

Henderson County Master Gardeners (HCMG) Newsletter



Inside Dirt

President's Message

Yvonne Sparks, Master Gardener & President

April has been a very busy month for HCMGA. The first week of the month was the Texas Master Gardener Association State Conference. It was held in College Station on the campus of TAMU. Henderson County was well represented with 9 members and interns attending.



This year's conference offered a variety of speakers and topics. One member stated the keynote speakers were very entertaining and informative. The highlight of the conference was the Awards Dinner and the accolades HCMGA received. Master Gardeners were recognized with two first place awards and a second place award. Here is a recap of the awards and the comments from the judges:

Second Place Outstanding Individual-Jeanne Brown

"Ms. Brown sounds like a tremendous asset as a relatively young Extension Master Gardener. It sounds like she is already immersed in the mission of extension by willingly sharing her knowledge and expertise with other EMGs as well as members of her community. Thank you for your ability to lead and organize people, bringing order out of chaos. Good job!"

First Place Education-Learning at the Library

"Very nicely implemented speakers bureau type project! Love the direction and deliberate ties back to Texas AgriLife. Worth replicating. Worth repeating. Wonders how everyone felt locally about the investment of volunteer time compared to response or return on that investment? It was encouraging to see attendance numbers go up as the series progressed.



Inside this issue

President's Message	1
Calendar of Events.....	3
Save the Date	3
HCMG Projects.....	5
Evaluating Golden Kiwi Fruit.....	5
TX Annual MG Conference.....	6
Henderson County Facts.....	7
Monthly Gardening Tips.....	7
Relax and Enjoy.....	8
Praying Mantis-- Friend or Foe?...9	
Annual Plant Sale Recap.....	11
If You Grow It, They Will Come.....	12
More from TMGA Conference.....	14
Using Technology in the Garden...16	
Butterfly Garden.....	17
Spencer's Talk	19
MG Specialist Opportunities.....	19
Library Series.....	21
About HCMG.....	21

President's Message (cont. from page 1)

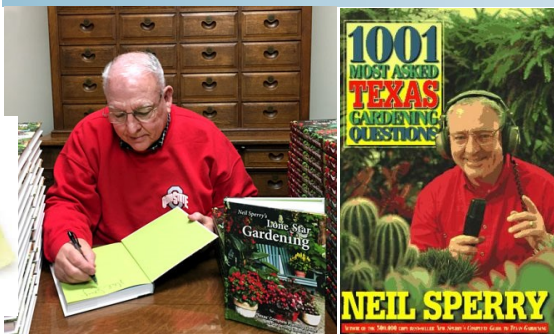
That tells me that people were satisfied with the earlier sessions and probably talked them up in the community. Another judge stated, 'It was an excellent project and local partnership with the library. Good job!'

First Place Outstanding Association-HCMGA

"In the absence of their county agent, this association seems to have stayed the course and kept the focus primarily on community outreach which is commendable. This association seems to be mature in the sense of organizational structure and function. This evidence by the amount of planning they conduct, their array of community partners, and their willingness to try new things and take appropriate advantage of their local volunteer's skills. They seem to be connected to their local extension office and the state coordinator's office, which is evidence of the cooperative partnership between the association, the local extension office and the state office, which is one sign of a healthy local MG association in my opinion. A second judge said, 'It's was so great to hear how this group rallied after the death of the CEA. What a great show of support and teamwork! Thank you!'

The remainder of the month members spent preparing for the HCMGA Annual Plant Sale. Martha Rainwater and her committee have worked tirelessly to propagate, up-pot, label and price over 4,000 plants. The sale generates a significant amount of revenue to support our many community and educational projects. It is also rewarding to see "all hands on deck" from members to make the plant sale a success. Thanks to All!





Neil is THE Texas gardening and horticultural expert! Sign up for his weekly newsletter at

e-gardens@sperrygardens.com

Look for more details in future newsletters!

Facts and Fantasies of Texas Gardening, An Evening with Neil Sperry

October 4, 2018

Athens Country Club

The HCMGA is excited to announce that Neil Sperry will be our key note speaker this year.

Neil is a Texas gardening and horticulture expert known for his books, magazine, radio programs and annual gardening show. His books

Complete Guide to Texas Gardening and *Neil Sperry's Lone Star Gardening* have been the standards in Texas gardening references.

The event includes dinner and a silent auction.

Tickets will go on sale July 1st.

"Facts and Fantasies of Texas Gardening, an Evening with Neil Sperry is not to be missed!"

Calendar of Events

- 5/15— Library Series—Sq. Ft. Gardening
- 5/16— HCMG Monthly Meeting
- 5/23-25 Greenhouse Management (MG specialist training)-Kerrville, TX
- 6/2— Smith County Garden Tour, Tyler, TX
- 6/19— Library Series— Summer Time Gardening
- 6/20— HCMG Monthly Meeting
- 7/18— HCMG Monthly Meeting
- 9/18-20 Texas Superstar (MG specialist training) Tyler, TX
- **10/4— An Evening with Neil Sperry**

Events in **bold** are open to the public

Henderson County Master Gardeners monthly meetings (noon) are held at: Richard M. Hart and Johnny Morris Conservation Center 5601 County Road 4812 Athens, TX

Neil was born and raised in College Station, TX. He attended Texas A&M University and earned B.S and M.S degrees in horticultural from The Ohio State University. He married his wife Lynn in 1967 and they now reside in McKinney, Texas.

While in high school and at Texas A&M, Neil owned and operated a nursery. From 1970 to 1977 he worked as a Horticulture Specialist for the Texas Cooperative Extension.

Neil hosted a radio program on KRLD 1080 AM for over 30 years. He now hosts a show on WBAP 820 AM radio. Additionally, he broadcasts to more than 50 stations statewide with his daily Plant Talk Texas and weekend Texas Lawn and Garden Hour.

Two of Sperry's books have become favorites of Texas gardeners. His *Complete Guide to Texas Gardening* (published 1982 with a second edition in 1991), has been popularly known as the "boot book," in reference to its cover art. It remained a primary reference for Texas gardeners until the publication of *Neil Sperry's Lone Star Gardening* in 2014. This 344-page book contains comprehensive plant listings and more than 800 photographs taken by Sperry, an avid photographer.

Facts and Fantasies of Texas Gardening, An Evening with Neil Sperry October 4, 2018

2018 Sponsorship Levels



\$1,000

Emerald

Four reserved tickets to event October 4, 2018 and two autographed books
Recognition/ad space in event booklet (Inside Front or Inside Back cover)
Recognition during event, HCMGA Facebook, website, newsletters
Opportunity to distribute business coupons/gifts



\$500

Diamond

Two reserved tickets to event October 4, 2018
Recognition/ad space in event booklet – Full page ad
Recognition during event, HCMGA Facebook, website, newsletters
Opportunity to distribute business coupons/gifts



\$250

Platinum

Recognition/ad space in event booklet – 2/3 page ad
Recognition during event, HCMGA Facebook, website, newsletters



\$100

Gold

Recognition/ad space in event booklet – 1/3 page ad
Recognition during event, on HCMGA Facebook, website, newsletters



\$ 50

Silver

Recognition during event, on HCMGA Facebook, website, newsletters

Donations to Silent Auction

Recognition during event, HCGA Facebook, website, newsletters



For more information, please contact:

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Henderson County Master Gardeners Association is a 501(c) (3) organization

Evaluating the Potential of Golden Kiwifruit as a New Specialty Fruit Crop for Texas

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Golden Kiwifruit (*Actinidia chinensis* Planch) is a deciduous woody vine from China with dioecious flowering habit. While the green or fuzzy kiwifruit (*A. deliciosa* A. Chev) has produced commercially in the U.S. nearly 50 years, golden kiwifruit is a relatively new crop. After approx. ten years of successful trailing in Alabama, patents were filed jointly by Auburn University and the Hubei Fruit and Tea Institute for two (*a. chinensis* cultivars).

In 2011, a total of 30 golden kiwifruit varieties were planted at Stephen F. Austin State University Gardens along with their respective male pollenizers. First production in September 2014 resulted in 45 pounds and in 2015, 875 pounds were harvested primarily from 8 vines of 'AU Golden Dragon'. Organoleptic evaluation rated the fruit at 8.84 on a scale of 0-10. Crops in 2016 and 2017 were relatively light, mostly because of record low chilling accumulation, poor flowering of males and rudimentary training system. Current flower bud indicates the potential for a good crop in 2018.

The successful crop in 2015 led to funding from a Texas Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant to SFASU and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in 2017 to further explore potential for a new crop for Texas. A replicated trial planting of the Auburn University varieties, along with 'AU Gulf Coast Gold' (patent-pending) was established near Texas A&M University, College Station, TX and at SFASU, Nacogdoches, TX, adjacent to the original plot. Plants were trained as 'Winged T-bar' and 'overhead pergola' with "teepee" system.

Further trail sites include Mount Pleasant, Tyler and Hempstead to provide greater insight into the geographical range of adaptation. To gain additional insight into cultural requirements and production systems, trips were made to visit commercial plantings and research centers in China, New Zealand, California and Alabama.

Additionally, six new *A. chinensis* and *A. deliciosa* varieties developed in China are scheduled for release from USDA quarantine in December 2018 for trailing. Several perceived adaption related challenges to production have been identified, and will serve as the focus of applied research efforts by Texas A&M. These include soli alkalinity, insufficient winter chilling, warm-temperature interruption during winter chilling accumulation, and reduced cold hardiness due to de-acclimation. These factors will be the focus of applied research efforts as the geographic range of adaptation and feasibility of production in Texas is assessed.



Golden kiwifruit has a sweeter and more mellow taste than the green kiwifruit and is in high demand in Japan and Southeast Asia.

HCMG Projects

DREAM Garden- The Henderson County Master Gardener Association (HCMGA) maintains a garden at the East Texas Arboretum (see page 2)

Children's Garden- The HCMGA began a program to help educate the children at South Athens Elementary school about gardening and growing delicious and nutritious food. We are expanding this program to other schools within Henderson County.

Library Series- Educational presentations are hosted by the HCMGA on the third Tuesday of each month. These programs are open to the public in Athens at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library.

Greenhouse- The HCMGA maintains a greenhouse located at Trinity Valley Community College. This greenhouse allows us to educate others and grow plants that are sold at our annual spring plant sale.

Plant Sale— The HCMGA hosts an annual plant sale in the spring which is open to the public. Master Gardeners propagate and grow different varieties of plants and trees. This event is a major fundraiser for the organization.

Summer Series—Workshops are provided in the summer months in an effort to share expertise and educate the public on various gardening topics.

Fall Conference— The largest fundraiser for the HCMGA, this conference includes guest speakers, a raffle/silent auction and a dinner which is open to the public.

Texas Master Gardeners 2018 Conference

David Bickerstaff, Master Gardener

Over 800 Master Gardeners enjoyed the 40th anniversary of the Texas Master Gardener Conference. The conference was held on the campus of Texas A&M on April 4-6. The Henderson County MGA had six representatives registered at the event.

Key note speakers included Dr. Douglas Steele, Director of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Dr. David Gibby, Co-founder of the MG Program, Doug Welsh, Coordinator for the Texas Master Gardener program for over 21 years and many other quality and entertaining speakers. We also participated in many tours, breakout sessions and workshops.



Texas A&M has 60,000 students and it was sometimes a challenge navigating the large campus, but we found that the volunteers and students were always helpful.

Some interesting facts about the Master Gardener program:

- ◆ In 1972, Washington State Extension Agent, Dr. David Gibby, had a far-fetched idea of having volunteers answer horticultural questions. He was told "It will never work".
- ◆ The program was started with an initial grant of only \$540
- ◆ Dr. Gibby acknowledges that the success of the program is due to the fact that "people are innately good"
- ◆ The Texas Master Gardener program began in 1978 and is now the largest MG state program in the U.S.
- ◆ There are currently over 7,000 Master Gardeners in Texas
- ◆ Over 100 of the 254 counties in Texas have Master Gardener programs
- ◆ Over 26 million people in Texas have been touched by the information shared by Master Gardeners
- ◆ The Master Gardeners attending the conference ranged from 12 to 93!

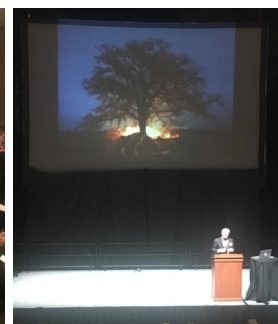
Three days of notable speakers, interesting new educational information, great food, celebrations and the camaraderie of Texas Master Gardeners from around the state made this a wonderful and memorable conference.

Throughout this newsletter you will find comments from other HCMGA conference attendees.

We want to thank the conference committee, sponsors and vendors. We especially want to say thanks to Nicky Maddams, 2018 TMGA President, and Jayla Fry, State Coordinator, for a job well done!



2018 TMGA CONFERENCE
CELEBRATING 40 YEARS



Henderson County Texas- Get to Know Your County

The Texas legislature established Henderson County on April 27, 1846, and named it in honor of James Pinckney Henderson, first governor of the state of Texas. The county was formed from parts of Nacogdoches and Houston counties

Henderson County includes two major lakes— Cedar Creek Reservoir on the northwest and Lake Palestine on the southeast.

The western portion of the county is the claypan area, where the soils are shallow sandy loams that overlie dense, clayey subsoils; vegetation here consists of mixed pine and hardwoods, including:

- Oak
- Elm
- Hackberry
- Pecan.

The western part drains into the Trinity River, and the eastern section drains into the Neches River.

Future issues will explore other sections of the county.



Selected Gardening Tips

May

- ◆ Plant heat tolerant summer annuals and tropicals. Favorites include zinnias, ornamental sweet potato vine, coleus, elephant ears, caladiums and pentas.
- ◆ Plant perennials, trees and shrubs. Water them in well as temperatures rise. Saturate root balls on trees and shrubs as much as twice per week throughout the summer.
- ◆ Heat tolerant vegetables, annual herbs can be planted until mid-month including Southern Peas, Sweet Potatoes, Basil and Oregano.
- ◆ Fertilize lawns and gardens with a high nitrogen fertilizer, following recommended application rates.
- ◆ Prune and reshape any spring blooming shrubs and vines after they finish flowering.
- ◆ Water grass regularly during the hot summer months, up to one inch depth, 2 to 3 times per week.
- ◆ Mow lawns once per week to maintain good healthy growth and reduce unnecessary wear and tear on lawn equipment.
- ◆ If you cut off old blossoms on early spring flowering annuals like pansies, snapdragons and calendulas, you can prolong the flowering season a few more weeks.
- ◆ Allow foliage of daffodils and other spring flowering bulbs to mature and yellow before removing. Do not hide or cover the leaves.

June

- ◆ Hotter weather means grass will grow faster and will require mowing at 5-6 days intervals rather than 7-10 days.
- ◆ Conserve moisture by mulching the landscape.
- ◆ Good time for setting out colorful summer annuals including marigolds, petunias, salvia, purslane, verbena, dusty miller, lantana and firebush.
- ◆ Color for shady areas include caladiums, coleus, impatiens and bedding begonias.
- ◆ Azaleas— apply a four to six inch layer of pine needles or other mulch to conserve water around these shallow-rooted shrubs. Feed them lightly with a complete fertilizer to encourage production of new growth.
- ◆ Spider mites can occur on tomatoes, roses, junipers, marigolds and other ornamentals now that the weather is hot and dry. Look for stippled leaves, and under severe infestations, fine webbing. Spider mites can be detected by taking suspicious leaves and rapping them over a white sheet of paper. Any dots which move are probably mites.

Visit easttexasgardening.tamu.edu for a more complete list of monthly tips.

Relax and Enjoy

Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



Typically, May and June are two months when the garden explodes into a riot of color. Lilies, daylilies, echinaceas, salvias, monardas, liatris, roses, and many, many more flowers begin to bloom in abundance. Even shade plants get in the act with agapanthus, hydrangeas, astilbe, gardenias, and even hosts as they send up pretty blooms to enjoy.

Dormant plants, long ago having emerged from the soil or leafed out, now fill out their intended space, and some multiply as if they would take over the entire world if you let them. This is when a gardener's heart is happy. The possibility of drought and the expectation of scorching heat during July and August are just a thought in the gardener's mind, not yet a constant worry. The plants that died over the winter have been replaced. Butterflies and bees greet the gardener who plays in the dirt or dreams of new areas in the yard to conquer.

Now is the time to take a lot of photos, relax in the garden for afternoon tea or an evening glass of wine, invite friends over to see the product of your hard work, and generally, enjoy. Be sure to place benches throughout your garden so you can now sit and take pleasure in all of nature's delights. Take notes on any spaces that are not filled in, list any plants you would like to move, divide, or remove, and examine your photos for blocks of color, not dots or dashes.

Look at color combinations and plant heights, and determine if there have been any changes in sun or shade which will need to be addressed (trees grow). When July and August get here, and it becomes too hot to work or even sit out in the garden for long, you can dream and plan for planting in autumn. For now, though, make some time to do what we gardeners often forget to do - **relax and enjoy!**



Praying Mantis– Friend or Foe?

David Bickerstaff, Master Gardener

Common Name: Praying mantid, praying mantis

Order: Mantodea

Scientific Name: *Stagmomantis* sp.

The praying mantis – so beautiful and fascinating – are carnivorous insects, generally subsiding on arthropods such as insects or spiders (and their mates after sex, but that's a different story). On occasion they have been known to eat smaller vertebrates such as frogs, lizards, salamanders or snakes.

The word mantis comes from the Greek mantikos, for soothsayer or prophet. Indeed, these insects do seem spiritual, especially when their forelegs are clasped together as if they're in prayer.

Of approximately 2,000 species of mantids described to date, almost all are tropical creatures. Just 18 native species are known from the entire North American continent.

Interesting facts about the praying mantis:

- ◆ They can turn their head 180 degrees- no other insect can do so
- ◆ Praying mantis is the only insect with 3-D vision
- ◆ They have two eyes, but only one ear. With only one ear they cannot determine the direction of the sound, nor its frequency.
- ◆ Mantises can detect ultrasound, or sound produced by echolocating bats. Studies have shown that praying mantises are quite good at evading bats
- ◆ Praying mantis are closely related to cockroaches and termites

Several mantis species occur in Texas. The adults are green to grayish brown, have well developed wings and may reach 2 to 3 inches in length. Egg masses of common Texas species such as the Carolina mantis, *Stagmomantis carolina* (Johnson), are rectangular and usually about 1 inch long and 3/8 inches wide & tall with rounded sides. Each mass contains dozens of eggs that are encased in a frothy material produced by the female that hardens into a foam-like material that is tan or occasionally white on top and darker sides. Mantis egg cases are easy to spot in the winter, when leaves have fallen from shrubs and trees. But be forewarned! If you bring an overwintering ootheca into your warm home, you may find your house teeming with tiny mantis!

Don't be fooled by its angelic pose, because the mantis is a deadly predator. If a bee or fly happens to land within its reach, the praying mantis will extend its arms with lightning quick speed and grab the hapless insect. Sharp spines line the mantis' raptorial forelegs, enabling it to grasp the prey tightly as it eats. Some larger mantis catch and eat lizards, frogs, and even birds. Who says bugs are at the bottom of the food chain?! The praying mantis would better be called the preying mantis.

Praying mantis can and will consume lots of other invertebrates in your garden, so they're often considered beneficial predators. It's important to note, however, that mantis don't discriminate between good bugs and bad bugs when looking for meals. A praying mantis is just as likely to eat a native bee that's pollinating your plants as it is to eat a caterpillar pest. Garden supply companies often sell the egg cases of Chinese mantis, touting them as a biological control for your garden, but these predators may do as much harm as good in the end.

Praying Mantis—Friend or Foe? (Cont. from page 9)

Praying mantises have been known to grab hummingbirds from feeders and as they're flitting about on garden flowers. They seem to have a preference to ruby-throated hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*).

Since the 1950s, a rumor has circulated that killing a praying mantis carries a fine. Killing a creature that looks as though it is on its knees praying may sound illegal, but while cruel, it isn't against the law. Mantises are not protected by law, nor has there ever been such a law or statute at the federal, state, or city levels in the United States. There are no penalties other than folkloric traditions from many millennia past.

It is a little known praying mantis fact that of the insect world, mantises are among the insects most widely kept as pets. Because the lifespan of a mantis is only about a year, people who want to keep mantises often breed them.

Two mantises are listed as official state insects: the European mantis in Connecticut, and the Carolina mantis in South Carolina.

Native insects eating pests is a great thing; invasive insects eating native birds starts edging into the world-gone-wrong realm.

Before introducing new species into your garden, do some research – just because you can buy pest-controlling mantises by the hundreds on Amazon doesn't mean you won't be putting your beautiful hummingbirds at risk.

<https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/praying-mantis/>



HCMG Plant Sale Recap

Martha Rainwater, Master Gardener & Co-Chairman of Plant Sale

The HCMG Annual Spring Plant Sale is now in the books. I want to thank our committee and many volunteers that made this year's event a success. This is truly a "all hands on deck" and most of our 50+ members participated.

We had over 4,500 plants which was more than double the amount available last year! The results are not yet final, but we expect that the plant sale will net over \$5,300 which will be used for our projects that benefit the residents of Henderson County.

Below are a some pictures from this year's plant sale.



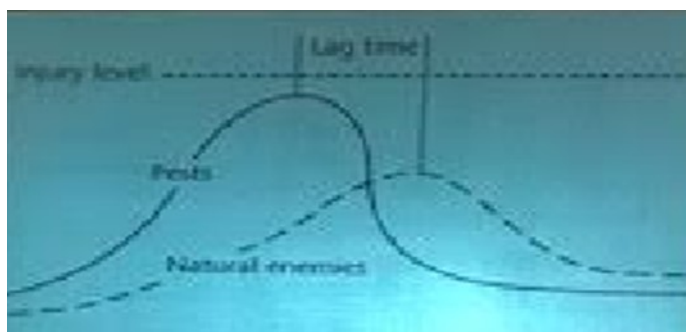
If You Grow It, They Will Come

Judy Haldeman, Master Gardener

Reflections from the Texas MG Conference

One of my favorite speakers at the State Conference was Skip Richter, Harris County Extension Agent. The title of his session was ***“Organic Gardening Techniques that Work”***. He spoke of long-term strategies that focus on the control of pests through a combination of techniques such as biological control, habitat manipulation, and modification of cultural practices.

Garden pests will always be with us, but in using broad spectrum insecticides, we end up killing the beneficial insects as well. The chart below was part of his slide presentation.



The idea behind waiting to kill pest, is to let the natural pest predators arrive in force to munch on the plant pests. Over time, if a gardener does nothing, the balance of natural predator and prey will stabilize.

In the “hazy” picture of a milkweed leaf, he pointed out a multitude of what most of us would consider garden pests. Only the aphid is the pest. The other insects or insect larvae are there to feast. In spraying the milkweed, you would also destroy the “good” predators. Shown are parasitoid wasp-infected, mummified aphids (the brown spots). The wasps lay their eggs in the aphids. Once the eggs hatch, they will eat the aphid from within. Ladybugs (Lady beetles) lay their eggs near aphid, mealybug, or scale colonies. A single ladybug adult may eat as

many as 5,000 aphids in its lifetime. The ladybug larvae look dangerous, but are harmless to humans. An adult syrphid fly could be mistaken for a yellow jacket, but it is also harmless to humans. A single female syrphid fly will lay hundreds of eggs on leaves infested with aphids or other soft-bodied insects. Lacewing bug larvae are voracious predators of the eggs and immature stages of many insects including aphids, spider mites, whiteflies, and mealybugs.

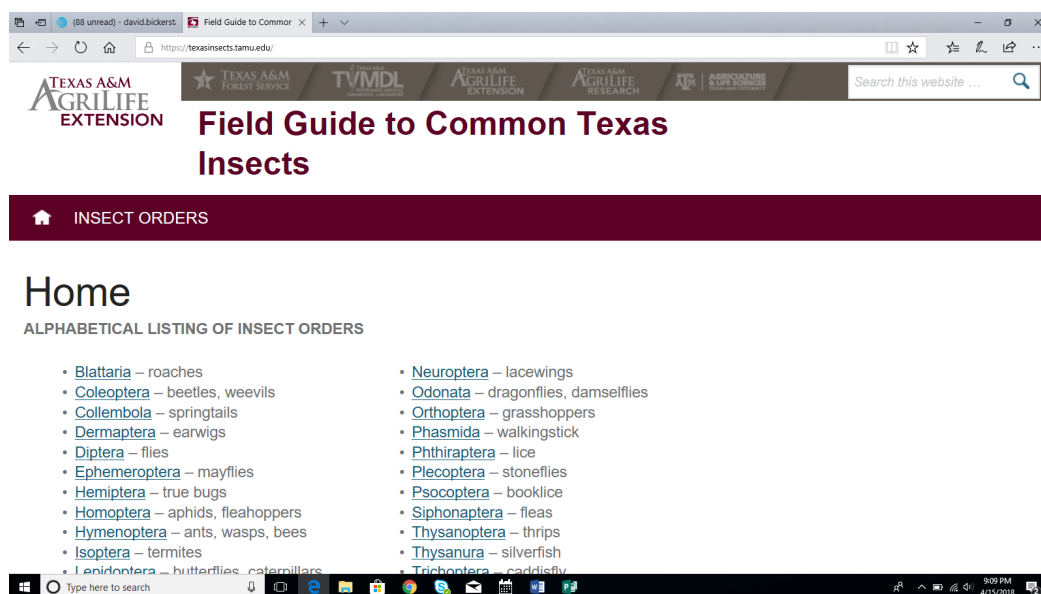


If You Grow It, They Will Come (Cont. from page 12)

Some of the common predators also eat these soft-bodied insects as adults. Others feed only on nectar from flowers. By establishing nectar-rich plants in your garden, you can attract the adult beneficial insects. Richter also listed several plants families that attract the adult predators. These were plants of the Umbelliferae family (yarrow, dill, anise, fennel, and cilantro); the Compositae family (chamomile, zinnia, aster, and copper canyon daisy); and Perennial Herbs (mints, thyme, chives, oregano, bee balm, basil, rue, and rosemary).

Enjoy your garden, but also be careful not to harm the beneficial insects that will do the hard work for you.

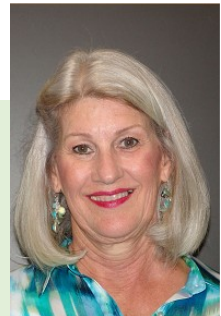
The Texas A&M Agrilife site has more information on insects at texasinsects.tamu.edu



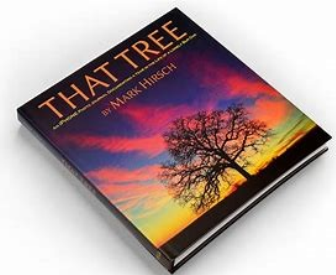
Skip Richter, County Extension Agent, - Horticulture Harris County

My Favorites from the TX State MG Conference

Claudia Durham, Master Gardener



- Leadership training. Very informative. Loved seeing how using social media can enhance your associations media presence
- Dr. Doug Steele - head of AgriLife Extension program in Texas. Very nice man. And hearing Dr. David Gibby - about how he came up with the idea of the master gardener program 40 years ago. Dr. Gibby is a very humble man and is an inspiration to me.
- Attending the Growing Strawberries Texas session. The most informative session about strawberries and I will take every tip he gave us and put into use.
- So impressed by Doug Welsh who gave the history of the Texas program and the wonderful people who made it happen. He talked about the number of hours contributed by volunteers - and the value of service. In 2016 hours volunteered were 620,000 making the total time since 1979 - 7,329,000 total hours. Value for the hours in 2016 were \$1,200,000 which is \$24.17 per hour.
- My favorite because it was so emotional to me was Mark Hirsch. He is a photographer by trade but due to a terrible accident, he decided to photograph one tree every day for a year - with his iPhone. The photos are amazing and I bought the book *"That Tree."* If you get a chance to look it up, you will be impressed with all the different things he photographed and the ways in which he captured nature. I also took his course and it was all about seeing things in a different light.
- Loved Linda Crum in the Nesting Box Workshop. She is an expert on Bluebirds but was also like a standup comic. We couldn't stop laughing.
- I really enjoyed spending time with our group of people. A great bonding experience. I



Henderson County Master Gardeners at the Texas MG Conference Awards Banquet

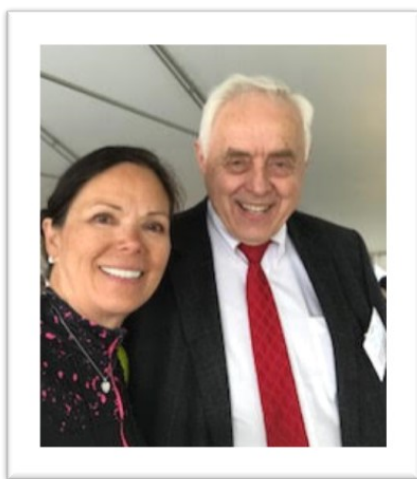
Highlights from the TX State MG Conference (Cont.)



My Favorite Things

Elizabeth Murphy, Master Gardener

- Hearing David Gibbs, and how the Master Gardener program came to be.
- The movie "Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall," about Piet Oudoulf, landscape designer.
- Hearing Mark Hirsch talk about his book "That Tree". He should be one of our big speakers.
- A workshop on designing floral centerpieces, inspired me to plant a cutting garden.



Maria Grimland HCMG and Dr. David Gibby, founder of Master Gardener Program



What I learned from the Conference

Judy Haldeman, Master Gardener

1. From David Gibby, Co-founder of the MG Program in Seattle and from Doug Welch, former TXMG Coordinator:

Honor the past by remembering that the mission of the MG Program is to help the local Ag Agent educate the public about the best horticultural practices available through the University that sponsors the MG program.

2. From Skip Richter, Harris County Extension Agent:

Let nature's predators help you control pests in the garden.

3. From Jan Bills, author and landscape designer:

Make sure you garden for the joy it brings.

4. From Mark Hirsch, author and photo-journalist:

Take time to notice and enjoy the common everyday things in your life.

Using Technology in the Garden

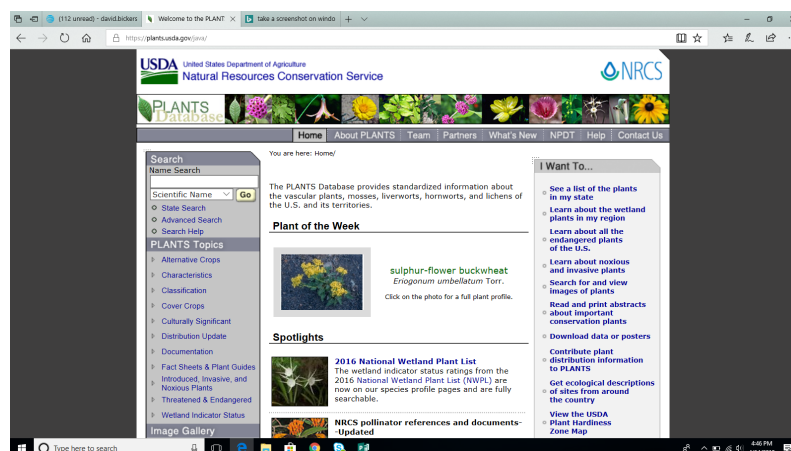
You might think that gardening is a low tech event, but you can leverage technology to solve plant problems, show you best practices in planting and generally help you enjoy your efforts

Over the next few newsletters we will share a few websites, apps and other technology that you might find useful. Keep in mind that misinformation can be shared in technology, so focus on information where possible from County Extension Agents and Master Gardeners

Plant Identification:

1. **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Plants Database.** <http://plants.usda.gov/>
This huge database includes a search function utilizing a common name or scientific name, photos and illustrations, geographic distribution maps, and links to other resources with even more information about a specific plant.
2. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, located at the University of Texas at Austin, has a wonderful **Native Plant Database.** <http://www.wildflower.org/plants/>. By selecting some typical plant characteristics, you can obtain helpful search results — which reduces the number of plants to consider as you identify an unknown plant.
3. **Dave's Garden** claims to be “the largest plant database in the world” and focuses on plants favored by gardeners. It's a great resource for photos to confirm a plant's identification. <http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/>
4. **Identify that plant**. Developed by a gardener that is passionate about plants and the correct identification of the plants. www.identifythatplant.com
5. **My Garden Answers**— app available in the App Store. Take a picture of the plant and submit online. The database compares and provides you with a suggested identification.
6. **Picture This**— app available in the App Store. Upload the picture of your plant and the database will provide likely plant identification.

When in doubt you should call the Henderson County Extension office at (903) 675-6130



Butterfly Garden

Janelle Cole, Master Gardener



Seeing butterflies flutter around the yard is always a joy and the reward of a little effort and planning. With a little research, planning and sweat equity you can draw those adorable fluttering creatures into your yard for hours of enjoyment!!

If you want to get started there are a few things to think about. Sunlight is a must, you want to pick an area in your yard that has at least 6+ hours of direct sunlight. Nearly every flower that the butterflies or other pollinators prefer needs full sun. Also, the earliest sun possible on your flowers is best, and maybe a few hours of late afternoon shade.

Next you want to figure out which butterflies you want to attract. Each butterfly has its own host plant. A host plant is the plant the butterfly lays her eggs on, they hatch into caterpillars and then eventually become butterflies. It is important to note at this point, those caterpillars are going to eat the plants they hatch on. As a butterfly gardener you need to understand that there will be times in the summer that the plant has very few leaves. However, know that those leaves will come back about the same time you find the butterflies in your yard on a regular basis. Two of our favorite butterfly plants are Passion Vine - the host plant for the Gulf Fritillary, Bronze Fennel for the Black Swallowtail.

Once you have the host plants, you will have butterflies, so you want to make sure to have plenty of nectar plants. Nectar plants are what they sound like, plants that offer nectar to the hungry butterflies. These do not have to be host plants and are not specific to any one butterfly. Most have large leaves that the butterflies can rest on and sun bathe, as well as eat. Some of our favorites are Turks Cap (gorgeous spiral flower), Mexican Sunflower, Purple Coneflower and Red Salvia (Hot Lips). Each of these will be favorites for the butterflies visiting your garden!

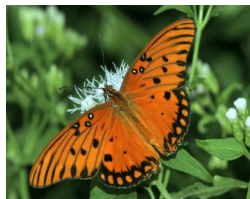
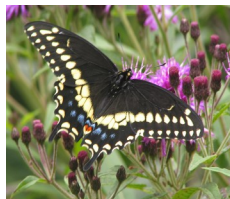
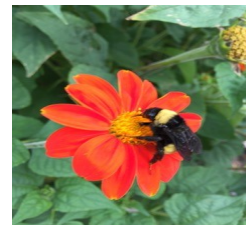
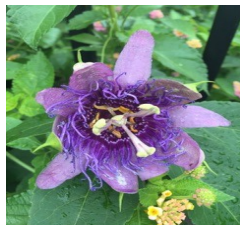
If you are trying to draw in other pollinators as well, such as honey bees or hummingbirds, the above plants are a good start. Including other purple Salvias, Bee Balm, Herbs and Hyssop will increase your pollinators to your garden. For honey bees, you want to try to plant an area of about 3ft by 3ft, since a bee colony will choose to work one plant at a time as a colony, so they prefer larger areas of the same or similar flowers.

While colors may be important to you, the choice is not so important to butterflies. They love red, orange, yellow, and white. Honey bees on the other hand prefer shades of purple the most, and next like white and yellow. So, start this year, add a new plant to your yard that you know will draw in those lovely ladies and you will not be sorry!

Butterfly Garden (cont. from page 17)

Many pollinator species have suffered serious declines in recent years. Unfortunately, most of our landscapes offer little in the way of appropriate habitat, forage, and housing. Start today, one plant at a time.

Happy planting!



See <https://monarchwatch.org/garden/plant-list-monarchwatch.pdf> for a list of butterfly plants

Master Gardener Specialist Training Opportunities

Greenhouse Management— 5/23-25 Kerrville, TX

Greenhouse Management program is designed to train and certify Master Gardeners to become part of a state corps of Greenhouse Management experts and educators. To become a certified Master Gardener Specialist – Greenhouse Management, Master Gardeners are required to attend the Master Gardener Specialist – Greenhouse Management training to fulfill training requirements and subsequently meet service requirements. Training activities during the course will empower Master Gardeners to complete these service requirements

Texas Superstars—9/18-20 Tyler, TX

An intensive multi-day training that will help empower certified Master Gardeners with knowledge and skills required to support the efforts in EarthKind environmental educational programs in their counties.

Training and Volunteer Requirements: Specialist training should be a minimum of 16 hours in length. Hours of training will depend on subject matter and level of expertise to be obtained. Training might include: formal classroom training, field trips and tours, mentoring by experts, and/or self-directed study. Following completion of the training requirement, an individual should complete a minimum 20 hours of volunteer service in a designated program or project to obtain this title of Master Gardener Specialist.

These training opportunities are limited to certified Master Gardeners

Spencer's Talk

Spencer Perkins, Henderson County Extension Agent

Lawn Management

The past month, the most common question that came into the office had something to do with lawn health. Whether your goal is to have the best-looking lawn in the county or just be able to keep stickers out of the grandkids feet, there are some basic steps to help.

It's always a good idea to collect a soil sample to see where the nutrient levels are in your lawn. Visit <http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/> for details on the soil sample process and you can pick up the kits at our office.

Some tips for the homeowner:

- Fertilize according to the results of your soil test, it is best to wait until well after spring green up.
- Make sure you are getting the proper amount of sunlight for your variety of grass.
- Apply Pre-emergent at least twice a year first application late February – early March second late September – early October.
- Apply Post-emergent as needed, target the weeds at the young growing stage.



Spencer's Talk (cont. from page 19)

Mow at a height using the “one-third” rule. Try to never take more than one-third of the leaf away. Each variety is different, with most lawns in Henderson County being Bermuda, it is ideal to keep around one to two inches of height.

As a rule of thumb try to get about an inch of “rain” per week on your lawn. Many times, we receive that by nature, however when having to supplement, do so only once or twice a week for longer durations, to allow proper root formation. To see how to perform a water audit on your sprinkler system, visit <http://irrigation.tamu.edu/coursematerial.php>

Those are the basic steps and we all know there are a lot more management strategies taken to achieve our goal. Unfortunately, most problems we face in our lawns are self-induced. A large majority of the fungus and disease is caused by fertilizing too early and watering too much. This year is a prime example of our lawns breaking dormancy early, then having several weeks of low night time temperatures and not having a lot of growth for our grass. If we used a weed and feed product too early to target winter weeds we most likely encouraged fungus and disease in our lawns. Please give me a call with any other questions, at 903-675-6130, or email me at spencer.perkins@ag.tamu.edu.



Henderson County Master Gardeners

The Master Gardener program is a volunteer development program offered by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service by disseminating horticultural information to individuals and groups in Henderson County and to develop and continue community projects related to horticulture. We are a group of volunteers who share a love of gardening and are eager to learn and share their knowledge.

'Learn at the Library' Series

"Square Foot Gardening"

May 15th—Master Gardener Susan Skomesa will discuss the practice of dividing the growing area into small square sections. This approach allows for a small, but intensively planted vegetable garden.



"Summer Time Gardening"

June 19th—Stephen Gent, owner of McDade's Nursery will talk about the do's and don'ts of summer time gardening. Stephen is very knowledgeable and will be a delight to hear.



The Library Series is open to the public and is held from 5:30pm to 6:30pm at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library in Athens, TX.



Henderson County Master Gardeners

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