals are frost tolerant and require a chilling period for their seeds to germinate. Here are four annuals that flourish during a cool Texas Fall:



Calendula - This plant has bright, yellow flowers that prefer the chilly side of temperatures and bloom until the heat of summer. The plants grow 8 to 24 inches tall.

Pansy – We all love the vast assortment of colors and petal patterns of the pansy; not to mention the tons of color pansies add to our winter landscapes!



Forget-Me-Not – This annual thrives in cool temperatures and can tolerate a light frost.

Flowering Kale – This bold plant provides richly colored, frilly leaves in shades of green, blue, purple, rose and cream. Flowering Kale is a terrific addition to your fall foliage.

Experimenting with Annuals is a wonderful way to add new plants and color schemes to your landscape without making a long-term commitment. In addition, Annuals mature fast and typically bloom until the first frost. Instant beauty!

Cool Season Perennials are hardy plants that usually bloom for one season each year for a 3–5-year duration. Adding Fall Perennials to your beds will keep gorgeous color in your landscape once summer annuals start to fade away and perennials keep on giving. You might try a few of these:



Fireworks' Goldenrod – This is a reliable plant and pollinators love it! Goldenrod can grow up to 8 feet, is deer resistant and drought tolerant.

Leadwort (Plumbago) – Bright blue flowers cover this plant. It is also drought tolerant and used to fill bare spots in landscapes.

Windflowers – This popular perennial produces white, lavender, and pink shades. They are easy to grow and have a long blooming season.



Mexican Bush Sage – This beauty hits its peak bloom in cooler temperatures and attracts hummingbirds and butterflies.

So, escort Fall in with a bold, colorful landscape. Happy planting!

References:

Annual Flowers That Can Take the Cold; Costsfarms.com

Understanding the difference between Annual and Perennial Plants; gardendesign.com

Better Homes and Gardens

Submitted by: Donette Bisett

Sometimes Honey is NOT so Sweet

Aphids, also known as the “lice of plants,” can do lots of damage to many numbers of plants. But they can also leave a mess behind, known as honeydew. If plants, patio furniture, or just about anything left outside is covered with a sticky substance; check for aphids and their trail of stickiness.



Makes gallons of honeydew

Aphids draw sap from plant tissue (phloem) using mouthparts adapted for piercing and sucking. Some aphids feed on foliage, while others feed on the twigs, limbs, branches, fruits, flowers, or roots of plants. Some species inject toxic salivary secretions into plants as they feed. Aphids can stunt plant growth, deform and discolor leaves and fruit, or cause galls to form on leaves, stems, and roots if left unchecked.

As aphid populations develop, infestation sites become littered with empty “skins” (exoskeletons) that the aphids shed during molting. Some species also produce large amounts of white waxy filaments covering their bodies and litter-infested plant parts.

Aphid honeydew is perhaps the most common form of honeydew on plants. It’s created when an aphid pierces the plant’s phloem ducts with its mouthparts, creating enough pressure that the sap passes straight through the aphid’s body and escapes as excrement. Plant sap is filled with sugars aphids, and other pests love to feed on but are kept under pressure, much like the blood in your arteries. Once the initial tension has decreased, the aphids are free to feed.

A fungus called “sooty mold” colonizes honeydew-covered surfaces, causing them to be covered with a black coating. As a result, sunlight cannot reach the leaf surface, which restricts sunlight, making it unable to reach the leaf surface, which limits photosynthesis which produces the plant sugars. Honeydew-covered surfaces, including car exteriors, decks, and sidewalks, become sticky and blackened with sooty mold.



Aphid Honeydew on Plants

Honeydew also attracts ants, flies, and other insects. The honeydew-loving ants “tend” the aphids by stroking the aphid until it delivers their sugary poop, and the ants prey upon natural enemies and unhealthy aphids. They also carry aphids to uninfested parts of plants.

Taking care of honeydew is a two-step process. First, you must get rid of the pest and ensure no traces of honeydew are left on your plants.

Isolate the affected plants, and always sterilize any tools before, during, and after the treatment to prevent cross-contamination. Carefully prune off the most damaged leaves and put them in a sealable plastic bag for safe disposal. It’s essential to prune only what’s necessary, as the plant may already be severely weakened. If you’re treating a sizeable outdoor plant, isolation may not be possible, so you must also treat any nearby plants.

References: Bastiaan M. Drees, <https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/asset-local/aggie-horticulture>
<https://plantcaretoday.com/aphid-honeydew.html>

Submitted by Patti Sexton

Henbit—Snack or Invasive Weed



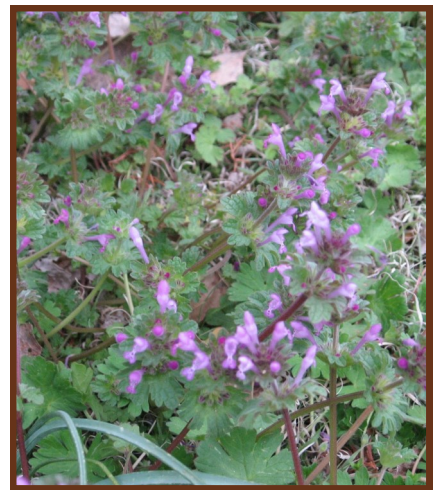
Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*) is a popular snack among chickens (hence the name) but can do a number on your lawn, cultivated fields, and wild pastures. Although the plant can quickly become invasive and rob your turf of valuable nutrients, its flowers are essential to spring pollinators providing nectar from their light purple-colored flowers.

Although it does not smell like mint, it is a member of the mint family and is safe to eat, according to Dave Holmes of the Ground Guys. It has a peppery flavor similar to celery. Its attractive appearance, an important food source for pollinators, edibility, and ability to thrive in different climates makes it a more desirable “weed” where other may not.

A good clue for recognizing Henbit is the upper leaves encircle the stem. It has multiple stems from a single taproot, masses of soft, hairy leaves, and small flowers, purple. Some gardeners who appreciate a manicured landscape may think the plant undesirable because the many stems can grow 6-8 inches long and sprawl over more desirable plants nearby. It reproduces by seeds that germinate in the fall or winter. It can grow during any period of warm weather that occurs in winter. Other than unusually warm periods, it remains dormant in the winter. It resumes growth in the spring and dies as the temperature increases hot in the spring and early summer.

The best defense for protecting against this plant is to have a dense, vigorous turf adapted for your area. Properly fertilize, mow, and water to encourage dense growth. Water the lawn deeply but as infrequently as possible in the fall, as the weed seeds need soil surface moisture to germinate.

If you are already experiencing a Henbit invasion and want to limit its growth or eradicate it, there are several methods to achieve this. Hand-pulling: Each plant is pulled individually by removing the entire root when the plants are small and before they produce seeds. Pulling is best done with moist soil and a hoe to dislodge the root as a whole. **Corn gluten meal**, if applied before the plant seeds germinate, prevents the plant from establishing roots. **Timing on this is essential.** If you apply corn gluten meal after germination, it acts as a fertilizer and encourages growth. Problem areas need to be treated monthly. **Chemical herbicides**, although effective, are toxic and can harm people, pets, and wildlife. The best way to chemically treat the plants is with a post-emergent option while they are young and small or a preemergent before the seeds germinate.



References:

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/henbit/>

https://agcjc-horticulture.tamu.edu/newsletters/hortupdate/2011/jan_Feb/garden.Weeds

<https://www.groundsguys.com/commercial-services/pest-weed-fertilization/>

Submitted by Patti Sexton

Persimmon Trees

Scientific Name: *Diospyros virginiana* and *Diospyros texana* (Texas native)

Mature Size: 10-40 feet

Sun Exposure: Full sun

Water Requirements: Moist, but well drained soil.

Soil Type: Loamy soil with a pH of 6.5 to 7.5

Harvest Time: Fruit ripens in the fall and can stay on till winter.

Propagation: Can be propagated by cuttings in late summer or fall or started from seed.

Fertilizer: Generally happy without fertilizer if soil has been amended to match a rich loamy soil.

Pests/Disease: Generally pest and disease free.

Recommended Varieties: Persimmons come in two types—astringent which needs to be left on the tree until soft and has a texture close to pudding. Non-astringent which can be eaten straight from the tree. Look for Eureka, Hachiya, Tane-nashi, Tamopan, Fuyu, Izu, & Fankio



Persimmon Pudding Cake

Ingredients:

- 2 cups ripe Hachiya Persimmon pulp
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 tsp. ground all spice
- 1 cup chopped nuts (pecan or walnut)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Butter an 8-inch square glass pan.
3. In a large bowl, mix the persimmon pulp, sugar, eggs, butter, milk and vanilla.
4. In a separate bowl, vigorously whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and spices.
5. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, a third at a time. Fully incorporate after each addition. Add chopped nuts and mix.
6. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake until done (about 50 minutes).
7. Serve warm or at room temperature, topped with whipped cream.



Don't Throw Away That Pumpkin!

Before you decide to throw out your fall pumpkins, there are numerous ways that you can continue to use your pumpkins or recycle them to get the most out of them.



Pumpkin Puree: Take smaller pumpkins and make puree out of the inner flesh. Fresh pumpkin puree makes the best tasting pumpkin pies. But don't stop there. You can also make soups, breads, muffins or put the puree into freezer bags for future use.



Roast the Seeds: Keep the seeds in a bag to roast later. Pumpkin seeds are loaded with potassium, packed with fiber and protein and make a great snack.



Use as Bowls: Nothing looks more festive than small pumpkin soup bowls. Choose small 6" pumpkins to make individual bowls.



Make into Planters: Want to dress up your fall decorations? Then why not plant some fall annuals and make your Thanksgiving centerpiece. Just cut the top off of your pumpkin, fill with soil and plant.



Pumpkin Facial: Pumpkin is packed with fruit enzymes and alpha hydroxy acids with increase cell turnover, to brighten and smooth the skin. There are several facial recipes that will help soften and sooth skin.



Make Christmas Decorations: I've done this for several years. Spray paint your pumpkins gold, silver or whatever color you can find in a spray can. The result makes a terrific Christmas decoration.

Compost: When you are completely done with your pumpkin then re-purpose it to fertilize your garden next year? Simply cut pumpkin into small pieces, add to your compost pile and use with your garden soil in the spring!

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 Grimes County Master Gardener



2023 Grimes County Master Gardener Class



Grimes County Master Gardeners will hold a Master Gardener Training Class starting January 2023.

Classroom courses will be held at the Navasota Center, 103 Stadium Drive, Navasota, Texas 77868.

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

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

- ◆ Plant Growth and Development
- ◆ Soils, Water and Plant Nutrients
- ◆ Fruits and Vegetable Gardening
- ◆ Ornamental Trees and Shrubs
- ◆ Earth-Kind Landscaping
- ◆ Integrated Pest Management
- ◆ Lawn Care

Registration is \$220. Price includes a Master Gardener Handbook, Master Gardener T-Shirt, and Other Training Materials. 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

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

Garden Work Day

Grimes County Master Gardeners had a successful garden workday at their Demonstration Garden located at the Grimes County Extension Office in Navasota, Texas. The summer plants were cut down or removed to make way for the new cool season annuals plus much needed mulching.



Trunk or Treat

Oooh! It was another scary Trunk or Treat night in Anderson, Texas for Grimes County Master Gardeners.



Events

Grimes County Master Gardeners will have their **November Business Meeting on Wednesday, November 9th—9:00 a.m.** at the Navasota Center, Bluebonnet Room.

We will be at the Navasota Famers Market on **Saturday, November 12th from 8:00—noon.** Located at the Navasota Library Parking Lot.

November 2022

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 / Events

- Nov 12: Montgomery County Master Gardeners: “[Living Layer of the Earth](#)”, 9:30—11:00 am \$5, Conroe, Texas
- Nov 12: Urban Harvest: “[Edible Landscapes](#)” 9:30—11:30 am, Zoom, \$20, Presenter: Angela Chandler
- Dec 10: Urban Harvest: “[Winter Fruit Tree Care](#)”, 9:30—11:30 am, Zoom, \$20, Presenter: Angela Chandler

Events

Grimes County Master Gardeners will have their **Christmas Social on Saturday, December 17th from 11:00—2:00** at the Bluebonnet Room at the Navasota Center in Navasota, Texas.

December 2022

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

Texas Master Gardeners

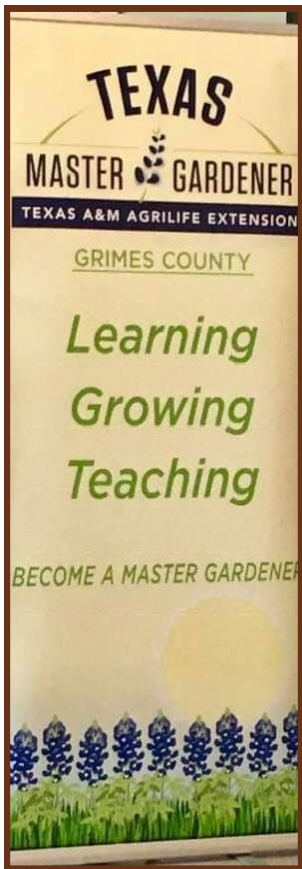
203 Veterans Memorial Drive
Navasota, Texas 77868

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



2022 Board

- President.....Paula Parmley
- Vice PresidentKimberly Hertan
- SecretaryRenee Harter
- TreasurerKyle Braswell

2022 Committees/ Chairs

- Administrative.....Connie Arden
- Advertising/PublicityPeggy Sloan
- Auditing.....Jena Jackson
- Community Garden.....Kady Hackenberg
- Co-op.....Jena Jackson / Ron Jackson
- Fair Judging.....Vicki Wood
- FundraisingCarol Garnet
- Historian.....Sharon Murry
- Intern Class Coordination.....Herb Abraham
- Junior Master Gardener.....Patti Sexton
- NewsletterPaula Parmley
- Nominating.....Carol Garnet
- Social Media.....Jamie Brunns
- Scholarship ProgramKimberly Hertan/Renee Harter
- Speakers Bureau.....Ann DeWitt
- TimekeepingMartha Brogdon